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soccer

## OPINIONS VARY ON MUTANT ... EPIDEMIOLOGICAL CURVE HERE STABLE

# New COVID variant raises concern



Amiri Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen leaving for the UK on Thursday to attend King Charles III's coronation ceremony.

### Arcturus in 34 countries

**KUWAIT CITY, May 4:** There has been renewed talk about the COVID-19 virus and its threat to health as well as the possibility of the return of some preventive measures following the alarming spread of the new mutant "Arcturus" (XBB.1.16), and the decision taken by some countries such as India to compel its citizens to wear masks again, reports Al-Rai daily.

Opinions vary globally regarding the new variant. Some experts classify it as "highly contagious" and may lead to a new wave of the epidemic. Others say there is no clear evidence that it is more dangerous than the previous and the currently prevalent variants in terms of death rates or hospital admissions.

In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of the spread of the new variant around the world in the near future, stating that it spreads at an estimated 1.17 to 1.27 times more efficiently than the "Kraken" variant, which is another variant of the "Omicron" strain.

In this context, the Head of the World Health Organization's Main Advisory Group of Experts for Vaccines and Immunization Stephen Griffin stressed the need to bring back the PCR tests and wear masks due to the high prevalence rates of the new variant.

He told Mail Online, "It may seem like a return to where we were last year."

British experts also urged the need for people to start wearing masks in public places and transportation again in light of the severity of the infection of the new variant.

In terms of the local situation, health sources revealed, "The relevant sectors of the ministry are closely following up the developments of the new variant and its global prevalence rates."

They said, "The emergence of mutants is expected. The criteria for evaluating any new variant include its severity, rate of spread, cases of infection resulting from it, and the rate of hospitalization.

However, there is nothing to worry about in light of the continued stability of the epidemiological curve in the country. Nevertheless, we always recommend adherence to prevention guidelines and sound health habits, including frequent washing and disinfecting of hands, covering the mouth and nose in crowded and closed places, and avoiding contact with others in the event of appearance of the symptoms of infectious respiratory diseases and the continuation of precaution and prevention during movement and travel."

The new variant Arcturus was first identified in the month of January 2023. It has been monitored by the World Health Organization since the end of March.

The number of countries where the new variant has been registered has reached about 34 so far, including India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Singapore, Australia and Canada.

Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, technical chief for COVID-19 at the World Health Organization said, "The Arcturus mutant is one of more than 600 sub-mutants produced from Omicron."

### Opinion

## Kuwait's democracy ... Where to?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

### NewsWatch

OUR past experiences dictate us to speak frankly regarding democracy, the form of which we have taken but overlooked its content, which recognizes that it is a political behavior that leads to the development of our society.

However, when democracy gets tainted by tribal and sectarian themes, it turns into a kind of quota system that leads to more social and political maladies, and paralyzes the nerve of administration due to corruption generated by tribalism, sectarianism, and nepotism.

It is true that the problem is not with society, but rather with the political performance of the representatives of the people, their vision, and their endeavor to give priority to the tribal and sectarian interests. They produce laws and systems that are built on such a narrow perspective, especially the elections.

This phenomenon erodes the existence of proper electoral programs, which we see and hear in the democracies of the civilized world. Through them, parties express the desires of a certain segment of the people in their vision of the interests of the nation.

Unfortunately, the Arab societies, which were based mainly on tribal and sectarian leadership and monopolized parties through a form of group expression, did not show the same behavior as the parties in well-rooted democratic countries.

It seems if there is a majority that governs and another that opposes, as is the case in France, the United States and Germany and even as in the United Kingdom, which is the oldest democracy in the world with constitutional monarchy.

That is why what is happening in the Arab world can be referred to as "chaos in democratic disguise" because it is based on freedom of speech and maliciousness, as is the case in Lebanon, which led to the failure of the state, or in Iraq after 2003 when militias dominated institutions and imposed their presence on society by force of arms.

On the other hand, there is a model that is in harmony with the social reality in the region, which is the monarchical states based on the verse in the Holy Quran "... and take counsel with them in the affair; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who put trust on Him". The leader exercises his role through a specific method. These states have lived the past decades in safety and security, and achieved the highest levels of development and prosperity because the houses of government work to feel the pulse of the people through open assemblies.

Today, the electoral battle has begun in Kuwait and as every time, faces, resonant speeches, and rhetorics are repeated, the candidates appear as if they will reform the universe, and as the public says, "grabbing the wolf by its tail" with everyone rejoicing in the democratic wedding.

However, as soon as a candidate enters parliament as a representative, he becomes either a representative of transactions for his constituency, or a broker of political deals. The situation of society remains as it is or even gets worse. The question remains - What did we benefit from the democracy of idle talk and gossip?

There are about 15 oversight bodies in Kuwait today. Despite this, corruption is still rampant in institutions. This is due to the fact that most of them are accused, or some of their officials are accused, of corruption. The reason is that there is parliamentary, tribal, sectarian, and family protection that dominates the administration, just as the National Assembly did not act

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**KUWAIT CITY:** Al-Enma'a Real Estate Company sold 5 properties consisting of 4 vacant lands and a villa, for a total value of 4.655 million dinars, in an auction during which it offered 16 properties belonging to the former Director General of Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), late **Fahd Al-Raja'an**, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The auction witnessed the sale of two vacant plots of land in **Qurtoba**, measuring 810 meters, one for 805.5 thousand dinars, and another for 787.5 thousand dinars.

This is in addition to a villa in **Yarmouk** measuring 913 square meters located on a main street for 1.47 million dinars, compared to an initial price of 1.14 million dinars, an increase of 28.9%.

Also sold during the auction was a vacant land in **Yarmouk**, measuring 921 meters for 1.064 million dinars, in addition to a vacant land in **Abu Fatira**, measuring 500 meters including and a side yard for 528.5 thousand dinars.

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Public Authority for Manpower announced that First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** has issued instructions to open of new areas of cooperation to bring in expatriate workers from new countries to meet the manpower market needs, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The authority indicated that the instructions of the Minister of Interior included coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to sign memorandums of understanding with new labor-exporting countries.

The sources added that the Public Authority for Manpower is implementing Labor Law No. 6 of 2010 regarding work in the private sector and Domestic Labor Law No. 68 of 2015, which provides full protection for workers' rights.

**VIENNA:** The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced on Wednesday that it reinstalled surveillance cameras in Iranian nuclear sites.

IAEA's spokesman **Fredrik Dahl** told the press in **Vienna** that work was underway to reinstall surveillance cameras at several sites.

Last June, **Iran** called on the IAEA to dismantle the cameras at its nuclear sites due to tension with the west. (KUNA)

**BEIRUT:** The U.S.-led coalition carried out a drone strike Wednesday in northwestern **Syria** targeting a senior al-Qaeda leader, the U.S. military said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the strike hit a chicken farm near the town of **Harem**, killing one person. It said the dead man has not been identified yet.

The strike was the latest of a series of similar attacks over the past years that have killed senior members of the Islamic State group or al-Qaeda. (AP)

### Day by Day

IT seems that the options are limited and the road leading to constitutional decisions is paved with thorns. The decisive decision-making machinery is absent and as a result decisions taken today are invalidated tomorrow.

It is also evident that we lack experienced people and as a result advisors need the services of those who are more experienced and qualified than them. We need strong decision-makers.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Jordanians evacuated from Sudan arrive at a military airport in Amman, Jordan, on April 24, 2023. In the country's capital, Sudan's army and the paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces have battled in the streets with automatic rifles, artillery and airstrikes. An AP journalist, waiting for a chance to leave the country, sheltered with a diverse group of more than a dozen people who hunkered down in a small hotel in central Khartoum. (AP)

### Sudan toll at 550

## Safe passage sought for aid deliveries

### Condition of Syrians dire

**BEIRUT, May 4, (AP):** Three months after a massive earthquake hit Turkey and Syria, living conditions remain dire in Syria's rebel-held northwest, aid officials who visited the region said Wednesday.

The Feb. 6, earthquake killed more than 50,000 people, including over 6,000 in Syria, according to the United Nations, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

Syria's northwestern province of **Idlib** is home to some 4 million people, many of whom had been earlier displaced during the country's 12-year civil war, which has killed nearly half a million people.

David Carden, the U.N.'s Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria crisis said that since the earthquake, some 2,000 trucks have crossed the border from Turkey, providing assistance such as shelter, food, medical supplies and other services.

"We have progressed since the early days but there is still more to be done one," he said, citing funding as one of the issues. Although a flash appeal is fully funded and \$400 million has been raised, he said the humanitarian response plan for Syria, which was in existence before the quake and requires billions of dollars of support, is only 7% funded.

Carden urged for the two border crossings between Turkey and Syria that were opened after the earthquake for three months to allow aid in to remain open.

"We want to keep using these crossings as long as possible," he said.

### Nablus woman slain

**NABLUS, West Bank, May 4, (AP):** Israeli troops on Thursday killed three Palestinian militants wanted in connection with a shooting attack that killed a British-Israeli woman and two of her daughters, the Israeli military said, the latest bloodshed in a relentless wave of violence.

In a rare daytime incursion launched as residents were starting their day, the military said forces entered the heart of the flashpoint city of **Nablus** and raided an apartment where the men were located. Troops and the suspects exchanged fire and the three men were killed.

The military said the men were behind an attack last month on a car near a Jewish West Bank settlement that killed **Lucy Dee**, the British-Israeli mother and two of her daughters, **Maya** and **Rina**. **Leo Dee**, the woman's widower, told The Associated Press he was "comforted" by the news of the militants' death.

In a statement after the raid, the Hamas militant group said the three men, identified as **Hassan Qatnani**, **Moaz al-Masri** and **Ibrahim Jabr**, were its members and the group claimed responsibility for the April attack.



Palestinians carry the body of **Hassan Qatnani**, draped in the Hamas militant group flag, during his funeral in the West Bank city of **Nablus**, May 4, 2023. (AP)

### Criticism

At a virtual news conference from Port Sudan, Griffiths said he is seeking guarantees from the warring sides for the safe passage of humanitarian supplies and people. We do this in every other country, even without cease-fires."

The conflict has so far killed 550 people, including civilians, and wounded more than 4,900. The fighting has displaced at least 334,000 people inside Sudan, and sent tens of thousands more to neighboring countries - Egypt, Chad, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia, according to U.N. agencies.

More than 42,000 Sudanese who fled the war in their country have crossed into Egypt along with 2,300 foreign nationals since the crisis began, the U.N. refugee agency said. Aid workers are increasingly concerned about lack of basic services in these areas, and also in Port Sudan, some 830 kilometers (500 miles) from Khartoum.

Early on, some Western countries, including France, Britain and Germany, airlifted hundreds of their citizens and other foreigners from airfields near Khartoum. Since then, the focus has shifted to Port Sudan as a base for those looking to leave. Many are still struggling to find a way out.

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## OPINION OTHER VOICES

FTC proposes sweeping changes

# Facebook misled parents, failed to guard child privacy

US regulators say Facebook misled parents and failed to protect the privacy of children using its Messenger Kids app, including misrepresenting the access it provided to app developers to private user data.

As a result, The Federal Trade Commission on Wednesday proposed sweeping changes to a 2020 privacy order with Facebook - now called Meta - that would prohibit it from profiting from data it collects on users under 18. This would include data collected through its virtual-reality products. The FTC said the company has failed to fully comply with the 2020 order.

Meta would also be subject to other limitations, including with its use of face-recognition technology and be required to provide additional privacy protections for its users.

"Facebook has repeatedly violated its privacy promises," said Samuel Levine, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "The company's recklessness has put young users at risk, and Facebook needs to answer for its failures."

Meta called the announcement a "political stunt."

"Despite three years of continual engagement with the FTC around our agreement, they provided no opportunity to discuss this new, totally unprecedented theory. Let's be clear about what the FTC is trying to do: usurp the authority of Congress to set industry-wide standards and instead single out one American company while allowing Chinese companies, like TikTok, to operate without constraint on American soil," Meta said in a prepared statement.

The Menlo Park, California company added that it will "vigorously fight" the FTC's action and expects to prevail.

Facebook launched Messenger Kids in 2017, pitching it as a way for

children to chat with family members and friends approved by their parents. The app doesn't give kids separate Facebook or Messenger accounts. Rather, it works as an extension of a parent's account, and parents get controls, such as the ability to decide with whom their kids can chat.

At the time, Facebook said Messenger Kids wouldn't show ads or collect data for marketing, though it would collect some data it said was necessary to run the service.

But child-development experts raised immediate concerns.

In early 2018, a group of 100 experts, advocates and parenting organizations contested Facebook's claims that the app was filling a need kids had for a messaging service. The group included nonprofits, psychiatrists, pediatricians, educators and the children's music singer Raffi Cavoukian.

"Messenger Kids is not responding to a need - it is creating one," the letter said. "It appeals primarily to children who otherwise would not have their own social media accounts." Another passage criticized Facebook for "targeting younger children with a new product."

Facebook, in response to the letter, said at the time that the app "helps parents and children to chat in a safer way," and emphasized that parents are "always in control" of their kids' activity.

The FTC now says this has not been the case. The 2020 privacy order, which required Facebook to pay a \$5 billion fine, required an independent assessor to evaluate the company's privacy practices. The FTC said the assessor "identified several gaps and weaknesses in Facebook's privacy program."

The FTC also said Facebook, from late 2017 until 2019, "misrepre-

sented that parents could control whom their children communicated with through its Messenger Kids product."

"Despite the company's promises that children using Messenger Kids would only be able to communicate with contacts approved by their parents, children in certain circumstances were able to communicate with unapproved contacts in group text chats and group video calls," the FTC said.

Meta critics applauded the FTC's action. Jeffrey Chester, the executive director of the nonprofit Center for Digital Democracy, called it a "a long-overdue intervention into what has become a huge national crisis for young people."

Meta, and with its platforms like Instagram and Facebook, Chester added, "are at the center of a powerful commercialized social media system that has spiraled out of control, threatening the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents."

The company, he added, has not done enough to address existing problems - and is now unleashing "even more powerful data gathering and targeting tactics fueled by immersive content, virtual reality and artificial intelligence, while pushing youth further into the metaverse with no meaningful safeguards."

As part of the proposed changes to the FTC's 2020 order (which was announced in 2019 and finalized later), Meta would also be required to pause launching new products and services without "written confirmation from the assessor that its privacy program is in full compliance" with the order.

Meta has 30 days to respond to the FTC's latest action. (AP)



## OTHER LIVES

# Life

With time grief  
can subside  
and a new  
life born from  
rubble of  
relationships

# after loss

Whether you are looking for exciting new beginnings or a desire to put your past behind you, Dr Shelley helps you get to where you want to be – process your pain or uncover your spark; and mend your broken heart.

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes  
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: When speaking of relationships, the main take-away from the heartbreaks is that people can either choose to grow from their experiences or they can delve into the depths of despair and cling tenaciously to the happy relationship that once was; trying to avoid the reality while looking into the eyes of someone they love, while they look away.

In most instances it is two words, three vowels, four consonants, seven letters. It can either cut you open to the core or leave you in great pain or it can free your soul and lift a tremendous weight off your shoulders when someone says "It's over".

Shelley J Whitehead, a relationship specialist helping individuals and couples all over the world, including people in the Arabian Gulf and the entire Middle East, says heartbreak is a form of grief which with time can subside and a new life can be born from the rubble of your relationship as you move through this grieving process.

When a person is open and not afraid to step into a future unknown, a transformational energy will give support to create a life that is even more beautiful and even more embodied than before, says Ms Shelley.

Dr Shelley told the Arab Times, that for almost two decades she has been teaching people to learn and strengthen essential relationship skills, develop thriving partnerships and live their lives to full

satisfaction.

She went on to say, "I work in a coaching capacity (with individuals, groups, and couples) and run online courses and retreats. I am also currently working on two books which are planned for publication later this year."

Whether you are looking for exciting new beginnings or a desire to put your past behind you, Dr Shelley helps you get to where you want to be – process your pain or uncover your spark; and mend your broken heart.

"When we are devastated by overwhelming heartbreak everything in our world can look hopeless. You could be struggling to eat, sleep and start a conversation but in the early days after a breakup, this is 'normal' and all a part of a relationship rupture," says Shelley.

With personalized support and her courses, Dr Shelley guides heart-broken people to tap into their inner resources, helping them reconnect to themselves, create a new life and make healthy connections. She guides them to find a partner who adds that special sparkle again.

If this all sounds far too familiar to you, you might want to get in touch with her! With Shelley you can kick-start your healing with some introductory tools, including meditations to calm your mind and soothe your soul, through to a range of powerful courses for moving beyond heartbreak and reconnecting with your desires.



Dr Shelley Whitehead

With a five-step program she takes you from the depths of grief to relief with her 'Healing Your Heartbreak' course.

Dr Shelley is an exceptional professional in guiding people and giving them practical tools and support to help them move beyond an ending, to put the past behind and deepen powerful connections to themselves and to others as they step forward with confidence into a life they love again.

In a world where social media often disconnects us from ourselves and our important relationships, we need to pay attention to being present and making time for connection with our loved ones. No one wants to be treated with indifference or to feel lonely in a relationship, she says.

"We all want to be heard, seen, feel safe, soothed and to be supported, and we will be challenged in our relationships. Conflict is growth trying to happen. If we are open to doing the 'work', if we take responsibility instead of blaming, and support our partners' highest values, we will have relationship success," she says.

Dr Shelley concluded by saying, "If we neglect our own personal growth and neglect the relationship with our partner, the relationship will not endure."

For a short read on the work Shelley does please find her website (<https://shelleyjwhitehead.com>).

Or get a flavor of her wisdom on her YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/ShelleyJWhitehead>).

editor's choice



## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:37 Asr ..... 15:21  
 Sunrise .. 05:04 Maghrib .. 18:26  
 Zohr ..... 11:45 Isha ..... 19:46

# Local

CIVIL ID STATUS INQUIRY: <https://e.gov.kw/sites/kgoenglish/Pages/eServices/PACI/CivilIDStatus.aspx>

**Expected weather for the next 24 hours:**  
**By Day:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-45 km/h.

Weather		By Night:	
Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 10-32 km/h.		Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 10-32 km/h.	
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	36	25	Abdaly 37
Kuwait Airport	36	25	Jahra 37
			Salmiyah 33
			Ahmadi 32
			Nuwaisib 37
			Wafra 37
			25
			26
			26
			26

## Steps taken under leadership guidance: FM Sheikh Salem

# KRCS lauds Kuwait's humanitarian air bridge to help Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Preparations are in full swing for carrying out a humanitarian campaign to provide relief aid to Sudanese people, with the first aid aircraft being scheduled to fly to Sudan later today, said Kuwait's ambassador.

The campaign involving five planes lasts until next Monday is meant to dispatch medical and humanitarian aid to Sudanese people, Kuwaiti Ambassador in Khartoum Dr. Fahad Al-Dhufairi told KUNA.

The Kuwaiti aid airlift, which includes 75 tons of relief aid in the first phase, comes under the direction of the Kuwaiti political leadership with a view to easing out the anguish of the Sudanese people due to ongoing war in their country, he said.

The five-day humanitarian initiative is to be jointly carried out by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the ministries of health, finance and defense, the ambassador pointed out.

The Kuwaiti cabinet had decided to send humanitarian and relief aid to Sudanese people following the eruption of fighting between the Sudanese army and paramilitary forces.

Kuwait's Red Crescent Society praised the Kuwaiti humanitarian step by launching a relief air bridge to the brothers in Sudan, which was inaugurated Thursday with an aid plane carrying 10 tons of medical supplies to be delivered to the Sudanese people.

In a statement to KUNA, KRCS Deputy Chairman, Anwar Al-Hassawi, said that Kuwait has always been at the forefront of countries providing humanitarian aid to needy people, adding that medical aid comes based on the directives of the political leadership.

Al-Hassawi also noted that there are a number of other planes heading to Sudan to provide relief

to the brothers there, expressing his thanks to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense for harnessing the planes and the ministries of foreign affairs, health, finance, social affairs and others for their contribution to the success of this humanitarian mission.

In turn, Kuwait ambassador to Sudan Dr. Fahad Al-Dhufairi affirmed that this humanitarian aid expresses Kuwait's solidarity with the Sudanese people in these difficult circumstances.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Fahad Al-Thafeeri spoke Thursday of his country's rapid response to the humanitarian situation in Sudan via providing medical aid and relief to the Sudanese people.

Ambassador Al-Thafeeri told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the Kuwaiti air bridge launched its first flight this morning carrying urgent humanitarian aid to the Sudanese people, as per the directives of Kuwait's wise leadership and the instructions of his highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Ambassador also noted the considerable role of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah as the ministry was instructed to coordinate with ministries of defense, finance and health as well as KRCS to facilitate the arrival of 75 tons of aid to Port Sudan International Airport.

The aid will be delivered to Sudanese Health Ministry and the local Red Crescent Society.

On his part Sudanese Ambassador to the country, Awadh Al-Kareem Mousa, stated that this is but an extension of Kuwait's humanitarian role, and expressed his gratitude to Kuwait's political leadership, its government and its people.

The Ambassador extended his gratitude to the

foreign minister who showed significant care and interest in the Sudanese situation putting it at the forefront of his agenda.

Kuwait's cabinet decided during its last meeting on Monday to send aid and relief to the fraternal nation of Sudan.

The first planeload took off from Kuwait Thursday morning, with ambassador Al-Thafeeri on board along with an accompanying delegation from KRCS.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Thursday Kuwait's four-day aid airlift comes upon direction of the political leadership and reflects its solidarity with brotherly and sisterly countries.

He said the initiative was at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the cabinet, for sending relief aid to Sudan due to the current circumstances in their country.

In this context, a committee of the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, finance and health as well as the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), he said.

The committee is meant to ensure the delivery of relief and medical aid to Sudanese people as soon as possible, he said, noting that the first flight has already been sent to Sudan.

The first flights of the Kuwaiti relief airlift to help the brothers in the Republic of Sudan took off Thursday morning, reflecting the true Kuwaiti desire to stand with brothers and friends and alleviate their pain and sufferings.

The fresh relief initiative shows Kuwait's deep-rooted humanitarian approach that wins wide-scale world appreciation.



Kuwait Air Force plane carrying aid for the Sudanese people ready for take-off. KUNA photo

## Other Voices

### Push for nod to LGBTIQ+

By Ahmad alsarraf

There is a strong push from major Western countries towards expanding acceptance of homosexuality, or LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and the + holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities), as if it were taken for granted, and pressure to accept the matter as it is, and not tolerate those who disagree with it.



alsarraf

However, the issue is subject to further development or change with the change in the mood of the American voter, for example, and the re-election of a personality like Donald Trump, as the gay movement will find someone who strongly opposes it.

Also, the Muslims of America and specific Western countries face a difficult dilemma regarding this issue, as most of them fled from their countries to escape oppression of tyranny to the land of peace and freedom to find themselves forced to drink from the cup of freedom much larger than they can swallow, and they now stand between two choices, either fleeing from Western sexual immorality, and returning to their homelands, which is almost impossible under the current circumstances, or accepting that their children receive an education that they do not want for them!

Thus, the propaganda machine, of the Brotherhood in particular, began to move within an organized campaign to promote the collapse of the West and its moral decline, after it was invaded by abnormalities of another kind, and how European countries, especially Spain and Germany, officially allowed sex with animals, and that "animal brothels" are opening doors.

There is a great uproar in Western newspapers on this subject, and the existence of erotic zoos whose visitors can "rape animals," and other nonsense and lies that are really

sickening.

The Kuwaiti "preacher" Muhammad Al-Awadi did not hesitate to join this malicious campaign, confirming the existence of this phenomenon, and that his friends in Germany allegedly told him about!

No sane person doubts the insignificance of such accusations issued by sick souls obsessed with sexual issues.

German laws impose a fine of 25,000 Euros on anyone caught practicing this crime. Article 337 of the Penal Code in Spain criminalizes this act, and its perpetrators face serious criminal charges.

The act is also considered a form of criminal abuse in dealing with animals, and it is not tolerated in Spanish society.

The conscious governments of these countries do not hesitate to warn of the danger of such practices to health, and this does not mean that they are common, but rather it is a kind of public information service, and evidence of the progress of society, something similar that we lack in our countries.

It is unfortunate that the number of supporters and followers of such fabricated topics is millions, and the depth of many people's hatred of the West and its culture, the depth of their ignorance and their inability to respond rationally and logically to their superiority over us in every field, but these same people do not hesitate to travel 365 days a year to the same countries they have previously visited and accused these countries of all those vices and anomalies!

Conclusion: It seems that the goal of these people is to divert attention from the moral decay that our societies suffer from, and to highlight the devastation of Western societies!

The Lebanese Embassy will be hosting me next Sunday, May 7, at 7:00 pm at its headquarters in Daiya, to present my new book, "70 Texts in 11 Years on 70 Years of Love."

The Lebanese Embassy's initiative is part of the cultural activities it organizes, and an affirmation of the distinguished relationship that binds the two peoples.

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# Candidacy for poll on Friday

Oldest politician Sa'adoun to contest election

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Ministry of Interior has announced that the filing of candidacies for the upcoming National Assembly election will start on Friday and end on May 14.**

Director General of the Legal Affairs General Department at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier Saleh Al-Shatti affirmed that the decision is in accordance with Election Law number 35/1962. He said the Elections General Department in Shuwaikh will receive the candidacies from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm daily during the 10-day registration period including weekends.

Meanwhile, former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun, who had earlier confirmed that he will contest the election in the Second Constituency, is the oldest politician in the world – as he is about 90 years old.

Also, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) has determined their candidates for the upcoming election as follows: former MP Osama Al-Shaheen in the First Constituency, former MP Hamad Al-Matar in the Second Constituency, and former MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi in the Third Constituency.

On the other hand, former MP Khalid Al-Anzi has no intention to run for the election due to the "suspension of forgery which marked the 2022 elections." He pointed out that he cannot be part of a process, which he considers a violation of the Constitution.

Former MP and former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Essa Al-Kandari has unveiled his plan to run for the election in the First Constituency.

Meanwhile, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi announced on Thursday receiving candidate applications for election campaign's headquarters permits, starting May 5.

Al-Manfouhi expressed in a press release, following the municipality's election committee's first meeting that they will work on the success of the upcoming elections by providing all assists needed.

He called on candidates to apply with all necessary documents for campaign headquarters and billboards licenses, including a copy of their ID cards and candidacy documents.

He also noted the approval of the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force regarding the location, including 200 KD permit fee via K-Net and 500 KD for insurance.

And, the Director-General of the General Department of Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Interior, Brigadier General Huqouqi Salah Al-Shatti, announced the approval of 759 original and subsidiary committees for the 2023 National Assembly elections, which will be held on June 6, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Shatti added, 118 schools in the five constituencies have been approved for voting, and 5 schools in each constituency to announce the results.

He added, "An administrative decision is being issued to designate 5 centers in the five electoral districts to receive applications from prospective contestants.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas issued a circular on suspending the vacation of security forces effective Thursday in preparation for the 2023 National Assembly election, reports Al-Anba daily.



The black and white frame.

KUNA photo

## 'Misbah' in 'Psalms' exhibition

Artist Dr. Hammoud Al-Maqati presented on Wednesday 14 paintings during his third personal exhibition 'Psalms' in Ahmad Al-Adwani Hall in the Abdullah Al-Salem suburb, in which he combined his passion for realistic drawing with multiple abstract touches.

He chose the misbah, that Arab and

Islamic heritage element, to be the element around which the artworks in the exhibition center around. He also chose to implement the paintings in black and white and their shades of gray to make the recipient focus on composition, shapes, lighting and textures. (KUNA)

## Guard commanders trained: Shuja

### 'Cpx Nasr 18' drill proves success

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): The Assistant for Operations and Training at the National Guard, Major General P.S.C. Faleh Shuja confirmed on Wednesday that the Guard Command Centers exercise 'Cpx Nasr 18' succeeded in training the Guard commanders from all units to deal with emergency situations and to quickly make appropriate decisions and resolve various dilemmas.

This came in a press statement issued by the Guard after the conclusion of the activities of the National Guard Command Centers exercise 'Cpx Nasr 18' in the camp of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, in the presence of senior leaders.

Major General Shuja said that the exercise 'Cpx Nasr 18' is one of the major exercises that are held annually in the National Guard to raise the degree of preparedness and combat readiness.

He conveyed to the participants in the exercise the greetings of the leadership in the Guard, represented by His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard, Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai.

He stressed the importance of the exercise in honing the skills of leaders in planning to face crises, by coordinating efforts, developing communication channels, developing capabilities in carrying out tasks, both in the security and military aspects, and providing support and backing to all state agencies with high efficiency to maintain the security of the homeland under the wise leadership.

He stressed the interest of the leadership in the Guard in training and upgrading the human element to achieve the development goals in the 2025 Guidance Document 'Protection and Support.

The exercise included workshops and



Maj Gen Shuja

## Trainees batch

### Call to enroll 400

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid has instructed Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences to immediately accept 400 admission applicants who did not make it in the recent lottery for the selection of the 31st batch of trainees with university degrees, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Ministry of Interior confirmed that these applicants were officially enrolled on Tuesday for a full academic year.

The minister's instruction is in line with the directive of the political leadership to fully support young Kuwaitis and give them the opportunity to serve their country.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has advised all citizens who received a letter of nomination to work in the DGCA to visit the directorate in order to be matched with its actual manpower needs, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The directorate will receive those with letter of nomination from Thursday until May 14, indicating these citizens should go to the General Record Department in the main building in Sabhan.

coordination meetings to discuss several topics, including cybersecurity, to raise the capabilities of specialists in the National Guard to confront electronic attacks and take proactive measures to avoid them.

Meanwhile, the National Guard Supreme Command is expected to approve the list of officers eligible for promotion next month, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source from the military sector.

## MoC employees urged to protect public funds

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The official spokesman for the Ministry of Communications Dr. Ahmad Al-Hussaini declared that the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula issued the first ministerial circular for the year 2023, through which he called on all employees to adhere to all provisions of Law No. 1/1993 regarding the protection of public funds and Law No. 2/2016 regarding the establishment of the Public Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha), and the provisions related to the disclosure of financial assets, particularly those related to the duty to report corruption crimes, reports Aljarida daily.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Husseini explained that this measure was based on the minister's concern to combat corruption and implement the provisions of the law to protect public funds and dry up the sources of corruption.

The circular confirmed that reporting corruption crimes is the duty of every person, according to article 1 of Law No. 1/1993 regarding the protection of public funds. It stated that public funds are sanctified. Protecting, supporting and defending them is the duty of every citizen, and Article 37 of Law No. 2/2016 regarding the establishment of the Kuwait Anti Corruption Authority. Based on the provisions for disclosing financial disclosure, it is necessary to report corruption crimes.

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# Indian throws self from rooftop after stabbing his wife to death

Customs foils bid to smuggle subsidized foodstuff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 4: An Indian is said to have stabbed his wife to death, then locked the door of the apartment, went to the roof of the building and jumped to his death, reports Al-Rai daily.**

Acting on information securitymen and personnel from the Criminal Evidences Department

rushed to the scene and referred the corpses of the couple to Forensics. The incident happened in Salmiya.

**Foodstuff seized:** Personnel from the Inspection and Warehousing Department in the Land Customs Administration Vegetable Market affiliated to the General Administration of Customs thwarted the attempt to smuggle out of the country large quantities of subsidized food items, re-

ports Al-Jarida daily. A member of the Customs Information Committee in the Customs Administration, Meshaal Al-Dhafiri, said the contraband was seized during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday from trucks carrying shipments of property and personal items.

**Trio in fraud case:** The Public Prosecution will soon refer three defendants in the fraud case involving a car distribution company to the Criminal Court for swindling more than 700 citizens, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed the three defendants include the owner of the company who is currently serving prison time for issuing dud cheques. Source said the total amount taken from the victims exceeds KD50 million as shown in the pieces of evidence submitted to the prosecution. Sources added the amount transferred to the company's accounts reached KD32 million for the purchase of vehicles that were not imported to the country, indicating the prosecution froze the company's funds and the accounts of the owner valued at about KD70,000.

**Drug addict held:** An Egyptian has been referred to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control after he was caught at a checkpoint in the Mahboula region in a state of drug abuse, reports Al-Anba daily.

During his search, a bag containing the narcotic substance was found with him,



The two men with the seized liquor bottles. **63 bottles of alcohol seized**

Personnel from the Ahmadi Security Directorate have arrested two Asians for bootlegging, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the men were caught red-handed selling alcohol in Fahaheel.

According to the daily the men were caught at checkpoint in Fahaheel. When the suspect and another man in the passenger seat approached the checkpoint they appeared nervous and after checking the vehicle police found 73 bottles of imported and local booze inside bags on the back seat of the car.

The men reportedly tried to escape but they were seized and to the General Department for Drug and Alcohol Control.

and two bags containing the chemical drug, in addition to drug use tools.

**Bid to rob pharmacies:** The Ministry of Health in a statement said an unidentified person attempted to break the locks of the Al-Razi Hospital and the Kuwait Center for Mental

Health pharmacies with the intention to steal the medicines, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry stated the incident happened on May 2, 2023, and that the video clips of the two incidents have been handed over to the concerned authority to take necessary legal measures.

# diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Need to gather around our govt, support its decisions'

"I AM very optimistic about what is happening in the political front, and despite the existence of a state of imbalance, all of these fluctuations promise us very positive results that will contribute to adjusting the course and correcting the path, bridging the gap of popular demands and contribute to improving the general societal climate," columnist **Mishari Al-Mutairi** wrote for Al-Anba daily.



Al-Mutairi

"I base this on several indications that begin with the presence of a wise and just leadership represented by His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, may God protect him, and His Highness, the trustworthy Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, may God protect him, who have successfully handled several crisis, political situations and events by their wise decisions, with amazing political sophistication that enables it to know the appropriate time to intervene and resolve matters.

"Not long ago, the Supreme Will resolved the crisis of the "National Assembly" and chose to support the people in their choice, and here comes the question "What after the solution?"

"I see that the current situation requires everyone, whether the people or the executive and legislative authorities' adherence to unity, and to be in the position of one front that agrees on construction and development, and not to allow any trumpets calling for division to influence us, and to shake off the dust of the past left by crises and differences, and to take into account the interests of the homeland, and the only strategy adopted by us is that loyalty be pure to the homeland and not the desired gains.

"The goals differed and confusion arose among everyone about the extent to which the legislative and executive authorities were keen on the interests of the state and the people.

"The factor of the "agreement" between the two authorities was that none of them succeeded in achieving their goals, and this is a natural result of events.

"It is a table for dialogue through which all parties can work to resolve conflicts and agree on unifying goals in a manner commensurate with the general interest of all, and for the people to realize the extent of the impact of their electoral vote on them and the future of future generations, and not to leave room for courtesy of the electoral vote, and to choose those who are able to bear responsibility.

"We do not want history to mention our political disputes about us. We must be aware that the future that we all aspire to is not only the responsibility of the government and the parliament, but also upon us, in our capacity as those who choose the contributors to decision-making for our dear Kuwait.

"In order to escape from the disease, we must all gather around our government, support it in its decisions, support it in achieving its dreams for the homeland, and not get carried away by rumors and misleading voices.

**Also:**

"The following is the message sent by a Kuwaiti citizen who loves his country and is jealous of its texture and history," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"This is how he began his message: The government's program submitted to the National Assembly on Dec 13, 2022 stated the establishment of the General Authority for Nationality within a year, one of its tasks is to purify nationality from the impurities of forgery and violations of the Nationality Law, and that this body be independent of the Ministry of Interior and has a board of directors made up of Kuwaiti men and women, consisting of experienced legal, judicial and security professionals, reporting to the Council of Ministers and is independent in decision-making in all its jurisdictions, in the implementation of the Nationality Law.

"Among the most important cases of forgery of nationality revealed by the rulings of the Criminal Courts of Cassation, that the DNA fingerprint is a means of detecting forgery and that the crimes of forgery of nationality do not fall under the statute of limitations even if they occurred 100 years ago.

"The Nationality Authority, in cooperation with the Public Prosecution, will open all cases related to forgery of nationality and refer it to the judiciary, and it will establish departments, courts, specialized in detecting forgery of nationality. We are fully confident that the Nationality Authority and the judiciary will lead us to save Kuwait from counterfeiters.

"The people of Kuwait are waiting for the issuance of a decree establishing the General Authority for Nationality to save Kuwait.

"I, and everyone who does not have a feeling about it agrees with this message, supports it, and considers it a legitimate right of a homeland."

"Nations are built by building the individual who is the nucleus of society and there is no way to build it except through education. Therefore, educational institutions in any society are the criterion of its strength, the measure of its renaissance, the center of its construction, the drawing of its future, the formulation of society, and the making of its generations. Education is the passport to the future to achieve aspirations like progress and advancement in Science and knowledge," columnist **Abeer Mubarak** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"The family is one of the most important social systems, upon which society relies on in caring for its members. It supervises their upbringing and teaches them the society's culture and traditions, and prepares them to assume social responsibilities. What is presented, what is heard and what is seen at home has the greatest impact on the lives and future of children. Parents must be role models for their children in words and action.

"The basis of education is the family, so it must instill love for learning and commitment to seek knowledge in the hearts of children. If it succeeds in this aspect, children will have a great ability to learn.

"The role of the family in reforming education is both important and dangerous. The educational institution will be reformed only under the effective sponsorship and leadership of the family institution.

"The education I am talking about here is neither traditional nor confined to memorization — it is sound reception, strong construction, creative industry, meaningful criticism, productive generations, true moderation, reading and knowledge, accepting intellectual pluralism, and realizing that difference has power."

"In the last 10 years, it has been concluded that the current healthcare systems are not economically sustainable and we need a paradigm shift," columnist **Dr Hisham Kalinder** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Michael Porter introduced the concept of Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC), in which the best value for the patient is achieved in return for lower total healthcare costs.

"VBHC is a practical framework for transforming healthcare systems by re-orienting them towards achieving value for patients. To achieve this concept, healthcare must be redesigned based on outcomes that matter to patients.

"It is becoming more and more important for VBHC players to address the social determinants of health.

"If issues such as transportation, food, housing, etc are addressed, the providers and payers are likely to see significant improvements in patients' health and outcomes, while keeping medical costs to a minimum. This trend is likely to grow through the search for innovative ways to manage value-based patient care.

"VBHC is a promising concept that we definitely need in order to change the way we organize healthcare. It can provide some answers about the healthcare challenges we will face in the coming decades."

"Recently, we read many news reports about the abundance of vegetables produced by Kuwaiti farmers, but there are no marketing outlets to sell them at fair and competitive prices. Kuwaiti agricultural products have high quality and much cheaper than the imported products," columnist **Hamad Al-Tarkeet** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Indeed, the prices set by our farmers are the most appropriate for the consumers. Unfortunately, the farmers have yet to find ears willing to hear the idea about food security that was planned and announced previously by various government agencies.

"It takes a brave decision to suspend the import of some types of vegetables at a time they are available locally, as long as we have agricultural capabilities to grow most types of high quality vegetables. This was proven during the corona crisis, when the whole world stopped all movements. At the time, Kuwait did not suffer from shortage of several types of vegetables for months.

"It is now necessary to reconsider importing these vegetables from neighboring countries, similar to what some other Gulf countries have done, without banning them entirely.

"The Ministry of Commerce and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs must coordinate their efforts to achieve food security by supporting the farmers who are doing their best despite the obstacles they are facing.

— Compiled by Ahmed Al-Shalzi

## KJA celebrates 'Press Freedom Day'

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, which falls on May 3 of each, the Kuwaiti Journalists Association stresses on the need to respect freedom of the press and the need to create an appropriate atmosphere and provide all facilities to fellow journalists in performing their work without harassing them, especially since we are in a country of freedom and democracy, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Journalists Association affirms that this occasion is an opportunity to stand by the various media

outlets and support them in exercising their right and performing their role through responsible and professional freedom.

**Security settings:** The Cybersecurity Department in the Ministry of Interior has advised the public to always update security settings in order to protect their electronic devices from hacking, report's Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the department also stressed the need for Apple users to keep the 'rapid security response' updated to protect their devices.

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## LOCAL



KUNA photos

The pavilion of Abdullah Al-Salem University in the ninth annual admission fair is witnessing a wide turnout from high school graduates

### University aims to introduce students to its new majors

## Huge turnout of students at Abdullah Al-Salem University pavilion

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): The pavilion of the new Abdullah Al-Salem University witnessed a huge turnout from high school graduates from public and private education schools in all educational regions, which was held in the Ninth Annual Admission Fair organized by Kuwait University, entitled 'Your choice builds a homeland'.

Through its participation, Abdullah Al-Salem University aims to introduce students to its new majors, which will open its doors starting from the first semester of the academic year 2023/2024 next September, so that they can choose their educational future in line with their aspirations.

## Contributions of national cadres effective in global hematology research: Al-Awadhi

Results top specialized scientific journals

### First of its kind amongst news agencies

## KUNA launches space on Spatial metaverse platform

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) launched its space on the Spatial metaverse platform, the first step of its kind amongst news agencies in the region, said Director-General of KUNA Dr. Fatma Al-Salem on Thursday.

In a statement assisted by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, Dr. Al-Salem affirmed that the launch was an important leap in the digital transformation of KUNA, which would enable users to provide faster and high-quality news to the masses.

AI would be used to analyze data and information to improve published content, she added.

Dr. Al-Salem said that the production process of news and analysis would help diversify services and would benefit those receiving them.

KUNA, she asserted, is taking an

important stride towards using technology in news-making to reinforce the agency's credibility, adding that employees of KUNA would be able to use the vast resources of the space in news editing.

She revealed that KUNA was ready to launch its news anchor avatar on social media platforms via using AI technologies as well as a specialized hall dedicated to this kind of venture.

These new developments would ease the process of delivering news and interactivity allowing people to reach desired information and would reinforce cooperation amongst the agency's employees.

Spatial is a metaverse platform enabling users to create avatars and spaces to collaborate, brainstorm, and produce content remotely through virtual reality.

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi said that the national cadres have effective and recognized contributions to international scientific research on blood diseases, and showed positive results that topped the most famous specialized scientific journals in the world.

Minister Al-Awadhi added, in a speech delivered on his behalf by Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Health District, Dr. Walid Al-Busairi, at the opening of the first Kuwait Conference on Hematology today, Thursday, that the whole world pays attention to the latest different treatments to deal with blood diseases and conducts research in an intensive and concise way to reach the most effective solutions.

He explained that the ministry attaches great importance to the programs adopted by the World Health Organization, pointing out that the ministry's related initiatives in this regard include coordination with academic bodies locally and globally to study the development of precise specializations to prepare national cadres in the ministry.

For her part, the head of the conference, consultant hematologist Dr. Hadeel Saleh, said that the conference brings together a group of specialists to present the latest findings of research and scientific developments in the field of hematology for children and adults.

Saleh pointed out that the specialization of hematology is complex and includes many subtle specializations that include cancerous diseases and benign diseases, both genetic and acquired.

She explained that it is also a sensitive specialty due to the accuracy of its details, and work has been done to gather specialists in this field from the largest and most prestigious global centers to listen to the latest findings of scientific studies in the



Group photo of conference participants.



Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Health District, Dr. Walid Al-Busairi



Part of honoring participants in the conference.

KUNA photos

field of blood diseases and to discuss ideas based on scientific evidence.

In turn, the Chairman of the Scientific Committee and Director of the National Bank of Kuwait Specialized Hospital for Children, Dr. Ali Mulla, said that there are about 120 cases of leukemia for children that are recorded annually, pointing out that there is a slight increase, but it is

commensurate with the global increases, and that compared to the population, it is less than the global rates.

Mulla added that work is underway to prepare the national register of leukemia and hereditary bleeding diseases, pointing out that there are currently about 300 cases registered in various hospitals in Kuwait, and he expects to complete the

preparation of the register within a year. He pointed out that some of the reasons are due to hereditary and genetic factors, so we always recommend the need to do the examination before marriage, and most importantly, adhere to the results of the examination to avoid genetic blood diseases, as well as healthy eating, healthy sleep and exercise.

### Kuwait's democracy...

Continued from Page 1

in accordance with the tasks entrusted to it, not only oversight, but the main task, which is legislation.

In other words, democracy did not benefit us at all. The Gulf countries were able to surpass Kuwait by light years in development and political and economic stability. Despite some mistakes, they proved that they are the best to reform and benefit in developing their behavior, without imaginary battles, as is the case in Kuwait.

Here, we beg to ask - Is democracy suitable for people who are still clenching on tribal and sectarian strife.

How many centuries do we need to become like other countries whose societies, democracy, and stability were able to develop?

This question is directed to those who are standing today to represent the nation in the upcoming elections.

### Safe passage

Continued from Page 1

Hundreds of Syrians, who came to Sudan fleeing their own country's civil war over the past decade, are among the foreigners to leave.

One Damascus-bound flight took off Wednesday, a second was to fol-

low later in the day and more flights were scheduled in coming days, said Tariq Abdel-Hameed, a Syrian in Port Sudan. He said priority was given to women, children and the elderly.

For thousands of Sudanese and foreigners flocking to Port Sudan, it's the last stop before leaving the country. Saudi warships have been ferrying evacuees across the Red Sea to the Saudi city of Jeddah.

"It feels really sad to be leaving behind a part of your life," said Saadiya Abdulrahman, a Sudanese-American woman from Khartoum, while waiting with her daughter for their turn to board a Saudi vessel. When their turn came, they first got into a tugboat with dozens of others, to take them to the Saudi ship. "Khartoum has become like a ghost

town in some neighborhoods because of all the destruction," said Salah Suleiman, a Sudanese from Khartoum who was among those sailing to Jeddah.

For those who can't afford to leave Khartoum, the most basic goods have become unavailable or unaffordable. Mercy Corps, an aid organization, said Wednesday that prices of basic goods in the city increased more than 130% on average while fuel prices increased more than ten-fold.

On Wednesday, the fighting continued in and around the city. Clouds of smoke were seen over areas of active fighting, and residents hiding in their homes still heard sounds of explosions, with the battles still seemingly centered around key government buildings, such as the Presidential Palace.

### 'Main partner to facilitate the arrival of aid to Sudan'

## Partnership with Kuwait measured by humanitarian value: Chapagin

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Secretary-General and CEO of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Jagan Chapagin, praised Kuwait's continuous and endless support for the Federation and the afflicted countries, as well as its humanitarian and relief initiatives to support those affected by disasters and crises, and affirmed the Federation's desire to strengthen the strategic partnership with Kuwait in the humanitarian fields, and raise it to a higher level of focus on the accelerating and growing crises and disasters around the world, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Chapagin spoke of the continuous coordination with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, which he described as a "main partner", to facilitate the arrival of aid to Sudan. We also work and cooperate with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, adding, "The continuation of the battles hinders the arrival of aid and supplies to the Sudanese people."

He pointed out that during his two-day visit to Kuwait, he met many officials of the Kuwait Red

Crescent Society and the Kuwaiti government, in addition to his meeting with officials of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and many global issues and humanitarian crises around the world were discussed, describing the talks and meetings with the Kuwaiti side as positive and fruitful.

Chapagin added, "We had a really open and transparent discussion, and focused on uniting efforts and forces, to meet the humanitarian needs that are growing rapidly and dramatically," considering that Kuwait's contributions are very important, as no institution or government can respond to major global crises on its own. Therefore, our partnership with Kuwait is important, and it plays this role more and more every year, and we appreciate its humanitarian stance.

Regarding the situation in Sudan, he stressed that Kuwait spares no effort in providing aid, as the Kuwait Red Crescent Society has already recently sent planes loaded with medical and humanitarian aid

to the Sudanese people, reiterating his appreciation for the distinguished humanitarian role played by Kuwait, hoping to continue this approach in a large way.

On the value of the material assistance provided by Kuwait to the union, he said, "This distinguished partnership between us cannot be measured by numbers and material value, but rather by its human value, as Kuwait's geopolitical position plays an important role in the world. Therefore, our partnership is far from being based on material value, but rather on our distinguished relations.

Chapagin spoke about the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its members around the world who are present in 192 countries and who are supported by nearly 17 million volunteers.

The most important challenges faced by the federation are the multiplicity of crises around the world, lack of material resources and the climate change challenges.

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## oil dips

The Kuwaiti oil price nosedived by USD 4.97 to USD 76 pb on Wednesday against USD 80.97 pb on Tuesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation announced on Thursday.

At international markets, forward Brent crude contracts fell by USD 2.99 to USD 72.33 pb, and the West Texas Intermediate crude dropped by USD 3.06 to USD 68.60 a barrel. (KUNA)

## Egypt raises diesel prices

Egypt's fuel pricing committee has decided to increase diesel prices by one Egyptian pound to EGP 8.25 (USD 0.27), but kept gasoline prices unchanged as of early Thursday.

The decision came against the backdrop of the increase in international prices of crude oil and petroleum products and the exchange rate of the pound against the US dollar, the committee

explained in a press release on Thursday. The price of 80-octane gasoline remains at EGP 8.75 (USD 0.28) per liter, while the price of a liter of 92-octane remains at EGP 10.25 (USD 0.33) and 95-octane remains at EGP 11.50 (USD 0.37), it added.

The price of mazut, used for non-electricity and food purposes, also remained unchanged at EGP 6,000 (194.49) per ton. (KUNA)

## Norway raises rate again to fight inflation

Norway's central bank said Thursday it had raised its key interest rate by a quarter-percentage point to 3.25%, saying the move was "needed to dampen inflation."

Norges Bank said the country's inflation - which reached 6.5% in April - "is high and markedly above the target of 2%." It added that the rate would most likely be raised again next month.

The rate is now at its highest level since 2008.

Norway is not part of the European Union. The bank noted that although the economy has slowed, activity remains high.

"If the krone remains weaker than projected or pressures in the economy persist, a higher policy rate than envisaged earlier may be needed," bank Governor Ida Wolden Bache said in a statement.

The rate hike takes effect Friday. (AP)

## Market Movements

04-05-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+0.36	3,590.62	EGYPT - EGX 30	-0.03	17,295.27
JAPAN - Nikkei	+0.12	29,157.95			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+0.01	42,093.80			
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+1.18	6,684.35			
SAUDI - Tadawul	+0.41	11,118.77			

# Business

## The Conversation

# Fed rate hikes, 'recession fears' and political backlash leave ESG investors at a crossroads

By Sehoon Kim, University of Florida

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

The Federal Reserve raised interest rates again on May 3, 2023, by a quarter point, making it the Fed's 10th rate hike since March 2022 in an ongoing fight to tame inflation. These rate hikes have been reverberating through the economy, raising prospects of a recession amid heightened concerns about the fragile state of banks.

The rate hikes are also rattling sustainability-focused investing, better known as ESG investing.

The trend toward ESG investing, which puts pressure on companies to meet environmental, social and governance benchmarks, has almost redefined asset management over the past decade. ESG funds today are a multitrillion-dollar market.

However, the high uncertainty around interest rates today, along with the prospects of a looming recession and a political backlash, has put the future of ESG investors at a crossroads.

I specialize in sustainable finance, and my recent work has documented the impact that tough economic times can have on ESG investing demand. Investments into U.S. sustainable mutual funds have visibly slowed since 2022, suffering their worst net flows in five years. Here are how three critical factors can affect investors' zeal for socially conscious investing going forward.

One of the primary arguments that big institutional investors like BlackRock make for ESG investing is that it creates long-term value for shareholders. Companies that pay careful attention to environmental, social and governance issues are believed to be better prepared for distant future risks, including regulatory risks and physical risks from climate change.

However, heightened uncertainty about interest rates poses a challenge today.

That's because higher rates can disproportionately affect the present value that investors assign to long-term investment outcomes. Let me explain.

Within the past year, the Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark lending rate from almost zero to a target range of 5% to 5.25% to combat inflation. In financial markets, higher interest rates lead to higher discount rates. That means that future cash generated by long-term investments is considered to be worth considerably less at today's higher interest rates.

The more distant an asset's value lies in the future, the more heavily it will be discounted in value when rates are high. So, long-duration investments - like most ESG investments - are especially sensitive to changes in interest rates.

This economic mechanism was also part of the backdrop of the recent rout in tech stocks and the series of bank failures that started with the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank.

Another factor that could affect ESG investing is the potential for an economic downturn.

As research shows, investors do not necessarily make ESG investments for greater long-term returns, but often for altruistic reasons or due to personal preferences to hold greener assets. For these ESG investors, a looming recession could change their perspective on these "luxuries."

In an early warning about this possibility, a recent study I conducted with an economist at the Rotterdam School of Management found that retail investors showed signs of shying away from investing in sustainable mutual funds during the early months of the COVID-19 shock in 2020. This was a period when many households experienced layoffs and furloughs, which likely pushed them to set aside luxuries to prioritize protecting the values of their 401(k)s, IRAs and other investment portfolios.

In other words, investors may be all for ESG, except when times are tough. Prominent economists, such as former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, have warned of a likely recession as inflation and the Fed's battle against it persist. The International Monetary Fund also lowered its global economic growth

outlook from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.8% in 2023.

Finally, recent political friction and anti-ESG policies across states have started to create headwinds for pension funds and large institutions that serve them.

For example, Florida and Kansas passed laws in recent weeks and several other states including Texas and Kentucky have taken actions to restrict the ability of state public pension funds to invest in companies based on their ESG performance, citing concerns about fraudulent greenwashing and potential fiduciary duty violations, referring to the obligation institutional investors have to seek the highest returns for the lowest risk possible.

These restrictions can severely limit the capacity for ESG investing by institutional investors, which have played a significant role in driving the growth of ESG investing.

While concerns about greenwashing and high fees in ESG investing are not totally unwarranted, these political interventions can also have unintended consequences.

A recent study from economists at Wharton and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago found that a Texas law enacted in 2021 prohibiting municipalities from contracting with banks with ESG policies had a distorting side effect on those municipalities' borrowing costs. The policy ended up raising the cost of public finance, meaning the law ultimately cost taxpayers.

As companies hold their 2023 annual meetings, the discussions among corporate officials, investors and stakeholders will serve as an important barometer for the current state and future of ESG investing.

Due to high interest rate uncertainty, prospects of a recession and political upheaval, ESG is under pressure. Perceived in recent years as a paradigm shift in how market mechanisms can address harms to society, stakeholders are now scrutinizing ESG investing with a critical lens regarding how strongly it can persist and how much impact it can have.

The next few years will be its most important stress test yet.

# WS sinks as worries crank higher over cracking US banking system

Asian markets higher after US rate hike

NEW YORK, May 4, (AP): Stocks are sinking on Wall Street Thursday as worries crank higher about a cracking U.S. banking system.

The S&P 500 was 0.7% lower in midday trading as several market-moving forces swirled, from the latest rate increase by the European Central Bank to a report indicating more U.S. workers got laid off last week than expected. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 390 points, or 1.2%, at 33,023, as of 11:45 a.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 0.4% lower.

Some of the wildest action was in the financial industry, where shares of PacWest Bancorp tumbled 48.4%. It's been under heavy scrutiny by investors recently following three of the four largest U.S. bank failures in history.

Wall Street has been hunting for other possible weak links in the system, which could see a swift exodus of customer deposits as the industry contends with much higher interest rates. PacWest said overnight that it's considering its options and that several potential partners and investors have approached it. It also said that its core customer deposits have increased since the end of March.

Fear is running so high in the industry that shares of Western Alliance Bancorp plunged as much as 61% after a report from The Financial Times said the Phoenix-based bank was considering selling its business, among other options. But the company refuted the report, saying there "is not a single element of the article that is true." Its stock pared its drop to a loss of 38.8%.

The wild movements came after Western Alliance tried to reassure investors late Wednesday with a statement saying its deposits are stable and that they increased from Monday to Tuesday.

First Horizon, meanwhile, dropped nearly 37% after it and TD Bank Group agreed to call off their merger deal. TD told First Horizon it did not know when it could get regulatory approvals for the deal.

At the start of this week, regulators seized First Republic Bank and sold most of it to JPMorgan Chase, with hopes that could bolster confidence in the industry. Officials have stressed they see the banking system is sound and secure, but the worries aren't leaving the market.

Even larger banks were falling Thursday, though not to the same degree as smaller ones. JPMorgan Chase fell 2.3%.

Banks are dealing with drastically

# European Central Bank raises interest rates 'but slows pace'

FRANKFURT, Germany, May 4, (AP): The European Central Bank slowed the pace of its interest rate increases Thursday, stepping back like the U.S. Federal Reserve from a string of jumbo hikes aimed at snuffing out inflation. The ECB's quarter-point hike follows evidence that its efforts are working by making mortgages and business loans harder to get.

The decision comes a day after the Fed approved a quarter-point increase and hinted that it may have reached the end of its hiking cycle. But the central bank for the 20 countries that use the euro currency started later and said it still has further to go even as economic growth slows to a crawl and U.S. bank instability stirs new fears of financial turmoil.

"Based on the information we have today, we have more ground to cover, and we are not pausing," ECB Presi-

dent Christine Lagarde said at a news conference. The bank said inflation "has declined over recent months, but underlying price pressures remain strong." It says its streak of six hikes of half- or three-quarters of a point are being "transmitted forcefully" by making loans harder to get but how that affects the rest of the economy isn't yet clear.

The ECB's lending survey this week showed that banks are getting stricter about giving loans and that consumers and companies are asking for less credit and fewer mortgages.

Making it more expensive to borrow can cool off spending, easing pressure on prices but potentially weighing on economic growth. Demand for housing loans in the eurozone plummeted in the first three months of the year, following the sharpest decline since statistics started in 2003 at the end of

last year.

Inflation is high at 7% and has been fueled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which drove up oil prices and led Moscow to cut off most natural gas to Europe. Energy costs have since fallen, but the surge is still feeding through to higher prices for goods, services and food.

The spiking cost for Europeans to feed their families has become the new pain point. Food prices jumped 13.6% in April from a year earlier, following a 15.5% annual increase the month before.

So-called core inflation, which excludes volatile fuel and food prices, fell only slightly in April, to 5.6% from a record 5.7% the month before. It's considered a clearer picture of whether price pressures are building up in the economy from demand for goods and higher wages.

In Hong Kong surged 1% to 19,899.02. The Kospi in Seoul lost 0.2% to 2,495.40 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 fell 0.1% to 7,187.20.

India's Sensex opened up 0.2% at 61,300.29. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets advanced.

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Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude advanced 40 cents to \$69 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract plunged \$3.06 on Wednesday to \$68.60. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, 60 cents to \$72.93 per barrel in London. It fell \$2.99 the previous session to \$72.33.

Currencies

The dollar fell to 134.51 yen from Wednesday's 135.46 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1081 from \$1.1058.

## Asia

Asian stock markets were mostly higher Thursday after the Federal Reserve raised its benchmark lending rate again to cool inflation and said it wasn't sure what may come next.

Shanghai and Hong Kong advanced while Seoul and Sydney declined. Japanese markets were closed for a holiday.

The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.6% to 3,341.73 and the Hang Seng

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## Banks offering higher rates on savings

# How a Fed raise could affect credit card debt, auto loans

NEW YORK, May 4, (AP): The Federal Reserve has raised its key interest rate yet again in its drive to cool inflation, a move that will directly affect most Americans.

On Wednesday, the central bank boosted its benchmark rate by a quarter-point to 5.1%. Rates on credit cards, mortgages and auto loans, which have been surging since the Fed began raising rates last year, all stand to rise even more. The result will be more burdensome loan costs for both consumers and businesses.

On the other hand, many banks are now offering higher rates on savings accounts, giving savers the opportunity to earn more interest. Economists worry, though, that the Fed's streak of 10 rate hikes since March 2022 could eventually cause the economy to slow too much and cause a recession.

Here's what to know: **What's prompting the rate increases?**

The short answer: inflation. Inflation has been slowing in recent months, but it's still high. Measured over a year earlier, consumer prices were up 5% in March, down sharply from February's 6% year-over-year increase.

The Fed's goal is to slow consumer spending, thereby reducing demand for homes, cars and other goods and services, eventually cooling the economy and lowering prices.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has acknowledged in the past that aggressively raising rates would bring "some pain" for households but said that doing so is necessary to crush high inflation.

**Who is most affected?**

Anyone borrowing money to make a large purchase, such as a home, car or large appliance, will likely take a hit. The new rate will also increase monthly payments and costs for any consumer who is already paying interest on credit card debt.

"Consumers should focus on building up emergency savings and paying down debt," said Greg McBride, Bankrate.com's chief financial analyst. "Even if this proves to be the final Fed rate hike, interest rates are still high and will remain that way."

**What's happening with credit cards?**

Even before the Fed's latest move, credit card borrowing had reached the highest level since 1996, according to Bankrate.com.

The most recent data available showed that 46% of people were carrying debt from month to month, up from 39% a year ago. Total credit card balances were \$986 billion in the fourth quarter of 2022, according to the Fed, a record high, though that amount isn't adjusted for inflation.

For those who don't qualify for low-rate credit cards because of weak credit scores, the higher interest rates are already affecting their balances.

**How will an increase affect credit card rates?**

The Fed doesn't directly dictate how much interest you pay on your credit card debt. But the Fed's rate is the basis for your bank's prime rate. In combination with other factors, such as your credit score, the prime rate helps determine the Annual Percentage Rate, or APR, on your credit card.

The latest increase will likely raise the APR on your credit card 0.25%. So, if you have a 20.9% rate, which is the average according to the Fed's data, it might increase to 21.15%. If you don't carry a balance from month to month, the APR is less important.

But suppose you have a \$4,000 credit balance and your interest rate is 20%. If you made only a fixed payment of \$110 per month, it would take you a bit under five years to pay off your credit card debt, and you would pay about \$2,200 in interest.

If your APR increased by a percentage point, paying off your balance would take two months longer and cost an additional \$215.

**What if I have money to save?**

After years of paying low rates for savers, some banks are finally offering better interest on deposits. Though the increases may seem small, compounding interest adds up over the years.

Interest on savings accounts doesn't always track what the Fed does. But as rates have continued to rise, some banks have improved their terms for savers as well. Even if you're only keeping modest savings in your bank account, you could make more significant gains over the long term by finding an account with a better rate.

While the biggest national banks have yet to dramatically change the rates on their savings accounts (clocking in at an average of just 0.23%, according to Bankrate), some mid-size and smaller banks have made changes more in line with the Fed's moves.

# White House warns of recession as debt limit fight drags on

WASHINGTON, April 4, (AP): White House economists on Wednesday warned of "severe damage" to the U.S. economy in the event of a debt default, warning that a prolonged default could cause 8.3 million job losses and the stock market to tumble 45%.

But the new report from the Council of Economic Advisers shows that even less severe scenarios would hamper

the U.S. economy, evidence that the political showdown over the debt limit carries major financial costs. Without a deal in place between Congress and the White House, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that the federal government will lack the accounting tools to keep borrowing and potentially begin to default as soon as June 1.

The first and most dangerous scenario is a "protracted default." The

second is a "short default" in which Congress acts swiftly to allow the nation to borrow again after defaulting. The third is "brinkmanship," in which lawmakers take the country's full faith and credit to the wire, but avert default. All three would hurt the economy, the experts said.

President Joe Biden has a May 9 meeting with congressional leaders to try to find a way to resolve the ap-

proaching crisis.

House Republicans are insisting on spending cuts as part of any plan to allow the country to resume borrowing. Biden says he will not allow the country to be "taken hostage" by such demands and will only negotiate with the GOP on spending as part of the budgetary process. The president and Democratic lawmakers are seeking a "clean" increase to the na-

tion's \$31.4 trillion debt limit.

A spokesman for House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., sent out an email Wednesday that blamed Democrats for the stalemate.

"There is no good reason other than political malpractice for the U.S. to default on its debt," wrote McCarthy spokesman Chad Gilmar. "Plenty of revenue is flowing in to pay interest on the debt."

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

# KAMCO INVEST

## Event Update – IMF Releases Regional Economic Outlook May 2023

### GCC growth lowered for 2023 due to oil output cuts; Stronger non-oil GDP partly offsets...

In its latest regional economic outlook for the MENA region, the IMF reiterated that inflation is expected to remain persistent in the region and the tight economic policies to tackle higher prices, reduce risks and rebuild fiscal buffers would likely affect economic growth in the region in 2023 and 2024. The recently announced oil production cuts by OPEC players is also expected to affect GDP growth rates in oil exporting countries.

The agency also highlighted increasing risks globally in advanced economies and the fears of a spread of those risks in the MENA region. Events like the banking sector crisis in the US and Europe and the resulting financial market volatility are expected to heighten financial stability risks globally. Also, structural reforms would be needed in the MENA region to tackle these risks, enhance growth and build resilience.

GDP growth in the MENA region is expected to average at 3.1% in 2023 witnessing a 50-bps downgrade from the IMF's previous forecast. MENA growth in 2024 is expected to reach 3.4% with a slight upward revision of 10 bps from IMF's previous forecast. GCC growth witnessed a steeper downward revision of 70 bps for 2023 with real GDP growth now expected to be below 3.0% at 2.9% as compared to previous forecast of 3.6%. For 2024, the GCC region is expected to record a slightly faster growth of 3.3%. The downgrade in the GCC growth for 2023 solely reflected a steep downward revision to oil GDP forecast for the region from 3.6% in IMF's previous forecast to 1.0% in the latest update. Non-oil GDP, on the other hand, is expected to see a faster growth of 4.2% vs. previous expectation of 3.7%. Within the GCC, Oman witnessed the biggest downgrade to expected growth in 2023 followed by Kuwait and the UAE while growth in Saudi Arabia was revised higher to 3.1% as compared to 2.6% expected earlier this year.

The year 2022 surprised on the upside with higher-than-expected GDP growth in a number of oil exporting and importing countries and as a result, GDP growth for 2022 was upgraded by 30 bps to 5.3% as compared to 4.3% in 2021. The growth mainly reflected strong domestic demand despite the negative impact of inflation as well as a rebound in oil production in oil exporting countries. The labor market in the region also showed improvement last year, especially in the GCC countries where employment rates increased, although outside the GCC unemployment rates remained a concern with minimal improvement and above the pre-pandemic levels.

### GCC oil GDP growth lowered; non-oil GDP growth revised up marginally.

GCC real oil GDP growth is expected to fall to 1.0% in 2023 after witnessing an expansion of 12.4% in 2022. Headline GDP forecast for the region was also lowered from 7.7% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023. Some factors that have contributed to the lower oil GDP growth expectation this year includes the OPEC+ related curbs in oil production in which the bloc has announced its plans to cut 3.66 mb/d or 3.7% of global supplies. The agency forecasts GCC oil production to dip 1.2% this year to 18.01 mb/d as compared to 18.23 mb/d in 2022. In terms of oil exports, the IMF expects the GCC countries to maintain total crude oil exports at 13.86 mb/d recording a slight marginal dip from 13.89 mb/d in exports in 2022.

The UAE is expected to lead the GCC in terms of oil GDP growth at 2.8% in 2023 followed by Qatar with an expected growth of 1.9%. Oman and Saudi Arabia are forecasted to be next with oil-GDP growth of 1.1% and 0.4%, respectively.

In terms of non-oil GDP, the GCC region is forecasted to record a relatively higher growth rate of 4.2% in 2023, recording a revision of 50 basis points as compared to earlier forecast, followed by 3.9% in 2024. The IMF expects Saudi Arabia to lead in terms of non-oil GDP growth in the GCC region with 4.9% growth in 2023 followed by the UAE and Bahrain with growth of 3.8% and 3.6%, respectively.

### GCC inflation is expected to fall in 2023...

Persistent global inflation continues to be a challenge to most of the MENA's non-oil exporting countries. Headline inflation has showed signs of easing up and peaking during the end of 2022, however, it remains persistently high for emerging market countries as well as non-oil exporting countries in the region. On the other hand, inflation in oil exporting countries in the GCC has been relatively lower than their counterparts in the wider MENA region mainly due to subsidies, caps on certain products as well as the strengthening of the USD and the smaller proportion of food the consumer price indices of the GCC countries. Moreover, the moderation of the GCC's inflation is partly attributable to the

declining global commodity prices particularly food which are expected to fall by 21% in 2023.

For the GCC, the IMF expects headline inflation to reach fall from 3.3% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023 and further lower to 2.3% in 2024. Comparatively, the IMF forecasts GCC core inflation to be much lower in 2023 at 2.3% followed by a 2.4% core inflation forecast in 2024. For the MENA region, the IMF forecasts inflation to remain the same 14.8% for 2022 and 2023 and then drop to 11.1% in 2024. For MENA oil importers, inflation is forecasted to grow from 18% in 2022 to 22% in 2023. Comparatively, inflation in MENA oil exporters is expected to fall from 13.5% in 2022 to 12% in 2023.

In the GCC, the UAE is expected to witness the highest consumer price inflation rate in 2023 at 3.4% followed closely by Kuwait at 3.3% and Qatar at 3.0%. The UAE government was expecting inflation in the Emirates to have reached 5.8% in 2022, the highest in six years. However, the IMF estimates that the UAE's inflation averaged 4.8% in 2022 thanks to inflation mitigating measures such as careful fiscal control and the local issuance of currency debt by the UAE government among many other measures.

### Fiscal surplus expectations continue but significantly smaller than previous expectations...

On the fiscal front, the IMF continues to forecast fiscal surpluses for the GCC region in 2023. However, the projected surplus as a percentage of GDP has been significantly downgraded. The IMF now expects a fiscal surplus of 2.4% of GDP for the GCC region in 2023 as compared to a forecast of a surplus of 6.0% of GDP in the IMF's previous REO. The broader MENA region is also expected to see the impact of this as MENA fiscal deficit expectations was increased from an expected deficit of 0.7% in the previous forecast to a deficit of 1.0% of GDP in the IMF's latest forecast. The current account surplus for the GCC region showed a steep decline to reach USD 180.5 Bn vs. USD 331.4 Bn in 2022. The decline reflected a sharp oil-export led decline in all the GCC countries during the year.

In terms of individual countries in the GCC, there was a downward revision across the board made by the IMF. Saudi Arabia is once again expected to slip into a fiscal deficit of 1.1% of GDP in 2023 as compared to previous forecast of a surplus of 3.9%. The deficit is expected to continue next year with a forecast of 1.2% of GDP. Bahrain is expected to post the biggest fiscal deficit of 8.2% this year (vs. 6.0% deficit as per previous forecast) followed by a higher deficit of 9.0% next year. The rest of the countries in the region are expected to show fiscal surpluses, albeit significantly lower than the previous forecast. The forecast for Qatar continues to show the biggest fiscal surplus of 14.7% of GDP in 2023 followed by 11.1% in 2024. Kuwait was next with an expected fiscal surplus of 7.0% of GDP this year followed by 4.2% next year.

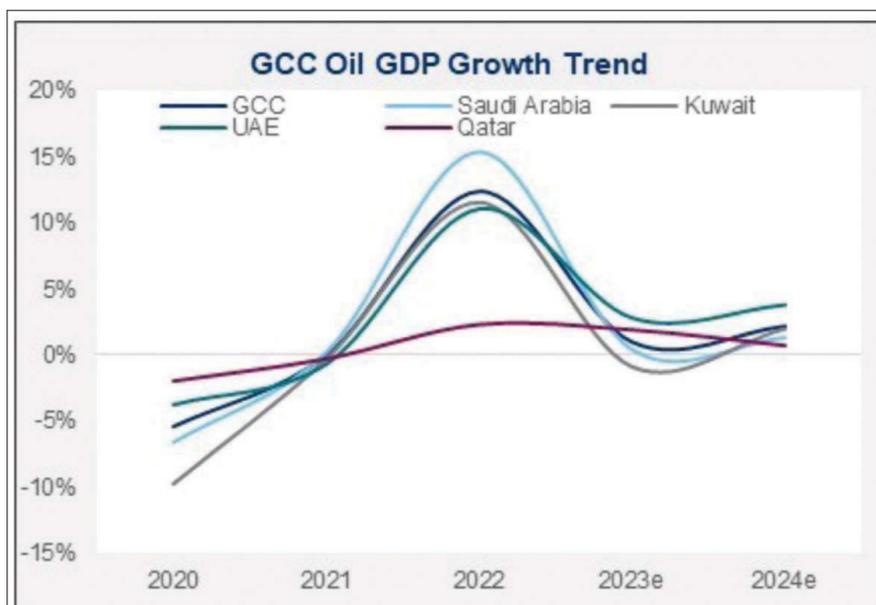
### Oil revenues expected to be hit by lower volumes and average prices...

The increase in oil revenues in 2022 as a result of higher production and exports supported the MENA economies on the fiscal front resulting in surpluses after several years. However, in 2023, the surprise production cuts announced by the OPEC recently in addition to lower crude oil prices are expected to result in lower oil revenues. On the spending side, however, the projects market in the GCC has recently shown signs of recovery with higher project awards during Q1-2023. Total value of GCC contracts awarded increased by 54.7% y-o-y during Q1-2023 to USD 29.9 Bn as compared to USD 19.3 Bn in awards during Q1-2022, according to MEED Projects. This was the second highest quarterly project awards since the start of 2022. All GCC project markets witnessed y-o-y project awards growth during Q1-2023 except for Bahrain which remains the smallest project market in the region. According to MEED Projects, GCC projects could reach an aggregate of USD 110 Bn in 2023 sustained by elevated oil prices and high energy demand around the world. All GCC countries are expected to see growth in contract awards with the possible exception of Qatar which may see dip in contract awards during the year.

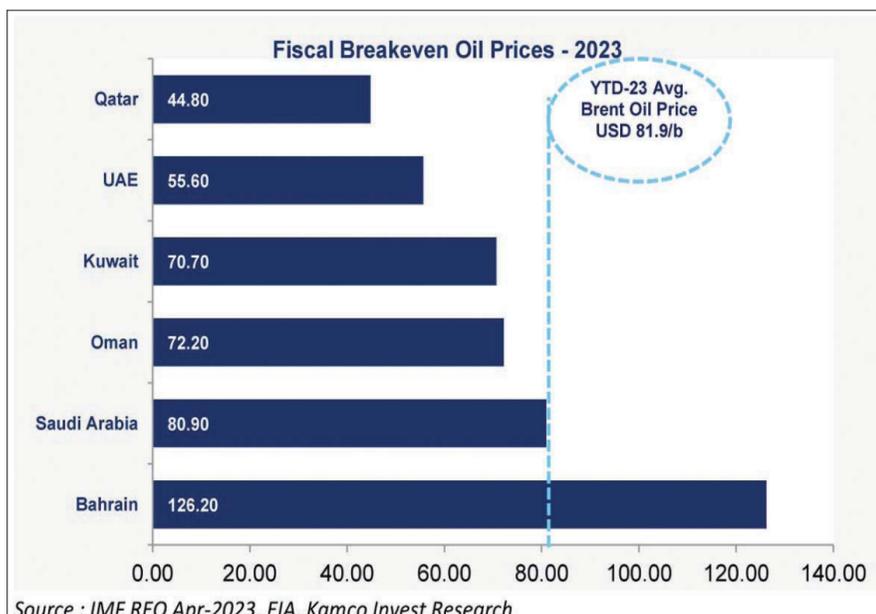
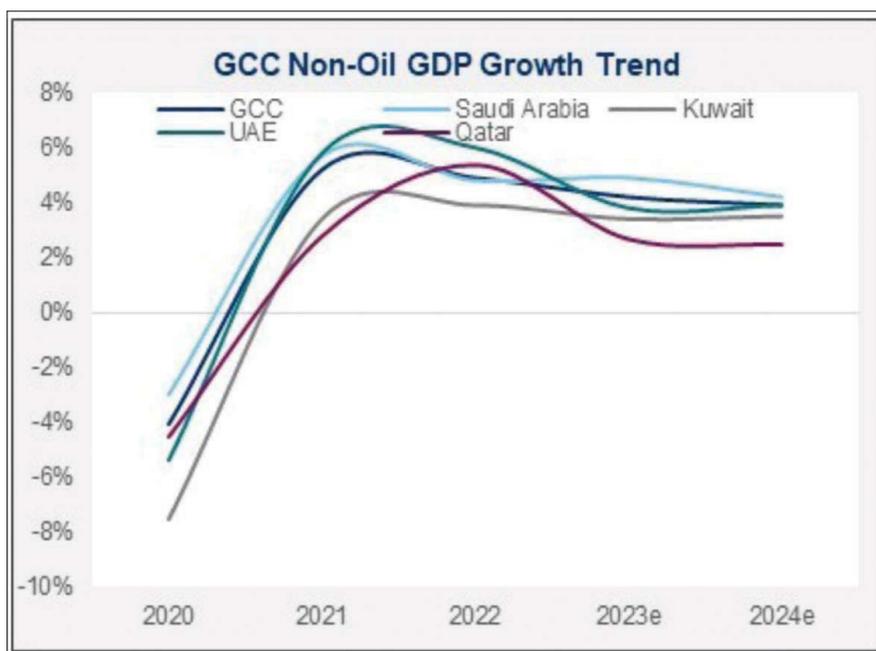
As a result, the fiscal breakeven oil price for 2023 is expected to be higher for four out of six GCC countries. Fiscal breakeven prices is expect to be the highest in the case of Bahrain at USD 126.2/b while Qatar continues to show the lowest price of USD 44.8/b. Brent crude oil averaged at USD 100.9/b last year and the average so far this year was significantly lower at USD 81.9/b. The IMF's world economic outlook released recently showed an oil price forecast of USD 73.1/b this year based on futures markets and is expected to fall to USD 65.4/b by 2026.

Country/Regions	May-2023 Updated Forecasts					IMF Revisions	
	2020	2021	2022	2023e	2024e	2023e	2024e
<b>Real GDP Growth</b>							
<b>Bahrain</b>	-4.6%	2.7%	4.2%	3.0%	3.8%	0.0%	-0.8%
Oil GDP	-0.1%	-0.3%	-1.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-5.6%	3.3%	5.5%	3.6%	4.5%	0.0%	N/A
<b>Kuwait</b>	-8.9%	1.3%	8.2%	0.9%	2.7%	-1.7%	-0.1%
Oil GDP	-9.8%	-0.3%	11.6%	-0.9%	2.0%	-2.9%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-7.5%	3.4%	3.9%	3.4%	3.5%	0.0%	N/A
<b>Oman</b>	-3.2%	2.9%	4.3%	1.7%	5.2%	-2.4%	-3.3%
Oil GDP	-0.9%	2.4%	9.6%	1.1%	9.5%	-5.3%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-4.5%	3.2%	1.2%	2.0%	2.5%	-0.6%	N/A
<b>Qatar</b>	-3.6%	1.6%	4.2%	2.4%	1.8%	0.0%	-0.1%
Oil GDP	-2.0%	-0.3%	2.3%	1.9%	0.7%	0.0%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-4.5%	2.8%	5.4%	2.7%	2.5%	0.0%	N/A
<b>Saudi Arabia*</b>	-4.3%	3.9%	8.7%	3.1%	3.1%	0.5%	0.3%
Oil GDP	-6.6%	0.2%	15.3%	0.4%	1.3%	-2.9%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-3.0%	5.7%	4.8%	4.9%	4.2%	1.1%	N/A
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	-5.0%	3.9%	7.4%	3.5%	3.9%	-0.7%	0.0%
Oil GDP	-3.8%	-0.7%	11.1%	2.8%	3.8%	-2.2%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-5.4%	5.8%	6.0%	3.8%	3.9%	-0.1%	N/A
<b>GCC Real GDP Growth</b>	-4.7%	3.5%	7.7%	2.9%	3.3%	-0.7%	N/A
Oil GDP	-5.4%	0.0%	12.4%	1.0%	2.2%	-2.6%	N/A
Non-oil GDP	-4.1%	5.2%	4.9%	4.2%	3.9%	0.5%	N/A
<b>MENA Real GDP Growth</b>	-3.1%	4.3%	5.3%	3.1%	3.4%	-0.5%	-0.1%

Sources : IMF REO Apr-2023



Source : IMF REO Apr-2023



Source : IMF REO Apr-2023, EIA, Kamco Invest Research

General Government Fiscal Balance	Average	Actual			Projections	
		2000-19	2020	2021	2022	2023e
Percent of GDP						
Bahrain	-4.7%	-16.3%	-11.6%	-5.6%	-8.2%	-9.0%
Kuwait	22.2%	-11.4%	2.3%	11.6%	7.0%	4.2%
Oman	2.4%	-16.1%	-3.2%	6.3%	0.3%	0.9%
Qatar	9.3%	1.3%	4.4%	14.2%	14.7%	11.1%
Saudi Arabia	3.1%	-10.7%	-2.3%	2.5%	-1.1%	-1.2%
United Arab Emirates	5.3%	-2.5%	4.0%	9.0%	4.3%	3.7%
<b>GCC</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>-8.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>MENA</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>
<b>Arab World</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>-8.6%</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>

Source : IMF REO Oct-2022

Crude Oil Production (mb/d)	2021	2022	2023e	2024e
Saudi Arabia	9.13	10.57	10.49	10.59
UAE	2.74	3.14	3.04	3.15
Kuwait	2.43	2.71	2.68	2.73
Oman	0.97	1.06	1.07	1.20
Qatar	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
Bahrain	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19
<b>GCC</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>18.23</b>	<b>18.01</b>	<b>18.41</b>

Source : IMF REO Apr-2023

## BUSINESS

## Shell posts \$9.6 billion profit

Global energy giant Shell said Thursday that it earned nearly \$10 billion in the first quarter, becoming the latest fossil fuel company to post strong financial results despite sliding oil and natural gas prices.

London-based Shell Plc reported adjusted earnings of \$9.6 billion in the first three months of 2023, up 5.7% from a year ago. The company said it faced headwinds from higher taxes and

lower prices for selling oil and natural gas, as energy prices have eased after spiking following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. Shell said those factors were offset by cutting operating expenses and better trading results.

In the first quarter, "Shell delivered strong results and robust operational performance, against a backdrop of ongoing volatility," CEO Wael Sawan said in a statement. (AP)

## United plans to hire 15,000

Airlines expecting a hectic summer travel season are planning to hire thousands of new workers this year, lifting a job market that has been hit by layoffs in technology and turmoil in the banking industry.

United Airlines said Wednesday that it hired 7,000 new workers in the first four months of this year and plans to hit 15,000 new hires by year-end, matching the number it hired

last year.

By 2026, United projects adding 50,000 workers to a workforce that was about 93,000 at the start of this year.

"We are in hiring mode here at United Airlines," Kate Gebo, the company's executive vice president of human resources, told reporters. Airline officials said they already have enough pilots to operate the peak summer schedule. (AP)

## constitutional body rejects call

France's top constitutional body rejected on Wednesday a last-ditch effort by opposition lawmakers to undo President Emmanuel Macron's law to raise the retirement age to 64, deeming that a proposed bill doesn't meet the needed criteria.

It was the second time that the Constitutional Council has rejected the plan to restore the retirement age to 62, no-

tably via a possible referendum or new bill. Had it passed muster, the process called for would be long and wouldn't stop Macron's law from taking effect.

The council ruled that the proposed legislation doesn't address a required "reform regarding social policy ... and therefore judges that it does not satisfy conditions" set out in the French Constitution. (AP)

## Partnership to focus on supporting nearly 8 million students enrolled across Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait

## PowerSchool, BME partner to expand digital transformation for ME education leaders

FOLSOM, Calif., May 4, (AP): PowerSchool, the leading provider of cloud-based software for K-12 education in North America, today announced a partnership with Board Middle East (BME) as part of the continued expansion of PowerSchool's PowerPartner Program. This partnership with BME will expand access to PowerSchool's innovative and mission-critical solutions in the Middle East.

The BME partnership will focus on supporting educators and the nearly 8 million students enrolled across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, with plans to serve more than 750,000 students across these countries in the next year. Through the partnership, educators across these countries can access mission-critical tools that are part of PowerSchool's international localization framework including PowerSchool's leading learning management system (LMS), Unified Classroom® Schoology Learning, and Unified Operations™ PowerSchool SIS to support even more students and families and help them realize the promise of personalized education.

"At BME, we work to build brighter futures for students by providing integrated services and solutions to im-



In this April 6, 2011 file photo, MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga speaks to reporters in New York. (AP)

provement the whole education experience and challenge the current model of education; we strive to bring the best education technology to our region," said Mr. Abdulaziz Alsanani, Chairman and owner of BME. "We're proud to partner with PowerSchool to continue driving positive changes in the way

education is delivered and experienced in the region."

The PowerPartner Program, a global channel partner initiative, leverages PowerSchool's regional channel partners to support localized marketing, sales, and customer deployment efforts. Currently, Pow-

## Ajay Banga selected 14th President of World Bank

WASHINGTON, May 4, (KUNA): The Executive Directors of the World Bank selected Ajay Banga as President of the World Bank for a five-year term beginning June 2, 2023.

Ajay Banga most recently served as Vice Chairman at General Atlantic. Previously, he was President and CEO of Mastercard, a global organization with nearly 24,000 employees.

Under his leadership, MasterCard launched the Center for Inclusive Growth, which advances equitable and sustainable economic growth and financial inclusion around the world. He was Honorary Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce, serving as Chairman from 2020-2022.

He became an advisor to General Atlantic's climate-focused fund, BeyondNetZero, at its inception in 2021.

Banga served as Co-Chair of the Partnership for Central America, a coalition of private organizations that works to advance economic opportunity across underserved populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

He was previously on the Boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods, and Dow Inc.

Ajay Banga is a co-founder of The Cyber Readiness Institute and was Vice Chair of the Economic Club of New York.

He was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal in 2012, the Padma Shri Award by the President of India in 2016, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the Business Council for International Understanding's Global Leadership Award in 2019, and the Distinguished Friends of Singapore Public Service Star in 2021.

The Board looks forward to working with Mr. Banga on the World Bank Group Evolution process, as discussed at the April 2023 Spring Meetings, and on all the World Bank Group's ambitions and efforts aimed at tackling the toughest development challenges facing developing countries.

Meanwhile, a statement from President Joe Biden on the selection of Ajay Banga congratulating him on the new post.

"I want to congratulate Ajay Banga - my nominee for the next President of the World Bank, on his resounding approval by the Bank's Board of Governors.

erSchool channel partners serve customers in Sub-Saharan Africa, Thailand, India, the Philippines, and Uruguay, with plans to rapidly expand the program this year.

"We're thrilled to partner with BME to support PowerSchool's extensive and growing customer base in the

Middle East & Africa (MEA) region," said Robert Speed, Vice President International Sales at PowerSchool. "We are both dedicated to providing educators and students with technology that empowers them to realize their full potential and we are pleased to partner with BME to continue enabling digital

transformation in education globally." In addition to the partnership with BME, PowerSchool is strengthening its customer support in the region with the opening of the company's previously announced MEA Office in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Q2 2023.

## Scientists warn of AI dangers but don't agree on solutions

'Humanity's survival is threatened when smart things can outsmart us'

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., May 4, (AP): Computer scientists who helped build the foundations of today's artificial intelligence technology are warning of its dangers, but that doesn't mean they agree on what those dangers are or how to prevent them.

Humanity's survival is threatened when "smart things can outsmart us," the pioneer AI Geoffrey Hinton said at a conference Wednesday at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"It may keep us around for a while to keep the power stations running," Hinton said. "But after that, maybe not."

After retiring from Google so he could speak more freely, the 75-year-old Hinton said he's recently changed his views about the reasoning capabilities of the computer systems he's spent a lifetime researching.

"These things will have learned from us, by reading all the novels that ever were and everything Machiavelli ever wrote, how to manipulate people," Hinton said, addressing the crowd attending MIT Technology Review's EmTech Digital conference from his home via video. "Even if they can't directly pull levers, they can certainly get us to pull levers."

"I wish I had a nice simple solution I could push, but I don't," he added. "I'm not sure there is a solution."

Fellow AI pioneer Yoshua Bengio, co-winner with Hinton of the top computer science prize, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that he's "pretty much aligned" with Hinton's concerns brought on by chatbots such as ChatGPT and related technology, but worries that to simply say "We're doomed" is not going to help.

"The main difference, I would say, is he's kind of a pessimistic person, and I'm more on the optimistic side," said Bengio, a professor at the University of Montreal. "I do think that the dangers - the short-term ones, the long-term ones - are very serious and need to be taken seriously by not just a few researchers but governments and the population."

There are plenty of signs that governments are listening. The White House has called in the CEOs of Google, Microsoft and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI to meet Thursday with Vice President Kamala Harris in what's being described by officials as a frank discussion on how to mitigate both the near-term and long-term risks of their technology. European lawmakers are also accelerating negotiations to pass sweeping new AI rules.

But all the talk of the most dire future dangers has some worried that hype around superhuman machines - which don't exist - is distracting from attempts to set practical safeguards on current AI products that are largely unregulated and have been shown to cause real-world harms.

Margaret Mitchell, a former leader on Google's AI ethics team, said she's upset that Hinton didn't speak out during his decade in a position of power at Google,



Taiwan Trade Minister John Chen-Chung Deng speaks during an interview with the Associated Press at Willard Hotel's Café du Parc, in Washington. (AP)

## Upcoming resort to be new architectural landmark in UAE

## Wynn AI Marjan Island unveils design vision

RAS AL KHAIMAH, United Arab Emirates, May 4, (AP): Wynn Resorts, Limited has announced the name of its new multi-billion-dollar integrated resort, debuting in Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE): Wynn AI Marjan Island. The company also unveiled the design vision of its first-ever beachfront resort, which is inspired by the tranquil seascape of AI Marjan Island, a group of four islands. The resort is being developed with local partners Marjan LLC, and RAK Hospitality Holding LLC.

Set in a pristine setting overlooking the azure waters of the Arabian Gulf, Wynn AI Marjan Island rises more than 1,000 feet (305 meters) above the sea, welcoming visitors to a premium luxury experience, including exceptional entertainment and gaming amenities. For its first project in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, the US-listed developer and luxury resort operator will create a serene and stylish setting that takes inspiration from the stunning sea views and brings the warm, relaxed ocean setting into its

modern world-class hotel. With an estimated project cost of approximately USD 3.9 billion, the iconic silhouette of Wynn AI Marjan Island will transform and accelerate the Emirate's rise as a major global tourist destination, while also creating substantial value to its economy through tourism and job creation. The project will pave the way for the accelerated growth of allied business sectors. Foundation construction work began onsite earlier this year.

The brand's signature, high-design opulence will be reflected in its approximately 1,500 lavishly styled rooms, suites and villas. Visitors can look forward to a wide array of entertainment options, a gaming area, 24 dining and lounge experiences, innovative spa and wellness experiences, a high-end shopping esplanade, a state-of-the-art events center, a theater hosting a unique production show, and other amenities. Designed for both longer visits and day trips from neighboring Emirates, the resort will offer abundant and layered experiences including nightly state-of-the-art laser and light

shows. The design of Wynn AI Marjan Island takes its inspiration both from the natural landscape surrounding the resort and the leading design aesthetic of Wynn Resorts. The same geometric configuration of the curved shape of the beach on the island is echoed through the podium structure, similar to a great opera house, creating majestic views of the beach, sea and the horizon. Every diner in the abundant restaurant offerings lining the beach-facing promenade at Wynn AI Marjan Island will enjoy sweeping views of the sea.

"We have spent the past year meticulously programming and conceptualizing Wynn AI Marjan Island, carefully considering its unique location," said Craig Billings, CEO of Wynn Resorts, "I am incredibly proud of our design and development team's ability to impart our legacy of rich, thoughtful design into a sun-soaked beachside resort that will delight customers, new and old. We look forward to opening Wynn AI Marjan Island in early 2027."

data sets.

But those concerns have grown recently, leading Bengio to join other computer scientists and tech business leaders like Elon Musk and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak in calling for a six-month pause on developing AI systems more powerful than OpenAI's latest model, GPT-4.

Bengio said Wednesday he believes the latest AI language models already pass the "Turing test" named after British codebreaker and AI pioneer Alan Turing's method introduced in 1950 to measure when AI becomes indistinguishable from a human - at least on the surface.

## 'We should avoid any exaggeration' Taiwan trade chief warns against unnecessary fear

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP): Taiwan's chief trade representative says his country's semiconductor makers will expand production in the U.S. as much as they can afford to do so, but he insists Taiwan remains an ideal place for that production and other U.S. trade, business and investment, despite tensions with China.

John Chen-Chung Deng spoke to The Associated Press on a visit this week to Washington, where he is leading a Taiwanese trade delegation and meeting with U.S. trade officials.

Deng's visit comes at a time of intensifying efforts to harden the U.S. and Taiwanese militaries and economies against any threat from rival China. As part of this, President Joe Biden and Congress are moving to boost semiconductor production on U.S. soil in the event of any conflict disrupting exports from Asia, especially from Taiwan.

Semiconductors make electronics ranging from phones to electric cars to advanced weapons run, and Taiwan produces more than 90% of the world's more advanced semiconductors.

At the same time, Pentagon leaders have been touring the Indo-Pacific to rally regional allies in bolstering military defenses and deterrence. A House committee last month war-gamed a hypothetical attack by China on Taiwan and U.S. positions as part of a bipartisan congressional effort to find specific ways to boost deterrence.

Deng said Americans should see these efforts as ensuring that Chinese President Xi Jinping will never feel confident enough to invade Taiwan, which China claims as its own.

"We should avoid any exaggeration or rhetoric which doesn't reflect the true situation, that creates fear ... unnecessary fear," said Deng.

He said the U.S. business community in Taiwan assures him it is still expanding and hiring. He cited the experienced workforce and support industries that Taiwan offers for semiconductor producers and for Google, Amazon and other U.S. businesses on its soil.

Relations between the U.S. and China have hit dramatic peaks in tensions over the past two years as Xi's government asserts China's growing strength economically, diplomatically and militarily. That includes China underscoring its broad territorial claims in the region.

China, for its part, accuses the U.S. of meddling in its internal affairs and pursuing a containment strategy against China to prevent its rise.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations. They are linked by billions of dollars in trade and investment. The Chinese Communist Party regularly flies fighter planes and bombers near Taiwan to enforce its stance that the island is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

The Biden administration and Republicans and Democrats in Congress broadly support strengthening the U.S. and Taiwanese positions in the region to discourage any Chinese invasion of the island.

For Taiwan, that swell in U.S. support overall has also brought renewed focus from Washington on the island's decades-old appeals to the U.S. to overhaul its tax and trade policies toward the island. Taiwanese leaders say the current U.S. policies make it hard for Taiwanese companies and workers operating in the United States, and could do more to help Taiwan strengthen trade relations with allies.

The U.S. switched its diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.

## Syria, Iran sign oil, trade agreements

DAMASCUS, Syria, May 4, (AP): The presidents of Iran and Syria signed Wednesday a series of long-term cooperation agreements on oil and other sectors to bolster economic ties between the two allies.

Iran's Ebrahim Raisi, leading a large economic and political delegation, met with his Syrian counterpart, Bashar Assad, after landing in the war-torn country for a two-day visit - an Iranian president's first visit to Damascus since 2010.

Tehran has been a main backer of Assad's government since a 2011 uprising turned into full-blown civil war and has played an instrumental role in turning the tide of the conflict in his favor.

Iran has sent scores of military advisers and thousands of Iran-backed fighters from around the Middle East to Syria to fight on Assad's side. Tehran has also been an economic lifeline for Assad, sending fuel and credit lines worth billions of dollars.

Syrian government forces have regained control of large parts of the country in recent years, with the help of its two main allies - Russia and Iran.

Syrian state media said Raisi and Assad signed agreements and memorandums of understanding related to several sectors, including oil, agriculture, railways and free trade zones.

Iran's state-owned railway company has long aspired to expand its network through neighboring Iraq and Syria, linking it to the Syrian port of Lattakia on the Mediterranean Sea to boost trade. Syria's opposition and Tehran critics see this as another Iran attempt at growing its political influence.

The deal are important also for Syria, whose economy has hit an all-time low over the past decade, with spiraling inflation, a currency plunge and rampant power cuts.

Without formal relations and the kind of a tax treaty that the U.S. has signed with friendly nations that it recognizes, Taiwanese workers in the U.S. have to pay taxes in both the U.S. and Taiwan. That makes the already more-expensive U.S. prohibitively expensive for many Taiwanese.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in March called it an issue the U.S. needed to address. Senior members of Congress also have urged the U.S. to reach a tax agreement with Taiwan.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration is promising tens of billions of dollars to support construction of U.S. chip foundries and reduce reliance on suppliers in Taiwan and elsewhere in Asia, which Washington sees as a security weakness.

Answering that U.S. call, Taiwanese chip giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. is building a chip plant in Arizona and plans a second, for a total investment of \$40 billion.

Deng said he hopes for resolution of the tax issue before that first Taiwanese plant starts operation in Arizona, given the double-tax burden the operation will face.

"Once they start to produce, this is a real problem," the trade official said.

**McDonald franchises fined for child labor violations**

Two 10-year-olds are among 300 children who worked at McDonald's restaurants illegally, a Labor Department investigation of franchisees in Kentucky found. Agency investigators found the 10-year-olds received little or no pay at a McDonald's in Louisville, the Labor Department said. The franchisee for the Louisville store was among three McDonald's franchisees fined \$212,000 in total by the department.

Louisville's Bauer Food LLC, which operates 10 McDonald's locations, employed 24 minors under the age of 16 to work more hours than legally permitted, the agency said. Among those were two 10-year-old children. The agency said the children sometimes worked as late as 2 am, but were not paid. "Below the minimum age for employment, they prepared and distributed food orders, cleaned

the store, worked at the drive-thru window and operated a register," the Labor Department said Tuesday, adding that one child also was allowed to operate a deep fryer, which is prohibited task for workers under 16. Franchise owner-operator Sean Bauer said the two 10-year-olds cited in the Labor Department's statement were visiting their parent, a night manager, and weren't employees. (AP)

**Obama launches firm to improve child nutrition**

Michelle Obama announced Wednesday that she has co-founded a new company to make and sell healthier food and drinks for kids, products that she says will be less detrimental to their long-term health because of their lower sugar and higher nutrient content. The former first lady's work with PLEZI Nutrition is an extension of her efforts to improve child nutrition when she was in the White House.

"I've learned that on this issue, if you want to change the game, you can't just work from the outside," she said during a keynote address in New York at a conference on the future sponsored by The Wall Street Journal. "You've got to get inside. You've got to find ways to change the food and beverage industry itself." "So today, I'm proud to announce the national launch of a company designed not just to provide bet-

ter products, but to jumpstart what I hope will be a race to the top that will transform the entire food industry," she said. Mrs. Obama said she is a co-founder and strategic partner of PLEZI Nutrition. She will work behind the scenes on its educational and philanthropic efforts, according to aides, who stressed that she will not be a spokesperson or public face of the company. (AP)

**Passkeys offer safer alternative to passwords**

**Hate passwords? You're in luck – Google is sidelining them**

SAN FRANCISCO, May 4: (AP) Good news for all the password-haters out there: Google has taken a big step toward making them an afterthought by adding "passkeys" as a more straightforward and secure way to log into its services.

Here's what you need to know: **What are passkeys?** Passkeys offer a safer alternative to passwords and text confirmation codes. Users won't ever see them directly; instead, an online service like Gmail will use them to communicate directly with a trusted device such as your phone or computer to log you in.

All you'll have to do is verify your identity on the device using a PIN unlock code, biometrics such as your fingerprint or a face scan or a more sophisticated physical security dongle. Google designed its passkeys to work with a variety of devices, so you can use them on iPhones, Macs and Windows computers as well as Google's own Android phones.

**Why passkeys necessary?** Thanks to clever hackers and human fallibility, pass-

words are just too easy to steal or defeat. And making them more complex just opens the door to users defeating themselves.

For starters, many people choose passwords they can remember - and easy-to-recall passwords are also easy to hack. For years, analysis of hacked password caches found that the most common password in use was "password123." A more recent study by the password manager NordPass found that it's now just "password." This isn't fooling anyone.

Passwords are also frequently compromised in security breaches. Stronger passwords are more secure, but only if you choose ones that are unique, complex and non-obvious. And once you've settled on "erVex411\$%" as your password, good luck remembering it.

In short, passwords put security and ease of use directly at odds. Software-based password managers, which can create and store complex passwords for you, are valuable tools that can improve security. But even password managers have a master password you need to protect, and that plunges you back into the swamp.

In addition to sidestepping all those problems, passkeys have one additional advantage over passwords. They're specific to particular websites, so scammer sites can't steal a passkey from a dating site and use it to raid your bank account.

**How to start passkeys?** First step is to enable them for your Google account. On any trusted phone or computer, open the browser and sign into your Google account. Then visit the page g.co/passkeys and click the option to "start using passkeys." Voila! The passkey feature is now activated for that account.

If you're on an Apple device, you'll first be prompted to set up the Keychain app if you're not already using it; it securely stores passwords and now passkeys as well.

Next step is to create the actual passkeys that will connect your trusted device. If you're using an Android phone that's already logged into your Google account, you're most of the way there; Android phones are automatically ready to use passkeys, though you still have enable the function first.

On the same Google account page noted above, look for the "Create a passkey" button. Pressing it will open a window and let you create a passkey either on your current device or on another device. There's no wrong choice; the system will simply notify you if that passkey already exists.

If you're on a PC that can't create a passkey, it will open a QR code that you can scan with the ordinary cameras on iPhones and Android devices. You may have to move the phone closer until the message "Set up passkey" appears on the image. Tap that and you're on your way.

**And then what?** From that point on, signing into Google will only require you to enter your email address. If you've gotten passkeys set up properly, you'll simply get a message on your phone or other device asking you to for your fingerprint, your face or a PIN.

Of course, your password is still there. But if passkeys take off, odds are good you won't be needing it very much. You may even choose to delete it from your account someday.

**'No special treatment'**

**Musk threatens to reallocate '@NPR'**

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) Elon Musk threatened to reassign NPR's Twitter account to "another company," according to the non-profit news organization, in an ongoing spat between Musk and media groups since his \$44 billion acquisition of Twitter last year.

"So is NPR going to start posting on Twitter again, or should we reassign @NPR to another company?" Musk wrote in one email late Tuesday to NPR reporter Bobby Allyn.

NPR stopped tweeting from its main account after Twitter abruptly labeled NPR's main account as "state-affiliated media" last month, a term that's also been used to identify outlets controlled or heavily influenced by authoritarian governments. Twitter then changed the label to "government-funded media."

NPR said that both labels were inaccurate and undermined its credibility - noting the nonprofit news company operates independently of the US government. Federal funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting accounts for less than 1% of NPR's annual operating budget, the company said. The last tweets on NPR's main account are from April 12 - when the news organization shared a thread of other places readers and listeners can find its journalism.

Twitter temporarily slapped other news organizations - including the BBC and PBS - with "government-funded media" labels. PBS also stopped using its Twitter account in response.

In an article written by Allyn late Tuesday, the NPR tech reporter detailed the messages that the billionaire owner of Twitter sent regarding NPR's account. Musk pointed to NPR's choice to stop tweeting as justifying possibly reassigning the account.

**Dormant**

"Our policy is to recycle handles that are definitively dormant," Musk wrote in one email. "Same policy applies to all accounts. No special treatment for NPR."

According to Twitter's online policy, the social media platform determines an account's inactivity based on logging on - not tweeting. Twitter says that users should log in at least every 30 days to keep their accounts active, and that "accounts may be permanently removed due to prolonged inactivity." Musk's comments and his actions, however, do not always match and it is uncertain if he will actually reassign NPR's handle, regardless of Twitter's published policy on account activity.

When asked by NPR who would be willing to use NPR's Twitter account, Musk replied, "National Pumpkin Radio," along with a fire emoji and a laughing emoji, NPR reported.

It is unknown if NPR has logged into its account, which currently has a blue check without the previous "government-funded media" label, since April. The Associated Press reached out to NPR for comment early Wednesday.

Musk disbanded Twitter's media and public relations department after the takeover.

As of Wednesday, the NPR Twitter handle still appeared to belong to NPR. If Musk does reassign the account to another user, experts warn of misinformation and further loss of credibility.

"Potentially losing access to a handle as a form of pressure is really just a continuation of eroding the credibility of information sharing on Twitter," Zeve Sanderson, executive director of New York University's Center for Social Media and Politics told The Associated Press.

"For journalism, there's not only brand safety concerns, but in addition to that, there are a ton of concerns around misinformation potentially being perceived as a lot more credible - because someone (could be) tweeting from the NPR handle when it's really not them," Sanderson added. It is the latest volley in what many experts describe as a chilling and uncertain landscape for journalism on Twitter since Musk acquired the company in October.

In addition to removing news organization's verifications and temporarily adding labels like "government-funded media" on some accounts, Musk abruptly suspended the accounts of individual journalists who wrote about Twitter late last year. In response to Musk's Tuesday emails, Liz Woolery, digital policy lead at literary organization PEN America said that it is "hard to imagine a more potent example of Musk's willingness to use Twitter to arbitrarily intimidate and retaliate against any person or organization that irks him, with or without provocation."



Musk

**Acquisition contributed to achieving highest profits: Al Rushood**

**KFH posts historic net profit of KD162.1 million for Q1 of 2023**

**KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the Q1-2023 Earnings Webcast. KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood started his speech by highlighting the Bank's financial performance during Q1-2023. He said that, by the grace of Allah, KFH reported historic net profit of KD 162.1 million for the first quarter of 2023 for KFH shareholders; an increase of 133.2% compared to the same period last year, taking into consideration the benefits of the acquisition. Earnings per share reached 11.06 fils; an increase of 67.6% compared to the same period last year.**

He affirmed that KFH positive financial indicators across the board during the first quarter of 2023 confirms the successful and efficient strategy of the Bank, adding that KFH successfully maintained key ratios in terms of profitability, ROA, ROE, improving asset quality, the coverage ratio of provisions for non-performing debt, cost-to-income ratio as well as all key financial indicators. He emphasized the solid capital base and high liquidity ratios which KFH enjoys that support its business growth and enhances its credit strength.

Al Rushood also said that KFH is continuing its strategy to improve the role of core banking activities in achieving profitability and sustainable growth, keeping pace with developments in digitalization, artificial intelligence, innovation in financing and investment products and technology solutions, increasing investment in green Sukuk in the total financing portfolio, and linking investments to sustainable development goals. In addition to KFH's investment in human resources, supporting entrepreneurship and youth, and supporting SMEs, while the harmony between the Group's banking subsidiaries continues to boost KFH's leading position globally.

"The growth resulting from the successful acquisition of Ahli United Bank constitutes a driving force for KFH to achieve its ambitions, not to mention moving forward in its regional and international expansion to record significant growth ratios in profits and in customer service levels," said Al Rushood.

He went on saying that KFH plays a prominent societal role characterized by diversity and inclusiveness, in a way that reinforces the implementation of sustainability criteria. KFH has implemented strategic social initiatives with added value and a real positive impact on society. The initiatives, for example, include KD 20 million debt settlement of defaulting debtors, KD 8 million reconstruction of Ahli Mubarakiya, and support for the "Kuwait is by your side" campaign to relief those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria with an amount of US\$20 million, in addition to signing various agreements to support social and relief efforts. Moreover, KFH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to support sustainability efforts, and launched the (Keep it Green) program, which implements several sustainability initiatives under its umbrella, as well as KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to receive the GSAS-Gold Level certificate.

He indicated that KFH continues to lead in digital transformation, achieving a remarkable growth in the customers' use of digital banking services through KFHOnline



Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, KFH Acting Group CEO



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer



Shadi Zahran, Group Chief Financial Officer

on mobile and website, where the rate of increase in usage in Q1 2023 compared to the same period of the previous year reached about 43%. KFH will continue to lead the competition and be unique in offering innovative financial solutions that meet customers' aspirations and add to KFH's leadership locally and globally.

Further, Al Rushood noted that KFH has qualified talent and personnel that are able to implement the strategic goals of the bank. Indeed, the successful talent acquisition and development strategy of KFH resulted in having the largest number of Kuwaiti employees at the level of Kuwaiti banks and all private sector institutions, while the percentage of attracting Kuwaitis for new appointments reached nearly 100% in recent years.

He concluded by saying that KFH received global recognition for its outstanding innovative products and services, reliability, broad geographical outreach, digital development, solid financial position, and its strong brand. Accordingly, KFH won various awards, most notably: "Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East", "Best Bank in Kuwait" and the Sustainability award in the Middle East from EMEA Finance magazine, as well as "Best Digital Offering in Kuwait" award from Islamic Finance News (IFN), in addition to many prestigious awards.

**Group Chief Financial Officer – Shadi Zahran**

Presenting the financial performance of KFH group for the first quarter of 2023, KFH Group Chief Financial Officer, Shadi Zahran said that the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the quarter ended 31st March 2023 of KD 162.1mn higher by KD 92.6mn or 133% compared to Q1-22 of KD 69.5mn. He explained that the higher profits are mainly from increase in total operating income and lower provisions partly offset by an increase in operating expenses, taxation and net monetary loss that resulted from the application of IAS-29 "Financial reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies" on the financial statements of Kuwait Turkish Participation Bank (KTPB).

Zahran presented details on key financial indicators saying that the Financing income has increased by KD 265.2mn or 115.2% compared to same period last year due to increase in yield and profit earning assets. Net financing income at KD 226mn increased by KD 66.9mn or 42.1% compared to same period last year mainly due to increase in financing income by KD 265.2mn offset by

increase in finance cost and estimated distribution to depositors by KD 198.3mn.

Net Operating income at KD 251.2mn increased by KD 102.9mn or 69.5% compared to same period last year; mainly from increase in net financing income by KD 66.9mn, increase in Investment income by KD 62.5mn and increase in fees and commissions by KD 10.2mn offset by increase in operating expenses by KD 48mn.

Zahran noted that the Total Operating Expenses at KD 127.9mn is higher by KD 48mn primarily due to consolidation of AUB besides the impact of high inflation in Turkey.

Cost to income ratio for Q1-23 improved at 33.75% compared to 35.04% for Q1-22. The improvement in C/I ratio is mainly due to increase in operating income by KD 150.9mn. Group C/I ratio is one of the most improved among the Kuwaiti banks for Q1-2023 and FY 2022 based on published results.

"Average Yielding Assets is up by 25.4% compared to FY2022 and 62.6% compared to Q1-22. The avg. financing receivables is up by KD 4.2bn and debt securities by KD 1.7bn compared to last year and by KD 7.9bn and KD 3.3bn respectively as compared to Q1-2022" said Zahran.

Looking at provisions and impairments, group total impairment charge decreased by KD 16.7mn or 41.4% to reach KD 23.7mn for Q1-23.

Group credit provisions charge for Q1-23 amounted to KD 55.9mn higher by KD 31.1mn compared to Q1-22 of KD 24.8mn. This was mainly due to higher provisions recorded during the current period in line with group's conservative approach towards provisioning in view of high recoveries from written-off financings receivables in Q1-23.

As for financial position, Zahran stated that Total Assets at KD 36.9bn marginally decreased by KD 115mn or 0.3% in Q1-23. Net financing receivables at KD 19.2bn increased by KD 319mn or 1.7%. Growth in financing receivables was achieved mainly in corporate banking segment, in our international operations, highlighting the importance of geographically diversified group.

Additionally, deposits for Q1-23 at KD 23.4bn are higher by KD 1bn or 4.3% compared to December 2022. Growth in deposits was achieved in all major group entities. The contribution from CASA deposits to total group deposits as at the end of Q1-23 is 44%.

Zahran said: "While we have noted some shift towards time deposits due to profit rate hikes, on overall basis this is not significant,

and group continues to benefit from a large pool of low-cost deposits. Contribution of customer deposits to total funding reached 80.5% compared to 76.3% in 2022 due to increase in deposits during the current period."

He added: "Looking at the key financial ratios which reflects improvement in all ratios due to increase profitability."

- ROATE from 15.15% to 22.97%
- ROAA from 1.61% to 2.04%
- C/I ratio from 35.04% to 33.75%
- EPS from 6.60 fils to 11.06 fils

Group NPL ratio reached 1.49% (as per CBK calculation) in Q1-23, and Provisions Coverage ratio for the Group is 325% in Q1-23.

**Group Chief Strategy Officer – Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem**

KFH Group Chief Strategy Officer, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem presented Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH performance and strategy during Q1-2023. He said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) April 2023 forecasts Kuwait to register 8.2% GDP growth in 2022, and a positive growth in 2023. The annual inflation rate in Kuwait rose to 3.7% in March of 2023, from 3.2% in the previous month. This was the highest reading since August 2022.

He pointed out that the Central Bank of Kuwait Board of Directors decided to raise the discount rate by 50 bp from 3.5% to 4.0% effective January 26, 2023, bringing borrowing costs to the highest since September 2019.

Al-Mukhaizeem revealed that Standard & Poor's credit rating for Kuwait stands at A+ with stable outlook. Further, Moody's credit rating for Kuwait was last set at A1 with stable outlook. Fitch's credit rating for Kuwait was last reported at AA- with stable outlook.

He stated that KFH's long term credit rating stands at "A" by Fitch with Stable Outlook, and at A2 by Moody's with Stable Outlook. In addition, KFH Group was recently named as the Best Islamic Financial Institution in the World and in the Middle East by Global Finance Magazine, and Best Treasury & Cash Management Bank in Kuwait by Global Finance Magazine, and Sustainability award in Middle east by EMEA Finance.

Al-Mukhaizeem pointed out that KFH ranked first among the largest listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of a market capitalization approximately KD 11 billion at the end of Q1-2023.

The call was attended by: CI Capital, HSBC, EFG Hermes, Moon Capital, JP Morgan and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA)

BeiGene and SpringWorks drug to address unmet medical need

# New combo therapy shows promise to treat solid tumors

STAMFORD, Conn., May 4: BeiGene, Ltd. (NASDAQ: BGNE; HKEX: 06160; SSE: 688235), and SpringWorks Therapeutics, Inc. (NASDAQ: SWTX), have announced that they were to present updated clinical data from the Phase 1b trial of BeiGene's RAF dimer inhibitor, lifirafenib, in combination with SpringWorks' MEK inhibitor, mirdametinib, in patients with advanced or refractory solid tumors with RAS mutations, RAF mutations and other MAPK pathway aberrations. The data was presented in an oral presentation at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2023, taking place in Orlando, Florida.

"The lifirafenib plus mirdametinib combination represents a novel targeted approach to treat solid tumors driven by RAS/RAF mutations, and other MAPK pathway aberrations. The early clinical data reported here demonstrate the potential of this vertical combination strategy in addressing the substantial unmet medical need represented by patients with tumors driven by these genetic alterations," said Lusong Luo, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, External Innovation at BeiGene. "We are very excited about our continued study of this combination with its advancement into dose expansion this year."

"We are pleased by the progress of our collaboration with BeiGene on the lifirafenib and mirdametinib combination," said Saqib Islam, CEO of SpringWorks. "We view vertical inhibition approaches, such as this novel combination, as a promising strategy to improve outcomes in biomarker-defined subgroups of patients that lack efficacious treatments for their cancers."

**Expansion**

This ongoing Phase 1b trial (NCT03905148) is an open-label, dose escalation and expansion study to investigate the safety, pharmacokinetics (PK) and antitumor activities of mirdametinib in combination with lifirafenib, BeiGene's RAF dimer inhibitor, in patients with advanced or refractory solid tumors harboring RAS mutations, RAF mutations, and other MAPK pathway aberrations.

Results from the Part A dose-escalation and dose-finding study are being presented at AACR. This portion of the study was designed to evaluate the safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of the combination, and determine the maximum tolerated dose and/or recommended Phase 2 dose.

As of the data cut-off of January 20, 2023, 71 patients were treated across 9 dose levels evaluating different dosing regimens. Results suggest that lifirafenib in combination with mirdametinib demonstrated a favorable safety profile, with low incidence of dose limiting toxicities and treatment-emergent adverse events that led to dose discontinuations. The most common treatment-related adverse events related to lifirafenib and/or mirdametinib (>15%) were dermatitis acneiform (42%), fatigue (32%), diarrhea (27%), platelet count decreased (18%), alopecia (18%), nausea (17%) and alanine aminotransferase increased (16%).

The combination showed antitumor activity in patients with various KRAS, NRAS, and BRAF mutations across several solid tumor types, including low-grade serous ovarian cancer (LGSOC), non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), and endometrial cancer. Among 62 efficacy-evaluable patients, 14 patients (23%) had confirmed objective responses. Of 17 patients with LGSOC treated, 10 patients (59%) had objective responses, with median duration of treatment of approximately 26 months. Of the 4 endometrial cancer patients treated, 2 (50%) had objective responses in tumors that harbor BRAF fusion mutation or KRAS mutation, respectively. Of the 11 patients with NSCLC treated, 2 (18%) had objective responses in tumors that harbor NRAS

mutation or BRAF V600E mutation, respectively. These data support the advancement of this combination into the dose-expansion portion of the study, which will focus on a biomarker selected patient population with a tumor agnostic approach. The expansion is expected to start in the second half of 2023.

"Our findings indicate that the combination of lifirafenib and mirdametinib treatment demonstrated antitumor activity in patients with various KRAS, NRAS, and BRAF mutations across several solid tumor types known to be driven by the MAPK pathway and for which current treatment options are limited," said Benjamin Solomon, MBBS, PhD, FRACP, medical oncologist at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia. "We are pleased with the risk-benefit profile seen to date with this combination and look forward to the further clinical investigation in the dose-expansion portion of the study."

Lifirafenib (BGB-283) is an investigational novel small molecule designed to inhibit both monomeric and dimeric RAF kinase. Lifirafenib has demonstrated antitumor activity in pre-clinical models and in cancer patients with tumors harboring BRAF V600E mutations and non-V600E BRAF mutations, in which the monomeric form of RAF is implicated, as well as KRAS/NRAS mutations, in which the dimeric form of RAF is implicated.

Mirdametinib is an investigational, oral, allosteric small molecule MEK inhibitor. Mirdametinib is designed to inhibit MEK1 and MEK2, which occupy pivotal positions in the MAPK pathway. The MAPK pathway is a key signaling network that regulates cell growth and survival and that plays a central role in multiple oncology and rare disease indications when genetically altered.

Mirdametinib is in development as a monotherapy treatment for neurofibromatosis type 1-associated plexiform neurofibromas (NF1-PN) and low-grade glioma (LGG), and as a combination therapy for the treatment of several subsets of biomarker-defined metastatic solid tumors. To date, over 300 subjects have been exposed to treatment with mirdametinib across clinical trials, with preliminary evidence of clinical activity against tumors driven by over-activated MAPK signaling.

**Affordable**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Commission granted Orphan Drug designation for mirdametinib for the treatment of NF1, and the FDA granted Fast Track designation for the treatment of patients ≥ 2 years of age with NF1-PN that are progressing or causing significant morbidity.

BeiGene is a global biotechnology company that is developing and commercializing innovative and affordable oncology medicines to improve treatment outcomes and access for far more patients worldwide. With a broad portfolio, we are expediting development of our diverse pipeline of novel therapeutics through our internal capabilities and collaborations. We are committed to radically improving access to medicines for far more patients who need them. Our growing global team of more than 9,000 colleagues spans five continents, with administrative offices in Basel, Beijing and Cambridge, Mass.

SpringWorks is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company applying a precision medicine approach to acquiring, developing and commercializing life-changing medicines for patients living with severe rare diseases and cancer. SpringWorks has a differentiated targeted oncology pipeline spanning solid tumors and hematological cancers, including two late-stage clinical trials in rare tumor types as well as several programs addressing highly prevalent, genetically defined cancers.

# Biomedicines, MD Anderson partner to develop cancer therapies using AI

To produce purpose-built medicines

SOMERVILLE, Mass. & HOUSTON: Generate:Biomedicines and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center have announced a strategic collaboration to jointly discover and co-develop protein therapeutics for up to five oncology targets in advanced cancers, including small-cell and non-small-cell lung cancer.

Under the co-development and commercialization agreement, MD Anderson and Generate:Biomedicines will each contribute toward creating optimized, potentially best-in-class therapeutics that can rapidly advance into proof-of-concept clinical trials. The agreement combines Generate:Biomedicines' integrated machine-learning capabilities and experimental/wet lab capabilities – which are powered by The Generate Platform – with MD Anderson's clinical research expertise and the translational research and drug development capabilities of the Translational Research to AdvanCe Therapeutics and Innovation in Oncology (TRAC-TION) platform.

"Together with Generate:Biomedicines, we aim to leverage rapid advancements in generative AI to develop new medicines that are purpose-built for those who do not benefit from existing treatments or who have drug-resistant cancers requiring new options," said Timothy Heffernan, Ph.D., vice president of Oncology Research for TRAC-TION at MD Anderson. "By joining The Generate Platform with our integrated translational research and drug development approach, we hope to successfully scale drug discovery and development in a way that has eluded traditional trial-and-error methods."

By tapping into the programmability and scalability of The Generate Platform, researchers within TRAC-TION and across the MD Anderson research enterprise will accelerate the pace of drug development and inform clinical translation. TRAC-TION is a core component of MD Anderson's Therapeutics Discovery division that deploys a fully integrated translational biology engine to overcome traditional challenges in oncology drug discovery.

**Emerge**

"Our collaboration with MD Anderson is an embodiment of innovative and cooperative research purposed to maximize the clinical impact of new therapeutics in oncology," said Generate:Biomedicines' Chief Medical Officer, Alex Snyder, M.D. "Together, we aim to deploy disruptive technology that will enable us to completely reimagine how we identify and pursue therapeutic targets, with the goal of creating new therapies for patients faster than ever before."

Under the agreement terms, Generate:Biomedicines and MD Anderson will share research and development expenses as well as funds generated through commercialization of products that emerge from the collaboration. The organizations

Firm to make impact in fight against AD, MS

# Therini Bio raises \$36 million to develop neurodegenerative disease therapies

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., May 4: Therini Bio, Inc., a biotech company aimed at developing fibrin-targeted therapies to treat inflammatory neurodegenerative and retinal diseases, has announced the close of a \$36M Series A financing round. The funding round was co-led by Dementia Discovery Fund, MRL Ventures Fund, the therapeutics-focused corporate venture fund of Merck & Co., Inc., Sanofi Ventures, and SV Health Investors' Impact Medicine Fund. New investor Eli Lilly and Company participated in the round, with all existing investors including Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF), Dolby Family Ventures, and Foundation for a Better World. The Series A funding brings the total amount raised since inception to \$62M.

The Company is well-positioned to make a significant impact in the fight against Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases with this potentially novel biological approach to inflammation.

Therini Bio is developing therapeutic candidates that selectively target the inflammatory component of fibrin, in neurological diseases, including Alzheimer's disease (AD) and multiple sclerosis (MS), as well as in a variety of retinal diseases, such as diabetic macular edema (DME) where destructive inflammation plays a role in the disease process.

The new funding will enable Therini Bio to advance its pipeline of fibrin-targeting therapies and advance its lead antibody THN391, that binds the inflammation-driving

component of fibrin that is known to activate immune responses in neurodegenerative and ophthalmologic diseases. Importantly, based on our preclinical studies to date, targeting this region does not impact or diminish fibrin's critical role in blood clotting and coagulation.

"We are thrilled to announce a top-tier investor syndicate, which will allow us to advance our groundbreaking work in developing fibrin-targeted therapies for diseases driven by chronic inflammation," said Michael Quigley, Ph.D., President and CEO of Therini Bio. "This funding will enable us to accelerate the development of our lead antibody program targeting inflammatory fibrin in neurodegenerative and retinal diseases. We look forward to advancing our first candidate, THN391, into clinical trials, and expect to announce key safety and proof of mechanism clinical data by the end of 2024."

**Innovative**

"We are thrilled to invest in Therini Bio and support their innovative first-in-class approach in developing therapies that selectively target inflammatory fibrin," said Houman Ashrafiyan, BM BCh, DPhil, Managing Partner, SV Health Investors. "Therini Bio's approach in optimizing humanized antibodies to target fibrin inflammatory signals without affecting critical clotting functions is groundbreaking, and we look forward to working with the team to advance development of these potentially novel therapies for patients."

"Loss of vascular integrity, fibrin

deposition and subsequent chronic inflammation are known risk factors in the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease. Therini Bio is targeting the root cause of chronic inflammation by developing a targeted monoclonal antibody that reduces fibrin-mediated inflammation in the vasculature of the brain, inhibiting the activation of microglia, immune cells in the brain," said Howard Filit, M.D., Co-Founder and Chief Science Officer at the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF). "The Company is well-positioned to make a significant impact in the fight against Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases with this potentially novel biological approach to inflammation."

Additionally, Therini Bio was awarded a \$3M non-dilutive funding grant in 2021 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute on Aging (NIA), which will provide \$1M of preclinical research funding to advance the Company's Alzheimer's disease program each year through 2024.

Therini Bio is a biotech company aimed at developing fibrin-targeted therapies to treat inflammatory neurodegenerative and retinal diseases. The Company is developing a pipeline of potential first-in-class therapies targeting toxic fibrin accumulation. The foundational science was licensed based on technology discovered in Katerina Akassoglou, Ph.D. laboratories at the Gladstone Institutes at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) and formerly the University of California San Diego.

also anticipate that MD Anderson will serve as a site and recommend lead investigators for Phase I and II clinical trials of any jointly developed therapeutic product candidates.

Generative biology represents a fundamental shift in therapeutic development driven by generative artificial intelligence (AI). This approach creates never-before-seen therapeutic molecules targeted to specific biological processes involved in disease that can be modulated with a wide range of protein modalities—from short peptides to complex antibodies, enzymes, and cytokines. But the promise of generative biology goes beyond existing proteins found in nature and can create novel proteins that are purpose-built to address an existing or emerging therapeutic need. As a result, generative biology promises to leave trial-and-error drug discovery methods behind to usher in a new era of programmable drug generation

that's faster, cheaper, and better tailored to specific conditions.

Generate:Biomedicines is the first drug generation company, pioneering a machine learning-powered generative biology platform with the ability to create new drugs on demand across a wide range of biologic modalities. The Generate Platform – which is a continuous loop to generate, build, measure, and learn – can drastically increase the speed at which targets and therapeutics are identified and validated. This will improve the specificity of target engagement by generated proteins and reduce the time and cost of identifying and developing clinical candidates. Generate:Biomedicines was founded by Flagship Pioneering after two years of foundational research in its Labs unit and launched in 2020.

MD Anderson has an institutional conflict of interest with Generate related to this research, and this re-

lationship will be managed according to an MD Anderson Institutional Conflict of Interest Management and Monitoring Plan.

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston ranks as one of the world's most respected centers focused on cancer patient care, research, education, and prevention. The institution's sole mission is to end cancer for patients and their families around the world. MD Anderson is one of only 53 comprehensive cancer centers designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). MD Anderson is No. 1 for cancer in U.S. News & World Report's "Best Hospitals" rankings and has been named one of the nation's top two hospitals for cancer since the rankings began in 1990. MD Anderson receives a cancer center support grant from the NCI of the National Institutes of Health (P30 CA016672).

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# Artists to Russia: 'Our Fire is Stronger Than Your Bombs'

GOFFSTOWN, N.H., May 4, (AP) — As Ukrainian artists Jenya Polosina and Anna Ivanenko watched missiles descend on their country, the two decided to use their creativity to push back against Russia's invasion. Working in the early days of the war from bunkers or sometimes without electricity and water in Kyiv, they and other artists started drawing.

Some of their war posters are now on display in New Hampshire. In the exhibit entitled "Our Fire is Stronger Than Your Bombs," posters from Ivanenko show children studying in a bomb shelter and Ukrainians fleeing the country soon after the war started. Polosina's drawings celebrate a female gymnast and a young mathematician who were killed in missile strikes.

"We understood that it's a good pill, a good medicine for not panicking, for keeping yourself together. So, we started drawing," Ivanenko told The Associated Press from the studio in Kyiv she shares with Polosina. They are among eight artists who contributed 20 posters to the exhibit at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics in Manchester that opened Monday. The posters were shown previously at Dartmouth College and still can be seen as part of a digital exhibit.

Before the war, Polosina was producing illustrations for books and advertising that focused on social themes like human rights and Ukraine's largest LGBTQ rights event, KyivPride.

Ivanenko did book and advertising projects. But they quickly turned their focus to the war and, through Instagram, shared their images. They have been joined by scores of other Ukrainian artists who produce graphic novels, comics and other types of media to spread the news about the war.

The colorful and at times startling posters produced last year have helped rally support for the war among their fellow Ukrainians, raise money for the war effort as well as give them something to do. The posters have also become part of a growing digital effort to draw attention around the globe to the invasion and its impact on Ukraine.

"One hundred pictures from illustrators in Ukraine ... are helping to grow awareness about what is happening and then that will have an impact on those who make decisions," Polosina said.

Polosina said the opportunity to show their work in New Hampshire "is very important for us because this is almost direct communication with viewers outside of Ukraine that can see our reflections, that can see our feelings and be more sympathetic."

Some of the posters on display in New Hampshire have the feel of classical war propaganda aimed at raising the spirits and rallying residents.

## Document

One shows four people staring up at a missile featuring the Russian coat of arms and the words "Our Fire Is Stronger Than Your Bombs." Another shows two people holding the Ukrainian flag in Kherson next to the words from the Ukrainian national anthem, "And We Will Show Brothers That We Are Of The Cossack Nation." Russian had taken over Kherson in the early days of the war and Ukraine retook it late last year.

Others serve to document the most dramatic events of the war like the Mariupol theater attack or fighting in Bakhmut, which has become the longest-running battle since Russia launched its full-scale invasion more than a year ago. That poster features a soldier, blood on his chest

and white bandages on his head, gripping a red snake in each hand that represent Russian forces struggling to encircle the city. Another shows masked workers in white hazmat suits exhuming a mass grave.

Ivanenko described how she was "charged with rage" and a "desire to stop the war, stop the aggressions" whenever she hears about explosions or another collapsed building in Ukraine. So her posters are her effort to help "in a small way."

Some are more like diary entries of the artists, documenting the daily struggles they encounter. Along with the posters of children and family impacted by the war, one shows children with reflective vests playing, a reference to the precautions they often take during frequent blackouts.

"We focus mostly on some things that are related to our experiences because it's feels little bit more true to us," Ivanenko said. "Of course, some things we hear about in the media, it's also our experience. You can't stay indifferent to everything."

The exhibition was the inspiration of Veronika Yadukha and Hanna Leliv, translators who fled Ukraine and arrived in the United States in September. They are both at Dartmouth and felt that an exhibit of war posters chronicling the first year of the war would be a way to overcome American fatigue around the long-running conflict.

"People get tired very quickly of these horrific events and the news. Usually, when we see the photographs or videos, our mind blocks all this stressful information," Yadukha said. "I realized that these pictures or illustrations work as an alternative media ... People see these pictures. There is space between the real life and the message. They get the information which is the essential thing."

People

## Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Cillian Murphy in a scene from 'Oppenheimer.' (AP)

## Film

'Oppenheimer' rooted in historical facts

# Cillian Murphy leads a Nolan epic

LOS ANGELES, May 4, (AP) — The day Christopher Nolan called Cillian Murphy about his new film, "Oppenheimer," Murphy hung up the phone in disbelief.

The Irish actor, though a regular presence in Nolan films going back almost two decades, had always been a supporting player. This time Nolan wanted him to lead.

"He's so understated and self-deprecating and, in his very English manner, just said, 'Listen, I've written this script, it's about Oppenheimer. I'd like you to be my Oppenheimer,'" Murphy, 46, told The Associated Press recently. "It was a great day."

For Murphy, it is never not exciting to get a call from Nolan. It's just hard to predict if he's going to. He knows there are some movies he's right for and some movies he isn't.

"I have always said publicly and privately, to Chris, that if I'm available and you want me to be in a movie, I'm there. I don't really care about the size of the part," he said. "But deep down, secretly, I was desperate to play a lead for him."

Murphy first met Nolan in 2003. He was brought in to screen test for Batman — not just the movie, the character. Murphy knew he wasn't right for the Dark Knight, but he wanted to meet the man who'd directed "Insomnia" and "Memento." They hit it off and Murphy got to tap into a sinister intensity to play the corrupt psychiatrist Dr. Crane/Scarecrow, who would go on to appear in all three films. Nolan would also call on Murphy to be the conflicted heir to a business empire in "Inception" and a traumatized soldier in "Dunkirk."

"We have this long-standing understanding and trust and shorthand and respect," Murphy said. "It felt like the right time to take on a bigger responsibility. And it just so happened that it was a (expletive) huge one."

Soon after the phone call, Nolan flew to Dublin to meet Murphy to hand him a physical copy of the script, which he devoured right there in Nolan's hotel room in September 2020. It was, he said, the best he'd ever read.

Then the scale of it started to sink in.

This would be a film about the charismatic and controversial theoretical physicist who helped create the atomic bomb. Oppenheimer and his peers at Los Alamos would test it on July 16, 1945, not knowing what was going to happen. Then several weeks later the United States would drop those bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing tens of thousands of people and leaving many with lifelong injuries.

As Nolan said last week in Las Vegas, "Like it or not J. Robert Oppenheimer is the most important person who ever lived."

"Oppenheimer," which opens in theaters on July 21, features a starry cast including Emily Blunt as Oppenheimer's wife Kitty, Matt Damon as Leslie Groves Jr., Robert Downey Jr. as Lewis Strauss, Gary Oldman as Harry S. Truman, and many more rounding out the pivotal players in and around this tense moment in history.

## Responsibility

"You realize this is a huge responsibility. He was complicated and contradictory and so iconic," Murphy said. "But you know you're with one of the great directors of all time. I felt confident going into it with Chris. He's had a profound impact on my life, creatively and professionally. He's offered me very interesting roles over and I've found all of them really challenging. And I just love being on his sets."

Murphy continued: "Any actor would want to be on a Chris Nolan set, just to see how it works and to witness his command of the language of film and the mechanics of film and how he's able to use that broad canvas within the mainstream studio system to make these very challenging human stories."

Over the years, Murphy has come to appreciate that with Nolan there's always something deeper to discover than what's literally on the page. "Dunkirk," he recalled, was only 70 pages and there wasn't much to his character, not even a name.

"He said, 'Look, let's figure it out together and you and me can find an emotional journey for the char-

acter. And we did it. We did it out in the water on that boat. That comes from trust and respect," Murphy said. "I'm really proud of that performance."

As with all Nolan endeavors, secrecy around "Oppenheimer" is vitally important. Murphy loves the "old-fashioned approach" that builds interest and anticipation.

The difference with "Oppenheimer" and other Nolan originals, though, is that this is rooted in historical fact. You can read the book it's based on, Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin's Pulitzer Prize-winning "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer." You can watch the 1981 documentary "The Day After Trinity" on The Criterion Channel.

And you can try to parse Nolan's words for clues. He's talked about recreating the Trinity Test, the fascinating paradoxes, the twists, turns and ethical dilemmas and that the story is cinematic and both dream and nightmare. But ultimately, it's something that just needs to be seen.

"The question will be how Chris presents it," Murphy said. "I think people will be very surprised and wowed by what he does. Anything I say will just seem a bit lame as compared to seeing this in an IMAX theater."

The time for discussions will be after the movie comes out.

"There's an awful lot to talk about when we can talk freely," Murphy said with a smile.

He did offer up that they worked hard to get Oppenheimer's look right, from the silhouette to the pipe to the hat. The man, he said, "seemed aware of his own potential mythology." But, again, those conversations will have to wait.

"I'm really proud of the movie and I'm really proud of what Chris has achieved. This was, for sure, a special one, certainly because of the history with me and Chris. We were not walking around the set high fiving, but it did feel special," Murphy said. "It's an event every time he releases a film, and rightly so. Whether I'm in them or not, I always go to see his movies."

Features

ARABO TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, MAY 5-6, 2023

**ANKARA, Turkey:** A court in Istanbul on Wednesday handed Turkish pop singer **Gulsen** a 10-month suspended sentence after convicting her of "inciting hatred and enmity" over a joke about Turkey's religious schools, the country's state-run news agency reported.

The singer-songwriter was briefly jailed last year for the joke she made during a concert, when she quipped that the "perversion" of one of her musicians came from attending a religious school.

The 46-year-old singer, whose full name is **Gulsen Colakoglu**, was jailed for five days and later spent 15 days under house arrest despite having apologized for any offense she caused religious school graduates.

The court on Wednesday found her guilty of the charge and initially sentenced her to one year in prison, Anadolu Agency reported. The court later reduced the sentence, citing her "respectful stance" during the trial. Gulsen will face prison if she reoffends within the next five years.

There was no immediate comment from the singer.

Gulsen had vehemently rejected accusations that she aimed to "incite hatred" insisting that her comment "was a joke between two people."

She had told the court in her defense that she had teased a band member who was nicknamed "Imam" but had not attended a religious school.

On Wednesday, lawyer **Ziya Ilker Goktas** reiterated that the comment was a joke and requested her acquittal insisting "there was no crime." (AP)

**NEW YORK:** A week after Fox News fired star host **Tucker Carlson** - for reasons that remain unexplained - he has been the subject of a handful of embarrassing stories about some of his private messages and statements while at the network.

The latest was in The New York Times on Wednesday, reporting on a text message that had been redacted as part of a recent defamation case targeting the network. In it, Carlson declared that a group of Trump supporters beating a protester was "not how white men fight."

The sentiment was not out of character for Carlson, who has

promoted the view that whites are being "replaced" by people of color. But the Times suggested the timing was crucial, as members of Fox's board found out about the message as part of documents uncovered in the defamation lawsuit filed by Dominion Voting Systems, shortly before a trial was to begin last month.



Morgan



Carlson

The newspaper said the discovery "contributed to a chain of events" that led to Carlson being fired April 24, less than a week after Fox agreed to pay Dominion nearly \$800 million to settle the case.

Three times in the past week, the anti-Fox watchdog Media Matters for America has released "hot mic" moments of Carlson

speaking while on Fox sets, material that was never included on broadcasts.

In one, Carlson is seen speaking to someone offscreen disparaging Fox's streaming service, Fox Nation. In another, he shares offscreen banter with **Piers Morgan** before an interview, commenting to someone offscreen that a

person's girlfriend "was kind of yummy." He is also heard saying how he waits for his "post-menopausal fans" to make comments about his appearance.

**Angelo Carusone**, Media Matters chairman and president, would not comment Wednesday on how Media Matters acquired the material. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Influx of pop acts

## N. Orleans' old guard still star at 'Jazz Fest'

NEW ORLEANS, May 4, (AP): Bassist **George Porter Jr.** and drummer Zigaboo Modeliste played the very first New Orleans Jazz & Heritage festival in 1970 with their groundbreaking funk band The Meters. More than 50 years later, The Meters are no more, but Porter and Modeliste are still among the festival's mainstays.

So are singer Irma Thomas, the renowned "Soul Queen of New Orleans," who first played the fest in 1974; and guitarist and singer Deacon John Moore, also a regular since 1970.

"Originally it was all local bands," Porter said in a recent interview, reminiscing about days when he would close down one Jazz Fest stage with The Meters and run with Modeliste to another stage for a final set with piano legend Professor Longhair. "Local and regional bands - meaning Baton Rouge, Lafayette - those acts were always the headliners," he said.

Plenty of nationally and internationally known acts populate the roster for the 2023 festival, which includes current megastars like Lizzo and Ed Sheeran and long-established crowd-pleasing artists like Santana and the Steve Miller Band.

Still, longtime Jazz Fest producer Quint Davis would argue that the home-based acts remain the real headliners.

Jazz Fest unfolds over seven days that play out over two long weekends. When it's over Sunday night, around 580 acts will have played on more than a dozen stages. Davis estimates close to 500 of them are from New Orleans or southwest Louisiana. "That's what the festival's built on," he said.

Thus, preceding Lizzo on one of the festival's biggest stages last Friday were two New Orleans acts, Big Freedia, then Tank and the Bangas. Louisiana-rooted bands Sweet Crude and The Revivalists were on that same stage Saturday before Sheeran performed. Another veteran of The Meters, guitarist Leo Nocentelli, performed Sunday.

## Connection

Thomas takes the big stage this Friday evening before Jon Batiste (a New Orleans-area native) closes. Porter and his band Runnin' Pardsners play that stage Saturday, followed by Anders Osborne, then the Preservation Hall Jazz Band - all New Orleans acts - before John Mayer takes the stage with Dead & Company.

Once a small affair that drew about 350 people to Louis Armstrong Park near the French Quarter, the festival now overflows the vast infield of the historic Fair Grounds horse racing track.

Moore, who turns 82 in June, doesn't mind the influx of big-name pop acts that don't necessarily have a Louisiana connection.

"We have to bring those kind of bands in to attract younger people to come to the festival," he said. "They'll be exposed to the indigenous culture and the older musicians and the other genres of music that the festival promotes, like Zydeco, Cajun, R&B, folk, jazz, traditional jazz, avant-garde jazz - the whole thing."

Festival elders like Porter, 75; Thomas, 82, and Moore are the contemporaries of departed greats such as Fats Domino, Dave Bartholomew, Dr. John, Alan Toussaint and others - royalty among New Orleans artists. They kept the city's musical legacy alive in the mid and late 20th century with the evolving contemporary music of their time, much as jazz pioneers Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and others did in the early 1900s.

When Jazz Fest debuted more than 50 years ago, it provided a needed showcase for local musicians, some of whom had not seen financial benefits commensurate with their early recording success. Thomas, who started recording as a teenager, had national or regional hits including "Wish Someone Would Care," "It's Raining," and "Ruler of My Heart," by the time she first took a Jazz Fest stage in 1974. The festival was a kind of homecoming for Thomas, who lived at the time in California. And the gig was needed. She had sometimes supplemented her income with work at a department store.

"I worked at Montgomery Ward's because my career wasn't doing all that great," Thomas recalled.

If, now, there is a lament among festival veterans, it's that the cost of the festival - \$95 per person per day, not including food and drinks - has put it out of reach for some in the city.

Davis points to other festivals with higher prices and says the nonprofit that owns Jazz Fest distributes 8,000 free tickets per year. Also, there is a "local day" on the Thursday that opens the second weekend, when tickets for Louisiana residents are \$50.

And he speaks with pride about the uniquely Louisiana flavor of the festival - from the variety of foods at booths throughout the Fair Grounds to the Louisiana-based acts with a strong reputation. "Our talent is really known nationally and internationally," he said.

Among his examples, Davis noted the touring success of Trombone Shorty, who first appeared at Jazz Fest as a child and now traditionally closes the festival with his dynamic, brass-heavy blend of New Orleans funk, rhythm and blues and rock.

## Culture

Porter, despite expressing some concerns about ticket prices and what he sees as a somewhat diminished role for local Black artists in comparison to the early years, has high praise for the festival's fidelity to local culture.

"I think they put the music, culture, the artistry - down from the food all the way up to the artists on stage - I think the New Orleans Jazz Festival does that better than anybody."

This year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival began its two-weekend run on Friday, filling the air with the sounds of R&B, rock 'n roll, Zydeco, pop, blues, country, rap, gospel - and of course jazz.

Music fans poured into the Fair Grounds Race Course when gates opened at 11 a.m. They wandered among 14 stages or tents, many spreading blankets or tarps and setting up folding chairs, laying claim to spots where their favorite artists were to perform.

And some were dancing, particularly in front of the festival's Fais Do-Do Stage, where Zydeco rang out, played by Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie.

Retiree Joe Hulsey of Seattle said he and his wife have spent the last four months in New Orleans. A music festival veteran, Hulsey said Jazz Fest is his favorite.



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Rebecca Ferguson in a scene from 'Silo,' premiering May 5. (AP)

## Television

## Secrets, mysteries and suspicious murders

## 'Silo,' is a look at life underground

NEW YORK, May 4, (AP): Dystopian storytelling goes underground this month with the arrival of Apple TV+'s "Silo," a gripping, ambitious tale of Earth's last population living far below the surface.

Something terrible has happened to make the environment toxic so 10,000 people are hiding out in a massive, mile-deep underground silo until it's safe to come out. They grow food, maintain a huge generator for power and recycle everything.

But there's also a sense of dread down here, too, and secrets, mysteries and suspicious murders. What exactly happened to the Earth? What is this talk about a rebellion 140 years ago? Where are all the books? Can we trust what the government is saying?

"Life in the silo in many ways is pretty good. They're part of this cause, which is basically just to stay alive until the day that it is safe to go outside. So they feel that they've got this common mission," says creator and showrunner Graham Yost.

"But you just get a sense that there's been a slight eugenic program to try and breed out curiosity, independence, obstreperousness - all those nasty human things. And you also get the sense that that's not going to succeed."

One of those rebelling is the 10-part series' heroine, a woman named Juliette, an engineer with a tragic childhood who seeks answers about the silo. She's played by Rebecca Ferguson, who says she was drawn to the work by its complexity.

"If you and I right now have to be stuck in a silo and we have to evolve and survive, what would happen?"

It's sort of 'Lord of the Flies'-meets-Greta Thunberg-meets-the people who question the status quo. It'll be chaos," says the actor, know for "Dune" and the "Mission: Impossible" films.

Based on Hugh Howey's bestselling trilogy, "Silo" also stars Tim Robbins, Common, David Oyelowo, Rashida Jones and Will Patton. The first two episodes drop Friday.

This is world-building that slowly reveals itself. There are familiar things - tattoo artists, cops complaining about paperwork and ice trays - but also some different notes. Coins are square, suicide is a crime, and no one knows what a Pez dispenser is - a so-called relic of the before times and so illegal to own.

## Mankind

The series contains two opposite philosophic ideas - that mankind is good and it is society that makes it bad, and that men and women are born fundamentally bad and society tames them.

The people inside the silo are told that outside has become a wasteland and so they've formed a system of government that can charitably called a soft dictatorship, like East Germany in the 1980s. Anyone questioning the system is expelled - sent out into what seems to be a wasteland where everyone inside watches them crumple and die within minutes. Or do they?

"While life in the silo isn't terrible, it's not great. There's something wrong and that battle between the truth and order is something that will play out over the whole series," says Yost.



Ed Sheeran attends the premiere of the Disney+ music docuseries 'Ed Sheeran: The Sum of It All' at the Times Center on Tuesday, May 2, in New York. (AP)



Winfrey Fisher

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Carrie Fisher is receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, a May the Fourth tribute to one of the "Star Wars" franchise's most beloved figures.

On Thursday, Fisher - who died in 2016 - joins "Star Wars" co-stars Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill on the Hollywood tourist attraction that recognizes luminaries from film, television, music and other entertainment industries. The trio's stars are all located on the 6,800 block of Hollywood Boulevard, near where the original film debuted in 1977.

Fisher played Leia Organa, who over six films morphed from a princess to a general leading the forces of good in its fight against oppressive regimes aiming to control a galaxy far, far away. **Billie Lourd** will be accepting the star on behalf of her mother.

Fans have long campaigned for her to receive a Walk of Fame star. The honor comes on May the Fourth, essentially an official holiday for Star Wars fans that's a play on a line that Fisher said often in the films. "May the Force be with you."

Devotees worldwide celebrate with a variety of tributes, while retailers hold special sales on Star Wars merchandise.

The induction ceremony will be held at 11:30 a.m. Pacific and livestreamed by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

Fisher will be given the 2,754th star on the Walk of Fame. Ford received his star in 2003 and Hamill was honored in 2018.

Walk of Fame stars are given to performers who are nominated and a \$75,000 fee is now required to create the star and maintain it. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** The long-awaited new novel by Abraham Verghese, "The Covenant of Water," is Oprah Winfrey's latest book club pick. "The Covenant of Water," published Tuesday, is Verghese's first work of fiction since his million-selling "Cutting for Stone" came out in 2009. Verghese's current book is a multigenerational saga set in India from 1900-1977.

"This is one of the top five books

I've read in my lifetime. And I've been reading since I was 3," Winfrey said in a statement. "It's epic. It's transportive. Many moments during the read I had to stop and remember to breathe. I couldn't put the book down until the very last

page - it was unputdownable!"

Verghese said in a statement that receiving the call from Winfrey, the dream of countless authors, felt like a "miracle."

"My thoughts were racing back through the decade-plus of writing

There have been previous attempts to get Howey's books onto the big screen, but Yost thinks a 10-hour TV series is the best, including echoing the book by having Juliette only show up in the last few minutes of the first episode and take over.

"It's bold. It makes sense," says Ferguson. "It's a story being built up around a world where you don't have to automatically see it through the lens of the character who's going to pull you through it. I love that in storytelling."

The look of life in the silo is carefully made, with most items made of metal and plastic, since growing trees for wood underground is hard. There is a grit and dirt, dim lighting and a grand curling staircase that connects the 144 concrete levels, with farming in the middle and working-class laborers in the bottom.

When audiences first meet Juliette, she is the chief engineer at the bottom keeping the generator running - "She pretty much keeps everyone in the silo alive," an admirer says - and then events send her up to the top of the structure, where the bureaucrats and leaders are.

"We love the idea of the reluctant hero," says Yost. "She didn't set out to be a hero. It was thrust upon her begrudgingly. And that's the kind of hero we like to write about."

He hopes to be rewarded with a second, third and fourth season to flush out this underground world. He hopes fans will also turn to the books it is based on - with one request.

"As I told Hugh, I said, 'I just want everyone who watches this show to read the books after they finish watching the show.'"

"The Covenant of Water," during which time my mother died, and Covid had descended on us," he said. (AP)

**CHICAGO:** Illinois lawmakers green-lighted a bill that says libraries in the state must adopt an anti-book-banning policy to receive state funding on Wednesday, in a vote that fissured along party lines.

The measure, spearheaded by Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias**, represents a counter-movement to growing efforts to restrict books on topics such as race, gender and sexuality in schools and libraries across the **United States**.

The legislation has passed both chambers and now heads to the desk of Gov. **J.B. Pritzker**, who said he looks forward to signing it.

"This landmark legislation is a triumph for our democracy, a win for First Amendment rights, and most importantly, a great victory for future generations to come," said Giannoulias in a news conference Wednesday after HB 2789 cleared the Senate in a party-line vote.

In order to be eligible for state funding, the bill requires libraries to adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which holds that "materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and "should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." (AP)



Jenya Polosina, a Kyiv-based artist, is seated in a studio she shares, in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, April 30, 2023. Polosina and artist Anna Ivanenko, not shown, appeared, May 1, from Kyiv via video link on a screen at an art opening for an exhibit called 'Our Fire is Stronger Than Your Bombs' at Saint Anselm College, in Manchester, N.H., Monday, May 1. Polosina and Ivanenko are among a number of Ukrainian artists with works in the exhibit. (AP) — **Details Page 11**

Technology

'Protect children online'

Ban social media for kids? Parents say yes

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) — Sen. **Katie Britt** says she hears about it constantly when she is at home in Alabama - at school track meets, basketball tournaments and on her regular morning walks with friends. And when she was running for the Senate last year, Britt says, "parent after parent" came up to her wanting to discuss the way social media was harming their kids.

Britt also navigates the issue in her own home, as the mother of a 13-year-old and a 14-year-old.

"Enough is enough," says Britt, a Republican who last week introduced bipartisan legislation with three other senators - all parents of young children and teenagers - to try and better protect children online. "The time to act is now."

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, too, deals with it firsthand as a father to an 11-year-old and 14-year-old. Murphy says he's seen the upsides to social media, like connection during the pandemic and silly videos that bring them joy. But he's also seen the downsides, including children he knows who he says have ventured into dark corners of the online world.

"I just feel like we've reached this point where doing nothing is not an option," says Murphy, a Democrat. "And increasingly, when members of Congress go home, this is one of the first or second issues that they're hearing about from their constituents."

Legislation introduced by Britt and Murphy, along with Sens. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, and Tom Cotton, R-Ark., aims to prohibit all children under the age of 13 from using social media and would require permission from a guardian for users under 18 to create an account. While it is one of several proposals in Congress seeking to make the internet safer for children and teens, the four senators said in a joint interview with The Associated Press that they believe they are representative of millions of American parents who are gravely worried that social media companies are largely unchecked in what they can serve up to their children.



Britt

Content

"The idea that an algorithm has some sort of First Amendment right to get into your kid's brain is preposterous," says Schatz, who initially brought the bipartisan group of four together. "And the idea that a 13-year-old has some First Amendment right to have an algorithm shove upsetting content down their throat is also preposterous."

Along with the age restrictions, the legislation would prohibit social media companies from using algorithms to recommend content to users under 18. It would also require the companies to try and verify the ages of users, based on the latest technology.

The bipartisan bill comes at a time when there is increasing appetite in Congress for regulating social media companies - and as those companies have for years eluded stricter regulation in Washington. Some states like Utah and Arkansas have enacted their own laws, creating an even bigger challenge on the federal level.

This time, the four senators said they believe there is an unusual bipartisan momentum around the issue as parents grapple with a burgeoning post-pandemic mental health crisis among young people. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for example, showed that 60% of teen girls reported feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness, and 30% said they seriously considered attempting suicide.

"This is an issue that unites parents all across the country, no matter what their political views on other matters might be," Cotton said.

Still, any legislation proposing to regulate technology and social media companies faces major challenges, and not only because of the companies' deep pockets. While the European Union has enacted much stricter privacy and safety protections online, Congress has so far been unable to agree on a way to regulate the behemoth industry. Past legislation has failed amid disagreements about overregulation and civil liberties.

And despite the widespread bipartisan interest in taking action, it remains to be seen if any legislation could successfully move through the Democratic-majority Senate and the Republican-controlled House. The two parties have various and sometimes conflicting priorities over what should be done about tech companies.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Tuesday that "I believe we need some kind of child protections" online, but did not specify legislation.

A separate bill on child safety by Sens. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., was approved by the Senate Commerce Committee last year. It takes a different approach, requiring social media companies to abide by a "duty of care" to make their platforms safer and more transparent by design. That bill, which the two reintroduced this week, would force the companies to give minors the option to disable addictive product features and algorithms and enable child safety settings by default.

Privacy

Another bill introduced Wednesday by Sens. Ed Markey, D-Mass., and Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., would expand child privacy protections online, prohibiting companies from collecting personal data from younger teenagers and banning targeted advertising to children and teens. Republicans and Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, too, have been working on a more expansive online privacy bill that would give adults as well as children more control over their data.

Other bills would aim to ban TikTok or give the government more leeway to review foreign-owned platforms deemed a possible security threat.

Industry groups have criticized the child safety bills, warning of overreach. They say the rules could backfire and prevent some teenagers from finding helpful resources on suicide or other issues, in particular.

"Being a parent in the twenty-first century is hard, but inserting the government between parents and their teens is the wrong approach," said Carl Szabo of NetChoice, an advocacy group that counts Meta, TikTok, Google and Amazon among its members.

Another industry-aligned group, Chamber of Progress, said the prohibition on algorithmically targeted content would actually make it harder for teenagers to find age-appropriate material. "We should listen to teens, who are saying that social media is mostly playing a positive role in their lives," said CEO Adam Kovacevich.

Blumenthal also criticized the four senators' bill, saying this week that he has "strong concerns" that the legislation would put more of a burden on parents than the technology companies and potentially give industry the opportunity to collect more data as parents attempt to verify their children's ages.

"Our bill in effect puts the burden on big tech" rather than parents, Blumenthal said about his legislation with Blackburn. Schatz defended their legislation as "elegant in its simplicity."

"We simply say kids 12 and under shouldn't be on a social media platform at all," Schatz says. "That's a policy call. That's within the purview of the Congress. And I think most people agree with us."

Cotton says that most social media companies are already collecting data on children, and that their bill does not pose any additional risk. The fact that there are several bills out there, he says, highlights "a lot of energy and enthusiasm about putting some reasonable guardrails around social media."

Many teenagers want some regulation as well, Murphy says. "When I talk to the kids that hang around my house, they know that they're not being protected and looked after," he says. "They know that sometimes these sites are sending them into places where they shouldn't be."



This electron microscope image provided by the National Institutes of Health shows human respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) virions, colored blue, and anti-RSV F protein/gold antibodies, colored yellow, shedding from the surface of human lung cells. The US approved the first vaccine for RSV on Wednesday, May 3, shots to protect older adults against a respiratory virus that's most notorious for attacking babies but endangers their grandparents, too. (AP)

Health

Shot to protect older adults against respiratory virus

US approves 1st vaccine for RSV

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) — The US approved the first vaccine for RSV on Wednesday, shots to protect older adults against a respiratory virus that's most notorious for attacking babies but endangers their grandparents, too.

The Food and Drug Administration decision makes GSK's shot, called Arexvy, the first of several potential vaccines in the pipeline for RSV to be licensed anywhere.

The move sets the stage for adults 60 and older to get vaccinated this fall - but first, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must decide if every senior really needs RSV protection or only those considered at high risk from the respiratory syncytial virus. CDC's advisers will debate that question in June.

After decades of failure in the quest for an RSV vaccine, doctors are anxious to finally have something to offer - especially after a virus surge that strained hospitals last fall.

"This is a great first step ... to protect older persons from serious RSV disease," said Dr. William Schaffner, medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, who wasn't involved with its development. Next, "we're going to be working our way down the age ladder" for what's expected to be a string of new protections.

The FDA is considering competitor Pfizer's similar vaccine for older adults. Pfizer also is seeking approval to vaccinate pregnant women, so their babies are born with some of mom's protection.

Protective

There isn't a vaccine for kids yet but high-risk infants often get monthly doses of a protective drug during RSV season - and European regulators recently approved the first one-dose option. The FDA also is considering whether to approve Sanofi and AstraZeneca's one-shot medicine.

"This is a very exciting time with multiple potential RSV solutions coming out after years of really nothing," said Dr. Phil Dormitzer, chief of vaccine research and development for GSK, formerly known as GlaxoSmith-Kline.

RSV is a cold-like nuisance for most people but it can be life-threatening for

Lilly says experimental drug slows worsening of Alzheimer's disease

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) — Eli Lilly and Co. said Wednesday its experimental Alzheimer's drug appeared to slow worsening of the mind-robbing disease in a large study.

In the 18-month trial, people in the early stages of Alzheimer's who received infusions of donanemab showed 35% less decline in thinking skills compared to those given a dummy drug, Lilly announced in a press release.

The drug is designed to target and clear away a sticky protein called beta-amyloid that builds up into brain-clogging plaques that are one hallmark of Alzheimer's.

A similar amyloid-targeting drug,

Eisai and Biogen's leqembi, recently hit the market with similar evidence that it could modestly slow Alzheimer's - and also some safety concerns, brain swelling or small brain bleeds.

Donanemab also comes with that risk. Lilly said in its study, the brain side effects caused the deaths of two participants and a third also died after a serious case.

The preliminary study results haven't been vetted by outside experts. Indianapolis-based Lilly plans to release more details at an international Alzheimer's meeting this summer and is seeking Food and Drug Administration approval of the drug.

the very young, the elderly and people with certain high-risk health problems. It can impede babies' breathing by inflaming their tiny airways, or creep deep into seniors' lungs to cause pneumonia.

In the US, about 58,000 children younger than 5 are hospitalized for RSV each year and several hundred die. Among older adults, as many as 177,000 are hospitalized with RSV and up to 14,000 die annually.

Why has it taken so long to come up with a vaccine? The field suffered a major setback in the 1960s when an experimental shot worsened infections in children. Scientists finally figured out a better way to develop these vaccines - although modern candidates still were first tested with adults.

GSK's new vaccine for older adults trains the immune system to recognize a protein on RSV's surface, and contains an ingredient called an adjuvant to further rev up that immune reaction.

In an international study of about 25,000 people 60 and older, one dose of the vaccine was nearly 83% effective at preventing RSV lung infections, and reduced the risk of severe infections by 94%.

To see how long protection lasts,

GSK is tracking study participants for three years, comparing some who get just one vaccination during that time and others given a yearly booster.

Shot reactions were typical of vaccinations, such as muscle pain and fatigue.

There was a hint of a rare but serious risk - one case of Guillain-Barre syndrome, which can cause usually temporary paralysis, and two cases of a type of brain and spinal cord inflammation. The FDA said it was requiring the company to continue studying if there really is a link to the vaccine.

If the CDC ultimately recommends the vaccination for some or even all seniors, it will add another shot for the fall along with their yearly flu vaccine - and maybe another COVID-19 booster.

"We'll have to educate the population that this virus that not everyone has heard about is actually an important threat to their health in the wintertime," said Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida, May 4. The rocket is carrying a batch of Starlink satellites. (AP)



Biden



Testa

Discovery

**Radio-collared bear captured:** For the first time, researchers have captured and radio-collared a bear in the Santa Monica Mountains near Los Angeles where mountain lions have been studied for two decades, the National Park Service said Wednesday.

The 210-pound (95-kilogram) black bear dubbed BB-12 was caught April 23 in a natural area south of US Route 101 on the western end of the range, the park service said in a statement.

It's the first time in 20 years that scientists have encountered a bear that has taken up residence in the mountains northwest of downtown LA, according to Jeff Sikich, a park service biologist who studies cougars.

"He appears to be the only bear here in the Santa Monica Mountains, and he's likely been here for almost two years based on our remote camera data," Sikich said. "It will be interesting to see how he shares the landscape with our other resident large carnivores."

BB-12, a male estimated to be about 3 or 4 years old, was measured, given a physical exam and outfitted with a GPS radio collar around its neck.

Researchers believe BB-12 may be the same black bear that was spotted in July 2021 lumbering along a road farther west in the Newbury Park area and later caught on wildlife cameras. The nearest population of breeding black bears is about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north in the Santa Susana Mountains, officials said. (AP)

**GOP seeks wind projects halt:** Republican state lawmakers and other New Jersey opponents of offshore wind turbines called Wednesday for a 30- to 60-day moratorium on construction work at such sites to see if it would lead to a decrease in whale deaths.

Four state senators hosted an online hearing about offshore wind energy generation and whale deaths, three weeks after the most recent East Coast whale death was reported and despite the assurances of most scientists and conservationists that there is no correlation.

The two-hour hearing came a week after Democrats, who control the Legislature and the governorship, held a similar hearing and many of New Jersey's major environmental groups said the greatest danger to whales is climate change, not offshore wind generation.

"I've been labeled a climate change denier and a tin-foil hat wearer," said Jim Hutchinson, managing editor of The Fisherman, a widely read New Jersey publication. "We're defamed, denied, discarded

and disparaged at every step along the way." "One thing our side of the aisle gets accused of is not following the science," said Republican state Sen **Michael Testa**. "So

what is the harm of waiting 30 or 60 days?" Since Dec. 1, 32 dead whales have washed ashore between Massachusetts and Florida, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The most recent



This combination of photos shows logos of Twitter, (top left); Snapchat, (top right); Facebook, (bottom left); and TikTok. Social media companies would have to verify the age of Wisconsin users and get parental permission for kids to open accounts under a bill unveiled Monday, May 1, by Republican Rep. David Steffen. (AP)

death came on April 9, when a fin whale washed up on a sandbar in Virginia, according to NOAA spokeswoman Allison Ferreira.

New Jersey has aggressively approved and cleared the way for a nascent offshore wind energy industry, with three offshore wind projects already approved and more being sought.

What began in January as a request by the environmental group Clean Ocean Action for the Biden Administration to temporarily halt offshore wind site preparation work while the deaths are investigated rapidly grew into a politically polarized divide.

"We've gone too far, too fast," Cindy Zipf, the group's executive director, said of efforts to approve offshore wind in New Jersey. "Over 2.2 million acres is being allocated to offshore wind and 10,000 miles of cables. We became alarmed that it was plausible that activity going on offshore had to do with the whale die-offs. We felt there was a reason for investigation."

Most of the state's major environmental groups support the expansion of offshore wind energy generation and have declined to join Clean Ocean Action in its call for a moratorium.

Numerous federal agencies, including the NOAA, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Marine Mammal Commission and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, have said there is no evidence linking offshore wind prep with whale deaths. (AP)

### 'Forget about recent disappointments'

# Bayern's Müller wants 'goldfish mentality' to win Bundesliga

BERLIN, May 4, (AP) — Bayern Munich captain Thomas Müller wants his teammates to adopt a "goldfish mentality" to secure a record-extending 11th consecutive Bundesliga title.

"With a 10-second memory, there's only looking forward," Müller says in his latest newsletter.

"We owe it to ourselves, to our fans and to the DNA of the club to do whatever it takes to give the season a happy end with the championship title. I expect absolute belief, commitment and unity from myself, from our team and everyone around."

With that, Müller wants his teammates to forget about recent disappointments in a difficult season so far for the Bavarian powerhouse.

Bayern was knocked out of the German Cup and Champions League in the quarterfinals last month, and is threatened in an uncharacteristically close Bundesliga race by a hard-charging Borussia Dortmund.

### SOCCER

Müller, who is captain while Manuel Neuer recovers from his broken leg, acknowledged that April was "an absolute disappointment" but said it's "not the right moment in time for a full-scale investigation into the causes."

That will come later after Bayern this week postponed its quarterly supervisory board meeting from May 22 to May 30.

"With the scheduling of the meeting after the final game of the season at Cologne (on May 27), everyone in the club should focus on the sporting aspect in the decisive phase of the championship race," Bayern said in a statement.

Bayern leads the Bundesliga by just one point with four games remaining after dropping points in 12 games from 30 so far.

The defending champion also enjoyed a slice of fortune when Dortmund was denied a clear penalty in a 1-1 draw at

Bochum last weekend, allowing Bayern to retake the lead on Sunday by beating last-placed Hertha Berlin 2-0.

Bayern can stretch its lead to four points on Saturday with a win at Werder Bremen before Dortmund bids to keep pace on Sunday with a win at home over in-form Wolfsburg.

Bayern then has home games against Schalke and Leipzig before finishing the season in Cologne, while Dortmund's last three games are against Borussia Mönchengladbach, Augsburg and Mainz.

Once the season is over, Bayern can begin what Müller described as the "full-scale investigation" into why it won't be as successful as expected.

### PSG travel to Troyes without Messi

## OM & Lens in 'pivotal' game for Champions League spots

PARIS, May 4, (AP) — Lens has been almost invincible at home this season. Marseille has been flourishing on the road.

The two meet this weekend in the former coal mining town for a showdown likely to decide who ends up runner-up in the French league.

And, who knows, in light of leader Paris Saint-Germain's troubles, the game in Lens on Saturday could produce a credible last-minute challenger for the title.

### SOCCER

With five rounds left, second-placed Marseille has closed the gap to just five points after Lorient inflicted a sixth defeat of the season on PSG by 3-1 at Parc des Princes last weekend.

"The title? We are still hoping for it," said Marseille defender Jonathan Clauss, who will be returning to his former club. PSG travels to Troyes on Sunday without Lionel Messi, who has been suspended for taking a trip to Saudi Arabia without the club's permission.



Marseille's Nuno Tavares (right) challenges for the ball with Auxerre's Lassine Sinayoko during the French League One soccer match between Marseille and Auxerre at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille, France. (AP)

Under the guidance of coach Igor Tudor, Marseille has been building its quest for a first league title since 2010 away from Stade Velodrome, winning 12 of 16 matches on the road and losing just one.

In addition to bringing back ambition to the nine-time champion, Tudor has developed an attacking and demanding style of play based on pace, tempo and hard press. Marseille has been transformed into one of the most attractive teams in the league.

Last week, Tudor's coaching paid off when Matteo Guendouzi and club icon Dimitri Payet came off the bench at the same time to help their team come from behind in a much-needed 2-1 win against Auxerre.

Up front, Chile international Alexis Sanchez has found his old form and has 17 goals in all competitions, more than in his previous two seasons combined at Inter Milan.

Without the big names of star-studded PSG, Lens has also been impressive, boasting the best defensive record with only 25 goals conceded. Sitting just one point behind Marseille, the club hopes to claim a second league title although coach Franck Haise has played down his team's chances.

"We took a big step towards a podium finish but we still have a lot of battles to fight," Haise said after Lens won at Toulouse midweek. "Appetite will be needed (against Marseille), that's for sure. There will be some on the other side. It's a great game to play, the second against the third with five matches to go. It's not insignificant."

Lens combines solid defending with fast transitions to the wings in an enthralling counterattacking style that should pose serious problems to Tudor's players in front of the buoyant fans at Stade Bollaert-Delelis, where Lens has lost only once this season.

"It's my favorite place to play. The fans and the atmosphere gives us that little bit extra," defender Kevin Danso said. "It's a fortress. We feel good here. All teams who come here should be worried, because we're at 100%, and the fans are behind us."

And with Lois Openda's form growing stronger after losing his starting spot earlier this year, Lens has a strike weapon. The Belgian international has nine goals in his last seven league matches to take his season tally to 18.

# Haase homers in both games, Tigers sweep DH against Mets



Los Angeles Angels starting pitcher Shohei Ohtani throws in the second inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals in St. Louis. (AP)

## White Sox secure first series win of season

**DETROIT, May 4, (AP):** Eric Haase homered in both games of a doubleheader, driving in six runs, and the Detroit Tigers tagged Max Scherzer in his return from a suspension to sweep the New York Mets with an 8-1 victory Wednesday night.

Haase had five RBIs in the first game, including a go-ahead single in the eighth inning of a 6-5 comeback win, and then added one of Detroit's two homers off Scherzer in the nightcap.

The slumping Mets have lost eight of 10. They were playing their second doubleheader in three days after getting rained out three times in the previous four days.

In the second game, Scherzer struggled against his former team. Detroit scored twice in the first inning. Haase homered in the second and Matt Vierling hit a two-run homer in the fourth.

Scherzer (2-2) allowed six runs and eight hits in 3 1/3 innings. He was suspended for 10 games by Major League Baseball on April 20 after getting ejected for having a foreign substance on his pitching hand during his April 19 start against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Michael Lorenzen (1-1) allowed one run in seven innings to get his first win with Detroit, which is 2-14 against the AL East and 10-3 against the rest of baseball.

**Yankees 4, Guardians 3, 10 Innings**

In New York, Willie Calhoun hit a tying single in the ninth inning and pinch-hitter Jose Trevino came through with a game-ending single in the 10th, lifting New York to a win in a game it had two more players get hurt.

Yankees center fielder Harrison Bader, back from the injured list just a day earlier, left after a ninth-inning collision with Isiah Kiner-Falefa, and Oswald Peraza limped off after hurting an ankle as a pinch runner.

Calhoun and Jake Bauers homered in the fifth off Shane Bieber as the Yankees erased an early 2-0 deficit.

Pinch-hitter Oscar Gonzalez had an RBI single in the top of the ninth to put Cleveland ahead 3-2, but Calhoun's single in the bottom half of the inning tied the score.

Albert Abreu (1-0) got Josh Naylor to ground into an inning-ending double play in the 10th to get the win.

**Nationals 2, Cubs 1**

In Washington, CJ Abrams had a tiebreaking RBI single in the seventh inning for the second consecutive game, and Washington beat Chicago.

After Marcus Stroman pitched

six crisp innings for the Cubs, the Nationals went ahead on four pitches by Adbert Alzolar (1-1). Lane Thomas tripled down the left-field line, the first extra-base hit of the game, and Abrams lined the next pitch to center.

**Giants 4, Astros 2**

In San Francisco, Wilmer Flores homered and Joey Bart and Austin Slater had two hits each to lead San Francisco.

Slater drove in a run to put the Giants up in a two-run sixth, and an RBI double by Bart extended the lead to 3-0 in the seventh.

Alex Bregman got Houston without a run with a two-run home run in the eighth before Flores added some insurance for the Giants with a solo shot in the ninth.

**White Sox 6, Twins 4**

In Chicago, Eloy Jiménez hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the seventh inning to lead Chicago to its third straight victory.

### BASEBALL

Luis Robert Jr. homered as the White Sox secured their first series win of the season. Tim Anderson and Yasmani Grandal each had three hits, and Keynan Middleton worked the ninth for his first save of the season.

Carlos Correa had two RBIs for Minnesota, and Nick Gordon homered for the second straight day.

**Angels 6, Cardinals 4**

In St. Louis, Mike Trout and Jake Lamb hit solo homers in the ninth inning, Shohei Ohtani tied a career-high with 13 strikeouts and Los Angeles rallied to beat St. Louis.

Los Angeles has won six of its last eight games, while the Cardinals have lost five in a row.

Ohtani didn't get the decision, but did become the second player



Kansas City Royals left fielder Edward Olivares (14) and center fielder Kyle Isbel (28) converge on a fly ball from Baltimore Orioles batter Ryan Mountcastle for an out during the third inning of a baseball game in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

in MLB history to record 500 career strikeouts and hit at least 100 home runs, joining Babe Ruth. Ohtani gave up four runs on five hits over five innings and allowed two home runs for the second straight outing.

The Angels trailed 4-3 heading into the top of the ninth before Lamb launched his second homer of the season to right-center off Giovanni Gallegos (1-1), tying the game at 4. With one out, Trout hit his eighth home run of the season to left for the eventual game-winning run. Anthony Rendon added a run-scoring hit.

**Rays 8, Pirates 1**

In St. Petersburg, Shane Bieber became baseball's first six-game winner and Tampa Bay routed Pittsburgh.

McClanahan (6-0) gave up one run on five hits over six innings, striking out nine and lowering his ERA to 2.03. Josh Lowe and Wander Franco homered off Pittsburgh relievers as the Rays improved to 25-6.

Since 1961, only the World Series-winning 1984 Detroit Tigers (26-5) had more wins through 31 games. Tampa Bay has outscored its opponents 207-94. The Rays lead the majors with 64 home runs.

**Dodgers 10, Phillies 6**

In Los Angeles, Max Muncy hit a game-ending grand slam and Los Angeles rallied from an early five-run deficit for a season-high sixth straight win.

Bryce Harper doubled to start a four-run second inning and reached base five times in his second game of the season for the Phillies, who lost their fourth straight.

Los Angeles swept the three-game series, outscoring the defending NL champions 36-11 and reaching double digits in every game.

**Red Sox 8, Blue Jays 3**

In Boston, Emmanuel Valdez, Triston Casas and Masataka Yoshida each drove in two runs and Boston won its fifth straight.

Nick Pivetta (2-2) went six innings and gave up three runs, including solo home runs by Daulton Varsho and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. - whose shot in the third cleared the Green Monster and left Fenway Park.

Alek Manoah (1-2) allowed five runs, two earned, and eight hits in five innings for Toronto.

**Padres 7, Reds 1**

In San Diego, rookie Brett Sullivan hit his first home run and had his first four RBIs, and Juan Soto hit a three-run double to make up for a baserunning blunder that cost Xander Bogaerts a club-record on-base streak as San Diego beat Cincinnati.

Seth Lugo (3-2) pitched six strong innings for the Padres, who have won seven of 10 heading into a home weekend series against the rival Los Angeles Dodgers. It'll be the teams' first meeting since the Padres eliminated the 111-win Dodgers in four games in the NL Division Series to reach their first NL Champi-

onship Series in 24 years.

**Rockies 7, Brewers 1**

In Denver, Kyle Freeland pitched five scoreless innings, Kris Bryant and Charlie Blackmon homered and Colorado got its season-high third straight win.

Alan Trejo hit a three-run double and Elías Díaz had an RBI single as the Rockies improved to 9-3 in their last 12 games against the Brewers.

Already ahead 4-0, the Rockies added to their lead in the seventh when Jurickson Profar doubled off Tyson Miller and Bryant launched his fourth homer. Blackmon connected for a solo shot off Jake Cousins in the eighth.

Eric Lauer (3-3) went 4 2/3 innings for Milwaukee, allowing four hits and four runs - none earned. Third baseman Mike Brosseau made a throwing error in Colorado's four-run fourth.

**Diamondbacks 12, Rangers 7**

In Arlington, Christian Walker homered twice before he drew a bases-loaded walk that put Arizona ahead to stay.

Walker put the Diamondbacks ahead 3-1 with his three-run homer in the third, added a solo shot in the fifth that chased Texas starter Andrew Heaney and walked on four pitches from Jose Leclerc in the seventh that drove in the run that snapped a 7-7 tie.

Each team hit four homers on the mostly sunny, 79-degree day with the roof open.

Ketel Marte and Emmanuel Rivera also homered for Arizona, which matched its season high for runs. Walker matched his career-best with five RBIs in his sixth career multihomer game.

**Royals 6, Orioles 0**

In Kansas City, Vinnie Pasquantino homered and drove in three runs, Zack Greinke won for the first time since last August and Kansas City snapped a 10-game home losing streak.

Greinke (1-4) won for the first time in 14 starts, allowing just three singles in five innings and striking out three. He threw only 44 pitches - his fewest in a start since tossing 43 for Arizona at Boston on Aug. 14, 2016.

The Royals won their second home game of the season to improve to 2-13 at Kauffman Stadium.

**Braves 14, Marlins 6**

In Miami, Marcell Ozuna hit a grand slam among his sixth home runs, Ronald Acuña Jr. also homered and Atlanta went deep six times to roll past Miami.

Acuña's three-run shot to center field in the fifth inning was his sixth home run of the season and made it 11-4 before Austin Riley homered to left-center to add two more runs.

Only the Tampa Bay Rays and Los Angeles Dodgers have recorded more home runs so far this season than the Braves (52). Acuña is hitting .358 and leads the majors with 43 hits and 14 stolen bases.

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) — Results and standings from the MLB games on Wednesday.

Detroit	6	NY Mets 1st game	5	Boston	8	Toronto	3
San Francisco	4	Houston	2	LA Angels	6	St. Louis	2
Arizona	12	Texas	7	Seattle	7	Oakland 10 inn	2
Detroit	8	NY Mets 2nd game	1	San Diego	7	Cincinnati	1
Tampa Bay	8	Pittsburgh	1	LA Dodgers	10	Philadelphia	6
Kansas City	6	Baltimore	0	Atlanta	14	Michigan	6
NY Yankees	4	Cleveland 10 inn	3	Washington	2	Chicago Cubs	1
Chicago W. Sox	6	Minnesota	4	Colorado	7	Milwaukee	1

American League				National League					
East Division				East Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Tampa Bay	25	6	.806	—	Atlanta	21	10	.677	—
Baltimore	20	10	.667	4-1/2	Miami	16	15	.516	5
Toronto	18	13	.581	7	New York	16	15	.516	5
Boston	18	14	.563	7-1/2	Philadelphia	15	17	.469	6-1/2
New York	17	15	.531	8-1/2	Washington	12	18	.400	8-1/2
Central Division				Central Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Minnesota	17	14	.548	—	Pittsburgh	20	11	.645	—
Cleveland	14	17	.452	3	Milwaukee	18	12	.600	1-1/2
Detroit	12	17	.414	4	Chicago	15	15	.500	4-1/2
Chicago	10	21	.323	7	Cincinnati	13	18	.419	7
Kansas City	8	23	.258	9	St. Louis	10	21	.323	10
West Division				West Division					
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB		
Texas	18	12	.600	—	Los Angeles	19	13	.594	—
Los Angeles	17	14	.548	1-1/2	Arizona	17	14	.548	1-1/2
Houston	16	15	.516	2-1/2	San Diego	17	15	.531	2
Seattle	14	16	.467	4	San Francisco	13	17	.433	5
Oakland	6	25	.194	12-1/2	Colorado	11	20	.355	7-1/2

## Jets sign former Packers WR Cobb

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP) — The New York Jets signed veteran wide receiver Randall Cobb on Wednesday, adding another of Aaron Rodgers' former Green Bay Packers teammates to the roster.

The 32-year-old Cobb, who had two stints with Rodgers in Green Bay, adds depth to a suddenly crowded wide receiver room in New York.

The Jets also have Garrett Wilson, the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year last season, as their No. 1 receiver to go along with Allen Lazard - another former Packers player - Corey Davis, Mecole Hardman and Denzel Mims. Malik Taylor, who spent four seasons in Green Bay, is also on the roster, along with Dontae Spencer and Irvin Charles.

Cobb was mentioned by

Rodgers when he met with the Jets in March as someone he'd like to continue to play with. The two walked off the field together in January after Green Bay's season-ending loss to Detroit - which turned out to be both players' final game at Lambeau Field.

The Jets acquired Rodgers from the Packers last week and formally introduced him at a news conference last Wednesday.

Cobb was a second-round pick of Green Bay in 2011 and played for the Packers for eight seasons before signing with Dallas as a free agent in 2019. He played the next season in Houston before being re-acquired by the Packers - at Rodgers' request - in 2021.

Cobb, who has served primarily as a slot receiver, had 34 catches for 417 yards and a touchdown last season. In 12 NFL seasons, he has 625 receptions for 7,585 yards and 53 touchdowns.

In addition to Cobb, Lazard and Taylor, the Jets have backup quarterback Tim Boyle and offensive linemen Billy Turner and Adam Pankey as players who were teammates of Rodgers in Green Bay.

Cobb is also reunited with Jets offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett, whose system Cobb played in for

the Packers in 2021.

□ □ □

The Cleveland Browns added needed experience and depth to their secondary Thursday, agreeing on a one-year contract with veteran free agent safety Rodney McLeod.

The 32-year-old McLeod has started 138 games in his NFL career. He spent last season with Indianapolis, finishing with 96 tackles, eight pass breakups and two interceptions, returning one for a touchdown.

Terms of McLeod's deal were not immediately known.

With Cleveland, McLeod will be reunited with defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz, who was hired in the offseason to fix a unit that woefully underperformed last season. McLeod and Schwartz won a Super Bowl together with Philadelphia in the 2017 season.

McLeod played six seasons with the Eagles after breaking in and spending four seasons with the Rams.

McLeod's familiarity with Schwartz and his system will be a major asset to the Browns. He'll also fit in nicely with expected starters Grant Delpit and Juan Thornhill, who signed as a free agent after winning the Super Bowl with Kansas City.

## Change Name

I, Hussain, holder of passport no. N8641387, do hereby change my name to Hussain (as given name) Lukmani (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Hussain Lukmani and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

## SPORTS

# Golden Knights top Oilers 6-4 in Game 1

Hurricanes see off Devils

**LAS VEGAS, May 4, (AP):** Golden Knights coach Bruce Cassidy could only laugh at the brilliance that was Leon Draisaitl, who scored four goals to nearly beat Vegas by himself.

However, the Golden Knights prevailed in Game 1 of the second-round playoff series because their depth was the difference in Wednesday night's 6-4 victory over the Edmonton Oilers.

Ivan Barbashev scored two goals, including one that put Vegas ahead for good, and he was one of five Knights players to find the back of the net.

It was the second night in a row a team had won despite allowing an opposing player to score four goals. Seattle beat Dallas 5-4 on Tuesday even with Joe Pavelski scoring four goals for the Stars. Teams with a player scoring four goals had been 36-3 before that game in the playoffs, and it had been 30 years since a team had overcome such a performance.

This was the Oilers' first regulation loss since March 11. "Overall, we weren't good enough," Draisaitl said. "It's not even close to how we play. We've got to move on, and we'll be better."

In addition to Barbashev, the Knights also received goals from Chandler Stephenson, Michael Amadio, Mark Stone

## ICE HOCKEY

and Jack Eichel. Eichel's goal was an empty netter from deep in his zone, and he and Stone also each had an assist. Zach Whitecloud had two assists.

Evan Bouchard, Mattias Ekholm, Zach Lyman and Connor McDavid each had two assists for the Oilers.

"I don't think our team was anywhere near where it needed to be in order to walk away with a road win in the playoffs," Edmonton coach Jay Woodcroft said. "Leon had a great effort. He's been good all playoffs, but our team can do things a lot better than we did tonight."

Game 2 is Saturday in Las Vegas.

Draisaitl extended his goal streak to four games, and he has at least a point in all seven playoff games. He had never scored four goals in a playoff game, and had reached that mark just once in the regular season - March 2, 2020, against Nashville.

Draisaitl has 11 goals in the postseason.

"Does that sound funny to you, 11 goals in the second round," Cassidy said. "That is unbelievable."

Two of his goals against Vegas came on the power play, making Edmonton 11 of 19 this postseason with the man advantage. The Oilers set an NHL record during the regular season by converting 32.4% of their chances.

One goal, at even strength, came at the end of the first period when Draisaitl bounced a puck off Knights goalie Laurent Brossoit from the goal line.

This series was billed as the Oilers' star power against the Knights' balanced attack, and that's how the opening game played out. Vegas found a way even with one of the NHL's most dynamic scorers having a career night.

"We used our four lines," Cassidy said. "We didn't have to get too far away from our line combinations. We're aware of their top guys and the damage they can do, but we like our team. We feel like if our team plays well, we'll have success."



Vegas Golden Knights center Jack Eichel (9) skates between Edmonton Oilers' Klim Kostin (21) and Nick Bjugstad (72) during the second period of Game 1 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup second-round playoff series Wednesday, May 3, 2023, in Las Vegas. (AP)

After Draisaitl scored on a power play less than two minutes into the third period to make the score 3-3, the Knights took the lead for good with two goals in 50 seconds. Barbashev scored on a rebound and Stephenson from the right circle. "It doesn't matter who scores, them or us, the next shift is huge," Barbashev said. "I think we did a better job by that. It feels good."

Oilers forward Mattias Janmark took an awkward spill into the boards in the first period and was taken into the locker room. ... Edmonton goalie Stuart Skinner is one of three finalists for the Calder Trophy, which goes to the league's top rookie. ... In addition to Draisaitl, Bouchard also has points in all seven games this postseason, and McDavid has a six-game point streak. For Vegas, Mark Stone has points in five consecutive games.

## Hurricanes 5, Devils 1

In Raleigh, N.C., the Carolina Hurricanes spent the first period swarming the puck and closing just about any fleeting

bit of open ice the New Jersey Devils could find.

It was a dominating start to their second-round playoff series - and the blueprint the Hurricanes know they must follow going forward.

The Hurricanes got goals from Brett Pesce and Seth Jarvis alongside a suffocating defensive performance in the first, allowing Carolina to jump quickly on New Jersey en route to a 5-1 win Wednesday night to start this best-of-seven series.

Jesper Kotkaniemi, Brady Skeji and Jesper Fast also scored for the Hurricanes, who took the Devils completely out of any type of first-period flow while surrendering a single shot on goal. Meanwhile, Pesce scored on a low-flying shot through traffic to beat Akira Schmid and Jarvis blew past Ryan Graves near the blue line to beat Schmid over his glove for a 2-0 lead.

By the time Kotkaniemi followed early in the second, Schmid was headed for the bench.

"That's a super-skilled team that is fast and comes in waves," said Carolina forward Jordan Martinook, who found Kotkaniemi for his point-blank putaway. "If you can stay on top of them and kind of limit their space, that's what we're going to have to do."

"Yeah, it's hard. It's a lot of work, but we're willing to put it in."

Game 2 is Friday night in Raleigh.

Nathan Bastian scored for the Devils, who played this one without trade-acquisition Timo Meier following his huge hit from New York Rangers forward Jacob Trouba during Monday's Game 7 win. Bastian's goal came when he got loose coming into the zone to beat Frederik Andersen at 5:02 of the second period, but the Devils got not closer.

"They backed us into a corner right away," Devils coach Lindy Ruff said.

The Hurricanes pushed into the second round after beating the New York Islanders, with the Game 6 clincher coming Friday night. That gave a team with an injury-hit group of forwards a few extra days to regroup, and Carolina jumped right back in to establish its style and play confidently from in front with the backing of a loud home-ice crowd.

"We played fast, physical," Skeji said. "We got some pucks to the net. It was just the way we wanted to start, that first period."

The Devils are in the playoffs for the first time since 2018 and won a series for the first time in 11 years. But they had less than 48 hours following the Game 7 clincher against the Rangers to get ready for Wednesday's puck drop. Ruff had said Tuesday he liked jumping right into a series to keep rolling.

Instead, the Devils' lone shot in the first period was a wrister from Bastian that looked more like an entry pass from the blue line before dribbling its way to Andersen at 12:15.

New Jersey eventually began to establish its style in the second, but by then, the Devils were fighting uphill.

## Mumbai down Punjab in IPL; Lucknow, Chennai share pts

**MOHALI, India, May 4, (AP):** Mumbai Indians chased down a 200-plus target for the second straight game as they beat Punjab Kings by six wickets in the Indian Premier League on Wednesday.

Ishan Kishan scored 75 off 41 balls and Suryakumar Yadav hit 66 off 31 balls as the visitors scored 216-4 (18.5 overs). Punjab rode Liam Livingstone's 82 not out off 42 balls to register 214-3 (20 overs).

Put in to bat, Punjab lost opener Prabhsimran Singh for nine. Skipper Shikhar Dhawan scored 30 runs and put on 49 runs with Matthew Short (27) to lay the foundation for a tall score.

Piyush Chawla then struck twice in four overs to remove both Dhawan and Short as Punjab was down to 95-3 in 11.2 overs.

Livingstone and Jitesh Sharma then put on an unbeaten 119 off 53 balls for the fourth wicket to stun Mumbai's attack.

Sharma hit 49 not out off 27 balls, including five fours and two sixes. But it was Livingstone who stole the show with a 32-ball half-century.

He scored 33 runs off the next 10 balls, hitting three consecutive sixes off Jofra Archer in the 19th over. Overall, Livingstone hit seven fours and four sixes in his knock.

In reply, Mumbai got off to a torrid start as Rohit Sharma was out for another duck. It was his 15th score of zero in IPL's history, joint highest with three other players.

But Kishan and Cameron Green resurrected the innings with 54 runs off 33 balls for the second wicket.

Green scored 23 runs before falling to impact player Nathan Ellis (2-34). Kishan meanwhile moved to 50 off 29 balls and put on 116 off 55 balls with Yadav for the third wicket.

Yadav got to 50 off 23 balls, hitting two sixes and eight fours in total, as Mumbai was riding comfortably toward the target, before Arshdeep Singh and Ellis returned to dismiss the set duo in the space of seven balls. Kishan was caught off Singh in the deep, as Mumbai was 178-4 in 16.1 overs.

Tilak Varma and Tim David though didn't waste any time. They scored 38 runs off 16 balls to end the game in a hurry, with Varma smacking 26 not out off 10 balls including three sixes.



Pakistan's Shadab Khan plays a shot during the third one-day international cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand, in Karachi, Pakistan. (AP)

## Hosts' top-order batters continue to flourish

# Pakistan beat NZ in 3rd ODI, clinch series

**KARACHI, Pakistan, May 4, (AP):** Pakistan top-order batters continued to prosper as they beat under-strength New Zealand by 26 runs in the third one-day international on Wednesday for an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Opening batter Imam-ul-Haq made 90 off 107 balls and captain Babar Azam scored 54 as the home team raised a total of 287-6 after losing the toss and being asked to bat first.

Cole McConchie's (64 not out) late counter-attack saw the 31-year-old smash New Zealand's fastest half-century on ODI debut off 36 balls before the Kiwis were bowled out for 261 in the final over to lose their first ODI series against Pakistan since 2011.

"We knew these wickets would not be the same as Rawalpindi wickets, so it was important to give respect," Imam said after being named player of the match. "We knew it was a 280-290 track. We were thinking of 260 but my partnership with Babar helped to get to a good position."

Pakistan chased down two big totals in the first two ODIs at Rawalpindi, including its second highest-ever successful chase in an ODI of 337 runs in the second game.

New Zealand made a solid start in a bid to keep the series alive

when Tom Blundell (65), playing his first game of the series, and Will Young (33) put on 83 runs for the opening-wicket stand. But Young's run-out in the 16th over saw the middle-order stifled by Pakistan spinners Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz before Blundell too got run out while going for a second run with captain Tom Latham.

Daryl Mitchell, who scored centuries in the first two games, had two lucky escapes before he holed



New Zealand's Matt Henry (center), bowls as umpire Langton Rusere watches during the third one-day international cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand, in Karachi, Pakistan. (AP)

out in the deep after scoring 21 and Mark Chapman, who was the star for New Zealand in the preceding 2-2 drawn T20 series against Pakistan, was clean bowled by Naseem Shah for 13.

Left-arm spinner Nawaz, who dried up runs in the middle overs, injured his left index finger when he tried to hold onto a return catch of Mitchell and was brought to the hospital.

Part-time off-spinner Agha Salman made up for Nawaz's absence, taking 1-42 off his nine overs as spinners got plenty of assistance off the wicket at the National Stadium.

Fast bowler Mohammad Wasim (2-50), one of the three changes Pakistan made from the last game, had Latham clean bowled as the Black Caps skipper attempted a ramp shot while exposing his stumps.

McConchie struggled against the spinners before taking charge in the final 10 overs against the pace as he smashed two sixes and six boundaries and brought up his half-century with a big six over mid-wicket against Shaheen Shah Afridi (2-53).

"At the halfway mark, we were happy and the bowlers certainly improved after the first two games," Latham said. "From a batting point of view, we had a really

good start. We just could not continue that momentum after we lost a couple of wickets. When you are chasing scores like that, you need back-to-back partnerships."

Earlier, Imam and Babar combined in a 108-run second wicket stand after Fakhar Zaman fell to Matt Henry (3-54). Fakhar's two back-to-back centuries had earned Pakistan convincing wins at Rawalpindi before he played across the line and skied a catch to wicket-keeper Blundell.

Henry also broke the century-stand when Babar, who hit his eighth score of 50-plus in the last

## CRICKET

11 ODIs, played the fast bowler back onto his stumps while going for an off drive. Imam showed plenty of patience but also fell in similar fashion when Adam Milne (2-56) struck in his return spell and Pakistan lost momentum in the death overs.

Mohammad Rizwan made 32 off 34 balls before he got caught by McConchie off Milne's full toss before Shadab Khan's hit a little came off 21 off 10 balls and provided a perfect finish by hitting Henry for a six off the final ball.

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Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid battles for a loose ball with Boston Celtics center Al Horford (right), and guard Marcus Smart, bottom, during the second half of Game 2 in the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series in Boston. (AP)

# Sports

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## Celtics spoil Embiid's return to even series

Boston rolls past 76ers

**BOSTON, May 4, (AP):** The Celtics walked off the court angry and frustrated after giving up home-court advantage in their series-opening loss to the 76ers.

Boston called on those emotions - and its defense - to dominate in Game 2.

Jaylen Brown scored 25 points and the Celtics rolled past Philadelphia 121-87 on Wednesday night, spoiling the return of new league MVP Joel Embiid.

The Celtics tied the series at one game apiece as the Eastern Conference semifinal series shifts to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Friday.

"I think we've just got to take more pride in ourselves. That's it," Brown said. "I just feel like we underperformed last game. We wanted



Boston Celtics guard Marcus Smart (36) drives to the basket against Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid (21) during the first half of Game 2 in the NBA basketball Eastern Conference semifinals playoff series in Boston. (AP)

to come out and play to the best of our ability. And that's what we did."

Malcolm Brogdon added 23 points, connecting on six of Boston's 20 3-pointers. Derrick White and Marcus Smart added 15 points apiece. Jayson Tatum played most of the game in foul trouble and was held to seven points.

Boston ratcheted up its defense and limited a 76ers team that hit 17 3-pointers in its Game 1 win to just 6 of 30 from beyond the arc on Wednesday. The Celtics led by as many as 36 points in the fourth quarter. Brogdon said their charge now is to maintain the same mindset going forward.

"It doesn't mean anything if there's no carryover," he said.

Tobias Harris led the 76ers with 16 points. Embiid finished with 15 points, three rebounds and five blocks in his first game back from a sprained right knee that caused him to miss the final game of the 76ers' first-round sweep of Brooklyn. He also sat out Philadelphia's Game 1 win on Monday.

James Harden, who tied his post-season career high with 45 points in Game 1, missed all six 3-pointers and shot 2 for 14 overall while finishing with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Embiid's return came a day after being voted MVP for the first time.

He was cleared to play by doctors and training staff following a pregame, on-court workout. That was after he did some light work during the 76ers' morning shoot-around.

Embiid said he was told it could take four to six weeks for his injury to heal and the opportunity to take a 2-0 lead ultimately made him want to play, even if there was rust.



Manchester City's Julian Alvarez (right), challenges for the ball with West Ham's Lucas Paqueta during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and West Ham United at Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Raducanu to miss FO Wimbledon

## Aryna reaches Madrid final, Karatsev 'ends' Zhang's run

**MADRID, May 4, (AP):** Aryna Sabalenka advanced to the Madrid Open final for the second time in three years by defeating Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-1 on Thursday.

The 2021 champion in the Spanish capital will face either top-ranked Iga Swiatek or 12th-seeded Veronika Kudermetova, who will play later Thursday.

The second-seeded Sabalenka opened with a 3-0 lead before Sakkari pulled even. The 24-year-old player from Belarus then won nine of the last 11 games, including the last five, to comfortably close out the match.



Sabalenka

The Australian Open champion is seeking her fifth WTA 1000 title and 13th career title overall.

The ninth-seeded Sakkari has a 7-22 record in semifinals. It was the first time the 27-year-old Greek was playing in the last four in Madrid.

Men's qualifier Aslan Karatsev reached his first Masters 1000 semifinal after ending a strong run by Chinese player Zhang Zhizhen 7-6 (3), 6-4.

The 121st-ranked Russian saved all three breaks points he faced in the first set and converted his only opportunity in the second.

The 99th-ranked Zhang was the first Chinese man to make the quarterfinals of a Masters 1000 tournament by upsetting Denis Shapovalov, Cameron Norrie and Taylor Fritz.

Karatsev has been ranked as high as 14th. In 2021, he became the first man in his Grand Slam debut to reach the Australian Open semifinals.

In Madrid, he's only the second qualifier to make the semis.

"I started the year inside the top 100 then I dropped and lost some matches," he said. "You have to keep going and believe, and I have a team behind me that is always supporting me and believing in me."

Emma Raducanu will miss the French Open and Wimbledon after

### TENNIS

announcing Wednesday that she is having what she called "minor" procedures on both hands and an ankle and expects to be sidelined for "the next few months."

The 2021 U.S. Open champion, a 20-year-old from Britain, has struggled with a series of injuries, most recently pulling out of the Madrid Open because of a hand problem.

Raducanu said on her social media accounts that she's dealt with "a recurring injury on a bone of both hands" for the past 10 months. She posted a photo of herself in a hospital bed with her right wrist and hand bandaged.

"I'm disappointed to share that I will be out for the next few months and while I am at it will have another minor procedure that is due on my ankle," the 85th-ranked Raducanu wrote. "It pains me that I will miss the summer events and I tried to downplay the issues so I thank all my fans who continued to support me when you did not know the facts."

## Atletico overtake Real for 2nd place

**MADRID, May 4, (AP):** Atletico Madrid continued its winning form by routing Cadiz 5-1 and overtaking Real Madrid for second place in the Spanish league.

Antoine Griezmann scored twice in the first half and Alvaro Morata, Yannick Carrasco and Nahuel Molina

### SOCCER

each added a goal in the second to give Atletico its 12th win in 14 league matches. Diego Simeone's team moved a point in front of Madrid with five rounds remaining.

It is the first time this season Atletico moved into second spot in the standings, which is particularly impor-

tant because it guarantees a spot in the lucrative Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Madrid, which lost 2-0 at Real Sociedad on Tuesday, had been in the top two since the early rounds. It is now focused on Saturday's Copa del Rey final against Osasuna and the Champions League semifinal against Manchester City.

Atletico would still make it to the Super Cup by finishing third behind Madrid, though, which earned its spot for the tournament in Saudi Arabia by reaching the Copa final. It wouldn't make it if it finished third behind another team.

Atletico is 13 points behind leader Barcelona, which has the chance to clinch its first league title in four years in the next round.

Liverpool keep slim hopes alive

## City regain top spot as Haaland breaks EPL scoring record

**MANCHESTER, England, May 4, (AP):** As if the sight of Erling Haaland scoring his 35th Premier League goal of the season wasn't daunting enough for defenses across Europe, Pep Guardiola delivered an ominous warning to Manchester City's rivals.

The Norwegian goal machine, who set a new scoring record in English soccer's top division on Wednesday, has only just begun.

"Of course this record will be broken sooner or later, maybe by him in the future," Guardiola said. "He will score a lot of goals. His mentality is to score more, more. But when he scores, (he's like) 'I want to score in the next action.'"

Haaland's 70th-minute strike in the 3-0 win against West Ham at Etihad Stadium helped fire City back to the top of the table, one point above Arsenal with a game in hand.

He moved clear of Alan Shearer and Andy Cole's previous record of 34 goals in a season - and with five league games still to play, could further extend his new benchmark.

"I have the feeling he will score goals for his mentality," Guardiola added. "When you are anxious in both boxes you are not a good striker or defender and he is so calm."

"I learn a lot as a manager from this type of mentality and the ambition is there, otherwise he cannot score here or (for) Dortmund or Salzburg."

Those are telling comments from a manager who has coached some of the greatest goal-scoring of all time at Barcelona, Bayern Munich and City.

Guardiola's Barcelona team included Lionel Messi, and at Munich he had Robert Lewandowski.

At City, he inherited a team with Sergio Aguero, who would go on to become the club's all-time leading scorer.

Haaland, however, has given a new dimension to a team that has already dominated English soccer since Guardiola took over in 2016.

He has now scored 51 goals in all competitions in his first year in English soccer, and on Wednesday, his achievement earned him a guard of honor from his teammates as he left the field.

"When there is a special occasion we have to show how special it is," Guardiola said. "Today it was with Erling and to overcome the position of Andy Cole and Alan Shearer. They are incredible top strikers so it's special."

It is not just the Premier League title that Haaland's goals are firing City toward, but the Champions League and FA Cup as well as the club pursues a treble of trophies.

Guardiola is yet to win the Champions League without Messi, having won European soccer's elite competition twice with the Argentine great at Barcelona.

Haaland feels like he could have a

similarly inspirational effect on City to end his manager's search for a first European crown since 2011.

"We cannot achieve if the club does not provide us with great strikers, top quality players upfront. It's not possible," Guardiola said.

Haaland, meanwhile, does not seem to be distracted by his march toward the history books.

"We cannot keep thinking of these records, my head would become crazy so I don't think of these things," he said. "I will go home, play some video games and then sleep."

Nathan Ake set City on course for a ninth-straight win in the league that moved it above Arsenal, heading in Riyad Mahrez' free kick in the 50th minute.

Haaland made history when he lifted the ball over Lukasz Fabianski in the 70th and Phil Foden's deflected effort in the 85th sealed the win with the

1,000th goal of Guardiola's time in charge at City.

Liverpool's Champions League hopes may be slim, but they are not over yet.

Despite a disappointing season for the Merseyside club, a run of five straight league wins has moved it to within four points of fourth-place Manchester United.

### SOCCER

United has two games in hand, but will be looking over its shoulder as Liverpool applies the pressure in the final weeks of the campaign.

Mohamed Salah's 39th-minute penalty secured a latest win for Jurgen Klopp's team, which has finally found some consistency in the latter part of the season.



Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk (left), challenges for the ball with Fulham's Tom Cairney during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Fulham, at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, England. (AP)

"We just have to win our games and see where it takes us," Klopp said. "At the moment I'm happy with our direction. We just have to keep going and in the end we'll look at the table and take what we can get."

Sam Allardyce has swept back into English soccer with a big smile and some even bigger assertions.

Now it's time for "Big Sam" - as he is widely known - to back up the talk and save Leeds from relegation in the Premier League.

The four-game mission in his ninth top-flight job starts with perhaps the toughest assignment possible in English soccer - a trip to defending champion and league leader Manchester City on Saturday.

That means going head-to-head with Pep Guardiola, the City manager who has previously called Allardyce a "genius" for his ability to save clubs from relegation.

Guardiola has welcomed the return of Allardyce to the Premier League and agreed with the 68-year-old former England coach's bold claim that there is "nobody ahead of me in football terms."

"With this type of old manager," Guardiola said, also referencing Roy Hodgson after his recent return to Crystal Palace at the age of 75, "people say, 'They are old' or whatever. And people who are 35, 40 (say) we invent football, we create football. No, football is already created."

"These guys belong to this league and helped us to do it ... you don't have to be young to be a good manager."

Allardyce is regarded as something of a pioneer, at least in the English game, for introducing sports science and data analysis to top-level soccer from his days at Bolton around the turn of the century and even before that.

It was at Bolton where he did his best work, defying his long-held image as a pragmatic, long-ball manager by getting a team containing exciting talents like Jay-Jay Okocha and Youri Djorkaeff into a domestic cup final and later into the now-defunct UEFA Cup following a sixth-place finish in the Premier League.

After leaving Bolton in 2007, he had tough spells at Newcastle, West Ham and Everton, where he was never popular with supporters, but excelled at Blackburn, Sunderland and Crystal Palace.

Allardyce certainly divides opinion but there's no doubt he retains a high opinion of himself, using his presentation as Leeds manager to name-check Guardiola, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp and Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta as coaches he believes he is as good as. Being away from soccer for almost two years is a concern, though, as is the form of the team Allardyce has taken over.