



## Amir receives former prime ministers

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday former prime ministers, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Sa-

bah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.  
The reception was part of current consultations for forming a new government.

## Amir receives Eid wishes from Bahrain King, Sultan of Oman

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from King of Bahrain Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, congratulating him on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

The Bahraini King beseeched His Almighty that this occasion will be repeated for the two countries and the Arab and Muslim nations, wishing His Highness good health and wellness.

His Highness the Amir thanked the Bahraini king for the phone call, reciprocating with identical sentiments and wishes.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday received a phone call from the Sultan of Oman his Majesty Haitham bin Tariq on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

During the phone call, Sultan Haitham expressed to His Highness the Amir his sincere congratulations and best wishes on this blessed occasion.

On his part, His Highness the Amir thanked him for his kind gesture, which is a part of the two countries' strong historical ties.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

## 'CONTINUE TO LIVE IN LOVE AND HARMONY' HH Amir congratulates citizens, residents in Kuwait on Eid Al-Fitr

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan conveyed on Monday the warmest congratulations of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to citizens and residents in Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, and prayed that they would continue to live in love and harmony.

The Amiri Diwan, on this occasion, congratulated His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

It also congratulated the Kuwaiti people and all residents in the country and prayed that the occasion would revisit the Arab and Muslim states as they enjoyed greater security and peace.

## Amiri Decree appoints governors

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): An Amiri Decree was issued on Sunday appointing governors of Al-Farwaniya, Al-Assima, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Al-Ahmadi and Al-Jahraa.

The Amiri Decree stipulated the appointment with a minister's degree Adhbi Nasser Al-Adhbi Al-Sabah as Al-Farwaniya Governor, Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah as Al-Assima Governor, Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor, Hamad Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah as Al-Ahmadi Governor and Hamad Jassem Mohammad Mheisen Al-Habshi as Al-Jahraa Governor.

## New Fahaheel Health Center opens doors

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, the Minister of Health, on Monday inaugurated the Fahaheel Health Center, highlighting its three-story structure and comprehensive medical and health services.

In a statement, Al-Awadhi mentioned the center's nine clinics offering primary healthcare services to workers with Article 18 residency, alongside the Preventive Health Center, one of eight in the Al-Ahmadi Health District.

He also noted the inclusion of school health clinics and commended the efforts of national healthcare professionals.

### NewsWatch

**RIYADH:** Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister **Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud** reviewed Sunday with visiting Pakistani Premier **Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif** the joint efforts to strengthen bilateral ties as well as the regional and international developments of common interest.

This came in a meeting held at Al-Safa Palace in **Makkah**, reported the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). (KUNA)

**MUSCAT:** Omani Foreign Minister **Badr Al Busaidi** and Iranian opposite number **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian** expressed Sunday support to the efforts exerted to reduce escalation in the region.

They also stressed the need for the voice of wisdom to be present in resolving all conflicts.

"The Palestinian cause is the main issue we are trying to overcome in light of the Palestinian people's suffering as a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza and various occupied Palestinian territories," Al Busaidi said in a joint press conference with Amir-Abdollahian in Muscat today.

He added that **Oman** believes that there is no way but the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the world's recognition of its internationally recognized borders of 1967 with **East Jerusalem** as its capital. (KUNA)

**JERUSALEM:** A top Iranian military adviser on Sunday warned **Israel** that none of its embassies were safe following last week's strike in **Damascus** blamed on **Israel** that killed two elite Iranian generals. Regional tensions threaten to draw the Middle East into a wider conflict as **Israel's** war against **Hamas** marks six months.

The remarks by Gen. **Rahim Safavi**, a military adviser to **Iran's** supreme leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**, signaled that the attack on a diplomatic mission could be met with a similar response. **Israel** has not directly acknowledged its involvement.

"None of the embassies of the (Israeli) regime are safe anymore," Safavi was quoted as saying by the semi-official Tasnim agency. He spoke at a ceremony in **Tehran** for the generals killed in the strike that flattened an Iranian consular building. (AP)

**THE HAGUE:** **Nicaragua** on Monday called on the United Nations' top court to halt German military and other aid to **Israel**, arguing that **Berlin's** support was enabling acts of genocide and breaches of international humanitarian law in the **Israel-Hamas** war in **Gaza**.

Opening **Nicaragua's** case at the International Court of Justice, the country's ambassador to the **Netherlands**, **Carlos José Argüello Gómez**, told the 16-judge panel that "**Germany** is failing to honor its own obligation to prevent genocide or to ensure respect of international humanitarian law."

While the case brought by **Nicaragua** centers on **Germany**, it indirectly takes aim at **Israel's** military campaign in **Gaza** following the deadly Oct. 7 attacks when **Hamas-led** militants stormed into southern **Israel**, killing some 1,200 people. (AP)

# Public Prosecution orders jail time for vote-buying accused

MP-elect urges PM to choose ministers carefully

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Public Prosecution ordered the imprisonment of a citizen accused of buying votes of two female nationals for a candidate in the Fifth Constituency in the latest parliamentary elections.**

The suspect has also been charged with possession of drugs.

The Public Prosecution said on its X account on Sunday that the suspect had been interrogated and confessed to the possession of the materials that had been found with him.

It declared on Sunday the start of interrogating two citizens on charges of vote buying and that one of the accused had carried mobile phones, a computer and lists and phone numbers of voters.

Meanwhile, the oldest MP-elect, Saleh Ashour, has disclosed that he is studying the possibility of public voting for the National Assembly speaker post.

On the other hand, constitutional expert Professor Mohammad Al-Fili stressed that the Assembly speaker must be elected through secret ballot as per the National Assembly Law. He added no one should violate the law.

In the meantime, MP-elect **Abdullah Al-Ajmi** urged **HH** the Prime Minister **Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah** to carefully choose the members of his government. He pointed out that any minister accused of money laundering or financial corruption, especially those whose cases have been withheld, must not be part of the government.

MP-elect **Fahd Falah Bin Jame'e** said the current finance minister should not be reappointed, because he blocked the ratification of bills aimed at improving the citizens' standard of living. He revealed the minister asked for more time to conduct studies on popular bills, ignoring all the existing studies in this regard.

He criticized **HH** the Prime Minister for denying that his government came to dissolve the Assembly. He said the premier must support the citizens' demands, if he is keen on cooperating with the Assembly.

He also confirmed his intention to run for the Assembly speaker election.

MP-elect **Abdulkareem Al-Kandari** commented about the decree on appointing five members of **Al-Sabah** Family as governors. He inquired if the priority of the government is the appointment of royal family members to senior positions. He said the recruitment regulations and relevant laws must be applied on them as well, pointing out that ordinary citizens work hard for many years before being appointed to a senior position.



Photo shows American Air Force preparing for humanitarian assistance airdrop. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Royal Jordanian Air Force conducted a combined humanitarian assistance airdrop into Northern Gaza.

Kuwait, Jordanian FMs discuss situation in Palestinian territories

## Kuwait stands firm in support of Palestinian independence

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (Agencies):** Minister of Foreign Affairs **Abdullah Al-Yahya** reiterated Sunday Kuwait's principled and firm support to the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their legitimate rights and establish their independent state with **East Jerusalem** as its capital.

This came in a phone call with Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of **Palestine** **Dr. Muhammad Mustafa**, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry.

During the call, Minister **Al-Yahya** said he looks forward to working with the Palestinian counterpart for strengthening and consolidating bilateral relations in various fields and at all levels.

He expressed full support to international efforts aiming to resolve the Palestinian cause and alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Palestinian people.

He congratulated **Dr. Mustafa** as assuming his position as the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of **Palestine**, wishing good luck and success in his mission.

For his part, Prime Minister **Mustafa** conveyed the greetings of his country's

leadership and people to the State of **Kuwait** and its wise leadership and people.

He voiced gratitude and appreciation to the State of **Kuwait** for defending the Palestinian cause at international fora and providing humanitarian and relief aid to the war-traumatized Palestinian people.

The Ministry statement pointed out that both sides reviewed and exchanged views about the latest developments of common concern in the occupied Palestinian territories, the region and the world.

Meanwhile, **Kuwait's** Minister of Foreign Affairs **Abdullah Al-Yahya** discussed, via phone Sunday, with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of **Jordan** **Ayman Al-Safadi** the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and increasing coordination and consultation on dealing with the dangerous escalation in the **Gaza Strip**.

In a press statement, the Foreign Ministry that both sides underlined the need to support international efforts seeking to accelerate humanitarian and relief aid delivery to the Palestinian people.

They urged international community to assume its responsibilities and intensify its efforts to help achieve a just and last-

ing solution to the Palestinian cause.

Minister **Al-Yahya** appreciated **Jordan's** effective role in maintaining regional security and stability and enhancing joint Arab action.

He affirmed the State of **Kuwait's** backing to the Hashemite Kingdom's efforts for stopping the war on **Gaza** and limiting its repercussions.

He also voiced **Kuwait's** full support for the international efforts for finding the most effective ways to end this dangerous deterioration that threatens the security of the region.

Elsewhere, streams of **Palestinians** filed into the southern **Gaza** city of **Khan Younis** on Monday to salvage what they could from the vast destruction left in the wake of **Israel's** offensive, a day after the **Israeli** military announced it was withdrawing troops from the area.

Many came back to the **Gaza Strip's** second-largest city to find their former hometown unrecognizable. With scores of buildings destroyed or damaged, piles of rubble now sit where apartments and businesses once did. Streets have been bulldozed.

Continued on Page 5



The relief medical team affiliated with the Kuwaiti Relief Society returned home Sunday evening on board a Kuwaiti Air Force plane. The team traveled to the **Gaza Strip** last week to treat the wounded and the sick, help the **Palestinians**, assist the medical personnel and support the field hospitals there. — See Page 4

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:09	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:30	Maghrib ..	18:10
Zohr .....	11:50	Isha .....	19:29

# Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## Weather

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to southerly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on and a chance for rising dust.

**By Night:** Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to southerly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	33	23
Kuwait Airport	34	21
Abdaly	35	20
Jahra	33	22
Salmiyah	32	22
Nuwaisib	34	22
Wafra	33	21

## High fees, gun violence cause of shift to Southeast Asian countries

# Decline seen in Kuwaiti, Gulf students studying at US universities

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: American universities are experiencing a noticeable decline in students from Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, with decreases also seen among students from Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Conversely, Middle Eastern student enrollment in other popular Western destinations like the UK and Australia remains relatively stable, with a growing interest observed in East and Southeast Asian countries for higher education, according to The National.

Data from the Open Doors for International Education report reveals a significant drop in the number of Saudi and Qatari students studying in the United States during the 2022-2023 academic year. Factors such as personal safety concerns, including the risk of gun violence, and high tuition fees have been cited as reasons for this shift away from American universities.

Vinay Loungani, sales director for the Middle East and North Africa at Crim-

son Education, notes a decline in interest in the United States from the region due to safety, financial, and geographical reasons. Dr. Ryan Allen of Chapman University and Dr. Krishna Bista of Morgan State University suggest that an unwelcoming climate may deter Middle Eastern students from pursuing higher education in the US.

Changes in scholarship systems and the availability of high-quality educational institutions in the Middle East have also influenced students' decisions to study abroad. For instance, the presence of institutions like New York University Abu Dhabi and American universities in Qatar has contributed to students opting to stay in their home countries.

In contrast, the UK has seen an increase in Middle Eastern student numbers over the past decade, with universities capitalizing on higher tuition fees for international students. This trend has been facilitated by the cap on tuition fees for British students, making UK universities an attractive option for foreign students.



A long wait for fish somewhere near the Doha Power Plant, north of Kuwait City as sea gets rough in high winds

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

## Rising dust in high winds expected

The Meteorological Department has issued a weather advisory predicting wind speeds potentially surpassing 60 kilometers per hour. This could lead to dusty conditions,

reduced visibility in certain regions, and waves reaching heights of over 7 feet in the sea. Additionally, scattered rain, possibly accompanied by thunderstorms, is

anticipated. The advisory spans a duration of 12 hours, commencing at 3:00 pm today and concluding at 3:00 am tomorrow, reports Al-Rai daily.

## Other Voices

### Mother of tragedies ... enough!

By Ahmad alsarraf

The tragedy of education in Kuwait can be traced to one fundamental issue: the government administration's failure to recognize its paramount importance.

Without a firm belief in the critical role of education, no progress can be achieved in economic, commercial, or societal spheres. Despite substantial financial investments in education, much of the budget is allocated to salaries, with a significant portion going towards unnecessary positions.

The current situation is exacerbated by a surplus of Kuwaiti teachers, many of whom specialize in non-essential subjects such as drawing and physical education.

Compounding the problem is the mismatch between available teaching positions and the demands of a knowledge-based economy. Vacancies for essential subjects like physics, mathematics, and science often go unfilled, necessitating the recruitment of non-Kuwaiti teachers. This reliance on foreign educators highlights a failure to cultivate expertise among local talent.

Moreover, the oversupply of education graduates reflects a lack of strategic planning and career guidance. Many graduates from education colleges struggle to find employment in sectors outside of teaching, despite the shifting demands of the job market.

This over-saturation not only devalues the teaching profession but also undermines the quality of education. Teachers face challenges stemming from students' deteriorating behavior and outdated curricula. Despite these obstacles, dedicated educators persevere in their noble pursuit of shaping young minds.

Addressing the crisis in education requires a comprehensive reassessment of priorities and a concerted effort to invest in quality teaching and relevant skills development. Only by recognizing the crucial role of education and providing adequate support to educators can Kuwait hope to overcome its educational challenges and unlock its full potential for development.

The Minister of Education, in full cooperation with the Prime Minister, is concerned with developing a solution to the problem of education, and stopping the decline in the level of students and teachers, and the usually subsequent decline in the level of the nation as a whole. This requires something of the utmost importance, which is developing a modern education plan and having it

approved by the Council of Ministers. Do not allow any official to interfere in it!

Education encompasses more than just classroom instruction, textbooks, and teachers; it extends to the influences of family, environment, media, and communication platforms. In today's interconnected world, the impact of these external influences on children's learning experiences is profound, sometimes even surpassing that of traditional educational settings.

It is essential to ensure that these external influences are not harmful and do not contradict the school curriculum. Contradictions between what children learn in school and what they absorb from other sources can lead to confusion and cognitive dissonance, especially considering the absence of formal education in critical thinking.

The lack of critical thinking education can hinder students' ability to discern between conflicting information and ideas. This was exemplified by a personal experience sixty years ago, where a student's attempt to reconcile contradictory information led to investigation and suppression rather than open discussion and critical inquiry.

Today, with the proliferation of religious discourse through various media channels, there is a heightened risk of misinformation and confusion. Some clerics disseminate extreme views that not only lack coherence but also sow discord and confusion among their audiences.

An example cited is the recent discussion of dress codes for prayers, which introduced perplexing distinctions between "free women" and "slave women."

The disconnect between religious discourse and reality raises questions about the relevance and applicability of such teachings.

In a world where slavery is largely abolished, the notion of regulating prayer attire based on ownership status seems antiquated and out of touch with contemporary society.

In conclusion, the integration of critical thinking skills into education is crucial for empowering students to navigate the complexities of information and ideas encountered in both formal education and external influences.

Additionally, ensuring that religious discourse remains relevant and coherent with contemporary values and realities is essential for fostering understanding and harmony within society.

What about the rest of our dangerous issues? How can a teenager listening to these people relate their words to what he learns in school? Isn't there a sane person, someone with authority, who would say to these people, "Enough"?

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reduced visibility in certain regions, and waves reaching heights of over 7 feet in the sea. Additionally, scattered rain, possibly accompanied by thunderstorms, is

anticipated. The advisory spans a duration of 12 hours, commencing at 3:00 pm today and concluding at 3:00 am tomorrow, reports Al-Rai daily.

# 'Kuwaiti consumers of fresh water amount to 86.04 % of 79,119 users'

## Power outage in some Salmiya areas restored

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: According to informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Kuwaiti consumers of freshwater amounted to 86.04 percent of the total 79,119 consumers in all residential sectors.

The sources explained that the percentage of clients from the investment housing sector was 7.60 percent. The commercial housing sector came in third place with 4.35 percent, followed by other types of housing (livestock pens and chalets) with 1.11 percent, then industrial housing sector with 0.41 percent, then agricultural housing sector with 0.32 percent, and then the government sector with 0.17 percent.

According to the latest statistics, the total capacity of the fresh water distillation station units amounts to 682 million imperial gallons per day through the station units whose capacity ranges between 5 million to 15 million imperial gallons per day for each unit, depending on each station.

In a related context, the sources said the ministry included in its plan a project to establish horizontal drainage systems with the aim of reducing the groundwater levels at the sites of some electrical transfer stations in order to protect them from the negative effects of the presence of water under the stations, which reach approximately 837 major transfer stations throughout the country.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced yesterday the complete restoration of power to Salmiya blocks 5 and 6 following an interruption yesterday morning due to four sub-feeders of the main substation being out of service.

The ministry explained that the exit of these feeders from the station led to a power outage in limited parts of blocks 5 and 6 in Salmiya. The ministry's emergency teams were immediately dispatched to the site and the necessary repairs were made, after which the power was restored.

**Registration begins:** The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) in Kuwait has announced the commencement of registration for young individuals interested in joining the Arbitration Academy program focusing on debates.

Scheduled from April 20th to 23rd, this marks the third session of the program, organized by the country's national debate team in collaboration with the Qatar Debate Centre. The program is tailored for young people aged 21 years and above.

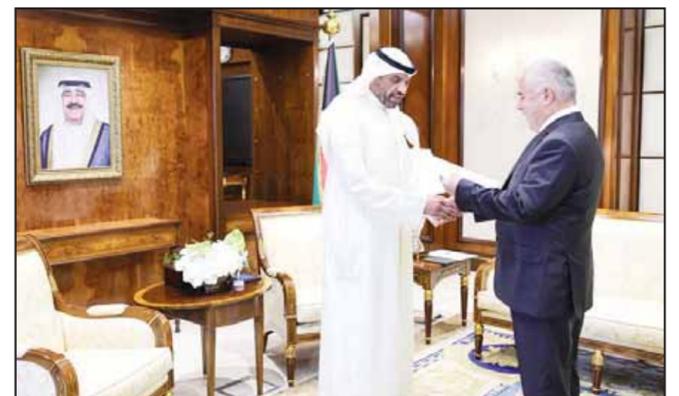
Asrar Al-Ansari, spokesperson for the Authority, highlighted the Authority's commitment to supporting youth initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills of young individuals. She commended the national debate team for its significant efforts in refining and developing the cognitive and personal abilities of youth.

Al-Ansari emphasized the Authority's vested interest in debates, citing its role in fostering linguistic proficiency and communication skills among young people. Additionally, she noted that participation in debate activities contributes to enhancing leadership abilities, self-confidence, and critical thinking skills.

Al-Ansari reiterated the General Youth Authority's commitment to providing comprehensive support and cooperation with various institutions, including governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and the private sector. She expressed pride in the ongoing collaboration with the national debate team, underscoring their joint success in numerous programs.

Fahd Al-Subaie, head of the National Debate Team, affirmed that successful completion of the program enables young participants to serve as arbitrators in upcoming debate tournaments for both school and university students. He emphasized the mutual interest shared between the team and the Authority in advancing youth through dialogue and persuasion-based competitions.

Al-Subaie disclosed that the academy's training program targets recent graduates from universities and colleges, offering three levels of instruction, including beginner. He encouraged young individuals, particularly those with prior experience in debate competitions, to enroll in the program and seize the opportunity for personal and intellectual growth.



KUNA photo

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives a letter from Tajikistan counterpart Sirojiddin Muhriddin.

## Kuwait, Tajik ties in focus

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a letter from Tajikistan counterpart Sirojiddin Muhriddin.

The letter touched on bilateral ties be-

tween the two friendly countries and ways of boosting cooperation in various fields.

Tajikistan Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zubaidallah Zabidov handed the letter to Minister Al-Yahya. (KUNA)

'We respect orders, values of people'

## Zain company cancels drama show

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Zain Company has announced the cancellation of the theatrical show, "Fi Zein Al-Zaman", out of commitment and respect for the instructions of the competent authorities affirming its adherence to the values and morals that the Kuwaiti people have established, and in full support of the political leadership in confronting everything that might harm the State of Kuwait; we extend to our dear audience our deep regret and apology for canceling the theatrical show, 'Fi Zein Al-Zaman' c

"in compliance with and respect for the instructions of the competent authorities.

"We are grateful for your trust and support for us in the interest of the nation. Details and the mechanism for refunding the payment for reserved tickets will be announced soon, in coordination with the Arena Kuwait management."

"With reference to the letter of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters on April 7, 2024 addressed to the company producing the theatrical work, 'Fi Zein Al-Zaman', regarding the competent committee's non-approval of the play to be shown to the public, this is because the Ministry of Information referred the writer and some actors to the

Public Prosecution for their participation in a television series that contravened the values and morals of Kuwaiti society.

"As the Mobile Telecommunications Company (Zain) affirms its adherence to the values and morals that Kuwaiti people have established, and in full support of the political leadership in confronting everything that might harm the State of Kuwait; we extend to our dear audience our deep regret and apology for canceling the theatrical show, 'Fi Zein Al-Zaman' c

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"We respect orders, values of people"

"We respect orders, values of people"

## Doctor says insulted, assaulted

# Hackers steal from Kuwaitis, expats

By Jaber Al-Hamoud/Munaf Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Criminal Court sentenced two Egyptian brothers to imprisonment for two and a half years for fraudulently usurping KD 11,000 from a Kuwaiti citizen's account.

They were accused of hacking into the consumer protection database of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and exploiting it to steal the money from Kuwaiti citizens and expatriates via WhatsApp after claiming to be calling from the Consumer Protection Department.

**Doctor insulted, assaulted:** An expatriate doctor filed a complaint at Naem Police Station, accusing an unidentified person of insulting and assaulting him while he was working at Jahra Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

The doctor, born in 1984, stated in medical misdemeanor case no. 8/2024 (insult, defamation and mild assault) that

the accused grabbed his hand, pushed him and uttered expletives against him.

The investigator summoned both parties involved in the case to the Jahra Prosecution Office to complete the investigation, determine the circumstances that led to the assault, and the motive behind the assault.

**Kuwaiti's SUV stolen:** A Kuwaiti citizen has filed a case against an unknown individual who stole his American-made "Silverado" vehicle from the parking lot of the Sulaibikhat Club.

According to a security source, the citizen went to the police station of the area and informed the police that he had parked his vehicle in the club's parking lot and was surprised to realize it was not where he parked when he returned. He provided the police with the vehicle's description and information in order to help in locating the vehicle and apprehending the thief.

The case has been referred to the concerned authorities to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## The words of Amir ... threads of balance and melodies of wisdom

"THE annals of Kuwaiti parliamentary history bear witness to the active engagement of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, in a dialogue with the constitution, viewing it as a crucial partner in governance. His role is indispensable, for Kuwait's aspirations cannot be realized without his involvement," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The constitution is not merely a decorative piece but a pivotal instrument in shaping the nation's future, laying down the foundations of stability, and formulating a comprehensive plan. It serves to safeguard the state, guide its developmental trajectories, and respond to the aspirations of its populace. Far from being a temporary fix, the constitution stands as a permanent document ensuring the integrity and unity of the state, while illuminating the path forward for both the people and governmental apparatus.

"In his address on the evening of April 1, 2024, His Highness the Amir underscored the imperative of adhering to the constitution, emphasizing the need to protect its essence and thwart any attempts to undermine its objectives.

"Moreover, His Highness the Amir transitioned from emphasizing preservation to advocating for implementation, urging the Kuwaiti populace to exercise their right to participate in elections. He advised that moderation and a forward-looking approach should guide their choices, aiming for constructive consensus across all developmental, social, and political spheres.

"His hope is for individuals of discernment and moderation to actively engage, thereby marginalizing the influence of those who flout regulations, engage in nepotism, or obstruct legislative processes. The call is to strive for progress and integrity in the electoral arena, steering clear of divisive tactics and prioritizing the collective welfare of the nation.

"In the discourse, there's a subtle caution against candidates driven solely by personal gain, detached from societal welfare unlike candidates from the previous parliament, whose actions sowed discord and undermined constitutional principles essential for political and social cohesion and security, are encouraged. The call resonates for the electorate to favor balanced, forward-thinking individuals committed to charting a course that propels Kuwait beyond stagnation toward tangible progress.

"Furthermore, His Highness the Amir's vision, as articulated in this historic speech, envisages a robust parliament characterized by moderation and fruitful cooperation between legislative and executive branches. Such synergy is seen as pivotal in shaping a future blueprint, buoyed by strong public backing to ensure implementation unhindered by bureaucratic red tape or parliamentary discord.

"This trajectory is deemed apt for Kuwait's revival, eagerly anticipated by a populace weary of parliamentary conduct prioritizing personal privileges over public good. Reflecting on past council experiences, characterized by height-

ened tensions and emotional outbursts exceeding acceptable bounds, underscores the urgency for a shift towards constructive dialogue and collaborative governance.

"For the first time, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait addressed the significant and alarming threat to national identity posed by manipulation of Kuwaiti nationality. He echoed a prevailing sentiment among Kuwaitis regarding apprehensions about the infiltration of foreigners into the closely-knit fabric of Kuwaiti society, which is staunchly committed to national unity and cognizant of the perils encircling the nation. There is a collective determination to avert the pernicious effects of such infiltration and safeguard Kuwait from its encroachments, seeking its eradication once and for all.

"His Highness the Amir underscored the lack of public confidence in the proliferation of this phenomenon, signaling expectations for its inevitable eradication. He recognized that Kuwait's strength lies in the unity of its people and their alignment with the rich Kuwaiti heritage, transcending sectarian divides and historical discord.

"The responsibility for addressing this issue falls on the executive branch, with the Ministry of Interior tasked with unraveling the mysteries surrounding this phenomenon. It's reiterated that Kuwait's most potent weapon is the solidity of its unity, emphasizing that adversaries and those harboring territorial ambitions are well aware of the Kuwaiti people's unwavering attachment to their homeland, identity, and pride.

"The world witnessed the harrowing experience of invasion, and the tactic to undermine this solidarity now lies in infiltration through deceit and ingenuity. What increases the need for a quick treatment of the absurdity of nationality is that His Highness the Amir expressed overwhelming fears that the Kuwaiti people talk about and are concerned about. His Highness the Amir's words were a realistic translation of the suffering that the people endure from these absurdities of nationality.

"Let us not overlook the perils posed by individuals holding dual nationalities. Addressing the issue of Kuwaiti nationality necessitates confronting those who possess citizenship from regional countries and elsewhere, entering Kuwait as citizens and participating in its electoral processes. These individuals, along with counterfeits, form a detrimental bloc that influences Kuwait's future trajectory.

"The Ministry of Interior holds the necessary files and capabilities to address this concerning issue, and we express confidence in Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef's resolve to translate decisions into actionable measures upon request.

"His Highness the Amir reaffirms his trust in the Kuwaiti people's commitment to internal unity and their capacity to thwart infiltration attempts. Kuwait, their homeland, is regarded as a sanctuary of tranquility and solace -- a nation whose struggles we have endured together, unified in safeguarding its interests and embracing its progress.

"As the state's oil revenues surged, our affection for its soil deepened,

strengthening our resolve to uphold its security, preserve its heritage, and cherish its land. This profound sentiment fosters a growing Kuwaiti national identity, equipping us to confront internal and regional sabotage efforts.

"His Highness the Amir chose not to delve into Kuwait's foreign relations, aligning with the tradition of his predecessors, who typically address the populace during the final ten days of Ramadan. The emphasis of his speech on security underscores the escalating concerns amidst parliamentary proceedings, underscored by the fortitude of national unity.

"The people of Kuwait remain vigilant of the risks prevailing in the neighboring region and their potential repercussions on Kuwait's security. The imperative to safeguard the strategic partnerships with both the United States and Britain remains paramount, underscored by the ongoing necessity for continuous communication across various strategic, political, economic, and investment domains. Kuwait alone lacks the capacity to counter regional risks stemming from semi-permanent turmoil.

"It is undeniable that His Highness the Amir's words have resonated deeply, enlightening minds, offering reassurance to those who followed or read his message, including the members of the new National Assembly. It's conceivable that they have internalized his message, particularly the representatives of the dissolved parliament, who comprehend the rationale behind its dissolution and grasp the nuances expressed by His Highness the Amir, advocating for balance, moderation, and cooperation with the government to achieve Kuwaiti people's aspirations, notably in terms of growth and development.

"Voters were urged to heed the advice to support candidates committed to constitutional principles and cooperation based on shared understanding, while eschewing those driven by personal agendas or inclined towards disruptive behavior that undermines constitutional norms.

"In his address, His Highness the Amir spoke not just as a leader but also as a paternal figure, a brother, and a fellow citizen. His words resonated with the sentiments of Kuwaitis, reflecting their yearning for a productive parliament guided by rationality, their concerns regarding the widespread abuse of citizenship, and their apprehensions about the infiltration of individuals motivated by personal gain, jeopardizing the sanctity of citizenship.

"In his speech, His Highness the Amir established a precedent by shedding light on the critical issues close to his heart, which he deems imperative to address in order to mitigate the harm they pose to the homeland, particularly concerning subtle threats such as nationality forgery and the infiltration of malicious individuals."

"His Highness's addresses have stirred waves of clarity, characterized by a tone of unwavering resolve and paternal guidance. Within them, the wisdom of counsel prevails, imparting positivity and urging us to navigate our paths guided by their illuminating wisdom. It is incumbent upon us to heed their light and chart our course accordingly."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Bishara



A classroom at one of the schools devoid of students.

### Principal promises 'Eidiya' to pull students

The head of a primary school within the Jahra Educational District has introduced a novel initiative termed 'Will give you Eidiya' (money given to children by parents, elders) aimed at motivating female students to maintain regular attendance. This proactive step seeks to address the prevalent issue of absenteeism both before

and after official holidays. Encouraging a commitment to education, the principal emphasized the importance for both male and female students to remain engaged in the learning process, be it through traditional in-person classes or distance education, reports Al-Rai daily.

Driven by a desire to foster a culture of

academic excellence and perseverance among her students, the principal personally allocated resources to support the entire 'Eidiya' initiative. Her decision was prompted by the unexpected absence of students on Sunday, April 7, despite prior agreements to abstain collectively until after the Eid holiday.

## Attendance next to none at schools, public sector

Truant officials face legal action

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8:** As is customary, with a working day sandwiched between two official holidays, the Ministries Complex experienced a noticeable case of employee absenteeism yesterday, as many chose to extend their Eid Al-Fitr holiday by including Sunday and Monday.

During a visit by Al-Qabas to the Ministries Complex, despite numerous offices being devoid of employees, there was a sense of calmness, with transactions smoothly handled by those officials on duty for the small number of visitors present.

With the scarcity of visitors, employees engaged in side conversations, predominantly centered around the soaring prices during Eid, holiday destinations, the outcomes of the National Assembly elections held the previous Thursday, traffic congestion, and speculations about the winners in European League matches.

Sources told the daily that the employee attendance rate did not surpass 51%, with a significant number opting to request permission to leave before the end of the workday, with permission requests reaching up to 62% in most government agencies.

Officials from various legal affairs sectors

in some government agencies confirmed to Al-Qabas that employees' leave during this period was pre-planned. They emphasized that employees have the right to select their periodic leave dates after securing approval from their superiors, and they may also avail themselves of medical services, provided that there are personnel available to attend to patients and ensure uninterrupted workflow.

These officials cautioned that individuals absent without excuse during these two days (Sunday and Monday) will be referred to legal affairs for necessary disciplinary measures.

Similarly, employees who clock in but leave work afterward are being monitored. Inspection tours are being conducted to ensure employees' regularity and the timely completion of tasks without disruption.

Immediate resolution of customer complaints is prioritized in accordance with the Council of Ministers' directives emphasizing the necessity of efficient service delivery without inconveniencing citizens.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of mass student absenteeism has escalated, with most schools experiencing a complete lack of student presence. In contrast, teachers and administrators have demonstrated remarkable dedication to their work, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Educational authorities attribute the absence of students to the convergence of factors such as the last ten days of Ramadan and the imminent Eid al-Fitr celebrations.

Others incited to join terror outfit

## 12 high school students face 'probe' for joining ISIS group

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8:** The Public Prosecution has referred 12 secondary schools minors to the State Security, after it was found that they had joined the terrorist organization ISIS and incited others to join it and adopt its ideas, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The source explained that some of these events were discovered through investigations with members of terrorist cells who were recently arrested, while others were discovered through individual cases, after they were monitored by the Ministry of Interior as being involved in belonging to the terrorist group, and were subjected to intensive investigations and charged with committing crimes against the state security.

The source confirmed that investigations proved that these juveniles announced, through clips and blog posts on social media, their support for the terrorist group ISIS, and incited their peers to affiliate with this ideology.

The source pointed out that some of those accused in terrorist cells who are currently on trial were found to be communicating with juveniles to deceive them, and inciting them with messages via the social networking sites with phrases such as "The beautiful 'hours' are waiting for you... Leave the social networking sites and hurry to heaven".

### Recruit

The source indicated that those accused in the terrorist cells sought to recruit students and juveniles to believe in their terrorist ideas and assist them in their criminal plans to harm the state.

The source concluded that many of the juvenile students refused to submit

to the terrorist cells and quickly informed their families about them and the parents informed the Ministry of Interior.

The source stressed the need for parents to monitor their children, follow what they publish on social media sites, discover any criminal deviation, and be careful of everything prohibited by the law, stressing the danger of neglecting to monitor their children.

### Banned

An informed source said that the Public Prosecution investigated 51 State Security cases last year, 2023, including cases of incitement and calls to join criminal and banned terrorist groups, and other cases, and it is expected that juvenile cases will contribute to an increase in the percentage of these cases during the current year, 2024.

The source pointed out that investigations are still continuing to search for any crime, whether committed by juveniles or others, and to carry out pre-emptive strikes to control security and arrest anyone who tries to transgress the law.

The source stressed that there were summonses made by the Ministry of the Interior for juveniles who were observed being followed on many social media sites and clips of suspicious people inciting to join terrorist groups.

After questioning them, it turned out that these juveniles were sympathetic to them but had no terrorist affiliations or tendencies, and their summoning was out of caution and more accurate knowledge.

## Minister refers ex-board members to prosecution

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8:** Sheikh Firas Al-Malik, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, has referred the previous boards of directors that were in charge of the Mishref Cooperative Society between 2019 and 2023 to the Public Prosecution, reports Al-Jarida daily.



Sheikh Firas

This action comes upon the recommendation of the investigation committee in the field of cooperative work, which comprises members of the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

The decision to refer these previous boards was made in light of the committee's findings, which revealed a number of financial and administrative violations, as well as suspicions of mismanagement leading to harm to shareholders' funds and the financial position of the association.

Furthermore, the committee recommended that a former board of the Rawdah and Hawalli Cooperative Society, which assumed management of the society in 2022, be referred to the General Department of Investigations for further scrutiny.

## Municipality approves site exchange for Mol projects

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8:** The Kuwait Municipality has given its approval to the Ministry of Interior's request to exchange the designated site for the General Administration of Rescue Patrols project with that of the General Administration of Information Systems project, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to a technical opinion provided by the Director-General of the Municipality, Eng Saud Al-Dabbous, the Municipality has agreed to the Interior Ministry's request for the exchange of sites.

The designated site, spanning an area of 135 thousand square meters, is located within the South Surra area, overlooking the Sixth Ring Road. This decision aligns with Municipal Council Resolution No. (B/F 16/289/11/2002), which was adopted on May 20, 2002.

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Kuwait Medical Relief Society team members in a group photo in Gaza.

KUNA photo

**Team performs number of delicate surgeries**

**Kuwait Medical Relief Society team concludes Gaza mission**

**By Salman Al-Mutairi**

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): A team from Kuwait Medical Relief Society concluded its mission in Gaza Strip, Sunday, after a relief and medical mission trip aimed at assisting the medical staff in the European Hospital and the Kuwait Specialized Hospital, performing several surgical and emergency operations for wounded Palestinians due to the tragic devastation and war there.

Deputy Director General of the society and team official Omar Al-Thuwaini told KUNA that the team completed its relief activities inside Gaza Strip, which varied between performing a number of delicate surgical operations and distribution of food, shelter and social projects and supporting a wide number of relief sectors.

Al-Thuwaini called on volunteer medical and relief teams around the world to go to Strip with their equipment to provide support to a large number of wounded Palestinians, and to support the medical sector, which is on the verge of collapse and is struggling to survive with raw materials and a severe shortage of basic and necessary medical supplies.

He also praised the efforts of Kuwait's ministries that facilitated the travel of the

relief medical team, which in turn led to the completion of their mission, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Health Ministry, which facilitated the departure of the medical team on an official mission, in addition to the Ministry of Defense, which was responsible for transportation.

For his part, the head of the relief and projects sector at the association and coordinator of the administrative team, Mahmoud Al-Misbah, said in a similar statement to KUNA that the doctors accompanying the society's team performed around 184 surgical operations at the Kuwait Specialized Hospital and the European Hospital during the seven days they spent inside Gaza, in addition to conducting a medical examination of more than 1,000 sick Gazans, using the medical equipment and supplies they brought on their journey to the besieged Strip.

Al-Misbah also noted that the society had signed an agreement with the (Rahma Around the World) Association in Gaza to employ a medical staff consisting of 313 individuals, revealing that before departure they had begun procedures for establishing a field hospital to support the health sector and provide care for 790 families inside Gaza.

**Power minister announces 4 new regulatory decisions**

**New grievances committee formed for purchasing stages**

**By Mohammed Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf issued four regulatory decisions regarding nomination procedures in the Ministry of Electricity and Water and the formation of the grievances committee during the purchasing stages.

It authorized the undersecretary to approve forms for reporting cases of abstention and disbursement in the Oracle system that the financial controller refuses to sign, and to form a committee to follow up on the procedures for implementing Law No. 48/2005.

Regarding the decision on nomination procedures, Minister Al-Hajraf decided to adhere to what was stated in the Civil Service Commission's Circular No. 4/2024 regarding the approval of job needs in all government agencies covered by the central employment system.

The Administrative Affairs Sector and its rele-

vant organizational units are obligated to allocate candidates for ministry appointments based on the specific requirements of each sector, as per the guidelines set forth in the Civil Service Commission's automated system. Furthermore, all Ministry sectors must adhere to a policy of not approving any requests to transfer or assign newly appointed employees to other sectors within the first five years of their appointment.

Also, Al-Hajraf decided to form a grievances committee regarding the purchasing stages stipulated in circular No. 5/2020 concerning the purchasing system for public entities. The committee is headed by the assistant undersecretary for Administrative Affairs.

The committee shall be tasked with receiving grievances related to any stage of the purchase in accordance with the procedures stipulated in the circular referred to above, and shall study and decide upon them and take appropriate corrective measures after ensuring that the complainant has

fulfilled the grievance procedures.

Concerning the authorization decision, Minister Al-Hajraf issued a decision to authorize the undersecretary to approve forms for reporting a case of abstention, disbursement forms in the Oracle system that the Financial Controller refuses to sign, and all required documents, after the Financial Affairs Sector expresses its opinion on the matter.

In addition, Al-Hajraf issued a decision to form a committee to follow up the procedures for implementing law No. 48/2005, headed by the assistant undersecretary for the Customer Services Sector.

**The committee's terms of reference are as follows:**

- Follow up the implementation of the provisions of Law No. 48/2005 and its executive regulations and amendments.
- Monitoring and following up the work of judicial police officers, including reports and violations recorded in them according to the rules and regulations.
- Preparing field survey plans for those who have judicial authority to limit the spread of electricity and water violations.
- Proposing the best solutions to the undersecretary.



Dr Al-Hajraf

**Distinguished teachers, schools to be honored**

**Minister issues decisions regarding courses in higher institutions abroad**

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani recently issued a number of decisions on the deletion and addition of study programs and degrees on the lists of higher education institutions in the United States of America, Canada, Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom as per the recommendation of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Educational Quality Assurance, reports Al-Anba daily.

One of the decisions stipulates deletion of certain courses from the list of higher education institutions in the United States of America. The decision took effect on the date of issuance and every text that contradicts it is repealed.

Another decision is on adding Biological Sciences in the University of Manitoba in Canada; indicating the students who will specialize in this field will enroll through the traditional education system, which entails regular attendance during the academic week. These students must complete the academic period specified for granting the degree, meaning the graduation of the first batch in the college offering this program is required; taking into account the decisions regulating enrollment and the system of study in higher education institutions outside Kuwait.

A decision was also issued to add Occupational Therapy at the University of Limerick in the Republic of Ireland, as well as the addition of some courses on the list of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom in the same manner described above.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education has approved the list of 330 distinguished teachers, both male and female, along with distinguished schools, who will be honored on Monday, April 29, for their outstanding contributions during the academic year 2022/2023, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, expressed gratitude towards the teachers and school administrations for their dedicated efforts in serving the educational process.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Adwani highlighted the importance of recognizing the efforts of teachers and emphasized the political leadership's commitment to supporting and appreciating their contributions.

He congratulated the distinguished teachers and school administrations for their excellence, which led to their selection for this prestigious honor by His Highness the Amir of the country, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad.

Dr. Al-Adwani praised the dedication and commitment of teachers, noting that they play a vital role in building nations and fostering the development of society. He expressed pride in their tireless efforts to provide the best education to students and achieve excellence in the field of education.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Adwani expressed gratitude for His Highness the Amir's continuous support for teachers and his patronage of the annual teacher honoring ceremony.

He emphasized that Kuwait stands out as



Dr Al-Adwani

**'PAY volunteers'**

**Al-Jouan expands economic activity**

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Jouan, has issued a decision to incorporate the activity of international telecommunications service within the existing boundaries outlined in the Unified Guide for Classification of Economic Activities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Ministry of Commerce, in a statement to KUNA, highlighted that this ministerial decision follows a thorough review of the Trade Law and its subsequent amendments, as well as the Companies Law.

Additionally, it takes into account the ministerial decision pertaining to the standardization of classification for statistical data related to economic activities across government agencies, aligning with the United Nations International Classification of Economic Activities.

This decision is in accordance with the fourth revision recommended by the United Nations Statistics Division and is consistent with the agreements reached within the framework of the GCC countries and the records of the Committee for Classification of Commercial, Professional, and Craft Activities.

It is emphasized that the inclusion of this new commercial activity will come into effect from the date of its issuance and subsequent publication in the Official Gazette.

**Volunteers working hard:** The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) has affirmed that its volunteers are working hard in a number of Ramadan centers established by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in the mosques throughout the country to better serve the worshippers, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the 27th Ramadan night, Director of the Voluntary Work Department at PAY Walid Al-Ansari stressed that the group of young volunteers have been working hard since the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan; particularly during prayer times -- Tarawih and Tahajjud.

Al-Ansari revealed these young people are offering their services in 11 out of 25 centers set up by the ministry in hopes of satisfying Allah the Almighty. He said these youths embody the noble values of giving that Kuwaitis do to uphold their religion and their country, praising the youths' charitable volunteer work throughout this holy month. He considers this cooperation between PAY and the ministry an example of joint efforts between State agencies to serve the citizens and expatriates.

He added this is in line with the authority's strategy, which is based on the principle of partnership with State institutions to serve the community. He looks forward to more cooperation with the ministry in future occasions.

a leading country in honoring teachers, reflecting the government's ongoing commitment to education and its recognition of the pivotal role teachers play in shaping the future of the nation.

**Kuwait shows 6 diverse films**

**NCCAL participates in fourth Gulf Film Festival being held in Riyadh**

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters is participating as a representative of the State of Kuwait in the Gulf Film Festival in its fourth session, which is organized by the Film Authority in the city of Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from April 14 to 18. Assistant Secretary-General for the Arts Sector of the National Council and head of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the festival, Musaed Al-Zamil, said in a press statement today, Monday, that Kuwait is participating in the festival with six diverse films, including short, documentary, and long films. He added that the Gulf Film Festival constitutes a pioneering platform in introducing Gulf cinema and a forum for filmmakers, workers in the

film field, and elite film pioneers in the Gulf. It also confirms the presence of Gulf cinema and its remarkable and rapid development despite its recent era. Al-Zamil praised the Kingdom's hosting of this festival in its fourth session, noting the great advancement in the course of culture, art and entertainment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an additional and prominent sign. He confirmed his readiness to participate in the festival, which includes a number of cinematic workshops and seminars, and a ceremony honoring Gulf cinematic pioneers, including the distinguished artist Jassim Al-Nabhan, for his contributions to enriching the Kuwaiti cinematic and artistic movement.




# EID AL FITR

Special Promotion

## Room Promotion

1<sup>st</sup> day of Eid – until 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2024

<b>Book for One-night</b> (Inclusive of breakfast)	Queen Cabana (2 persons). 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons).	<b>BHD 76.230 net</b> <b>BHD 170.247 net</b>
<b>Book for Two nights and get 15% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	<b>BHD 64.800 net</b> <b>BHD 144.800 net</b>
<b>Book for Three nights and get 25% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	<b>BHD 57.200 net</b> <b>BHD 127.700 net</b>

In house guests can get a **15% discount** on all food and beverage consumption



## Food & Beverage Promotion

1<sup>st</sup> day of Eid till 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Lunch Buffet will be served at **Café Marisol Restaurant** with price of **BD5.500/net per person**. Starts from 12:30 Noon to 16:00 hrs.

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## Exports amounts to 139.7 million riyals, positions Kuwait 4th among Gulf countries

# 'Kuwait's merchandise exports to Saudi 20 pct down in January'

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Data released by the Saudi General Authority for Statistics indicates a 20% decline in Kuwait's merchandise exports to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in January compared to the same period in 2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

Exports amounted to approximately 139.7 million riyals, positioning Kuwait fourth among Gulf countries in terms of merchandise exports to Saudi Arabia during that month.

Saudi Arabia's merchandise imports from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries totaled 7.46 billion riyals in January 2024, marking a 1% increase compared to January 2023 when imports

amounted to about 7.38 billion riyals.

Among GCC countries, the United Arab Emirates accounted for 60% of total Saudi imports, valued at 4.46 billion riyals, representing a 1% decrease from January 2023. The Sultanate of Oman ranked third with merchandise exports to Saudi Arabia worth 1.9 billion riyals, up 15% from January 2023.

Bahrain ranked third in exports to Saudi Arabia with a value of 891.3 million riyals in January, compared to 907.2 million riyals in January 2023. Qatar came fifth with exports to Saudi Arabia valued at 62.7 million riyals in January, down from 155.4 million riyals in January 2023.

# PAFN tested 10,700 food samples from all Subhan factories in 2023

'690 violation reports issued, 63 food establishments closed'

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Inspection Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr Saud Al-Hamidi Al-Jalal has revealed that 10,700 food samples from all factories in Subhan were tested in 2023 to ensure they are suitable for human consumption, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an interview with the daily recently, Al-Hamidi pointed out that all Subhan factories are under the governorate; hence, it has the largest number of samples taken as confirmed by the issuance of 5,600 export certificates for Gulf countries and 3,700 export certificates for Arab countries.

### Violation

He also confirmed the issuance of 690 violation reports and 63 food establishments were closed last year for committing various violations like opening and managing an establishment before obtaining a health license, failure to meet health and public hygiene requirements and others. He added 200 violations were also recorded for workers without a health card, as obtaining this card for the worker is important to prove the absence of infectious diseases. He explained the examination is carried out in the laboratories of the Ministry of Health and the tests are for infectious diseases that are transmitted quickly by preparing or transporting food materials. "The examination is carried out to ensure the safety of the worker and to ensure the safety of the food item before it reaches the consumer. The card is given based on the result of the medical examination," he stated.

He asserted that a mechanism is followed based on the importance of guaranteeing the safety of products and the consumers' access to them. "We inspect and monitor all food establishments. We started with centers that operate in shifts. Inspectors checked companies, facilities, factories, central markets and parallel markets," he explained.

Regarding the export certificates and the type of examination, he clarified that before exporting any product, an export certificate is issued after examining the product well. "In 2023, 10,700 food samples taken from all factories were tested to ensure their suitability. This is in addition to obtaining 5,600 export certificates for Gulf countries and 3,700 for Arab countries. For this reason, we export a large amount on a daily basis accompanied by a quantity of samples and certificates. We obtain monthly samples of the production of companies and factories, whether manufactured potatoes (chips) or different types of candies, chocolates, dairy and carbonated drinks," he narrated.

### Shortage

He went on to say: "We suffer from a shortage of inspectors, but this obstacle has been overcome by organizing work shifts, as well as the presence and entry of new inspectors -- whether through training courses or through the Civil Service Commission. Therefore, work matters have become smoother, especially through cooperation with many parties. Many agencies cooperate in this regard like the Ministry of Interior. If it is difficult for female inspectors to carry out their work in some dangerous places or places that are difficult to enter and where workers are present in large numbers, the help of Interior men is sought. They do not fall short and are present all the time until the inspection is completed, during which the worker is asked to present the



Dr Saud Al-Jalal



Worshippers praying in different mosques in Kuwait during Ramadan night prayers.

## Safeguarding values and identity

# No theatrical work is shown without passing through screening committee: NCCAL official

E-FORM opens

## PAAET announces opening of early registration for 'summer courses'

KUWAIT CITY, April 8, (KUNA): The Assistant Secretary-General for the Arts Sector at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Musaed Al-Zamil, confirmed on Monday that all theatrical works in Kuwait go through a censorship committee before being shown to the public to approve the theatrical performance, whether it is intended for adults or children. Al-Zamil said in a press statement that the National Council, represented by the arts sector, formed members of a committee to monitor and approve the theatrical performances of the children's theater headed by the artist Abdel Nasser Al-Zayer, and another oversight committee for the adult theater headed by the artist Hussein Al-Mufidi, and the work of the two committees will continue for a full year.

He explained that the renewal of the members of the two committees takes place according to the vision of the National Council and the circumstances of the members, stressing the great responsibility that falls on the oversight and approval committees for theatrical performances. In his message to the members of the two committees, Al-Zamil stressed the necessity of adhering to the ministerial decision (13-2021) regarding the establishment of the Oversight Committee and the approval of the offers, which is carried out in two stages. The first is to give initial approval to the text after reading it and ensuring that it is free of transgressions and caveats until seeing (a final rehearsal of the offer).

He stated that the decisions of the Children's Theater Oversight Committee are based on the Publications and Publications Law and the Child Protection Law, in addition to its role in applying the spirit of guidance and cooperation with artists and providing technical and supervisory observations, as they are specialized academics and worthy of trust in serving and

health card or any proof of identity and is transferred directly to the police station in the event that the identity and/or health card is not present. Measures are taken completely by the inspector and transferred to the police station."

He pointed out that the inspection is done in two ways, as there are many complaints that are received through the public relations hotline, or through the centers

enriching the theatrical movement and presenting performances worthy of the name of Kuwait, the leading children's theater and adult theater in the world. Gulf, considering theater one of the basic artistic cultural tributaries in the State of Kuwait. He pointed to the direction of the National Council supporting the theatrical movement that children's theater in particular should be more tightly controlled than before, stressing that "theatrical work is not just a spectacle and dances performed by groups on stage, but it is a "process of enriching the child's mind with concepts and thought.

In this regard, he said that censorship also applies to adult theatre, as the work must contain a directing perspective and a purposeful intellectual perspective with a high level of importance and respect, far from vulgarity and superficiality, and a true intellectual vision of the form of theatrical drama, appropriate to the taste of Kuwaiti society and preserving its privacy. Al-Zamil pointed out the formation of a committee to adhere to the special performances presented by the National Council through its activities and participation in lo-

cal and foreign festivals, which in turn looks at and watches the texts and theatrical performances that represent the State of Kuwait by the National Council. The committee is headed by Dr. Ali Haider. For his part, the acting director of the theater administration, Youssef Al-Jamaan, said in a similar statement that there are conditions that must be met in the theatrical performance in order for it to be approved, as the text for children's plays must aim to affirm the values of society and instill good qualities in the child's soul, such as love of the homeland, loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, improving his language and imagination, and developing his abilities to innovate. Al-Jamaan added that approving the performances also depends on the committee viewing (the final rehearsal) of all the elements of the theatrical performance to decide on it and ensuring that the text and the theatrical performance are free of the prohibitions stipulated in Law No. 3 of 2006 regarding publications and publishing and its amendments, and taking into account the provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015 regarding children's rights and its executive regulations.

requirements, expired food or general cleanliness. The complainant is contacted to learn about the violation procedures, and most of the complaints that occur frequently these days are about purchasing and ordering through social media, especially Instagram. We must warn consumers not to order through these accounts unless they are sure of the company and that it exists," he added.

## Move to spend holiday with their families

### 'Guard' frees disciplinary detainees

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: As per the directives of National Guard Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf, Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General M. Hashem Al-Rifai issued a decision to release military personnel detained under disciplinary penalties, so they can spend the holiday with their families, reports Al-Anba daily.

His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali expressed his warmest greetings and

wished for blessings for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, as well as the leaders and forces of the National Guard, on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. He implored Allah to bless everyone with goodness, righteousness and other blessings, and to perpetuate the security and safety blessings throughout the dear homeland under the wise leadership of HH the Amir.

## Ali Haider's touching gesture

### Kuwaiti child's act of obedience goes viral

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: A Kuwaiti child, Ali Haider, set the best example of obedience to parents and honoring them, in a spontaneous scene via a video clip; showing him kissing his father's hand while praying in the Grand State Mosque, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The touching scene, which reflected innate human emotions, went viral on social media.

Imam of the Grand State Mosque Omar Al-Damkhi met the child in a new

video clip, wishing him success, saying: "May your reward be recorded and your value raised. We see you as a memorizer of the Qur'an and a great Imam. May Allah protect you, and you, God willing, are the best example of kindness to your parents."

Haider advised his friends and other children to maintain a good relationship with their parents, be kind to them, and to avoid doing anything that could harm them.

37-year-old father of two children said. "They left nothing there."

On Sunday, shortly after the military announced it had withdrawn, lines of Palestinians could be seen leaving Khan Younis with scant possessions.

By foot and on bicycle, they carried plastic bags and laundry hampers with whatever they could gather back to where they were displaced to. One carried a rolled-up mattress. Another a standing fan. One man used his bike to move plywood.

The military exodus from Khan Younis comes ahead of an expected Israeli offensive in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city where hundreds of thousands have fled fighting elsewhere to seek shelter and which Israel says is Hamas' last major stronghold.

The city shelters some 1.4 million people - more than half of Gaza's population. The prospect of an offensive has raised global alarm, including from Israel's top ally, the U.S., which has demanded to see a credible plan to protect civilians.

Allowing people to return to nearby Khan Younis could relieve some pressure on Rafah, but many have no homes to return to. The city also is likely filled with dangerous unexploded bombs left by the fighting.

Israel's military quietly drew down troops in devastated northern Gaza earlier in the war. But it has continued to carry out airstrikes and raids in areas where it says Hamas regrouped, including Gaza's largest hospital, Shifa, leaving what the head of the World Health Organization called "an empty shell." Israel blames Hamas for the damage, saying it fights from within civilian areas.

Khan Younis' main Nasser Hospital has also been that target of Israeli raids, with troops storming it earlier this year because the military said the remains of hostages were inside.

The precise state of the hospital after the troops' withdrawal was unclear. Video from the hospital showed the emergency building appearing to be intact, but debris was strewn around its interior where thousands of displaced people once sought shelter before being forced to evacuate by the military.

Israel says its war aims to destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities and return the roughly 130 remaining hostages, a quarter of whom Israel says are dead. Negotiations brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the U.S. meant to bring about a cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages are underway.

## Kuwait stands

Continued from Page 1

Schools and hospitals were damaged by the fighting.

Israel sent troops to Khan Younis in December, part of its blistering ground offensive that came in response to a Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7 into southern Israel.

Israeli authorities say 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and roughly 250 people taken hostage.

The war, now in its seventh month, has killed more than 33,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to local health authorities, displaced most of the territory's 2.3 million people and left vast swaths of the beleaguered Gaza Strip uninhabitable.

"Many areas, especially the city center, have become unfit for life," said Mahmoud Abdel-Ghani, who fled Khan Younis in December when Israel began its ground invasion of the city. "I found that my house and my neighbors' houses turned to rubble."

Israel's withdrawal of troops from Khan Younis signaled the end of a key phase in its war against Hamas and brought Israeli troop levels in the tiny coastal enclave to one of the lowest since the war began.

Israel said the city was a major Hamas stronghold and says its operation over the past few months killed thousands of militants and inflicted heavy damage to a vast network of tunnels used by Hamas to move weapons and fighters. It also claimed to have found evidence that hostages were held in the city.

With no military presence in the city, Hamas could seek to regroup there as it has in other areas where the military has scaled back forces.

The latest Israeli withdrawal also cleared the way for some Palestinians to make their way back to the area to comb through the mountains of debris to try to hold on to any possessions that remained.

Najwa Ayyash, who also was displaced from Khan Younis, said she was unable to reach her family's third floor apartment because the stairs were gone. Her brother climbed his way up through the destruction and pulled down some possessions, including lighter clothes for her children.

Bassel Abu Nasser, a Khan Younis resident who fled after an airstrike hit his home in January, said much of the city turned into rubble.

"There is no sense of life there," the

## World News Roundup

## Europe

## Ukraine denies accusations

## 'Attacks on nuke plant increase accident risk'

KYIV, Ukraine, April 8, (Agencies): The head of the UN's atomic watchdog agency on Sunday condemned a drone strike on one of six nuclear reactors at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, saying such attacks "significantly increase the risk of a major nuclear accident."

In a statement on the social media platform X, **Rafael Mariano Grossi** confirmed at least three direct hits against the ZNPP main reactor containment structures took place. "This cannot happen," he said.

Russia blamed Ukraine for the attack, but the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency didn't attribute blame. Kyiv officials made no immediate comment.

He said it was the first such attack since November 2022, when he set out five basic principles to avoid a serious nuclear accident with radiological consequences.

Officials at the plant said the site was attacked Sunday by Ukrainian military drones, including a strike on the dome of the plant's sixth power unit.

According to the plant authorities, there was no critical damage or casualties and radiation levels at the plant were normal after the strikes.

Later on Sunday, however, Russian state-owned nuclear agency Rosatom said that three people were wounded in the "unprecedented series of drone attacks," specifically when a drone hit an area close to the site's canteen.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said Sunday that its experts had been informed of the drone strike and that "such detonation is consistent with IAEA observations."

## Impact

In a separate statement, the IAEA confirmed physical impact of drone attacks at the plant, including at one of its six reactors. One casualty was reported, it said.

"Damage at unit 6 has not compromised nuclear safety, but this is a serious incident with potential to undermine integrity of the reactor's containment system" it added.

The power plant has been caught in the crossfire since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and seized the facility shortly after. The IAEA has repeatedly expressed alarm about the nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe. Both Ukraine and Russia have regularly accused the other of attacking the plant, which is still close to the front lines.

The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features.



**Ukraine denies Russia accusations:** A senior Ukrainian official has denied Russian accusations that his country's army fired exploding drones at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, which the Kremlin's forces have been occupying and running in southern Ukraine since shortly after the war began more than two years ago.

Andrii Yusov, the spokesperson for Ukraine's military intelligence agency suggested there had been no attack, saying Russian forces routinely fabricate strikes on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. However, the strikes on this occasion were confirmed by U.N.'s atomic watchdog agency, though it didn't attribute responsibility for the attack to either side.

The plant has repeatedly been caught in the crossfire since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and seized the facility shortly after. The International Atomic Energy Agency, a UN body, has frequently expressed alarm about the facility amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe.



**'Act securely against global challenges':** North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg urged member states Sunday to work closely with international partners to confront current and future global challenges more effectively.

Stoltenberg said in a statement to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that the world is now entering a new phase of instability and danger, involving global challenges that require NATO to be prepared for any crises and conflicts.

In this scenario, he accused China of supporting Russia's war economy by supplying Russian military companies with spare parts, noting Iran and North Korea are also supplying weapons and ammunition to Moscow in exchange for technology.

Stoltenberg emphasized that NATO was exploring new ways to ensure long-term financial support for Ukraine, indicating that member states agree to bear those burdens but are discussing how to implement them.



**Germany deploys troops to Lithuania:** German Army, The Bundeswehr, commenced Monday a mission deploying thousands of its troops to Lithuania, NATO's northeastern borders, as part of the military alliance's efforts in fending off any possible attack from the east.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, in a statement, hailed this significant step pointing out that it is Germany's first time deploying troops since the end of the Second World War.

Minister Pistorius explained that the operation, re-locating some 4,800 servicemen, will extend until the year 2027, adding that ensuring the operation's success entails making necessary changes and providing proper infrastructure for the forces and their families.



**Conservative oppn leads Tusk's party:** An exit poll released after Poland's local and regional elections Sunday showed Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-EU party trailing the conservative opposition party that governed Poland for eight years until December. But the socially liberal mayor of Warsaw, a Tusk ally, easily won another term in the capital.

Sunday's elections were the first electoral test for Tusk's coalition government nearly four months since it took power. Poles voted for mayors, local councilors and representatives to the nation's 16 regional assemblies.

The exit polls have a small margin of error and final results are not expected until Monday. But they indicated that Law and Justice, the conservative party that governed Poland from 2015-2023, remains a political force to be reckoned with in the nation of 38 million people.



US President Joe Biden speaks at the Washoe Democratic Party Office in Reno, Nev., March 19, 2024. Biden has credited Latino voters as a key reason he defeated Republican Donald Trump in 2020 and is urging them to help him do it again in November. (AP)

## Politics

## Latino voters covered by both major parties

## Lawmakers float rules for privacy protection

WASHINGTON, April 8, (AP): Two influential lawmakers from opposing parties have crafted a deal on legislation designed to strengthen privacy protections for Americans' personal data.

The sweeping proposal announced Sunday evening would define privacy as a consumer right and create new rules for companies that collect and use personal information. It comes from the offices of Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell and Republican Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, both of Washington state.

Cantwell chairs the Senate Commerce Committee while McMorris Rodgers leads the House Energy and Commerce Committee. While the proposal has not been formally introduced and remains in draft form, the bipartisan support suggests the bill could get serious consideration.

Congress has long discussed ways to protect the personal data regularly submitted by Americans to a wide range of businesses and services. But partisan disputes over the details have doomed previous proposals.

## Consent

According to a one-page outline released Sunday, the bill worked out by McMorris Rodgers and Cantwell would strengthen rules requiring consumer consent before a company can collect or transfer certain kinds of information. Companies would have to notify consumers about the details of data collection and retention policies and seek consumer permission for significant changes.

In addition, companies would have to ensure that any algorithms used to analyze personal data aren't biased, and companies that buy and sell personal data would have to register with the Federal Trade Commission.

Consumers would also have greater control over how their data is used under the measure. One provision of the proposal would allow consumers to opt out of targeted ads - i.e., advertisements sent to them based on their personal data.

A new bureau focused on data privacy would be created within the FTC, which would have the authority to en-

act new rules as technology changes. Enforcement of the law would fall to the FTC as well as state attorneys general.

If passed, the new standard would preempt most state privacy laws - though it wouldn't impact certain states' laws already on the books that protect financial, health or employee data.

## Also:

**PHOENIX:** As ranchera music filled the Phoenix recording studio at Radio Campesina, a station personality spoke in Spanish into the microphone.

"Friends of Campesina, in these elections, truth and unity are more important than ever," said morning show host **Tony Arias**. "Don't let yourself be trapped by disinformation."

The audio was recorded as a promo for Radio Campesina's new campaign aiming to empower Latino voters ahead of the 2024 elections. That effort includes discussing election-related misinformation narratives and fact-checking conspiracy theories on air.

"We are at the front lines of fighting misinformation in our communities," said **Maria Barquin**, program director of Chavez Radio Group, the nonprofit that runs Radio Campesina, a network of Spanish-language stations in **Arizona, California and Nevada**. "There's a lot at stake in 2024 for our communities. And so we need to amp up these efforts now more than ever."

Latinos have grown at the second-fastest rate, behind Asian Americans, of any major racial and ethnic group in the US since the last presidential election, according to a Pew Research Center analysis, and are projected to account for 14.7%, or 36.2 million, of all eligible voters in November, a new high. They are a growing share of the electorate in several presidential and congressional battleground states, including Arizona, California and Nevada, and are being heavily courted by Republicans and Democrats.

Democratic President **Joe Biden** has credited Latino voters as a key reason he defeated Republican **Donald Trump** in 2020 and is urging them to help him do it again in November. Given the high stakes of a presidential

election year, experts expect a surge of misinformation, especially through audio and video, targeting Spanish-speaking voters.

"Latinos have immense voting power and can make a decisive difference in elections, yet they are an under-messaged, under-prioritized audience," said **Arturo Vargas**, CEO of NALEO Educational Fund, a national nonprofit encouraging Latino civic participation. "Our vote has an impact. These bad actors know this, and one way to influence the Latino vote is to misinform."

In addition to radio, much of the news and information Latinos consume is audio-based through podcasts or on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube. Content moderation efforts in Spanish are limited on these platforms, which are seeing a rising number of right-wing influencers peddling election falsehoods and QAnon conspiracy theories.

The types of misinformation overlap with falsehoods readily found in other conservative media and many corners of the internet - conspiracy theories about mail voting, dead people casting ballots, rigged voting machines and threats at polling sites.

Other narratives are more closely tailored to Latino communities, including false information about immigration, inflation and abortion rights, often exploiting the traumas and fears of specific communities. For example, Spanish speakers who have immigrated from countries with recent histories of authoritarianism, socialism, high inflation and election fraud may be more vulnerable to misinformation about those topics.

Misinformation on the airwaves also is particularly difficult to track and combat compared with more traditional, text-based misinformation, said **Daiquiri Ryan Mercado**, strategic legal adviser and policy counsel for the National Hispanic Media Coalition, which runs the Spanish Language Disinformation Coalition. While misinformation researchers can more easily code programs to categorize and track text-based misinformation, audio often requires manual listening. Radio stations that air only in certain areas at certain times also can be difficult to track.



In this photo taken from video and released by the Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on April 8, a Russian tank fires towards an Ukrainian position in an undisclosed location in Ukraine. A senior Ukrainian official has denied Russian accusations that his country's army fired exploding drones at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, which the Kremlin's forces have been occupying and running in southern Ukraine since shortly after the war began more than two years ago. (AP)



Judd



Colbenson

## America

**Crew removes containers:** Salvage crews on Sunday began removing containers from the deck of the cargo ship that crashed into and collapsed the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, an important step toward the full reopening of one of the nation's main shipping lanes.

The removal of the containers from the deck of the Dali would continue this week as weather permits, according to a statement from the Key Bridge Response Unified Command. Crews were progressing toward removing sections of the bridge that lie across the ship's bow to eventually allow it to move, the statement said.

In total, 32 vessels have passed through temporary channels on either side of the wreckage, officials said.

"The Unified Command is concurrently progressing on its main lines of effort to remove enough debris to open the channel to larger commercial traffic," US Coast Guard Capt David O'Connell said in the statement.

The Dali has been trapped under mangled steel in the Patapsco River since it slammed into the bridge on March 26, killing six workers. (AP)



**Truck accident kills boy:** A 12-year-old boy was trapped and killed after a truck went off the road and into a river in the Rocky Mountains west of Denver, authorities said Sunday.

The truck was submerged in the river when law enforcement arrived at the crash scene Saturday night, finding two women with cuts on their faces and a man screaming for help running up the embankment, the Clear Creek County Sheriff's Office said.

They soon learned that a boy was still in the river, and sheriff's deputies, local police officers and a citizen jumped in, finding the child stuck between a boulder and the vehicle, according to the release.

They were able to lift the vehicle enough to free the boy, but even with resuscitation attempts, he was pronounced dead upon arrival at a hospital, a news release from the sheriff's office said. (AP)



**2 dead in car crash:** Two people were

killed in a car crash with a Washington State Patrol trooper just west of Seattle, authorities said Saturday evening. The trooper was not seriously injured in the Saturday crash, but was transported to a hospital as a precaution.

The Mason County Coroner identified the

two killed as Washington residents Charles Ferree, 72, and Deolia Blandford, 49, on Sunday.

The trooper, who has not been identified, was driving on US 101 with emergency lights and sirens on when the trooper T-

boned a Toyota Prius at an intersection, said Deputy **Matt Colbenson**, spokesperson for the Mason County Sheriff's Office.

Washington State Patrol released a brief statement Saturday about the crash and declined to comment, citing the agency's own involvement in the case.

The sheriff's office is leading the investigation. (AP)



**Student stabs mom to death:** A 21-year-old college student has been charged with first-degree murder after Florida authorities say he drove to his mother's home and stabbed her multiple times Saturday because "she got on my nerves," authorities said.

Emmanuel Espinoza drove about 165 miles (266 kilometers) from the University of Florida in Gainesville to Frostproof, Florida, for a family event. When he arrived at his mother's, he began stabbing her when she answered the door and then called 911 to confess to the slaying, said Polk County Sheriff **Grady Judd**.

Elvia Espinoza, 46, was on the phone with another relative when her son attacked her.

"We talked to him and he confessed. He said, 'You know, I have wanted to kill my mother for many, many years because she got on my nerves,'" Judd said. "We asked him, 'What's your relationship with your mother?' and, he said about an eight out of 10, that he really loved her, but she irritated him." (AP)



Conservative Law and Justice party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, (centre), declared victory in Poland's local and regional elections in Warsaw, Poland, on April 7. The vote is the first test at the ballot box for Prime Minister Donald Tusk four months after he took office. (AP)

## Africa

## World inaction blamed

## Mozambique's ferry disaster kills over 90

HARARE, Zimbabwe, April 8, (AP): A makeshift ferry sank off Mozambique's northern coast on Sunday, killing 94 people including children, local media reported.

The overcrowded boat was carrying 130 people and many of those who drowned were children, according to TV Diário Nampula, a local online outlet. The boat was operating between Lunga and the Island of Mozambique in Nampula province in the north of the country when it capsized, the report said.

Rescue efforts continued on Monday, as people were still reportedly missing.

Some people had been traveling to attend a fair while others were trying to "flee from Lunga to the Island of Mozambique for fear of being contaminated by cholera, which has affected that region in recent days," TV Diário Nampula reported.



Neto

Other news reports quoted **Jaime Neto**, the secretary of state in Nampula province, as saying that misinformation about an alleged cholera outbreak caused people to panic and board the boat, which ordinarily serves as a fishing vessel, in an attempt to flee.

Mozambique and neighboring southern African countries Zimbabwe and Malawi have in recent months been affected by a deadly cholera outbreak that authorities are battling to contain.

Many areas of Mozambique are only accessible by boats, which are often overcrowded. The country has a poor road network and some areas are unreachable by land or air.

## Also:

**RAS ANGELA, Tunisia:** Sore and sandblasted but triumphant, runner **Russ Cook** reached the northernmost point of Africa on Sunday, almost a year after he set off from its southern tip on a quest to run the length of the continent.

Dozens of supporters gathered on a rocky outcrop beside the Mediterranean in northern Tunisia, cheering on the British charity fundraiser, who has run more than 16,000 kilometers (10,000 miles) across 16 countries in 352 days.

"I'm a little bit tired," Cook said - likely an understatement.

In the course of his journey the 27-year-old endurance athlete from **Worthing** in southern **England** crossed jungle and desert, swerved conflict zones and was delayed by theft, injury and visa problems.

Cook - known on social media by his nickname, **Hardest Geezer** - set off on April 22, 2023 from **Cape Agulhas** in **South Africa**, the continent's southernmost point. He hoped to complete the journey in 240 days, running the equivalent of more than a marathon every day.

He and his team had money, passports and equipment stolen in a gunpoint robbery in **Angola**. He was temporarily halted by back pain in **Nigeria**. And he was almost stopped in his tracks by the lack of a visa to enter **Algeria**, before diplomatic intervention from the Algerian embassy in **Britain** managed to secure the required documents.

Cook, who has spoken about how running helped him deal with his own mental health struggles, previously ran about 3,000 kilometers (2,000 miles) from **Istanbul** to **Worthing** in 68 days. His African run has raised more than 690,000 pounds (\$870,000) for the **Running Charity**, which works with homeless young people, and **Sandblast**, a charity that helps displaced people from **Western Sahara**.

"It's quite hard to put into words, 352 days on the road, long time without seeing family, my girlfriend," Cook told Sky News as he started running Sunday, accompanied by supporters who'd come from far and wide to run the final stretch with him. "My body is in a lot of pain. But one more day, I'm not about to complain."

Cook said he planned to celebrate with a party, where **British band Soft Play** was due to perform.

"We're going to have strawberry daiquiris on the beach tonight," he said. "It's going to be unreal."



**KIGALI, Rwanda:** Rwandan President **Paul Kagame** blamed the inaction of the international community for allowing the 1994 genocide to happen as Rwandans on Sunday commemorated 30 years since an estimated 800,000 people were killed by government-backed extremists.

Rwanda has shown strong recovery and economic growth in the years since, but scars remain and there are questions about whether genuine reconciliation has been achieved under the long rule of Kagame, whose rebel movement stopped the genocide and seized power. He has been praised by many for bringing relative stability but vilified by others for his intolerance of dissent.

Kagame led somber commemoration events in the capital, **Kigali**. Foreign visitors included a delegation led by **Bill Clinton**, the US president during the genocide.

The killings were ignited when a plane carrying then-President **Juvénal Habyarimana**, a Hutu, was shot down over **Kigali**. The Tutsis were blamed for downing the plane and killing the president, and became targets in massacres led by Hutu extremists that lasted over 100 days. Some moderate Hutus who tried to protect members of the Tutsi minority were also killed.

Rwandan authorities have long blamed the international community for ignoring warnings about the killings, and some Western leaders have expressed regret.

Clinton, after leaving office, cited the Rwandan genocide as a failure of his administration. French President **Emmanuel Macron**, in a prerecorded video ahead of Sunday's ceremonies, said that France and its allies could have stopped the genocide but lacked the will to do so. Macron's declaration came three years after he acknowledged the "overwhelming responsibility" of France - Rwanda's closest European ally in 1994 - for failing to stop Rwanda's slide into the slaughter.

"It was the international community which failed all of us, whether from contempt or cowardice," Kagame said in a speech after lighting a flame of remembrance and laying a wreath at a memorial site holding the remains of 250,000 genocide victims in **Kigali**.

He also shared the story of a cousin whose family he tried to save with the help of US peacekeepers. She did not survive.

"We will never forget the horrors of those 100 days, the pain and loss suffered by the people of Rwanda, or the shared humanity that connects us all, which hate can never overcome," U.S. President **Joe Biden** said in a statement.



In this photo provided by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, (from left), Australian Navy ship HMAS Warramunga, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces ship JS Akebono and United States Navy ship USS Mobile (LCDR-26) maneuver during the first Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity at the disputed South China Sea on April 7. (AP)

## Quadrilateral maritime drills kick-off in South China Sea

The first quadrilateral maritime drills between the United States, Japan, Australia and the Philippines launched on Sunday in South China Sea amidst amplified Chinese assertiveness in the area.

The drills will include anti-submarine warfare training, read a joint statement issued by the countries' defense ministries, adding that this is part of

efforts supporting regional an international cooperation as well as a free and open Indo-Pacific area.

The maritime cooperative activities will be conducted by naval and air forces in the Philippines exclusive economic zone.

The past month saw recurring skirmishes between the Philippines and China, with China exercis-

ing sovereignty over the disputed areas, dismissing claims from all neighboring countries and international justice rulings. The drills are taking place days prior to first trilateral summit between US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos on economic relations in Indo-Pacific area. (KUNA)

## Asia

## US treads carefully in responding to HK new law

## South Korea launches its 2nd military spy sat

SEOUL, South Korea, April 8, (Agencies): South Korea has successfully launched its second military spy satellite into orbit, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.

The Koreans each launched their first spy satellites last year - North Korea in November and South Korea in December - amid heightened animosities. They said their satellites would boost their abilities to monitor each other and enhance their own missile attack capabilities.

South Korea's second spy satellite was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Sunday evening local time, which was Monday morning in Seoul.

## Entered

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it confirmed the satellite entered orbit and communicated with an overseas ground station after separation from a rocket.

"With the success of the second military spy satellite launch, our military has acquired an additional independent surveillance ability and further bolstered our 'kill chain' capability," Defense Ministry spokesperson Jeon Ha Gyu told reporters, referring to the military's preemptive missile strike capability.

Under a contract with SpaceX, South Korea is to launch five spy satellites by 2025. South Korea's first spy satellite launch on Dec. 1 was made from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base.

South Korea in 2022 became the world's 10th nation to successfully launch a satellite with its own technology by using a homegrown rocket to place what it called a "performance observation satellite" in orbit. But experts say it's economical to use a SpaceX rocket to launch spy satellite and that South Korea needs more launches to ensure the reliability of a rocket. North Korea is also eager to acquire its own space-based surveillance network to cope with what it calls military threats posed by the United States and South Korea.

approach pushed by the US government.

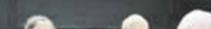
Sheinbaum briefly mentioned the recent raid of Mexico's Embassy by Ecuadorian police on Friday, cutting in at the beginning of the debate to thank embassy staff for their

bravery. (AP)

**Int'l leaders condemn Ecuador:** The global condemnation of Ecuador's govern-



Raquel Serur, the Mexican ambassador to Ecuador, (left), Alicia Bárcena Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, (2nd left), Roberto Canseco, head of the Mexican consular section in Quito, (right), and his wife Arcelia Valadez attend a press conference in Mexico City, Mexico, on April 7. Diplomats and relatives arrived to Mexico City following the severing of diplomatic relations with Ecuador after police stormed the Mexican embassy to arrest a former Ecuadorian vice president. (AP)



British runner Russ Cook arrives to the finish line in Ras Angela, the most northern point of the African continent, in Tunis, Tunisia, on April 7. Cook - known on social media by his nickname, Hardest Geezer - has run more than 16,000 kilometers (10,000 miles), from the south to north of Africa, in 352 days. (AP)



Obrador



Gálvez

## Lat/Am

**Candidates spar in Mexico:** In Mexico's first presidential debate on Sunday ahead of June 2 elections, former Mexico City Mayor and frontrunner **Claudia Sheinbaum** appeared comfortable with her polling lead, remaining calm amid ex-Senator **Xóchitl Gálvez's** personal attacks.

**Jorge Álvarez Máynez**, a candidate from the **Citizen Movement** party who is polling in single digits, grinned widely and presented himself as an alternative to the other two candidates, who he said represented the "old politics."

In the debate, candidates responded to questions about health, education, corruption, transparency, vulnerable groups and violence against women.

Polls have shown Sheinbaum of the **Morena** party of outgoing leftist President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** leading by more than 20 points over Gálvez, who represents a coalition of opposition parties. If Sheinbaum or Gálvez wins, they would become the first woman president in Mexico, a country with a reputation for gender-based violence and a "macho," male-dominated culture.

Sheinbaum emphasized her connection with the highly popular López Obrador and promised she would continue his policies.

"We're going to keep transforming Mexico," Sheinbaum said.

Meanwhile, Gálvez launched personal attacks against her competition, including at Sheinbaum.

"Claudia, even if you deny it, you are still cold and heartless. I would call you the ice lady," Gálvez said.

"Claudia, you're not AMLO. You don't have his charisma," she said, using the president's nickname. Sheinbaum did not respond to several of Gálvez's sharpest attacks.

Mentions of López Obrador were surprisingly few in the debate even though the populist leader, who is not eligible for reelection, looms large in the upcoming polls.

The candidates also discussed rising migration levels to the United States, agreeing that migrants should be protected and respected on their path through Mexico. That contrasted with the security-focused

with sanctions and depriving the territory of its preferential trading status.

While the new law, known as Article 23, now expands the Hong Kong government's powers to go after those it accuses of spying and to target dissidents anywhere in the world, Washington has been treading carefully.

The State Department declined to preview or comment on any potential actions but said it is considering all options.

Analysts suggest the **Biden** administration may not want to rock relations with **China** in an election year, especially when the impact of the law might take a while to manifest itself and any punitive U.S. measures would be unlikely to bring about meaningful change.

ment for its decision to break into the Mexican Embassy snowballed Sunday with more presidents and other leaders expressing disapproval, shock and dismay.

The criticism came as Mexico's ambassador and other personnel arrived in Mexico City on Sunday afternoon after departing Ecuador's capital, Quito, on a commercial flight. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador severed diplomatic ties with Ecuador immediately after Friday's raid, which international law experts, presidents and diplomats have deemed a violation of long-established international accords.

Alicia Bárcena, Mexico's secretary of foreign relations, thanked the returning diplomats "for defending our embassy in Quito even at the risk of their own physical well-being."

"Not even the dictator Pinochet had dared to enter the Mexican embassy in Chile," she said Sunday, referring to the late Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. "They entered violently and without authorization, physically assaulting (diplomats). We energetically condemn it."

Police broke through the external doors of the embassy to arrest Jorge Glas, a former vice president who had been residing there since December. He had sought asylum after being indicted on corruption charges. Bárcena said Mexico plans to challenge the raid on Monday at the World Court in The Hague. She added that 18 countries in Latin America, 20 in Europe and the Organization of American States have backed Mexico. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+354.96	39,347.04	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+1,350.15	69,720.06	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-4.39	6,741.07	

# Business

## Expectations of US interest rate cut rise amid robust job growth

### Gold hits record high, surging 5% weekly

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Gold reached a new record high, closing at \$2,230 per ounce at the end of last week's trading, marking a weekly increase of 5 percent, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to a report issued by Kuwaiti Dar Al-Sabaek Company on Sunday, gold continued its upward trend for the third consecutive week, with futures prices (June delivery) rising by 1.6 percent to \$2,345 per ounce. This surge was supported by geopolitical uncertainty, increased purchases by central banks, and speculation about a potential decrease in US interest rates.

The report highlighted expectations that the Federal Reserve (the US central bank) may lower interest rates during its June meeting, particularly in light of robust job growth in the United States in March. The US economy witnessed its highest job growth in 10 months in March, accompanied by a lower-than-expected unemployment rate, indicating a potential interest rate cut in the near future.

Financial officials in the US are reportedly awaiting "sustain-

able evidence" that inflation is approaching 2 percent before considering lowering interest rates. Investors are eagerly anticipating inflation data scheduled for release during the current week, which may influence the Federal Reserve's decision-making process in the coming months.

The report emphasized that geopolitical tensions are bolstering gold prices, as investors seek safe havens amidst escalating tensions in the Middle East. Economic data releases expected during the week include the minutes of the US Federal Open Market Committee meeting and producer prices. Moreover, interest rates in the euro zone and China will be closely monitored, alongside geopolitical developments in the Middle East, all of which could impact gold trends in the near term.

In the local market, the price of 24-karat gold reached 23.2 dinars per gram, while 22-karat gold was priced at 21.27 dinars per gram. Additionally, the price of silver closed at 317 dinars per kilogram.

## Kuwaiti banking sector records significant profit growth in 2023

Islamic banks see 56.9% profit surge

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8: In 2023, the banking sector in Kuwait, consisting of 9 Kuwaiti banks, witnessed significant growth in net profits compared to 2022. The total net profits, after deducting taxes and minority interests, amounted to approximately 1.535 billion dinars, marking a record level and representing an increase of about 358.1 million dinars, or 30.4 percent, compared to 2022, reports Al-Jarida daily.**

Conventional banks reported profits of about 831.7 million dinars, constituting approximately 54.2 percent of the total net profits of the banking sector. This reflects an increase of about 14.1 percent compared to 2022.

Islamic banks, on the other hand, recorded profits of about 703.7 million dinars, representing around 45.8 percent of the total net profits. This signifies a significant increase of about 56.9 percent compared to 2022.

Profitability indicators for the banking sector also improved.

The price-to-earnings (P/E) multiplier for the banking sector decreased to about 15.6 times, compared to about 22.2 times in 2022. The return on total assets increased to about 1.3 percent, up from about 1.0 percent in 2022 and the return on equity rose to about 11.2 percent, compared to about 9.1 percent in 2022.

Total cash distributions to the nine banks amounted to about 739.9 million dinars, representing an increase of about 16.6 percent compared to the previous period.

Among the banks, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) made the highest contribution to profits, reaching about 584.5 million dinars, accounting for approximately 38.1 percent of the sector's net profits. This marks a significant increase of about 63.4 percent compared to 2022.

The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) followed with profits of about 560.6 million dinars, representing around 36.5 percent of the sector's net profits, with a growth rate of 10.1 percent compared to 2022.

In terms of contribution percentages the KFH and NBK together accounted for about 74.6 percent of the total profits of the nine banks.

The other seven banks collectively contributed approximately 25.4 percent to the sector's profits.

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait had the highest participation percentage at about 7.2 percent, while the International Bank of Kuwait had the lowest at about 1.2 percent.

It's worth noting that Burgan Bank was the only bank to experience a decrease in profits, with a decline of about -16.5 percent, reporting profits of about 43.5 million dinars compared to about 52.1 million in the previous period.

## Major sovereign wealth funds consider partnership with Investcorp

### China's sovereign wealth fund expands reach into Mideast with \$800 mln fund

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Chinese sovereign wealth fund is currently in negotiations to support an investment fund valued at \$800 million, with the goal of acquiring stakes in companies across the Middle East. This move reflects the increasing trade relations between oil-exporting nations in the Arabian Gulf and China, the world's second-largest economy, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Reportedly, China Investment Corp. is collaborating with Investcorp Holdings, a Bahrain-based company, to inject capital into Investcorp's fund, which focuses on investing in Gulf companies during the pre-listing stage.

This potential investment by the Chinese sovereign wealth fund, alongside contributions from other major sovereign wealth funds from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, may be formally announced in the coming month.

Sources familiar with the matter, who requested anonymity due to the confidential nature of the discussions, suggest that this partnership with Investcorp is part of the Chinese fund's broader strategy to pursue investment opportunities in the Middle East.

The involvement of the Chinese sovereign wealth fund, which man-

ages assets valued at around \$1.3 trillion, has led to an increase in the fund's size from its initial target of \$500 million. Additionally, Investcorp plans to broaden the fund's focus to include investments across the Middle East and Asia.

Both the Chinese sovereign fund and Investcorp have declined to comment on these developments, according to the daily.

China's interest in deepening its ties with the Middle East extends beyond investment opportunities. As the largest purchaser of Middle Eastern oil, China is seeking to strengthen its economic relationships in the region, particularly amid trade tensions with the United States and a slowing domestic economy. This effort to bolster ties was evident when Chinese President Xi Jinping attended a regional summit in Saudi Arabia in 2022.

Investcorp, a leading alternative investment manager in the Middle East with assets worth \$50 billion, is also expanding its footprint into Asia. In 2022, it reportedly partnered with the private equity arm of the Fung brothers' family office to establish a \$500 million fund aimed at investing in mid-cap companies across China's Greater Bay Area.

## IMF agreement provides relief for Egypt's troubled economy

### Egypt's economic reform plans mitigate impact of regional crises

CAIRO, April 8, (KUNA): Egypt has been gripped with diverse geographical challenge's namely the crises in Gaza, Sudan and the Red Sea.

Despite pressure that had emanated, over the past years, from the coronavirus and the Russian-Ukrainian war, Egypt's economic reform plans, execution of which began in 2016, have contributed to limiting ramifications and ripples of these surrounding crises with minimal losses.

The latest agreement with the International Monetary Fund came as a relief and a stimulant for the troubled economy, amid aspirations that the private sector would play a leading role in boosting it.

The forecast USD 12 billion loan from the IMF, due to be paid in three years' installments, is expected to help in overcoming problems facing reform schemes, particularly the funding and shortage in hard currencies.

Moreover, Ras Al-Hekma transaction, worth USD 35 billion, has fed the hard currencies reservoirs and stemmed inflation after the pound turned drastically bearish vis a vis the US dollar, trading at 70 pounds for a single greenback.

The Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly, has affirmed in this regard that the accumulation of the US dollars would be invested in resolving the economic crisis, would contribute to the efforts to resolve the foreign currencies issue and paying external debts estimated at USD 165 billion.

For his side, the Finance Minister Mohammad Maait cited some positive factors, the forecast inflow of USD 20 billion after the agreement with the IMF and USD 7.4 billion worth of the financial package pledged by the EU.

The former minister of petroleum, Osama Kamal, said in a statement to KUNA that the state is facing rippling challenges and unprecedented developments at the regional and international levels.

However, it has adopted a clear approach based on attaining stability, expanding the scope of development, enhancing the local production and supporting the economy.

Egypt is steady on the track to attain its full-fledged development plan to resolve the financial crisis, he said, indicating that much hope is pinned on projects to overhaul the infrastructure, transports, luring investments alluding in particular to the Egypt-UAE Ras Al-Hekma project, which would help in reducing the debts.

The state of Egypt has multiple wealth resources that enable it to secure substantial proceeds and stabilize the domestic economy, Maait said, indicating in this respect to abundant human resources, with statistics showing that 60 percent of the population is aged under 40.

However, he said that Egypt has huge natural resources and a special geographic location, water and metal resources, renewable energy and wide lands feasible for investment.

He called on the government to overhaul the investment atmosphere and cut red tape.

Meanwhile, the first undersecretary of the parliamentary committee of economic affairs, MP Mohammad Ali, told KUNA that external support helped in resolving temporary issues, namely the currency shortage. Nevertheless, the economy still hinges on the trade balance, expenditures, exports and imports.

He called for increasing the exports, backing up the local industrial and agricultural sectors to attain sustainable economic growth, which in turn would cut spending on the exports and secure substantial resources of the USD.

MP Ali also called for restricting imports to basic products and encouraging local production

He has affirmed that the external support is crucial for the economy and underscored success of Ras Al-Hekma project that brought in hard currencies.

## KOTC extends deadline for gas cylinder tender

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Kuwait Oil Tanker Company has extended the closing date for the tender regarding the supply of 30,000 liquefied gas cylinders made of steel (25) kg with a sub-valve for filling liquefied gas (Umm Al-Aish and Al-Shuaibah), reports Al-Jarida daily.

Originally set to close

at one o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday, April 2, the new closing date is now one o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday, April 30.

Bidders are instructed to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the tender documents and place their bids in the designated bidding box (B) at the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company.

## Permits 6-month approval

### CMA grants initial approval for new securities company

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: The Capital Markets Authority has granted initial approval for the establishment of a closed joint-stock company engaging in securities activities, represented by a securities broker not registered on the stock exchange, with a capital of one million dinars, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Notably, the list of the company's shareholders in the articles of incorporation includes WP MENA Holding Limited, with an ownership stake of 84 percent, a company based in the United Arab Emirates.

Additionally, Seldon Invest-

ments Limited from Jordan holds a 4 percent ownership, along with Seldon Investments Limited from the British Virgin Islands.

Furthermore, Windsor Brokers International Limited, based in the Seychelles, holds a 4 percent stake, as does Windsor Global Markets Limited from the British Virgin Islands.

This approval is valid for a period of six months, with the option for renewal, beginning on 04/07/2024 and ending on 10/06/2024, allowing enough time for the company to meet the standards set by the Authority.

## Surge in Kuwaiti tourists in '23

### Bahrain tourism sector sees promising growth

MANAMA, April 8, (KUNA): A promising future awaits the tourism sector in the Gulf region as it is witnessing radical leaps and rapid growth in tourism investments, CEO of Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority said.

In an interview with KUNA, Sara Buhiji stressed that the Kingdom of Bahrain supported integrated tourism efforts among GCC countries with joint efforts currently being exerted between the GCC countries to promote the Arabian Gulf as a single tourism destination.

On the occasion of selecting Manama as the capital of Gulf tourism for the year 2024, Buhiji said that Bahrain was ready to launch various programs and festivals throughout 2024 to entertain tourists of all ages and backgrounds.

The activities will include musical and cultural performances, seaside activities, historical and sports tourism, adding that the

Authority was developing various activities and resorts to be launched in summer.

Buhiji said that the Authority will also launch several activities on the occasion of Eid, including exclusive hotel and travel special offers, art, cultural, and entertainment activities from April 9-14.

On hosting the 33rd Arab League summit, Buhiji said that it would be a great opportunity to review Bahrain's tourism achievements and attract tourists all around the world.

She added that work is underway to establish more tourism projects, hotels, and partnership with major travel and tourism agencies and airline companies in the market.

It is worth noting that the number of Kuwaiti tourists in 2023 increased by 7 percent compared to 2022.

Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority launched a calendar with all the activities for the year of 2024 on their website.

## Job opportunities soar

### Turkiye invests \$40m in Qantara West area

CAIRO, April 8, (KUNA): The General Authority for the Suez Canal Economic Zone, in a promising move, signed on Sunday with the Turkish Eroglu Holding Group a contract for the Eroglu (DNM) jeans factory project in the Qantara West industrial zone.

This venture involves a substantial 40 million dollar investment and holds the potential to significantly boost the local economy and create numerous job opportunities.

These are labor-intensive projects that contribute directly to development through the job opportunities they provide.

The head of the Suez Canal Economy, Walid Gamal El-Din, who signed the agreement on behalf of the Suez Canal Authority, said in a press statement that the authority has successfully attracted several investments to the West Qantara Industrial Zone. These projects are labor-intensive and contribute directly to achieving development through the job opportunities they pro-

vide.

The head of the Eroglu Group, Nurten Eroglu, who signed the contract on behalf of the Turkish side, expressed his happiness with the partnership with the Suez Canal Economic Zone, stressing that the Eroglu Factory (DNM) project is distinguished by its reliance on raw materials of fabrics that are produced locally in the company's factory located in the governorate of Damietta next June.

In addition, the company has more than 40 years of experience in textile and clothing production and aims to make the factory above an export base for global markets.

The statement explained that the project, built on 62 thousand square meters, provides 2,750 job opportunities, targeting the production of 7.2 million pieces of jeans, with about 70 percent of the production planned to be exported abroad.

In contrast, 30 percent will be allocated to the local market.

## BUSINESS

## potential for Bitcoin to rise is enormous

SkyBridge Capital founder Anthony Scaramucci has expressed his belief that Bitcoin possesses significant upside potential from its current levels due to robust demand and diminishing supply, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a recent interview with CNBC, the hedge fund expert noted that the approval of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in the Bitcoin spot markets has eliminated regulatory barriers for the

largest cryptocurrency by market capitalization, enabling new pools of capital to flow into Bitcoin.

Scaramucci emphasized that he anticipates leading cryptocurrencies to surge to higher prices, especially as Wall Street continues to absorb thousands of Bitcoins daily, particularly with Bitcoin's impending mining rewards halving.

He likened Wall Street's reception of Bitcoin-related products to

a vending machine, generating substantial demand for the cryptocurrency. Scaramucci cited the significant inflows of over \$10 billion in the first quarter alone, highlighting the rapid adoption and acceptance of Bitcoin as a financial asset.

Regarding the upcoming halving event, Scaramucci highlighted the reduction in Bitcoin's daily issuance from 900 to 450 coins, expected around April 20th.

## EU offers Western Balkan states USD 6.52 bln

The European Union has agreed to allocate six billion euros (USD 6.52 billion) to finance reform and growth plans in the Western Balkan countries.

The European Commission said in a statement that the measure constitutes an unprecedented offer to the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia) to obtain some of

the benefits of European Union membership before officially joining it.

The European Commission had proposed the finance plan last November.

"Enlargement is a major priority and strategy for the European Union," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, expressing her hope that the Western Balkan countries will join more quickly.

She points out that the Facility's overall amount for 2024-2027 is six billion euros. This amount comprises two billion euros in grants and four billion euros in highly concessional loans.

Funds will be released twice a year, based on requests by the Western Balkan partners and following verification by the Commission and, where appropriate, the EEAS, that all relevant conditions have been met. (KUNA)

## When will Fed cut rates?

## As US economy flexes its muscles, maybe later or not at all

WASHINGTON, April 8, (AP): Ever since the Federal Reserve signaled last fall that it was likely done raising interest rates, Wall Street traders, economists, car buyers, would-be homeowners - pretty much everyone - began obsessing over a single question: When will the Fed start cutting rates?

But now, with the U.S. economy showing surprising vigor, a different question has arisen: Will the central bank really cut rates three times this year, as the Fed itself has predicted - or even cut at all? The Fed typically cuts only when the economy appears to be weakening and needs help.

Lower interest rates would reduce borrowing costs for homes, cars and other major purchases and probably fuel higher stock prices, all of which could help accelerate growth. An even more robust economy might also benefit President Joe Biden's re-election campaign.

Friday's blockbuster jobs report for March reinforced the notion that the economy is managing quite nicely on its own. The government said employers added a huge burst of jobs last month - more than 300,000 - and the unemployment rate dipped to a low 3.8% from 3.9%.

Some analysts responded by arguing that it's clear the last thing the economy needs now is more stimulus from lower rates.

"If the data is too strong, then why are we cutting?" asked Torsten Slok, chief economist at Apollo Global Management, a wealth management firm. "I think the Fed will not cut rates this year. Higher (rates) for longer is the answer."

In March, the central bank's policymakers - as a group - had penciled in three rate cuts for 2024, just as they had in December. Some economists still expect the Fed to carry out its first rate reduction in June or July. But even at last month's Fed meeting, some cracks had emerged: Nine of the 19 policymakers forecast just two rate cuts or fewer for 2024.

Since then, Friday's jobs data, combined with an unexpectedly buoyant report showing that factory output is expanding again after months of contracting, suggested that the economy is extending an unexpected run of healthy growth. Despite the Fed's aggressive streak of rate hikes in 2022 and 2023, which sent mortgage rates and other borrowing costs surging, the economy is defying long-standing expectations that it would weaken.

Such trends have made some Fed officials nervous. Though inflation is down sharply from its peak, it remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target. Rapid economic growth could reignite inflation pressures, undoing the progress that has been made.

In a slew of speeches this past week, several Fed officials stressed that there was little need to cut rates anytime soon. Instead, they said, they need more information about where exactly the economy is headed.

"It's much too soon to think about cutting interest rates," Lorie Logan, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, said in a speech. "I will need to see more of the uncertainty resolved about which economic path we're on."

Raphael Bostic, head of the Atlanta Fed, said he favored just one rate cut this year - and not until the final three months. And Neel Kashkari, president of the Minneapolis Fed, sent stock prices falling Thursday afternoon after raising the possibility that the Fed might not cut at all this year.

"If we continue to see strong job growth," Kashkari said, "if we continue to see strong consumer spending and strong GDP growth, then that raises the question in my mind, well, why would we cut rates?"

Will Beijing flood the globe with EVs, green technology?

WASHINGTON, April 8, (AP): China's burgeoning production of electric cars and other green technologies has become a flashpoint in a new U.S.-China trade fight, highlighted by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen during her five-day visit to China and seized on by former President Donald Trump in incendiary remarks on the campaign trail.

China has sharply ramped up its production of cheap electric vehicles, solar panels, and batteries just as the Biden administration has pushed through legislation supporting many of those same industries in the United States. Concerns are growing not just in the U.S. but also in Europe and Mexico that China will seek to bolster its own struggling economy with a wave of exports that could undercut factories overseas.

A U.S. trade group, the Alliance for American Manufacturing, noted in a February report that leading Chinese automaker BYD had recently introduced an electric SUV at the "astonishingly low" price of \$14,000. China's auto industry poses an "existential threat" to U.S. carmakers, the report argued.

Trump, at a rally late last month in Ohio, charged that China would seek to export cars into the United States through Mexico. The U.S. currently has a 25% tariff on cars from China that has largely blocked vehicles from that country, but Mexico has a free trade agreement with the U.S.

Trump promised to block such imports with new tariffs, but suggested if Biden were reelected it would be a "bloodbath" for the auto industry.

So what's behind this new trade fight between the U.S. and China? Here are some questions and answers on the issue:

## What is the threat from China?

After more than a decade of subsidizing its automakers, China has built a substantial car industry that accounts for 60% of global electric vehicle sales, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency.

Yet by some estimates, Chinese companies are producing as many as 10 million more electric vehicles annually than they can sell domestically, according to the AAM. That is driving them to sell more cars overseas. Similar dynamics exist in other industries, such as solar panels, batteries, and more traditional areas such as steel.

"The concern is that the Chinese are building up a lot of capacity in many industries across the board, including these new technology sectors and if domestic demand does not pick up, they are going to be looking for markets outside the country," said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University.

## How is this different from previous trade fights with China?

It's pretty similar. American officials say they have seen this movie before.

In remarks on Saturday in Guangzhou, China, Yellen highlighted the Biden administration's concerns by recalling a visit a week earlier to Suniva, a solar cell manufacturer in Norcross, Georgia.

## US will push Beijing to change policy that threatens American jobs: Yellen

Treasury secretary wraps up 4 days of talks

BEIJING, April 8, (AP): The Biden administration will push China to change an industrial policy that poses a threat to U.S. jobs, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Monday after wrapping up four days of talks with Chinese officials.

She also said in Beijing they had "difficult conversations" about national security, including American concerns that Chinese companies are supporting Russia in its war in Ukraine.

But the focus of her trip was industrial policy, and what the U.S. and Europe describe as manufacturing overcapacity in China. Wealthy nations fear a wave of low-priced Chinese exports that will overwhelm factories at home. Yellen cited the manufacturing of electric vehicles and their batteries as well as solar energy equipment - sectors that the U.S. administration is trying to promote domestically - as areas where Chinese government subsidies have driven rapid expansion of production.

"China is now simply too large for the rest of the world to absorb this enormous capacity. Actions taken by the PRC today can shift world prices," she said, using the acronym for China's official name, the People's Republic of China. "And when the global market is flooded by artificially cheap Chinese products, the viability of American and other foreign firms is put into question."

It's unclear how China will respond to such calls. European officials have repeatedly raised the issue on visits to China with no sign of any change on the Chinese side. Moreover, one of leader Xi Jinping's major goals is to build the nation into a major power so it doesn't feel compelled to bend to outside pressure.

But overcapacity also affects China - price wars in the electric vehicle sector are expected to drive some makers out of business - and experts have called for better coordination of policies designed to promote new technologies. The government agreed during Yellen's visit to start talks on what the two sides called "balanced growth."

"We intend to underscore the need for a shift in policy by China during these talks," Yellen said at a news conference held outdoors on a balmy spring day at the U.S. ambassador's residence in Beijing.

On Saturday, the official Xinhua News Agency said that the Chinese



U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, (center), and U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, (left), visit the Guozhijian Imperial College site in Beijing, China, Monday, April 8, 2024. The Biden administration will push China to change an industrial policy that poses a threat to U.S. jobs, Treasury Secretary Yellen said Monday after wrapping up four days of talks with Chinese officials. (AP)

## The push for fatter yields on mortgage-backed securities may undercut easing mortgage rates

LOS ANGELES, April 8, (AP): Mortgage rates are expected to come down later this year, but any benefit to homebuyers could be muted by developments in the market for financial instruments tied to mortgages.

Over the last couple of years, uncertainty about inflation and the trajectory of mortgage rates led investors to demand a fatter yield for owning mortgage-backed securities relative to what they would get buying the government's 10-year Treasury bonds.

secretary said, a flood of "below-cost Chinese steel ... decimated industries across the world and in the United States. I've made clear that President Biden and I will not accept that reality again."

On the war in Ukraine, Yellen

Mortgage-backed securities, or MBS, are investments made up of home loans and, like bonds, pay interest to investors. The difference in the interest, or yield, offered by each of these types of investments can be gauged by looking at the spread between mortgage rates and U.S. government bond yields.

Historically, that spread averaged around 1.7% a month. It surged last year, swelling in June to nearly 3% -- the widest gap since August 1986, ac-

ording to Federal Reserve data.

"When rates started rising, essentially we really didn't know how high they would go or (for) how long," said Mark Fleming, chief economist at First American Financial. "Mortgage-backed securities investors said 'I need to charge you more over the risk-free 10-year Treasury rate to be willing to buy a mortgage-backed security.'"

The bond and mortgage markets are sensitive to what's happening with inflation, Federal Reserve interest

rate policy and other factors. Signs of cooler inflation and signals from the Fed that it might begin lowering its short-term rate this year have helped pull mortgage rates and bond yields lower after each hit multiyear highs in October.

Those moves have influenced the spread between the average rate on a 30-year mortgage and the 10-year Treasury yield, keeping it mostly coming down this year. Last month, it was down to 2.61%.

Yellen, the former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, met with China's central bank governor, Pan Gongsheng, earlier Monday.

warned that any banks that facilitate the sale of military or dual-use goods to Russia could face U.S. sanctions.

"I stressed that companies, including those in the PRC, must not provide material support for Russia's war and

that they will face significant consequences if they do," she said.

Yellen, the former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, met with China's central bank governor, Pan Gongsheng, earlier Monday.

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## Renewing humanitarian efforts under the umbrella of comprehensive social responsibility strategy

# KIB concludes Ramadan campaign with numerous humanitarian initiatives

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently concluded its annual Ramadan campaign, which included a diverse range of initiatives and activities aimed at positively impacting the community and providing support to all its segments and individuals. This important step came within the framework of the Bank's renewed commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. It also reaffirmed KIB's ongoing humanitarian efforts to promote the concept of solidarity, instill a culture of giving, and elevate noble humanitarian principles and values, on top of which is compassion.

Commenting on the occasion, Abdullah AlKhamees, Senior Specialist - Internal Communications at KIB, said: "We take pride in all our humanitarian efforts and initiatives that embody our commitment to continuously supporting all segments of the Kuwaiti society. KIB's annual Ramadan campaign provides an advanced model of events aimed at providing all means of support to members of our community. This campaign is also considered a fundamental element of the Bank's annual duties, reflecting its crucial role as a true partner and a key component of sustainable community development efforts."

KIB's Ramadan campaign included a number



KIB's numerous Ramadan campaign initiatives photos.

of initiatives that involved the participation of employees from all departments, and played a crucial role in fostering the values of kindness, compassion, collective work and genuine cooperation that

are emblematic of the holy month. Part of the campaign was the annual Machla distribution initiative, launched at the beginning of Ramadan. The Machla boxes, composed of a variety of food items and basic supplies, were distributed by KIB employees to a large number of families in need to ensure their comfort during the month of fasting. Additionally, the Bank organized an Iftar meals distribution initiative to hand out daily Iftar meals during the holy month in collaboration with the Zajil volunteer team, a group of Kuwaiti youth who are eager to contribute to humanitarian efforts throughout the year.

The collaborative partnership between KIB and the Zajil team does not end there, with the Bank sponsoring the initiatives of "Zajil Expo". This charitable exhibition targets underprivileged families during Eid Al-Fitr, where Eid clothing and other essentials are provided for this special occasion. Additionally, a variety of activities and events tailored for children will be organized as part of the ongoing support to ensure a dignified livelihood for this societal segment and leave a positive impact on their lives.

It is worth noting that KIB's annual Ramadan campaign reaffirms its ongoing commitment to contributing to the support of the Kuwaiti community and positively impacting the daily lives of all its members. It also reflects the Bank's adoption of religious, humanitarian, and ethical values, stemming from its main slogan, "Bank for Life".

## Enhancing travel experience for cardholders

# ABK expands Pearl Assist services

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is pleased to announce the expansion of its Pearl Assist services, designed to provide an even more impressive array of benefits to its valued customers.

The latest development offers ABK Emirates Visa Infinite cardholders an enhanced travel journey, with new complimentary services added to their existing benefits. These include free airport transportation to and from Kuwait International Airport and free international meet and assist services in four countries including Dubai, London, Spain and Turkey.

Expressing her enthusiasm, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "We are thrilled to provide our ABK Emirates Visa Infinite



Ms. Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK

cardholders with this elevated travel experience, which further demonstrates our commitment to delivering top-tier service and added value to our customers."

Furthermore, ABK Emirates Visa Signature, ABK Advantage Visa Signature, and Mastercard World credit cardholders can now benefit from Pearl Assist services at a discounted rate, reinforcing the Bank's dedication to providing exceptional value to its customers. Among these exclusive offers is a 50% discount on a series of services including airport transportation services in Kuwait, Meet & Assist in Kuwait, and baggage delivery.

"These latest developments underscore ABK's unwavering dedication to providing exceptional banking and travel experiences, as well as customer-centric value, cementing its position as a leading financial institution in Kuwait," Marafi added.

To access these services, card-

holders can book through the dedicated website <https://abk.pearlassist.com/>.

In addition to providing exceptional benefits to its cardholders, ABK has a strong dedication to excellence and maintaining strong partnerships. As such, the newly introduced Pearl Assist services and enhanced benefits for cardholders reflects the Bank's ongoing commitment to delivering superior service and reinforcing its reputation as a leading financial institution in the region.

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

## Warba continues to provide its services during the Eid holiday

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Warba Bank will continue to provide services to its valued clients during the official holiday of Eid Al-Fitr, from Tuesday, April 9 until Saturday, April 13, through the Airport T4 branch to facilitate the provision of services, in addition to the telephone call service via the Call Center 1825555 or through social media platforms or via the Internet and the Warba Bank application.

Mr. Abdullah Nasser Al-Shuail, Senior Director of Branches and Private Banking Services at Warba Bank noted that the Bank is ready to serve its clients by providing all banking services during this holiday. Al-Shuail added that Warba clients have additional technical advantages, as they can perform some of the basic banking operations via smart phones through the unique Warba Bank application.

According to the circular issued by the Kuwaiti Banking Association, the Bank will return to operate at all of its branches immediately after the holiday, starting from Sunday, April 14th.



Abdullah Nasser Al-Shuail, Senior Director of Branches and Private Banking Services at Warba Bank.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leadership position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

## Burgan Bank continues to serve its customers during Eid Al-Fitr holiday

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Burgan Bank announced that it will be closing all branches starting Tuesday April 9, 2024, on the occasion of the Eid Al Fitr holiday. The Bank will resume normal operating hours at all branches on Sunday, April 14, 2024. However, to accommodate Burgan Bank customers, the Airport Branch will continue to operate around the clock during the holidays, with only a short break every day between 11:00 pm and 12:30 am.

For more information about Burgan

Bank's products and services during the Eid holiday, customers can contact the customer service center at 1804080, via phone or WhatsApp. Customers can also continue to conduct their financial transactions easily and securely using the Burgan Bank mobile app or the online banking platform ([online.burgan.com](http://online.burgan.com)).

On this blessed occasion, Burgan Bank extends its warmest congratulations and best wishes to all its customers and the people of Kuwait.



Eid greeting

# Thanima Kuwait organizes friendship iftar

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Thanima Kuwait, a social and cultural organization of Indian Diaspora in Kuwait, has organized a community iftar on 5th April at the United Indian School. Event was honoured by the presence of Kuwait Transplant Society President and Kuwait Organ Procurement Head Dr. Mustafa Al Mousawi as chief guest and iconic speaker.

Program Convener Dominic Antony welcomed the meeting presided over by Habibullah Muttichur, Convener of the event. Thanima General Convener Shajju Pallipuram given introductory speech and Dr. Mustafa Al-Mousawi inaugurated the function.

Awards were handed over to Student members Angeline Shaw Jacob, Nevin John Alex and Brianna Teresa Thomas who are going home from Kuwait for higher studies.

K. M. R.M. Spiritual Director Rev. Fr. John Tundiath Cor Episcopa, Sarathi Kuwait President K. R. Aji and religious scholar Faisal Mancheri delivered Iftar messages proclaiming the need to love and care among the society regardless to any discrimination. BEC exchange CEO Mathew Varghese, Metro Medical Group CEO Dr. Hamza Payyannur and Gulf Advance Trading Company CEO K.S. Varghese expressed their greetings. Program Joint Convener T. K. Shamsudeen conveyed vote of thanks to the attended and organizing team.



Photos during the community Iftar organized by Thanima Kuwait.



Participants during the FIRA Kuwait iftar meeting.

# FIRA Kuwait organizes iftar meeting

KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Public forum of Indian Registered Organizations in Kuwait, the Federation of Indian Registered Associations (FIRA KUWAIT) organized the iftar meeting. The event, held at Abbasiya Poppins Hall, was inaugurated by Mr. Bathar Vaikom (MD Dew Drops). Secretary Mr. Charles P. George made a welcome speech. Shyji K., Acting Convener, FIRA presided over the function. Social activist, Mr. Zakir Hussain Thuvoo delivered the keynote address. Biju Stephen (Program Convener) explained the FIRA activities & interventions carried out in the Kuwait expatriate community and then congratulated Mr. Babu Francis for his strong leadership for FIRA.

Mr. Lijeesh (FOKE), Mr. Baby Ouseph (Kerala Association), Mr. Sunny Miranda (ONCP), Mr. Kurian Thomas (AJPAK), Mr. Anil P. Alex (Mangalam), Mr. Zakir (PALPAK), Mr. Justin (Wayanad Association), Mr. Nissam (TRAK), Mr. Jayakumar (TEXAS & Pravasi Legal Cell), Mr. Manoj Kumar (KODPAK),



Guest speaker delivers keynote address.

Mr. Martin Mathew (Pathanamthitta Association), Mr. Rasheed (KEA), Mr. Mubarak Kambrath (GKPA), Mr. Arun Ravi (Chiri Club), Mrs. Sherin Mathew (IAF), Mr. Ratheesh Varkala (Texas), Mr. Anson Pathrose (KERA), Mr. Rajesh (KAK), Mr. Shojan (EDA), Mr. Jamsad (MAK), Mr. Rajith (KLM), Mr. Mammen Abram

(TASK), Mr. Vinayan (Kannur Ex-pats Association) and Mr. Biju Pallode (Pratheeksha) addressed the gathering. Program coordination by Mrs. Jinju Shytaz. Mr. Hari Prasad (FOKE) thanked the sponsors of the event, Malabar Gold & Diamond Group, Mind Tree, Al Waheeda Group and those who participated in the Iftar.

# Whitmer shares story of political journey in new book

LANSING, Mich., April 8, (AP) — Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will detail her rapid ascent in Democratic politics in a book out this summer, a move that will undoubtedly spark fresh speculation about her potential presidential ambitions.

"True Gretch" is scheduled for release July 9 and a book announcement provided to The Associated Press promises insights into Whitmer's five-year tenure as Michigan's governor. It will include a behind-the-scenes look at how she navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, became the target of a kidnapping plot and continually clashed with former President Donald Trump.

The book also will highlight her role in the 2022 midterm election, when Michigan voters enshrined abortion rights in the state's constitution through a ballot initiative. Democrats that year also won full control of Michigan's state government for the first time in four decades.

Whitmer, a co-chair in President Joe Biden's reelection campaign, has emerged as one of the Democratic party's top stars and is often named as a potential contender for the party's presidential nomination in 2028.

An attorney turned state lawmaker, Whitmer was first elected governor in 2018 after running a campaign centered on a pledge to "fix the damn roads."

Shortly into her first term, when the pandemic began, she implemented some of the nation's most restrictive stay-at-home orders, which made her

the ongoing target of right-wing vitriol. Thousands of people came to the state Capitol with guns in 2020 as Trump egged them on, tweeting "Liberate Michigan." Whitmer became known as "that woman from Michigan," a play on words Trump used to attack her in 2020.

Her bouts with Trump, which have continued with him calling Whitmer "radical" and a "terrible governor" this week during a Michigan visit, helped grow her national profile. She delivered the Democratic response to Trump's State of the Union in 2020 and was considered a potential vice president pick for Biden later that year.

Whitmer won reelection in 2022 by more than 10%. Her party also flipped the state House and Senate, which has allowed them to roll back decades of Republican policies and rapidly implement a Democratic agenda over the past 15 months.

## Speculation

Whitmer's motto in politics, she writes in the book, is to "get sh-done."

The book's release unquestionably will fuel speculation Whitmer is angling for a higher office when her term-limited time as Michigan's governor concludes at the end of 2026, although she previously has told the AP that she has "no interest in going to D.C."

Both Simon & Schuster and the governor's office declined to comment on the financial compensation she received for the book. A

spokesperson for Simon & Schuster added "it is our policy not to comment on the financials of a book deal."

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Former President Bill Clinton has a memoir coming out this fall about his years since leaving public office in 2001. "Citizen: My Life After the White House" will cover everything from the presidential campaigns of his wife, Hillary Clinton, to his views on events ranging from the Jan. 6 insurrection to the Iraq War.

**Alfred A. Knopf**, which published Clinton's million-selling presidential memoir "My Life," will release the new book Nov. 19.

"I knew as I entered this new chapter of my life that I'd keep score the way I always have: Are people better off when you quit than when you started? Do our children have a brighter future? Are we coming together instead of falling apart?" Clinton said in a statement Thursday.

"Citizen" is the story of my 23-plus years since leaving the White House, told largely through the stories of other people who changed my life as I tried to help change theirs, of those who supported me, including those I loved and lost, and of the mistakes I made along the way," he said.

Knopf is calling the book "remarkably candid, and richly detailed," offering "fascinating insight into Clinton's life - both personal and political."

Books

## Variety



Jelly Roll performs during the iHeartRadio Music Awards, Monday, April 1, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Jelly Roll wins big at the 2024 CMT Music Awards Sunday night, taking home three awards. (AP)

## Music

Trisha Yearwood honored and Toby Keith tribute

# Jelly Roll rules CMT Music Awards

LOS ANGELES, April 8, (AP) — Jelly Roll won big at the 2024 CMT Music Awards Sunday night, taking home three awards at the annual event celebrating the best in country music videos.

His accolades began with the CMT performance of the year award for his gospel-assisted rendition of "Need a Favor" at the 2023 CMT Music Awards nearly a year ago to the day. It also was his first-ever awards show performance.

"In that last year you changed my life in every way I never thought my life could be changed," the tattooed rapper-turned-country breakout star said in an emotional acceptance speech live from the Moody Center in Austin, Texas. The show was broadcast live on CBS and Paramount+.

The music video for "Need a Favor" earned him male video of the year and the biggest award of the night, video of the year.

"I'm having one of the best nights of my life," he said, before focusing his speech on people who are looking for "second chances," specifically those in juvenile detention facilities. "I once heard a man say that 'you don't change until the pain to remain the same is greater than the pain it takes to change,' and that's what it takes. I love you, Texas."

In some ways, it was déjà vu from the 2023 awards show, where Jelly Roll also took home three awards, winning over audiences for his larger-than-life personality and outsider songs.

Kelsea Ballerini hosted the awards for fourth time in a row, opening with a comedic sketch about reading the minds of country music's biggest names that ended with Keith Urban hugging the beaver mascot of beloved Texas gas station chain Buc-ee's.

Her many outfit changes were only the first of a few surprises, which also included Melissa Etheridge appearing on a duet of "Come to My Window" with Ballerini.

Early on, Carly Pearce and Chris Stapleton won collaborative video of the year for their song, "We Don't Fight Anymore." She thanked Stapleton, who wasn't in attendance, and "Fans, fans, fans, fans, fans!"

Ashley Cooke won breakthrough female video of the year for "Your Place," her first-ever award. "I just won a CMT award, oh my god, good night!" she cheered as she headed off stage. Warren Zeiders took home the male equivalent for "Pretty Little Poison," thanking God and his best friend: his dad.

Live performances were fast and furious. Three-time CMT award winner and Texas native Cody Johnson opened the 2024 show with his ode to the lone star state, "That's Texas." Jason Aldean performed "Let Your Boys Be Country" in front of the University of Texas at Austin, a less controversial choice than his radio hit "Try That in a Small Town." Its music video was removed from CMT last year.

Megan Moroney brought her breakup anthem, "No Caller ID," to the CMT stage and Parker McCollum teamed with Britney Spencer for "Burn It Down." NEEDTOBREATHE and Jordan Davis teased "CMT Crossroads" by tackling each other's "Brother" and "Next Thing You Know," respectively.

Lainey Wilson reminded the audience that "Country's Cool Again," leading into an outdoor performance of "Where It Ends" by Bailey Zimmerman. Veteran Keith Urban brought the first single of his forthcoming album, "Straight Line."

## Reunited

Wilson spent a lot of time on stage, taking home female video of the year for "Watermelon Moonshine." "Thank you for supporting women in country," she told the audience.

Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush of Sugarland reunited on the CMT stage for the first time since 2011 in a collaborative performance with Little Big Town. The six voices teamed up for a cover of Phil Collins' "Take Me Home."

Trisha Yearwood was awarded the inaugural June Carter Cash Humanitarian Award, which honors musicians or industry veterans who demonstrate "an exceptional dedication to community and their fellow artists, embodying June's spirit as a fierce advocate and initiator in paying it forward," a statement said.

The country star was honored for her charitable contributions, including longstanding work with Habitat for Humanity and the annual Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Week Project.

"I don't think anyone who's ever gotten a humanitarian award has thought they deserve it," she began, agreeing with the sentiment before turning her attention to the woman the award is named after.

"June Carter Cash was a force, and she was married to a force. I know a little bit about that," she said, in reference to her husband Garth Brooks, before applauding Carter

Cash's ability to keep shining a light on her own successes. "She was strong in a very human way," Yearwood said.

Later in the night, she debuted a new song from her forthcoming album, the acoustic ballad, "Put It in a Song."

The emotional center of the award show no doubt came later, in an all-star tribute to the late Toby Keith, with Brooks & Dunn tackling Keith's 1993 breakout hit, "Should've Been a Cowboy," Sammy Hagar doing "I Love This Bar" and Lainey Wilson covering "How Do You Like Me Now." They all were backed by Keith's longtime band.

Keith, a hit country crafter of pro-American anthems who riled up critics and was loved by millions of fans, died in February at 62 after being diagnosed with stomach cancer.

In the crowd, artists including Ashley McBryde and Jelly Roll raised their red solo cups in a cheerful tribute to the singer, who immortalized the humble plastic cups in his 2011 hit, "Red Solo Cup."

After the musical tributes on stage, Keith's longtime friend and baseball star Roger Clemens, his eyes watering, thanked Keith's wife and children in the audience for sharing their husband and father with the world.

Clemens led a toast to those on stage, in the crowd, and at home: "Repeat after me. 'Whiskey for my men, and beer for my horses,'" a reference to a comedic song by Keith featuring Willie Nelson.

It was a fitting homage: a little funny, with a whole lot of country heart.

Complete list of winners:

- Video of the year: Jelly Roll, "Need a Favor"
- Female video of the year: Lainey Wilson, "Watermelon Moonshine"
- Male video of the year: Jelly Roll, "Need a Favor"
- Group/duo video of the year: Dan + Shay, "Save Me the Trouble"
- Collaborative video of the year: Carly Pearce featuring Chris Stapleton, "We Don't Fight Anymore"
- Breakthrough female video of the year: Ashley Cooke, "Your Place"
- Breakthrough male video of year: Warren Zeiders, "Pretty Little Poison"
- CMT performance of the year: Jelly Roll, "Need a Favor" from 2023 CMT Music Awards
- June Carter Cash Humanitarian Award: Trisha Yearwood

# Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024

**NEW YORK:** "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire" easily swatted away a pair of challengers to hold on to the top spot at the box office for the second week in a row, according to studio estimates Sunday.

After its above-expectations \$80 million launch last weekend, the MonsterVerse mashup brought in \$31.7 million over its second weekend, a 60% drop from its debut. The Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures release, directed by Adam Wingard, has thus far outperformed any of the studio's recent monster films except for 2014's "Godzilla."

But with \$361.1 million worldwide in two weeks, "Godzilla x Kong" could ultimately leapfrog the \$529 million global haul of 2014's "Godzilla." The latest installment, in which Godzilla and Kong team up, cost about \$135 million to produce.

"Godzilla x Kong" extended its box-office reign as another primate-themed movie arrived in theaters. Dev Patel's "Monkey Man," an India-set revenge thriller released by Universal Pictures, opened in 3,029 North American theaters with an estimated \$10.1 million.

That marked a strong debut for Patel's modestly budgeted directorial debut in which he stars in a bloody, politically charged action extravaganza. "Monkey Man," which cost about \$10 million to make, was dropped by its original studio, Netflix, after which Jordan Peele and his Monkeypaw Productions swooped in.

The weekend's other new wide release, "The First Omen," from Disney's 20th Century Studios, struggled to make a big impact with moviegoers. It came in fourth with an estimated \$8.4 million in ticket sales in 3,375 theaters, while collecting an additional \$9.1 million overseas. The R-rated horror film, which cost about \$30 million to make, is a prequel to the 1976 Richard Donner-directed original starring Gregory Peck and Lee Remick.

This version, directed by Arkasha Stevenson and starring Nell Tiger Free, Tawfeek Barhom and Bill Nighy, follows 2006's "The Omen," which opened to \$16 million and ultimately grossed

\$119 million. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Sixteen years after "Food, Inc.," which the way many think about where their food comes from, filmmakers Robert Kenner and Melissa Robledo reunited with "The Omnivore's Dilemma" author Michael Pollan and "Fast Food Nation" writer



Patel



Free

Eric Schlosser to take another look at the current state of food in the US With a special focus on the rights of farmworkers and the downsides of corporate consolidation and ultra-processed foods, "Food, Inc. 2" will be available on VOD starting Friday, April 12. Meanwhile, "Strange Way of Life," his 31-minute Western

streaming on Netflix starting Sunday, April 14. At the film's Cannes premiere last year, Almodóvar, who famously turned down the opportunity to direct "Brokeback Mountain," said unlike the characters in that movie, he imagined these guys were really gunslingers in the vein of "The Wild Bunch." AP Film Writer

Jake Coyle wrote at the time that "it's delightful to see Almodóvar at work in a new genre, yet just as at home, filling the frame with pops of color (Pascal's character wears a lime green jacket) and flourishes of emotion" and that it "extends yet another vibrant chapter in Almodóvar's filmography, now in its fifth decade." (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Television

## Scene-stealing thespian

## Esposito leads cast in crime drama 'Parish'

NEW YORK, April 8, (AP): **Giancarlo Esposito** has long been lauded as a charismatic, scene-stealing thespian and commander of roles who's worthy of leading man stature. But it might be surprising that for first time, it's actually official.

"I say, 'Ask for what you want.' So, I wanted this badly," said the star of "Parish," who's also an executive producer of the new crime drama. "When you ask for what you want, normally you will get it if you believe and if you can endure. So, almost eight years is a long time to endure."

That's how long it took to bring the series into fruition after being shopped and bounced around before landing at AMC.

"Parish," based on the BBC One series "The Driver," follows Gracian "Gray" Parish, a New Orleans-based former getaway driver-turned successful law-abiding taxi entrepreneur whose life unravels after his son's murder. Facing financial hardships, he entangles himself with a local Zimbabwe gang that deals in human

trafficking and ending that working relationship won't be easy.

The 65-year-old Esposito, a six-decade acting veteran who was first introduced to wide audiences through his work in Spike Lee Joints, is most recognized for his villainous, sinister roles like the iconic drug kingpin Gustavo Fring from "Breaking Bad" and its spinoff, "Better Call Saul." More recently, he's appeared in popular series like "The Mandalorian," "Godfather of Harlem," "The Boys," "Kaleidoscope" and "The Gentlemen."

Despite how long it's taken for him to reach the top of the call sheet, Esposito doesn't fixate on whether he receives the professional respect many believe he's owed.

## Underrated

"I've let go of wanting to have more respect than is due me, more respect than what comes to me. People come up to me and they say, 'You're a highly underrated actor.' So, I never know when that's said to me if I should feel awful or feel great," said the five-time Emmy nominated actor - four for supporting actor and one for guest actor. "It's an honor to have my own show. In this ecosystem of Hollywood, there's more that I have to do... I'm ready to bust out on a new journey, and 'Parish' is the beginning of that."

The AP spoke with Esposito about leading his own series, roles he has yet to play and if there's anything left to explore with **Gus Fring**.

Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

**Esposito:** I was a man up against the wall 10, 15 years ago - completely. Went bankrupt. Lost my house. Divorced, you know, wound up living in a goat barn for a while... Didn't know if I'd ever get my career back on track. Just didn't have any sense of hope - that's where Gray is - until a moment where I thought of some desperate ways to have my family survive.

To say that my life has been rosy and it's always great - which is sometimes what people want to hear from an actor of my stature - that's not my truth. And so, to live my organic truth is important to me.

**Esposito:** It is a very, very daunting responsibility if you see it that way, right? So, I see this project as something that so many people invested... in my journey to become a leader. And so, there's a lot of pressure behind it.

I realized, 'Oh, it's not just about me.' Sure, the part of my ego that goes, "Wow, I'm No. 1 on the call sheet - it's about time! Boy, do I love it." There's an enjoyment to it, and there's a wonder to it because I put so much of myself into this story. But it's also... a wonderful thing to learn, to learn from those I'm working with.

**Esposito:** In the last five years, I've given myself an assignment, and that assignment is to make it personal. And so, I find some link to who I am personally. I had a great realization that when I was young, I was bullied: I was bullied by my father, I was bullied by my brother. And I realized that part of that Gustavo personality (from "Breaking Bad") is a very gracious bully.

**Esposito:** Would I continue with a show called "The Rise of Gus"? I most certainly will - I would love to.

I feel like there's a part of Gus you don't know, and the agreement and the understanding is that what you don't know about Gus made him interesting. You wanted to know more: Does he have a family? Is he gay? Is he straight?... I know the audience wants more of Gustavo to know more of who he is, and if there were an opportunity one day, I'd love to explore that because I have these ideas.

**Esposito:** After playing such intense characters for so long, people oftentimes assume that that's who I am... but I want to do a rom-com, and I want to do a comedy... Taurus is my sign - astrological sign - so, I'm a romanticist, I'm always wanting and inviting romance in my life.

I'd love to tell the story of Haile Selassie. I think that would be a really interesting story: the Ethiopian who was just so profound in his leadership. I'm very interested in King Solomon because I feel like that role model is something we need in our world today.

## Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** **Colin Farrell** plays a private investigator in the new series "Sugar" for Apple TV+, where the central mystery is to locate the missing granddaughter of a big time Hollywood producer. Reviews are already screaming about a plot twist so proceed with caution online if you don't want spoilers. "Sugar" debuted Friday, April 5.



A still from the Sudanese movie, 'Goodbye Julia' which won 25 Arab and International awards.

KUNA photo



Bruce Springsteen performs during his concert with the E Street Band at the Kia Forum, Sunday, April 7, in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)



Tyler



The Weeknd

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** The total solar eclipse is quickly approaching. While you prepare to hit the road towards the path of total darkness or anticipate hours of traffic coming out of your watch party, you'll need something to listen to. And we've got your back.

Across 20 tracks, here's a comprehensive playlist of total solar eclipse (and total solar eclipse-adjacent) songs to listen to while preparing to take in the wonders of the universe on Monday. Listen to the full playlist on Spotify.

There is no more appropriate song than **Bonnie Tyler**'s karaoke classic, "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Try not to start a singalong with this one.

Not the synth-y cover by **Manfred Mann**'s Earth Band - **Bruce Springsteen**'s spirited "Blinded by the Light" is an eclipse song for the ages, or at least for those hoping to put a little boogie in their viewing experience.

One of the greatest pop songs of the last decade, The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" is not only an ideal song for speeding down a highway in the darkness - safely, of course - but also a **Max Martin**-produced earworm that will crawl into your brain and lodge itself there forevermore.

The best **YoungBoy Never Broke Again** tracks bring the listener into his world: He names loved ones, he dives deep into his pain and he transforms it into affecting raps. "Solar Eclipse" centers his own mortality and what would happen to his kids if something were to happen to him. A total solar eclipse can be a time for existential thinking: This is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for many, and so it is important to value that lifetime.

In **Joni Mitchell**'s "Moon at the Window," a lover looks out towards the sky and sees "ghosts of the future / phantoms of the past," the folk legend sings atop jazzy instrumentation. There's a kind of melancholic whimsy here, and lyrical poetry, which makes this song an appropriate listen for a solar eclipse.

What is a space-themed playlist without a "Blue Moon"? Originally written by **Richard Rodgers** and **Lorenz Hart** in 1934, the song has been covered countless times over the decades, but no other hits with the soul of **Billie Holiday**'s 1952 take.

If space is the final frontier, **David Bowie** knew of its powers - and on Tuesday, with a quick listen to "Starman," we can all try a bit of his Ziggy Stardust.

The beauty of Sun Ra's "Space is the Place" is that it's taken from a 1970s Afro-futurist film of the same name. Start with the song and watching the eclipse in real time, end with a screening.

Consider the distorted, reversed production of **Earl Sweatshirt**'s short rap track as an interlude for this playlist - a palate

## Film

## 'Goodbye Julia' wins globally, garners 25 awards

## Sudanese film triumphs amidst war

KHARTOUM, April 8, (KUNA): Based on a dramatic narrative portraying the pain of separation, the Sudanese movie, (Goodbye Julia) succeeded in transcending the ordeal of war to embark on an exciting journey of winning awards.

The genre of the movie is drama with a suspense element added, inspired by realism (Cinematic Realism), highlighting the various aspects of Sudanese culture that have not been previously showcased on the cinema screen.

The movie tells the story of Mona, a northern Sudanese retired singer in a tense marriage, wracked by guilt after covering up a murder, who tries to make amends by taking in the deceased's southern Sudanese widow Julia and her son Daniel into her home. United (cross head)

It takes place in Khartoum during the last years of Sudan as a united country, shortly before the 2011 separation of South Sudan, and the desire of Sudanese people to live in peace away from conflicts.

The movie has won 25 Arab and International awards, including the Grand Jury Award for Best Narrative Feature at the 27th Sonoma International Film Festival in California.

The movie also won the 2023 Cannes Film Festival's Freedom Prize, the Septimius Awards' Best African Film, the Robert Ebert Award in the Chicago International Film Festival, Al-Gouna Film Festival Cinema for Humanity prize, Luxor African Film Festival's Best Film Award and won at the Baghdad International Film Festival in Iraq.

The Malmo Arab Film Festival in Sweden announced that (Goodbye Julia) will open the 14th Malmo Arab Film Festival which is scheduled to be held from April 22 to 28, 2024.

The Movie's producer Amjad Abu Al-Ula told KUNA that the conditions which the movie was filmed and produced under were difficult because of the political and security situation in Sudan, four months before the outbreak of the war.

He added that in light of the situation in Sudan, they sought joint external production, noting that Sudanese Cinema and cinematic production have greatly progressed in the last five years.

On his part, movie director Mohammad Kordofani told KUNA that

he wished the movie to be shown in Sudan. Movies, he added, affect people and make them rush to theaters to see a movie produced by their country.

Art should not be stopped, postponed or canceled, stressed Kordofani, as it is needed now more than ever in the current circumstances of the world, and concluded by saying that without art people would succumb and die of despair rather than bullets.

On the future of Sudanese Cinema, Abu Al-Ula believes that it depends

## Nigeria film recalls Chibok girls abducted 10 years ago

ABUJA, Nigeria, April 8, (AP): Not a day goes by without Lawan Zanna remembering his daughter Aisha in prayers. She was among the 276 schoolgirls kidnapped 10 years ago when Islamic extremists broke into their school in northeastern Nigeria's Chibok village.

"It makes me so angry to talk about it," said Zanna, 55, whose daughter is among the nearly 100 girls still missing after the 2014 kidnappings that stunned the world and sparked the global #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign.

The Chibok kidnapping was the first major school abduction in the West African nation. Since then, at least 1,400 students have been kidnapped, especially in the conflict-battered northwest and central regions. Most victims were freed only after ransoms were paid or through government-backed deals, but the suspects rarely get arrested.

This year, to mark the 10th anniversary of a largely forgotten tragedy, members of Borno state's Chibok community gathered Thursday in Nigeria's economic hub of Lagos to attend the screening of "Statues Also Breathe," a collaborative film project produced by French artist Prune Nourry and Nigeria's Obafemi Awolowo University.

"This collaboration aims to raise awareness about the plight of the girls who are still missing while

highlighting the global struggle for girls' education," Nourry said.

The 17-minute film opens with an aerial view of 108 sculptures - the number of girls still missing when the art project began - that try to recreate what the girls look like today using pictures provided by their families, from their facial expressions to hairstyles and visible patterns.

The film captures the artistic process behind the art exhibit, first displayed in November 2022, featuring human head-sized sculptures inspired by ancient Nigerian Ife terracotta heads.

In the film, one of the freed women talks about the horrors she went through while in captivity. "We suffered, we were beaten up. (But) Allah (God) made me stronger," she said.

It also conveys a flurry of emotions as heartbroken mothers reminisced about life when their daughters were home.

## Memories

"When it is time for Ramadan (...) Aisha adorns my hair with henna and all sorts of adornments," one of the women in the film said of her missing child.

But Aisha has not been home in 10 years.

Another scene shows a woman hesitating when asked to go and see her daughter's face that was sculpted. "If I go and see it, it will bring sad memories," she said, her weak voice fading away.

on Sudan's fate, pointing out that cinematic production relies on filming and producing current war stories in safe areas in countries that have similar settings to Sudan, to guarantee the safety of crewmembers.

Goodbye Julia is a joint production between Sudan, Sweden, Germany, Saudi Arabia, France, and Egypt, and was written and directed by Mohammad Kordofani, produced by Abu Al-Ula, and the cast includes Eiman Yousif, Siran Riak, Nazar Gomaa and Ger Duany.

a fitting inclusion.

Colombian American musician **Kali Uchis**' songs center love, loss and divine femininity - and so does her hit "Moonlight." In this sweet moment of pop astrology, the moon is a source of power.

Looking up at the sky as a symbol of ambition, hope, nostalgia or innocence has a long literary history. It also functions as the perfect visual for **Taylor Swift**'s "Folklore" cut "Seven." Swifties know what's up.

What is more fitting for an afternoon eclipse than the soft folk stylings of **Cat Stevens**' "Moonshadow"? It doubles as a great road trip song for country road driving, too, so for those who are traveling - take note.

From **Sade**'s 2010 comeback album "Soldier of Love" comes "The Moon and the Sky," a soft soul song good enough for Earth and what exists above. (AP)

□ □ □

**LOS ANGELES:** The Grammy nominated R&B and hip-hop hitmaker **Bryson Tiller**'s eponymous fourth studio album is a bit of a mystery. His last album, "Anniversary," was released four years ago, and little is known about his new era. A week before it drops, only one song has been released, "Whatever She Wants" - which Tiller has said doesn't sound like anything on the album - and the only confirmed feature is Grammy best new artist winner **Victoria Monét**. Both are reason enough to get excited. (AP)



Sculptures created by French artist Prune Nourry, inspired by ancient Nigerian Ife terracotta heads, titled 'Statues Also Breathe,' and representing the remaining 108 Chibok girls still in captivity are displayed in Lagos, Nigeria, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022. A new film in Nigeria is being screened to remember the nearly 100 schoolgirls who are still in captivity 10 years after they were seized from their school in the country's northeast. The film captured a flurry of emotions as heartbroken mothers reminisced about life when their daughters were home. (AP)

## FDA's accelerated approval program faces criticism

# Many cancer drugs still unproven years after accelerated approval

NEW YORK, April 8, (AP) — The US Food and Drug Administration's accelerated approval program is meant to give patients early access to promising drugs. But how often do these drugs actually improve or extend patients' lives?

In a new study, researchers found that most cancer drugs granted accelerated approval do not demonstrate such benefits within five years.

"Five years after the initial accelerated approval, you should have a definitive answer," said Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, a cancer specialist

and bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania who was not involved in the research. "Thousands of people are getting those drugs. That seems a mistake if we don't know whether they work or not."

The program was created in 1992 to speed access to HIV drugs. Today, 85% of accelerated approvals go to cancer drugs.

It allows the FDA to grant early approval to drugs that show promising initial results for treating debilitating or fatal diseases. In exchange, drug companies are expected to do rigor-

ous testing and produce better evidence before gaining full approval.

Patients get access to drugs earlier, but the tradeoff means some of the medications don't pan out. It's up to the FDA or the drugmaker to withdraw disappointing drugs, and sometimes the FDA has decided that less definitive evidence is good enough for a full approval.

The new study found that between 2013 and 2017, there were 46 cancer drugs granted accelerated approval. Of those, 63% were converted to regular approval even though only

43% demonstrated a clinical benefit in confirmatory trials.

The research was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and discussed at the American Association for Cancer Research annual meeting in San Diego on Sunday.

It's unclear how much cancer patients understand about drugs with accelerated approval, said study co-author Dr. Edward Cliff of Harvard Medical School.

"We raise the question: Is that uncertainty being conveyed to patients?" Cliff said.

Drugs that got accelerated approval may be the only option for patients with rare or advanced cancers, said Dr. Jennifer Litton of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, who was not involved in the study.

It's important for doctors to carefully explain the evidence, Litton said.

"It might be shrinking of tumor. It might be how long the tumor stays stable," Litton said. "You can provide the data you have, but you shouldn't overpromise."

Congress recently updated the pro-

gram, giving the FDA more authority and streamlining the process for withdrawing drugs when companies don't meet their commitments.

The changes allow the agency "to withdraw approval for a drug approved under accelerated approval, when appropriate, more quickly," FDA spokesperson Cherie Duvall-Jones wrote in an email. The FDA can now require that a confirmatory trial be underway when it grants preliminary approval, which speeds up the process of verifying whether a drug works, she said.

### The Conversation

REM raises concerns about brain diseases

## Sleep disorder 'affects' millions and has clear links to dementia

By Anelyssa D'Abreu  
University of Virginia

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

A little-known and poorly understood sleep disorder that occurs during the rapid eye movement, or REM, stage of sleep has been garnering attention for its role in foreshadowing neurodegenerative brain diseases such as Parkinson's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies. The disorder, known as REM sleep behavior disorder, or RBD in the medical field, affects around 1% of the general population worldwide and about 2% of adults over 65.



D'Abreu

The conversation talked with Anelyssa D'Abreu, a neurologist who specializes in geriatric neurology, to explain what researchers know about the condition's links to dementia.

Every night, you go through four to five sleep cycles. Each cycle, lasting about 90 to 110 minutes, has four stages. That fourth stage is REM sleep.

REM sleep only comprises 20% to 25% of total sleep, but its proportion increases throughout the night. During REM sleep, your brain rhythms are similar to when you are awake, your muscles lose tone so you are unable to move, and your eyes, while closed, move quickly. This stage is often accompanied by muscle twitches and fluctuations in your respiratory rate and blood pressure.

But someone with REM sleep behavior disorder will act out their dreams. For reasons that are poorly understood, the dream content is usually violent - patients report being chased, or defending themselves, and as they sleep they shout, moan, scream, kick, punch and thrash about.

Injuries often result from these incidents; patients may fall from

bed or accidentally harm a partner. Some 60% of patients and 20% of bed partners of people with this disorder sustain an injury during sleep.

Appropriate testing, including a sleep study, are needed to determine if a patient has REM sleep behavior disorder, as opposed to another disorder, such as obstructive sleep apnea. This is a disorder in which breathing is interrupted during sleep.

REM sleep behavior disorder can occur at any age, but symptoms usually start with people in their 40s and 50s. For those younger than 40, antidepressants are the most common cause of REM sleep behavior disorder; in these younger patients, it affects biological males and females about equally, but past age 50, it's more common in biological males.

### Identified

The disease mechanism is not well understood. In some cases of REM sleep behavior disorder, a clear cause cannot be identified. In other cases, the disorder may be caused by something specific, such as obstructive sleep apnea, narcolepsy, psychiatric disorders, use of antidepressants, autoimmune disorders and brain lesions, which are areas of damaged brain tissue.

In both situations, REM sleep behavior disorder may be associated with synucleinopathies, a group of neurodegenerative disorders in which aggregates of the protein  $\alpha$ -synuclein accumulate in brain cells. The most common of these neurodegenerative disorders is Parkinson's disease. Others are dementia with Lewy bodies, multiple system atrophy and pure autonomic failure. REM sleep behavior disorder may precede these diseases or occur at any time during the disease process.

REM sleep behavior disorder may be the first symptom of Parkinson's disease or dementia with Lewy bodies. It is observed in 25% to 58% of patients diagnosed with Parkinson's, 70% to 80% of patients with dementia with Lewy bodies and 90% to 100% of those with multiple system atrophy.

In a long-term study of 1,280 patients with REM sleep behav-

ior disorder who didn't have Parkinsonism - an umbrella term that refers to brain conditions, including Parkinson's disease, that cause slowed movements, stiffness and tremors - or dementia, researchers followed participants to find out how many would develop these disorders. After 12 years, 73.5% of those with REM sleep behavior disorder had developed a related neurodegenerative disorder.

Some of the factors that independently increased the risk of developing a neurodegenerative disorder were the presence of irregular motor symptoms, abnormal dopamine levels, loss of sense of smell, cognitive impairment, abnormal color vision, erectile dysfunction, constipation and older age.

REM sleep behavior disorder may also be observed in other neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and Huntington's disease, but at much lower rates. The association is also not as strong as that observed in the synucleinopathies.

For most neurodegenerative disorders, there is a phase that may last for decades in which brain changes are taking place but the patient either remains asymptomatic or develops symptoms without the full expression of the disease. RBD, in that scenario, is an early sign of those disorders. This provides an opportunity to study how the disease progresses in the brain and to develop therapies that could either slow this process or prevent it from happening.

At this time, there are no approved therapies to prevent the onset of these neurodegenerative diseases in those with REM sleep behavior disorder. There are, however, medications such as melatonin and clonazepam that may improve the symptoms. We also recommend measures to avoid injury, such as removing breakable objects from the room, protecting windows and padding floors.

Patients who are affected by REM sleep behavior disorder may choose to participate in research. Proper treatment of the disease can help prevent injury and improve quality of life. (AP)

### Program improves pediatric oral health

## School dental clinic addresses pandemic teeth neglect in kids

CONCORD, N.H., April 8, (AP) — Tucked away inside the teachers lounge at a New Hampshire elementary school, Amber Warner was having her teeth checked out for the first time.

The 5-year-old sat back on what looked like a beach chair and wore a pair of dark sunglasses as certified public health dental hygienist Mary Davis surveyed Amber's teeth and then with a tiny syringe applied traditional dental sealants, which had the consistency of nail gel.

"Close down and bite your teeth together, bite down like you are biting down on a hot dog or a cheeseburger," Davis told Amber, to ensure the sealants were done properly. After that, Davis flossed all of the "popcorn and the chicken, pizza between your teeth." The whole visit took 15 minutes.

"Look at you. You are a pro on your first dental visit. I am so proud of you," Davis said to the kindergartner, who got up from the chair and was hugged by a teacher's assistant.

### Portable

The portable clinic is part of a cavity prevention program developed by NYU College of Dentistry and being rolled out in Concord and two other New Hampshire districts. CarriedAway New Hampshire hopes to expand to Maine and Vermont - and eventually nationwide - as part of a growing effort to improve pediatric oral health, especially in children from lower-income families.

There isn't a good national estimate of dental programs in schools but many larger school districts have them. Boston University's program operates in 20 schools and 30 preschools in Boston and eight other cities in Massachusetts and covers 3,000 children from 6 months to 21 years. In New York City, 81,000 students across 820 schools - a little over half of all public schools - were treated last school year.

Nationwide Children's Hospital has seen 1,700 children in central Ohio since 2021 with its roving school-based dental clinics, while Minnesota nonprofit Ready, Set, Smile is in 44 schools in the Twin Cities, serving 2,225 children.

"Dental care typically is looked at as an extra or an add-on," said Terri Chandler, who is the founder and executive director of Future Smiles in Clark County, Nevada, which includes Las Vegas and serves 7,500 kids in 75 schools. "It is not part of medical care."

Nearly half of all U.S. children don't receive regular dental care, according to a 2022 report from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, which is a federal agency.

That can lead to cavities quickly: More than half of children ages 6 to 8 had a cavity in at least one baby tooth and more than half adolescents ages 12 to 19 have a cavity in at least one of the permanent teeth, according to the



Clayton Warner holds a mirror as dental hygienist Mary Davis examines his teeth at the Christa McAuliffe School in Concord, N.H., Feb. 21, 2024. (AP)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Too many children fail to see a dentist before they enter school - forcing them to go to the hospital to get treatment for a mouthful of cavities, Harvard School of Dental Medicine's Catherine Hayes said.

"If their parents aren't getting any kind of oral health education in the physician's office, these kids develop extensive decay," she said, noting it can take a month or more to fix. She added: "... It's completely preventable. We know how to prevent it."

At Boston Children's Hospital, there's a waiting list of eight to nine months for the dental clinic, said Man Wai Ng, the dentist-in-chief. Ng points in part to worsening dental care during the pandemic.

### Preventive

"I have patients who were going to bed without brushing their teeth. They ate and drank at all hours of the day because those normal daily routines weren't there," Ng said. "They weren't able to get in for ... preventive dental care. Kids were developing more dental disease without the ability to get timely care."

Ruth Langwell struggled to find a dentist for her granddaughter Lola, a 10-year-old who has autism. She recently was able to get the girl into the clinic.

"She needs somebody who is very patient, obviously ... We've tried two other dentists and they have been reluctant because of Lola's challenges," said Langwell, who added she wanted Lola to see a dentist at age 2, but didn't until she was five.

The challenge for many programs, especially mobile and school-based clinics, is sustainability, said Richard Niederman, a professor of epidemiology and health promotion at NYU Dentistry and founder of CarriedAway. That's because school-based programs

like Niederman's lean heavily on donations because they often serve low-income populations who are either uninsured or on Medicaid.

Niederman has spent two decades developing his program. Other ones he tried in the Bronx and Boston ended due to a lack of funding, but this time, Niederman has \$1 million from Northeast Delta Dental, which ensures his New Hampshire program will remain in place for at least three years.

"It breaks my heart that kids don't get effective care that they could get ... and the system doesn't support it," he said. But the picture for pediatric oral health is improving - even outside of school programs.

Untreated tooth decay in preschool children is down 50% since 2000, according to the federal dental research agency's report. It pointed to an increased use of sealants, which prevent cavities.

Jane Grover, the senior director of the American Dental Association's Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, said there has been "tremendous growth" of dental programs in community health centers, as well as efforts to deploy dental hygienists in pediatric offices.

Some states are also better coordinating pediatric and dental care. Massachusetts, started requiring physicians last year to ensure a child has two fluoride varnish applications and refer them to a dentist, Hayes said.

"I remember my first dental cleaning and that left a lasting impression," Grover said. "We want to have children understand that, but we want their families to understand that sugar-sweetened beverages all day on primary teeth where the enamel is a little thinner than it is on adult teeth, it doesn't take long ... to go from a potentially serious situation to a very serious situation."

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## Gladbach spoil Hasenhüttl's home debut as Wolfsburg coach

## Brest edge struggling Metz to maintain drive for CL, Monaco pip Rennes

PARIS, April 8, (AP) — Brest held on to beat struggling Metz 4-3 and consolidate second place in the French league on Sunday, moving the unheralded club closer to qualification for the Champions League for the first time.

The home side led 4-1 but got pegged back to 4-3 after Georgia forward Georges Mikautadze struck two late goals. Brest trimmed Paris Saint-Germain's big lead to 10 points with only six games left.

Brest has never finished higher than eighth in its history, and Europe's elite competition is within reach for the small club from Brittany. Governing body UEFA recently visited the 15,000-seater Stade Francis Le Blé amid concerns it will not meet the norms to host Champions League games.

Metz took a surprise lead after six minutes when defender Ismaël Traoré turned in Lamine Camara's corner.

But the home fans enjoyed a 3-1 halftime scoreline thanks to goals from defender Brendan Chardonnet, midfielder Kamory Doumbia and striker Steve Mounié. Uruguay forward Martín Satriano headed in the fourth goal on the hour mark.

Metz again showed good attacking intent but is 17th in the 18-team league, with only six rounds left to

avoid relegation after just one season in the top league.

Also Sunday, third-place Monaco beat Rennes 1-0 to stay within one point of Brest, with midfielder Maghnes Aklouché hitting a first-time shot from a left-wing cross in the 25th.

Both sides had a player sent off: Rennes forward Martin Terrier in the 47th for a dangerous tackle on Aklouché, and Monaco defender Thilo Kehrer for a second yellow in the

## SOCCER

64th.

Nantes is just above the relegation zone after losing 3-1 at home to 10th-place Lyon in the late game, despite leading in the 16th minute through forward Matthis Abline.

Former France and Tottenham midfielder Moussa Sissoko was given too much room and advanced unchallenged before spreading the ball right to Florent Mollet, whose cross from the right was neatly headed inside the right post by Abline.

Veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette equalized in the 75th for French Cup finalist Lyon with his 14th league goal of the season, before 19-year-old forward Malick Fofana

scored two minutes later and Gift Orban wrapped up the win seven minutes into injury time.

Fifth-place Nice drew 0-0 at Reims, and Toulouse vs. Strasbourg also finished scoreless.

Téji Savanier's second-half penalty and an injury-time goal from substitute Yann Karamoh gave 13th-place Montpellier a 2-0 home win against Lorient.

PSG was held 1-1 at home by rock-bottom Clermont on Saturday.

Rocco Reitz scored late as Borussia Mönchengladbach came from behind to beat Wolfsburg 3-1 in the Bundesliga, spoiling Ralph Hasenhüttl's home debut as coach.

It was Hasenhüttl's second game as Wolfsburg coach after taking over from the fired Niko Kovač. He started with a win but the game saw the return of the misfortune that plagued his predecessor.

Ridle Baku got Wolfsburg off to a fine start in the seventh minute, but Gladbach emerged with determination after the break and was duly rewarded when Ko Itakura equalized with a deflected shot in the 52nd and Nathan Ngoumou scored six minutes after that.

Reitz capitalized on a Wolfsburg mistake to seal the win in the 88th with a precise shot from Tomáš Čvančára's cross.

## Bhatia 'wins' Texas Open playoff, earns Masters trip

Korda makes it 4 in a row on LPGA

SAN ANTONIO, April 8, (AP) — Akshay Bhatia nearly celebrated too soon Sunday, hurting his left shoulder while pumping his arms on a 12-foot birdie to force a playoff. He recovered to make birdie on the first extra hole and win the Texas Open over hard-luck Denny McCarthy to earn a trip to the Masters.

McCarthy was six shots behind going to the back nine at the TPC San Antonio when he birdied eight of the nine holes - including the last seven - making a 12-foot birdie for a 9-under 63. Bhatia had to make his birdie putt from the same range to have a chance.

He made it for a 67, raising his arms to shake them in his clutch moment. And that's when he felt his shoulder - which he says has given him trouble before - pop out of its socket.

Bhatia hit his tee shot and laid up with a 5-iron on the par-5 18th in the playoff.

## GOLF

McCarthy, winless on the PGA Tour, was first to play and chunked a wedge so badly that he immediately hung his head. The ball came up some 20 yards short into the middle of a creek.

And then Bhatia called for treatment, jogging off the course briefly to get his shoulder taped. He returned and hit wedge to 6 feet. Needing three putts to win, he holed it to win for the second time on the PGA Tour.

The 22-year-old Bhatia won at the Barracuda Championship last summer. It was held opposite the British Open, so it didn't get him into the Masters. This one did, and it came 10 years after Bhatia played in the Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals at the home of the Masters. McCarthy had already earned his spot from finishing in the top 50 in the world last year.

Rory McIlroy closed with a 66 to finish alone in third, nine shots back.

Nelly Korda won the T-Mobile Match Play to become the first LPGA Tour player in 16 years to win four straight starts, taking four of the first seven holes and going on to beat Leona Maguire 4 and 3 at Shadow Creek.

Lorena Ochoa in 2008 was the last player to win four consecutive starts. Korda, the world's top-ranked player, will try to tie the record of five - set by Nancy Lopez in 1978 and matched by Annika Sorenstam in 2004-05 - in two weeks at the season's first major, The Chevron Championship.

Because Korda took seven weeks off after winning in January in her hometown of Bradenton, Florida, this victory was her third straight in a scheduled event. Four players share the record of four in a row, with Mickey Wright doing it twice.

Korda took the drama out it against her Irish opponent with birdies on Nos. 5-7 for a 4-up lead. She was 5 up after 12, saw Maguire take 13 and 14 with pars, and ended the match with a par on the par-4 15th.

Korda earned \$300,000 for her 12th career victory.

Dean Burmester of South Africa won for the first time on the LIV Golf League by closing with a 4-under 68 and beating Sergio Garcia in a playoff when the Spaniard hit into the water on the second extra hole at LIV Golf Miami.

It was the third time Garcia has lost a playoff in LIV Golf, and the second



First-place individual champion Dean Burmester, of Stinger GC, poses with the trophy after the final round of LIV Golf Miami at Trump National Doral in Doral, Fla. (AP)



Akshay Bhatia reacts to a birdie putt on the 18th hole during the final round of the Texas Open golf tournament in San Antonio. Bhatia defeated Denny McCarthy in a playoff. (AP)

time this year.

The former Masters champion held a 40-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole and then took the lead when Burmester bogeyed the 18th at Trump National Doral. But Garcia badly missed a 4-foot par putt on the 18th hole and shot 70. They finished at 11-under 205, one shot ahead of Matthew Wolff.

Both made par on the 18th on the first playoff hole. The second time around, Garcia came up short of the green and into the water. Burmester made a 3-foot par putt for the \$4 million prize.

Burmester won for the third time in the last five months. He won the Joburg Open and South African Open late last year, events co-sanctioned by the European and Sunshine tours.

Masters champion Jon Rahm heads to Augusta National without having won in a year, at least as an individual. His Legion XIII team won for the third time in six LIV events this year.

Steven Fisk birdied three of his last four holes for a 4-under 68, and then won with a par on the first extra hole to win the Club Car Championship at The Landings to win his first Korn Ferry Tour event.

Rob Oppenheim shot 67 on the Deer Creek course at The Landings Golf & Athletic Club. They finished at 14-under 274.

On the 18th in the playoff, Oppenheim at a 5-foot par putt to extend the playoff.

Phillip Knowles, the 54-hole leader, shot 71 and tied for third at 12-under 276 with John Pak (63) and Max McGreevy (67).

## Commonwealth Games Federation plans to announce the new '26 host next month

LONDON, April 8, (AP) — The Commonwealth Games Federation plans to announce a new host for its 2026 event next month, saying it has "multiple proposals" to replace Australia's Victoria state.

The CGF on Monday said it was keeping the proposals confidential. Victoria state lawmakers last July withdrew from plans to host the 2026 Games in three regional hubs, citing escalating costs.

"Significant progress has been made and we are excited by the early concepts, which aim to reset and reframe the Games," the CGF said in a statement following its April meeting. "We are working collaboratively with the relevant (members) to undertake further detailed assessments, and aim to announce the 2026 Commonwealth Games host in May."

Victoria state agreed to a compensation package with the Commonwealth Games Federation, which will help offset costs for the next hosts. Australia's Gold Coast, which held the 2018 Commonwealth Games, was flagged as a potential host for 2026 but couldn't get state or federal funding.

The CGF said it was focusing on transforming the Games to reduce costs and make the events more sustainable. The Commonwealth Games, established in 1930 as the British

Empire Games, are open to 74 nations and territories and have been staged in Australia, Canada, England, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

Last month, an Australian inquiry into the Victoria government's decision to cancel announced it cost the state 589 million Australian dollars (\$385 million) and the price estimate that resulted in it being shelved was "overstated and not transparent."

Victoria's Auditor-General's Office said agencies failed to work together

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES

to give "frank, full and timely advice" to the government before it decided to host the games.

In 2022 the Labor government led by then-Premier Daniel Andrews agreed to host the 2026 Games at an expected cost of about AS2.6 billion (\$1.7 billion). But it pulled out in July 2023 after saying the figure had blown out to AS6.9 billion (\$4.5 billion).

Craig Phillips, CEO of Commonwealth Games Australia, said the inquiry findings "confirms the gross exaggeration of costs detailed by the then premier when he made the decision to cancel."



Fiorentina's Dodo, (left) fights for the ball with Juventus' Kenan Yildiz, during the Serie A soccer match between Juventus FC and Fiorentina at the Juventus stadium in Turin, Italy. (AP)

## Shelton outlasts Tiafoe in three sets

## Collins follows Miami title with Charleston Open win

CHARLESTON, S.C., April 8, (AP) — Danielle Collins is loaded with confidence and belief in what she can accomplish in her final season after following her Miami Open title with the Charleston Open championship.

Collins powered past 11th-ranked Daria Kasatkina for a 6-2, 6-1 victory Sunday, her career-best 13th straight match win as she became the first since Serena Williams in 2013 to follow a hard-court victory at Miami with one on the green clay of Charleston.

And she's open to even more in what is the 30-year-old's final season on tour.

"I'm just trying to keep this train rolling," Collins said after winning her fourth WTA title. "Really be myself out there and not think too much about what's next."

No one's been more dominant the past two weeks than the "Danimal," the nickname she coined when she signed up for Instagram out of college.

She showed that again this week, dropping just one set in six matches - it was a second-set loss to 2023 Charle-

## TENNIS

ton winner Ons Jabeur - to lift a second straight trophy.

She led 3-0 in the opening set, where she broke Kasatkina's serve twice as the crowd cheered the American's every move.

Collins didn't let up in the second set, taking a 5-0 lead before the Russian held serve.

Collins closed the match with a volley at the net, pumping her fist as her face broke into a smile.

Kasatkina, who is ranked 11th, played with a heavy wrap on her right thigh. She struggled with her serve throughout, regularly putting herself behind. The way Collins has played, it was an impossible hole from which to dig out.

"At first, I wanted to say I'll miss you on tour but after this match I'm not sure," Kasatkina said during the trophy ceremony. "To be honest, I'm going to miss you because you're such a character. Your personality is amazing. Tennis is going to lose a lot after you're done."

Collins had dealt with painful en-



From left: Second-placed Enat Tirusew of Ethiopia, winner Mestawut Fikir of Ethiopia and third-placed Vivian Cheruiyot of Kenya pose on the podium after the women's race of the Paris marathon, in Paris. (AP)

## Ethiopians dominate Paris Marathon

Ethiopian runners Mulugeta Uma and Mestawut Fikir won the men's and women's Paris Marathon at their first attempt.

Uma was well clear heading to the finish line but almost collided with an official approaching the final turn. He was going straight when the official ushered him to the right, almost knocking Uma off balance. Uma quickly regained his poise and pointed to the crowd as he celebrated.

He clocked a winning time of 2 hours, 5 minutes, 33 seconds and finished ahead of Kenyan pair Titus

dometrios, where tissue in the uterus grows outside the uterus. It can cause difficulty getting pregnant if not treated and Collins made a life decision to end her career for other goals like having children.

Her recent success has not changed her perspective or plans for retirement.

"I'm really happy that I can showcase my best tennis in these last couple of events, because I think that's the way I want to go out," she said. "I want to go out with my best results. I know everyone has a different way of retiring and ending their career, but for me I want to try to go out playing my best tennis."

Collins never thought about cancelling plans for Charleston after her

success at Miami. She drove home to Tampa, then drove herself to Charleston. She does not have a full-time coach or many of the staffers that some WTA players travel with.

In Houston, Ben Shelton captured his second career ATP Tour title, outlasting defending champion Frances Tiafoe 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 on Sunday to win the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championship.

Shelton, 21, had 11 aces on the way to becoming the youngest player to win this event since Andy Roddick did it at 19 years old in 2002.

Shelton has had his issues on clay courts. He was 2-7 in his career on the slower surface and had lost his last five clay-court matches before starting

tournament play this week.

But Shelton survived three three-set matches to take the title, his first since winning in Tokyo this past October.

The former Florida Gator standout won 83% of his first-serve points according to Infosys ATP Stats to triumph after 2 hours, 16 minutes.

He and Tiafoe are friends who had joking and kind words for each other after the match.

"I know this one stings," Shelton said. "Sorry you didn't go back-to-back titles, but you're that type of player who can go back-to-back. I want to see you do it again this year."

Tiafoe said it was great playing in a final after a difficult start to the year.

In Monte Carlo, unseeded players Borna Coric of Croatia and Lorenzo Musetti of Italy advanced to the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters.

Musetti downed 13th-seeded American Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-4 and was clinical in converting four of his five break points in the first clay-court Masters of the season.

Coric earlier toppled 16th-seeded Alexander Bublik 6-1, 6-1, breaking his serve six times and saving the only break point he faced against the imposing Kazakh.

Big-serving Jan-Lennard Struff had nine aces in a 1-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory against Argentine Sebastian Baez, who conceded 24 break-point chances. Struff converted only four of them. Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor also advanced with a 7-6 (2), 4-6, 6-2 win against German Dominik Koepfer.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic is looking to win the tournament for the third time but first since 2015. He hasn't made it past the quarterfinals since, and he could face defending champion Andrey Rublev in the quarters.

Second-ranked Jannik Sinner looks to continue his strong start to the year. The Australian Open champion from Italy is 22-1 with three titles, including the Miami Open.

The presence of Grand Slam winners Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev means the top-four ranked men's players are all in action at the Monte Carlo Country Club, where they have byes into the second round.

But record 11-time Monte Carlo champion Rafael Nadal is out as he continues to struggle with injury.



Al-Qurain squash players pose with officials at the end of the championship.

### Al-Qurain Club clinches squash title

The League Squash Excellence Cup was claimed by Al-Qurain Club, securing 46 points at the culmination of the 2023/2024 sports season. The season concluded last Sunday with the 16th Kuwait Championship, held at the courts of the Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah International Complex in South Surra. Khaitan secured second place in the Excellence Cup, earning 34 points, while Yarmouk secured third place with 17 points.

Following the Kuwait Championship matches, the players were awarded the Cup of Excellence and colorful medals by several dignitaries, including Federation President Walid Al-Sumaia, Al-Qurain Club President

Abdul Karim Al-Shahoumi, Federation Vice President Khaled Al-Habib, Secretary General Hamed Al-Omran, Board Members Adel Al-Gharib and Ahmed Al-Adwani, and Women's Committee member Asmaa Ashour.

Al-Qurain's standout player, Badr Al-Maghribi, clinched first place in the general age championship, triumphing in the final match against Al-Nasr player Mohammed Adel Al-Masoud with a score of 1/3. Al-Qurain's Saif Heikal secured third place. In the women's category, Al-Arabi's Basma Al-Shami claimed first place, followed by Al-Qurain's Aisha Al-Mizan in second place, and Kuwaiti player Sarah Al-Ali in third place.

## Al-Arabi, Al-Qadisiya share the spoils in exciting derby

Al-Mutawa, Khaba score

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8: Al-Arabi against Al-Qadisiya Derby ended in a deadlock in the third round of the Zain Premier League championship group at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium**

Badr Al-Mutawa put Al-Qadisiya ahead in the 14th minute, only for Al-Arabi to level the score in the 39th



Players in an aerial battle during the derby match between Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya.

### SOCCER

minute through Moroccan player Hamza Khaba.

This marks the third draw between Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya this season, following 1-1 and 2-2 results in previous encounters.

The match saw intense excitement from both teams, with fans enjoying two hours of exhilarating action as both sides launched attacks. Despite Al-Qadisiya holding more possession, Al-Arabi appeared more threatening in attack.

Both teams pushed for a winner but ultimately settled for a

point each.

Al-Qadisiya coach Muhammad Al-Mashaan admitted his team fell short in the derby, highlighting deficiencies in ball retention and buildup play. He acknowledged Al-Qadisiya's potential to perform better, especially after taking an early lead.

Al-Mashaan emphasized the

impact of the derby's intensity on the technical aspects of the game, expressing hope for improvement in future matches.

The Zain Premier League will go on hiatus until April 27 to accommodate the participation of the Kuwaiti Under-23 Olympic team in the Asian Cup finals, scheduled to take place in Qatar from April 15 to May 5.

## Kuwaiti figure skating team heads to Bergamo

**KUWAIT CITY, April 8:** The Kuwaiti girls' figure skating team is gearing up for the regional championship, set to kick off in Bergamo, Italy, next Sunday. Organized by the International Skating Union (ISU), the competition will feature seven teams from across three continents and span two days.

Heading the Winter Games Club, Fahaid Al-Ajmi announced that Sarah Al-Lahou, Laila Al-Farsi, Lara Al-Barak, and Sama Jaragh will proudly represent Al-Azraq. They'll face off against teams from Greece, South Africa, Cyprus, Morocco, the Emirates, and Egypt on the international stage.

Al-Ajmi noted the team's brief camp at the tournament venue, overseen by ISU, before their competition debut. He expressed optimism for their performance, highlighting Kuwait's significant progress in the sport.

### FIGURE SKATING

The players underwent rigorous training at the club's skating rink, guided by Russian coach Julia Martyusheva, under the close supervision of the national team's administrative staff, led by game director Salem Al-

Ajmi.

This participation presents an opportunity for Kuwaiti female athletes to earn crucial points for qualification in the upcoming Winter Olympic Games in Milan 2026 and the Ninth Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China, in February 2025.

Al-Ajmi extended gratitude to the Kuwait Olympic Committee and the General Sports Authority for their support, enabling the club's efforts in advancing the five Winter Olympic Games it hosts, including figure skating, ice hockey, curling, skiing, and speed skating.



Kuwaiti figure skating team gears up for the championship.

## Citizens have injury concerns

### Real Madrid well rested to take on City in Ancelotti's 200th CL game

**MADRID, April 8, (AP):** One of the Champions League's newest rivalries resumes this week with Real Madrid hoping to take advantage of the extended rest it's had ahead of Tuesday's quarterfinal against Manchester City.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, entering his record-extending 200th Champions League match, has had eight full days to prepare his squad for facing Pep Guardiola's Manchester City for the third straight year in the knockout rounds of Europe's top club competition.

City, meanwhile, played on Saturday at Crystal Palace in the Premier League and Guardiola wasn't happy about the considerable difference in the teams' preparation time. Madrid's last Spanish league match was on March 31, a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao. Madrid didn't have to play this past weekend as the Spanish calendar was reserved for the Copa del Rey final.

Ancelotti said Monday he is not going to make any "rare" changes to his team or try anything too different tactically because of the extra time he had to prepare.

"It is an incredibly attractive match," he said. "The quality of both sides will allow us to watch a beautiful match at a technical level. We think we will be better than City in some aspects and they think they will be better than us in others. After the end of the 180 minutes we will see which team prevails."

Madrid eliminated City two seasons ago with a late comeback in the second leg of the semifinals at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium,

where it hasn't lost in 27 straight games in all competitions dating back to last April.

But City got the better of Madrid last season, advancing after a 4-0 rout in the second leg of the semifinals at home. Both clubs went on to win the Champions League title after eliminating their rival.

The last four matches between the clubs produced 17 goals in total. They will have faced each other 12 times in 12 years after this season's quarterfinals. So far there are four wins for City and three for Madrid, with three draws.

Both teams are trying to reach the semifinals of the Champions League for the fourth straight time. City has injury concerns at full back for the game in Madrid, with captain and first-choice right back

### SOCCER

Kyle Walker hurt on England duty in the recent international break and Guardiola's two main options at left back - Nathan Ake and Josko Gvardiol - picking up injuries since the resumption of the Premier League.

None of Walker, Ake or Gvardiol were spotted in training on Monday, likely leaving Guardiola having to play 19-year-old Rico Lewis at right back and Manuel Akanji out of position at left back.

Ancelotti arrives as the coach with most Champions League titles (four) and victories (114), and he will be reaching his milestone 200th game in charge at the Bernabeu on Tuesday.

It will be the 59th game in the Madrid dugout for the 64-year-old Italian, who is in his 21st Champions League season.

"Reaching 200 games means a lot," Ancelotti said. "Surviving so many years in football, especially at my age, is a success."

## Pelicans beat Suns, leaving teams tied for 6th

## Rockets eliminated from playoffs, Mavs win in OT

**DALLAS, April 8, (AP):** Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 48 points, Dante Exum forced overtime with a buzzer-beating 3-pointer and the Dallas Mavericks rallied from 22 points down for a 147-136 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday.

Luka Doncic had 37 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds as the Mavericks took another step toward the fifth seed in the Western Conference playoffs.

Dillon Brooks scored a season-high 29 points, and Fred VanVleet had 24 points and 12 assists for the Rockets, who were eliminated from postseason contention after not trailing until the final three minutes of regulation.

### Pelicans 113, Suns 105

In Phoenix, C.J. McCollum scored 31 points, Zion Williamson had 29 and New Orleans beat Phoenix, leaving the teams tied for the sixth and final guaranteed Western Conference playoff spot.

Williamson, who sat out Friday night in a loss at San Antonio because of a finger injury, also had 10 rebounds and seven assists as the Pelicans snapped a four-game losing streak and moved to 25-14 on the road. Their next three games are also away from home before finishing at home next Sunday against the Los Angeles Lakers.

### Timberwolves 127, Lakers 117

In Los Angeles, Naz Reid hit six 3-pointers while scoring 31 points, and Minnesota capitalized on LeBron James' absence and Anthony Davis' early exit with an eye injury for a victory over Los Angeles.

Anthony Edwards added 26 points for the Timberwolves, who moved even with Denver atop the Western Conference at 54-24 with their seventh win in nine games. Minnesota didn't waste its golden opportunity to beat the surging Lakers, who played most of the night without their two superstars.

### Knicks 122, Bucks 109

In Milwaukee, Jalen Brunson scored 43 points and New York surged in the second half to win and Milwaukee their fourth consecutive loss.

The Bucks are facing their longest losing streak of the season and also have dropped six of their last seven. Milwaukee is a game ahead of the Knicks

and Orlando Magic in the race for the Eastern Conference's No. 2 playoff seed behind the Boston Celtics.

### Kings 107, Nets 77

In New York, Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 20 rebounds to extend his streak of double-doubles to 61 games, and Sacramento routed Brooklyn.

De'Aaron Fox scored 20 points for the Kings, who improved to 45-33 and stopped a two-game slide that had dropped them into ninth in the Western Conference.

### 76ers 133, Spurs 126, 20T

In San Antonio, Tyrese Maxey had a career-high 52 points and injury-depleted Philadelphia overcame Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio in double overtime for their fifth straight victory.

Wembanyama had 33 points, 18 rebounds and seven blocks. Philadelphia star Joel Embiid sat out the second night of a back-to-back. He had played three straight after missing 29 games because of a torn meniscus in his left knee.

### Warriors 118, Jazz 110

In San Francisco, clinched at least a spot in the four-team play-in tournament before the game when Houston lost 147-136 in overtime to Dallas.

From the opening tip, Thompson

came out looking for his shot to handle the bulk of the scoring load on a night Stephen Curry was held out for rest and Chris Paul started in his place.

### Clippers 120, Cavaliers 118

In Los Angeles, Paul George scored 23 of his 39 points in the fourth quarter. James Harden added 22 and Los Angeles rallied to beat Cleveland for their 50th victory.

Los Angeles overcame a 26-point deficit for the third-largest comeback victory in franchise history.

Terance Mann hit a tying 3-pointer and Amir Coffey followed with a 3 to

### BASKETBALL

give the Clippers their first lead since late in the first quarter, 118-115.

### Celtics 124, Trail Blazers 107

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 26 points and reached 10,000 in his NBA career, leading Boston past Portland for their 13th straight home victory.

Kristaps Porzingis had his third straight double-double with 12 points and 10 boards in just 27 minutes for NBA-leading Boston.



Boston Celtics guard Payton Pritchard (11) drives to the basket against Portland Trail Blazers guard Rayan Rupert (72) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Boston. (AP)

### Pacers 117, Heat 115

In Indianapolis, Myles Turner finished with 22 points and 13 rebounds, T.J. McConnell added 22 points and Indiana hung on to strengthen their playoff prospects with a victory over Miami.

The Pacers have won four of five to take a 1 1/2-game lead over the Heat for the Eastern Conference's sixth and final guaranteed playoff spot.

Jimmy Butler had 27 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Heat. Tyler Herro scored 21 points but had a made free throw erased because of a lane violation on Kevin Love with 3.6 seconds to go and the Heat down two.

### Thunder 121, Hornets 118

In Charlotte, Josh Giddey had 20 points, 13 assists and 13 rebounds for his 11th career triple-double. Isaiah Joe had two key 3-pointers in the final 1:30 and Oklahoma City beat Charlotte to snap a three-game losing streak.

The Thunder had lost their previous three games - their longest skid of the season - with stars Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Jalen Williams out with injuries.

### Magic 113, Bulls 98

In Orlando, Paolo Banchero scored 24 points, Jalen Suggs added 19 and Orlando kept up a playoff push that could land them as high as second in the Eastern Conference with a win over Chicago.

The Magic (46-32) moved into at least a tie for third place in the East by completing a four-game sweep of the Bulls. DeMar DeRozan had 30 points for the Bulls and Javonte Green, starting for the first time this season in place of injured forward Alex Caruso, added 15 points and eight rebounds.

### Raptors 130, Wizards 122

In Toronto, Immanuel Quickley had a season-high 31 points and 13 assists, RJ Barrett scored 22 points, and Toronto beat Washington, handing the slumping Wizards their franchise-worst 64th loss of the season.

Kelly Olynyk scored 21 points and Gary Trent Jr. had 20 as the Raptors snapped an eight-game home losing streak and got consecutive wins for the first time since a three-game streak Feb. 22-26.



Nelly Korda poses with the trophy after winning the LPGA T-Mobile Match Play golf tournament in North Las Vegas, Nev. Korda won 4th straight LPGA Tour start, beating Maguire in T-Mobile Match Play. (AP)  
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# Sports

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Cardoso delivers once again for Gamecocks against Iowa

## South Carolina finishes perfect season with NCAA championship

# Liverpool avoid damaging defeat to Man U but drop points in three-way race for title

Tottenham move up to fourth

**MANCHESTER, England, April 8, (AP):** Having ended Liverpool's quadruple challenge, Manchester United looked set to deliver a major blow to Jurgen Klopp's hopes of bowing out at the end of the season with a second Premier League title.

Time will tell how damaging a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford will be to the Merseyside club in the three-way fight at the top, but it could have been so much worse if not for Mohamed Salah's late penalty.

"We should have won the game, that is clear," Klopp said. "As far as I'm concerned, we have a point more than we did before."

It wasn't only the prospect of defeat at the home of Liverpool's fiercest rivals that felt so significant, but the nature of it.

Klopp's team had totally dominated by raining down shots on United's goal in a mismatched first half, but only managed to lead 1-0 at the break through Luis Diaz's goal.

The atmosphere totally changed when Bruno Fernandes struck a stunning equalizer from inside the center circle after a Liverpool mistake and Kobbie Mainoo curled a superb shot into the top corner to give United the lead.

After victories for Arsenal and Manchester City on Saturday, Liverpool was heading toward a second defeat to United, after losing in the quarterfinals of the FA Cup last month.

That was until Aaron Wan-Bissaka's reckless lunge at Harvey Elliott led to referee Anthony Taylor pointing to the spot and Salah converting.

The draw moved Liverpool level on points with first-place Arsenal, but behind on goal difference. City is a point behind in third in an ever-tightening title race.

### SOCCER

"You shouldn't do what we do today constantly, that won't be enough. Definitely not," Klopp said.

Klopp said in January that he would step down at the end of the season. He has already led Liverpool to the English League Cup and the club is still in contention to win the Europa League. Klopp is hoping to win the Premier League title for a second time after ending the club's 30-year wait for the trophy in 2020.

United has been a bogey team for Liverpool this season - with two draws in the league and victory in the FA Cup.

Arsenal still has to travel to Old Trafford in the league, but Klopp predicted a similar performance by United would be punished by Mikel Arteta's league leader.

"I'm really sorry to say it, but we should have won both games and didn't. That's our fault," Klopp said.

Erik ten Hag needed a performance from his players in front of new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe.

A desperately disappointing week had seen his team blow winning positions in stoppage time at Brentford and Chelsea to deliver blows to United's chances of qualifying for the Champions League.

While this was another late setback, United's response to being totally outplayed in the first half will have provided some encouragement to the manager.

"When you put yourself three times in a week in a winning position, just before the end of the game, but then drop points, it is very disappointing," Ten Hag said.

Pressure is on Ten Hag to salvage a campaign that has failed to live up to expectations. Ratcliffe is overhauling United's soccer operations in an attempt to end its wait for the title, having last lifted the trophy in Alex Ferguson's final season in 2013.

That won't happen this year, but Ten Hag could still win the FA Cup with his team playing second-tier Coventry in the semifinals later this month.

He still has hopes of qualifying for the Champions League, with fifth place potentially being enough, dependent on how English teams perform in Europe this season.

"We will keep fighting and we have



South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley celebrates with her team after the Final Four college basketball championship game against Iowa in the women's NCAA Tournament in Cleveland. (AP)



Liverpool's Luis Diaz celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Liverpool at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

to do the same and learn from the moments," Ten Hag said.

On Thursday, it was Chelsea pulling off a late comeback to stun United.

On Sunday, Mauricio Pochettino's team was on the wrong end of stoppage-time drama as last-place Sheffield United fought back to earn a 2-2 draw at Bramall Lane after Ollie McBurnie's equalizer in the third minute of added time.

Chelsea twice squandered the lead after opening the scoring through Thiago Silva and going in front again through Noni Madueke.

While Sheffield United looks almost certain to be relegated this season, it showed fight in front of its home fans.

Jayden Bogle leveled the game in the first half before McBurnie's late effort.

"Today is not about finding excuses, in the last few minutes we needed to kill (the game), that is the reason we are in the position we are," Pochettino said. "We are scoring and the problem is we are conceding a lot, we are going to keep working and believing."

Tottenham moved up to fourth after a 3-1 win against Nottingham Forest to take charge of the race for the last guaranteed Champions League place.

Spurs moved above fifth-place Aston Villa on goal difference and also has a game in hand on its closest rival.

Forest, meanwhile, missed the chance to move further clear of the relegation zone and is above 18th-place Luton on goal difference alone.

Shepherd smashes 32 in the last over of Mumbai's innings

## Indians secure first win as Titans continue good run

MUMBAI, April 8, (AP): Romario Shepherd smashed 32 in the last over of his team's innings as five-time champion Mumbai Indians secured its first win in the Indian Premier League with a 29-run victory over Delhi Capitals.

In the day's second game, Lucknow Super Giants beat Gujarat Titans by 33 runs to win its third straight match.

Mumbai ended its opening three-match losing streak and garnered a valuable two points for the Hardik Pandya-led side, while Delhi fell to its fourth loss in five games.

Shepherd smacked 39 not out off only 10 balls - including 4-6-6-6-4-6 against Anrich Nortje (2-65) in the 20th over - to help Mumbai post an imposing 234-5. Former skipper Rohit Sharma top scored with 49 off 27, including six fours and three sixes, while Tim David hit a 21-ball 45 not out.

In reply, Delhi finished on 205-8, thanks largely to Tristan Stubbs' 71 not out off 25 deliveries and opener Prithvi Shaw's 66 off 40. Pacer Gerald Coetzee took 4-34 for Mumbai.

After losing the toss, Mumbai made a fine start with Sharma and Ishan Kis-

han putting on 80 in seven overs.

Kishan scored 42 off 23 balls before left-arm spinner Axar Patel provided



Mumbai Indians' Romario Shepherd plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals in Mumbai, India. (AP)

the breakthrough, bowling Sharma at the end of the seventh over. He put the brakes on Mumbai's scoring, also sending back Kishan with a sharp one-handed caught-and-bowled dismissal.

Top T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav returned to action from a sports hernia injury but fell to a two-ball duck as Mumbai reached 111-3 in 10.2 overs.

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Hardik scored 39 off 33 balls to stabilize the innings and put on 60 runs for the fifth wicket with David. Mumbai desperately needed some momentum toward the innings' end when Shepherd arrived at the crease.

He smacked Nortje's final over to all parts of the ground as Mumbai's par total suddenly became a challenging one.

Shepherd continued this momentum with ball in hand as he then dismissed Delhi opener David Warner for 10 runs.

Shaw and Abhishek Porel added 88 off 49 balls for the second wicket to prove a platform to chase.



Tottenham's James Maddison, (right) attempts to block a kick by Nottingham Forest's goal keeper Matt Sels during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest at the White Hart Lane stadium in London. (AP)

CLEVELAND, April 8, (AP): Kamilla Cardoso delivered once again for Dawn Staley and South Carolina.

A perfect finish. A dynasty. A team too big for Caitlin Clark and Iowa this time around.

Cardoso had 15 points and a career-high 17 rebounds, and South Carolina completed its perfect season with an 87-75 victory over Clark and the Hawkeyes in the NCAA championship game on Sunday.

With Staley directing a relentless attack from the sideline, the Gamecocks (38-0) became the 10th Division I team to go through a season without a loss. And they accomplished the feat after they lost all five starters from last season's team that lost to Clark's squad in the national semifinals.

"When young people lock in and have a belief, and have a trust, and their parents have that same trust, this is what can happen," Staley said. "They made history. They etched their names in the history books."

Clark did all she could to lead the Hawkeyes to their first championship. She scored 30 points, including a championship-record 18 in the first quarter. She rewrote the record book at Iowa (34-5), finishing as the career leading scorer in NCAA Division I history with 3,951 points.

### BASKETBALL

She hopes her legacy isn't defined by falling short in two NCAA championship games, but more by the millions of new fans she helped bring into the game and the countless young girls and boys that she inspired.

"I think the biggest thing is it's really hard to win these things. I think I know that better than most people by now, to be so close twice really hurts," Clark said.

As the final buzzer sounded, a stoic Clark walked off the court, through the confetti, and into the tunnel heading to the locker room.

"I personally want to thank Caitlin Clark for lifting up our sport. She carried a heavy load for our sport," Staley said. "She's going to lift that league (WNBA) up as well. Caitlin Clark if you're out there you're one of the GOATs of our game. We appreciate you."

South Carolina has won three titles in the last eight years, including two of the past three, to lay claim to being the latest dynasty in women's basketball. Staley became the fifth coach to win at least three national championships, joining Geno Auriemma, Pat Summitt, Kim Mulkey and Tara VanDerveer.

The Gamecocks, who have won 109 of their last 112 games, became the first team since UConn in 2016 to go undefeated. South Carolina had a couple scares throughout the season, but always found a way to win.

With most of the team returning next year, Staley's team is in a good position to keep this run going.

"This team, we're going to be good. Coach Staley, we have the best coach, what, in the country, in the nation, in the whole world?" Raven Johnson said. "It's not telling what she's going to add to the pieces that's already here. I just say be on the lookout."

Tessa Johnson led South Carolina with 19 points. Cardoso, the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player, also blocked three shots.

"Kamilla Cardoso was not going to let us lose a game in the NCAA Tournament," Staley said. "She played through an injury, she played like one of the top picks in the WNBA draft, and her teammates did something that no teammates have done for somebody who went to the WNBA in our program. They send her off as a national champion. So this is history for us."

Led by the 6-foot-7 Cardoso and Ashley Watkins, South Carolina enjoyed a 51-29 rebounding advantage. It also finished with 30 second-chance points.

The Gamecocks also showed off their impressive depth. Tessa Johnson helped the team to a 37-0 difference in points by reserves.

South Carolina trailed 46-44 late in the second quarter before going on an 11-0 run spanning halftime to open a 55-46 advantage early in the third quarter. Clark finally ended the run with a layup.

The Hawkeyes closed to 59-55 and had a chance to get even closer, but Hannah Stuelke missed a wide-open layup on a brilliant pass from Clark.

South Carolina responded with the next eight points, including two 3-pointers. The Gamecocks, who were 4 for 20 from behind the 3-point line during last season's Final Four loss to Iowa, went 8 for 19 from deep against the Hawkeyes in the victory.

Iowa was down 80-75 after a three-point play by Sydney Afollor with 4:12 left. But the Hawkeyes were shut out the rest of the way.

Clark checked out with 20 seconds left when Iowa coach Lisa Bluder subbed in fellow senior Molly Davis, who hadn't played since she got hurt in the regular-season finale against Ohio State.