



AMIRI DECREE CALLS FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION APRIL 17

Amir accepts government resignation

Caretaker gov't until new Cabinet formed

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accepted Sunday the resignation of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the ministers.

An Amiri Order, signed by His Highness the Amir, accepted the government's resignation and instructed them to act as caretakers until formation of a new Cabinet.

The National Assembly shall be notified of this Order and be published in the official gazette. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a decree Sunday calling on National Assembly to convene on Wednesday, April 17.

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Every era has its state and people

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

ACCORDING to insights into the current political leadership, it is expected that the royal speech marking the opening of the new legislative term of the elected National Assembly will be characterized by frankness.

We reiterate to emphasize that the current leadership differs from its predecessors, who delegated the management of executive authority to entrusted individuals. This approach resulted in numerous hardships, stemming from parliamentary overreach into ministerial duties and undue compliance with legislative demands.

These lawmakers are responsible for passing a series of laws contrary to Kuwait's interests. These laws aimed to seize control of the state's institutions and alter its culture, such as the legislation banning co-education or addressing negative social phenomena.

These legislations isolated the country from the world by forcefully closing it down, and enacting laws that are against the vital economic interest. Worse of all is when the parliament attempted to "Islamize" the laws of an already Islamic country by proposing to amend Article 2 of the Constitution.

There are also ministerial decisions issued under pressure from the MPs with extremist agendas such as halting the project to develop the islands and the Silk Road, because it does not fit with their vision.

Note that other countries followed suit, despite their nature being more strict than Kuwait. They did so before their national interest dictated this without any objections from anyone.

There is no doubt that the current leadership, based on what has become known, realizes that going counter-clockwise will cause great harm to the country, and will cause more losses at all levels including socially, culturally, and economically, as well as on its regional and international relations.

Therefore, it is clear that returning to the time of parliamentarians' dominance over other authorities is not on the leadership's agenda. The internal situation has become different from what it was a few years ago, especially after Kuwaitis suffered from the fire of failed parliamentary and ministerial experiments, and the result of presenting personal agendas over the popular interest.

Regionally, the situation is also different from what it was a few years ago. Crises and wars have become more severe than before, and are threatening the entire region, and even the world, which is dancing on the brink of abyss.

Therefore, time no longer accepts the luxury of preoccupation with quarrels and nonsense, or with ventures of uncalculated consequences. All of this seems to be in the mind of the leadership, especially since the "supreme speech" during the oath-taking session defined the broad outlines of what Kuwait could be.

Unfortunately, the MPs of the dissolved parliament did not understand the message, which was deeply disappointing. This must be in the minds of

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Ramadan Timings

Iftar Monday 18:11
Imsak Tuesday 04:04



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives former National Assembly Speakers Ahmad Al-Saadoun and Marzouq Al-Ghanim.



Amiri Diwan photos



Kuwait's skyline darkens as rain lashes the city on Sunday.

Arab nations face rating dip due to regional instabilities

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation "Dhaman" revealed a decrease in sovereign ratings and political, economic, financial, and operational risk ratings of most Arab countries in 2023, according to 30 indicators issued by 15 major credit rating and risk assessment agencies around the world.

The Director-General of "Dhaman" Mr. Abdullah Ahmad Al-Sabeeh, explained in the editorial of the first quarterly bulletin "Dhaman Al-Istethmar" for 2024, that this disparity was the reflection of regional events in 2023, including the escalation of political happenings, the aggression on the Gaza Strip and continued armed conflicts in Sudan, Yemen and a number of Arab countries, in conjunction with growth slowdown due to the decline in oil production and revenues and the surging crises of the high-cost of living and debt crisis.

Al-Sabeeh emphasized that "Dhaman", based on its awareness of the paramount significance of the indices of sovereign and risk ratings in showing how much multinational companies, and finance, investment and trade institutions are interested in Arab countries, continues to monitor around 30 indicators of sovereign ratings and political, economic, financial and op-

erational risk assessment issued by 15 specialized international agencies, and compare them with the previous year. Key conclusions come as follows:

Sovereign ratings stabilized in 4 Arab countries, and improved in Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, compared to a decline in the rating of Morocco,

Continued on Page 5

2 more lose 'citizenship'

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Less than seventy-two hours after revoking the citizenship of 30 individuals, a new decree was issued today, stripping two people of their Kuwaiti citizenship, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Additionally, it has been decided to withdraw the citizenship from those who obtained it under their guardianship.

This action is in accordance with Article 21 bis, which stipulates: "Kuwaiti nationality certificates shall be revoked if they were obtained unlawfully through deception, false declarations, or invalid documentation.

The revocation shall be executed by a decision of the Council of

Continued on Page 5



Ahmed Al-Jarallah (left), Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, along with Mishal Al-Jarallah (right), CEO of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, extend congratulations to MP-elect Ahmed Al-Saadoun on his electoral victory.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Rain likely till Wednesday

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): There was a chance for light to moderate scattered rain throughout the day with a thunderstorm possibly occurring, said Kuwait Meteorological Center on Sunday.

Head of the center Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA that the country was affected by several weather conditions leading to the cumulus clouds.

Al-Qarawi said that wind speed would reach 60 kilometers per hour with lower horizontal visibility to around 1,000 meters, while waves would reach over six feet.

He predicted that chances for rain would continue until Wednesday, adding that the weather would return to normal by evening of that day with temperatures being warm in the daytime and moderate in the evening.

Supporters celebrate Al-Saadoun's victory

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: On Saturday, a number of Kuwaitis flocked to the campaign center of MP Ahmed Al-Saadoun to congratulate him on his victory in the National Assembly elections, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

They affirmed their support for him to run in the National Assembly's presidential elections, for which he announced his candidacy.

Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Al-Saadoun has declared that he will contest for the position of the Speaker of the National Assembly.

On his X account, he stated, "As a bearer of responsibility, I announce my candidacy for the presidency of the National Assembly."

MP-elect Osama Al-Zaid has announced that he will vote for former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun in the same position, while he is still undecided regarding the deputy speaker position.

NewsWatch

38 Palestinians killed in last 24 hours

Egypt raises alarm on Gaza crisis

CAIRO, April 7, (Agencies): Egyptian President Abdel-fattah El-Sisi warned of the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which necessitates concerted international efforts immediately to press for the immediate implementation



Protesters wave Palestinian flags as they shout slogans during a rally and prayer in support of the Palestinians in Gaza, in Jakarta, Indonesia, Sunday, April 7, 2024. (AP)

of relief aid to all areas of the Strip.

This came during El-Sisi's meeting with the head of the CIA, William Burns, in the presence of the head of Egyptian General Intelligence, Major General Abbas Kamel, said the official spokesman for the Egyptian presidency, Counselor Ahmad Fahmy in a statement on Sunday.

The meeting discussed the joint Egyptian, Qatari and American efforts to establish a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and developments in the field.

He stated that the meeting witnessed agreement on the need to protect civilians and the danger of military escalation in the Palestinian city of Rafah, as well as a complete rejection of the displacement of Palestinians from their lands.

Meanwhile, health authorities in Gaza announced, Sunday, 38 Palestinians were

Continued on Page 5

JEDDAH: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, of Saudi Arabia, welcomed his Bahraini counterpart Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to Al Safa Palace in Makkah on Saturday evening.

During the meeting, they discussed the longstanding relations between their two countries and explored opportunities for deeper cooperation in various domains, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: A top Iranian military adviser on Sunday warned Israel that none of its embassies were safe following a strike in Damascus last week blamed on Israel that killed 12 people, including two elite Iranian generals. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:10	Asr	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:31	Maghrib ..	18:10
Zohr	11:50	Isha	19:28

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot and cloudy to partly cloudy with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind to easterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for rising dust.

Weather

By Night: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Kuwait City	32	24
Kuwait Airport	33	22
Abdaly	34	19
Jahra	35	22
Salmiyah	27	22
Nuwaisib	33	22
Wafra	34	23

Station Max Exp Min Rec

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

'Reinstate ten electoral districts instead of five'

Ban opinion polls in media: KNIS

By **Mohammad Al-Musleh**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7 : The Kuwait National Integrity Society (KNIS) recommended the necessity of reconsidering the division of electoral constituencies, as the elections proved the inefficiency of this system, especially after the addition of the new regions. It demanded that the constituencies be redistributed to ten constituencies instead of five.

The society called for the need to ban the publication of voter opinion polls regarding the candidates' chances of success, as polls have turned into commercial businesses that work to influence voters' opinions in exchange for money.

Although advertising outlets must not be granted licenses to conduct polls, as they are in a conflict-of-interest situation because they provide paid advertising services to candidates, they will not be able to adhere to impartiality.

During the press conference held yesterday to announce the final report regarding review of the 2024 parliamentary elections, the association's president Lawyer Mohammad Al-Otaibi called for the necessity of taking the necessary measures to prevent polling companies from violating voters' privacy and leaking their information and directions.

Lawyer Al-Otaibi stressed the need to use modern technologies in elections, especially during the vote-counting process, adopt nomination papers that can be read automatically, and introduce automatic counting devices that reveal the results faster.

He also emphasized the necessity of overseeing all stages of the electoral process by establishing standardized procedures and detailed regulations governing the entirety of the electoral process. Additionally, he called for the issuance of specific regulations for vote counting and result announcements.

Lawyer Al-Otaibi stated that there are commercial companies that conduct polls

on candidates' opportunities by contacting segments of citizens according to tribal classification, which represents a violation of national unity, as there are no clear measures that prevent polling companies from violating the privacy of voters subject to the target segment and leaking their entire data and personal opinions to the candidates.

Lawyer Al-Otaibi said, "The election day activities were conducted easily and safely. All polling centers opened their doors to voters on time without any delay. All polling centers were characterized by a high degree of organization and arrangement. No violations were recorded during the vote counting process, although there was a discrepancy in the vote counting mechanism as the Chairman of the Election Committee deems appropriate as a result of the existence of a special list for counting."

Lawyer Al-Otaibi explained that the Ministry of Information had great success in carrying out complete transparent coverage of the election day with great efforts made through correspondents of Kuwait TV, Radio and KUNA.

Modern technologies were also used to transmit the vote counting and sorting process and announce the results immediately and moment by moment.

The Electronic Publishing Department of the Ministry of Information was unable to control the many violations of news accounts on social media, as many violations were monitored when these outlets promoted news aimed at harming some candidates and influencing voters.

Electronic media outlets licensed by the Ministry of Information also committed massive violations in breaking the electoral silence and publishing interviews with candidates during election day.

Exceptional licenses were granted to electronic media outlets to conduct public opinion polls, even though they are not specialized in polls and do not have licenses to practice public opinion polls issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

The Secretary-General of the society Eng. Hamoud Al-Enezi said the Ministry of Interior succeeded in controlling the negative aspects that occurred in the last elections, as by-elections were not held despite a failed attempt to hold them.

He stressed that the Ministry of Interior also succeeded in taking the necessary measures to reduce the risks of vote buying.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and the Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah with the Libyan and Iraqi businesspersons delegation at his residence .

Al-Jarallah receives Libyan, Iraqi business delegation

The Dean of Kuwait Journalism and the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received in his home on Saturday evening a delegation of Libyan and Iraqi businesspersons who are on a visit to Kuwait to study the investment activity in the country. After Al-Jarallah received the guests, they held their meeting in a cordial manner. They

mainly discussed about the investment capabilities available in Kuwait. The guests listened to the remarks of the Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah regarding the extent to which the laws in force in Kuwait can provide in this regard. Present in the meeting was Saud Al-Farhan and Mohammad Al-Farhan.

Kiosks at mosques removed

Eateries seeking illegal donations

By **Fares Al-Abdan**
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced that it recorded nine violations against some individuals and entities that have been calling for fundraising through advertisements posted on social media. The Public Prosecution has been contacted regarding this matter.

In a press statement regarding a periodic report issued on the work of the Ramadan inspection teams during the 12th project for the period from Ramadan 21-27, the ministry explained that the field inspection teams for collecting donations carried out 336 field visits to mosques. About 22 kiosks were monitored to collect clothes, and ten

of them were removed.

A total of 11 restaurants were monitored after they called for collecting donations for iftar for fasting people, through social media. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry was contacted in this regard.

Also, 47 advertisements of charity organizations and other entities were monitored as they did not adhere to advertising controls. Charity organizations were being addressed to avoid violations.

Furthermore, about 23 violations were monitored in mosques. These include advertisements for collecting donations for offering Iftar meals to fasting people, implementing many charitable projects, and others. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs was contacted in this regard.

MoSA fills number of supervisory positions

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Personnel Affairs Committee at the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) recently held a meeting, during which a number of supervisory positions were filled, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a source from the ministry.

According to the source, Dr Sa'ad Al-Shabo was appointed as Director of the Family Nursery Department; in addition to several heads of departments in various sectors at the ministry.

On the other hand, the source disclosed that about 2,500 employees are eligible for the excellent job performance bonus in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The source also confirmed that an expected rotation will include many supervisory positions, while the social assistance has been transferred to the bank accounts of beneficiaries; that is, before Eid Al-Fitr.

الوطني NBK

عيد مبارك

Eid Mubarak

1801801
nbk.com

How does a common Kuwaiti citizen read the poll results?

"BETWEEN happy and sad, optimistic and pessimistic, between very happy with the results of the recent elections and someone in a state of astonishment, and between ...," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"If we say that the clean representative who is jealous of his homeland and the interests of his country did not succeed, then we are wrong. If we say that the one with the loudest voice and the irrational proposal did not succeed, then we are wrong. If we say that the extremist proposal rejected by a large segment of the Kuwaiti people did not succeed, then we are wrong. If we say that whoever went too far in his seminars and transgressed the norms, values, and privacy of Kuwaiti life, would not succeed, we are wrong."



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"If we say that whoever respects the ruling family and addresses it rationally and calmly has not succeeded, then we are wrong. If we say that whoever wins politically in a cheap way... and goes too far with abuse, attacks and accusations, has not succeeded, then we are wrong."

"Kuwait went through many experiences during the last elections in different circumstances and atmospheres, and I do not think we learned much from them."

"We were previously optimistic, and we still are, that what is coming is better, through members of parliament whose positive and patriotic performance we aspire to at a high rate. However, unfortunately, after a few months of the performance of any new parliament, frustration and disappointment begin to creep into our hearts, and then we return to our old habits."

"Rumors and information abound from here and there that the coming of democratic life will not be easy for the nation. Will this council spread hope in our hearts and prove that we will see light at the end of the tunnel, hope for a better future of achievement, and toward breakthrough, after we as a people were given the freedom to choose? Or will we, by insisting on bringing back the elements of aggravation, and whoever puffs himself up too much, help him explode and blow up everything around him?"

"Based on the above, those who were in opposition and had a high ceiling returned strong, and those who were at the bottom of the lists of successful people in the past returned to being at the top of them."

"Whoever was the spark that led to the dissolution of the previous Assembly, won with strong votes, and whoever frothed, thundered, accused and threatened the government... won powerfully. Where are we headed? What is the reason for this? These are the questions that the government and stakeholders must study well and answer realistically and transparently, because the answer will determine the action plan for the next stage."

"Congratulations to everyone who succeeded and hard luck to those who did not succeed and were not lucky. However, the truth that we should not all disagree on is that Kuwait deserves nothing but fear for it. Do you know why we should fear for her? Look around you and observe the conditions of the surrounding countries, then you will know what I mean."

"Kuwait is a monastery like no other. We fear for it that it does not burn like others burned their monasteries and homelands."

"Will we one day applaud a measure that is difficult for us, and will we as a people call for it to save what remains to us, before devastation and destruction sweep through the joints of life?"

"His Highness the Amir of the country said, reconsidered and repeated in lofty speeches and words on multiple occasions, warning of steps he will have to take, which will be extremely difficult if the situation is not rectified."

"But if corruption and self-destruction persist, we as Kuwaitis and patriots will applaud these steps, because it will be the difficult surgical operation that will be the urgent and required way to eradicate a tumor that will destroy the body of Kuwait."

"Heroics are beautiful and bring joy to their owner, but in the end, many of them are not heroics of construction, but of destruction."

Also:

"The concept of electronic fasting offers a compelling solution to the challenges posed by excessive reliance on technology and social media in our daily lives. In today's digital

age, where information overload and constant connectivity can lead to stress, anxiety, and decreased well-being, electronic fasting provides individuals with a much-needed break from the digital noise," columnist **Dr Tahani Al-Mutairi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"During electronic fasting, individuals abstain from using electronic devices and social media platforms, allowing them to disconnect and unwind. This period of respite enables individuals to engage in activities that promote mental and spiritual health, such as reading, exercising, and spending time in nature. By stepping away from screens and digital distractions, individuals can find moments of quiet reflection and inner peace."

"One of the key benefits of electronic fasting is the improvement in concentration and productivity. Without the constant barrage of notifications and distractions, individuals can focus more deeply on tasks at hand, whether it be work, study, or personal projects. This enhanced focus can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in various aspects of life."

"Moreover, electronic fasting can strengthen personal and family relationships. By prioritizing face-to-face interactions over virtual communication, individuals can foster deeper connections with loved ones. Spending quality time together without the interference of screens can strengthen emotional bonds and promote a sense of belonging and support within the family unit."

"In conclusion, electronic fasting offers a valuable opportunity for individuals to recalibrate their relationship with technology and prioritize their mental and spiritual well-being. By incorporating periods of electronic fasting into our daily lives, we can achieve greater balance, focus, and fulfillment. Embracing electronic fasting habits can lead to a more balanced and fulfilling life in today's digitally saturated world."

"The silent majority... The vast majority of Kuwaiti people or what is called the 'silent majority' is no longer silent as it was in the past. This majority has expressed objection and strong dissatisfaction over the irrational proposals of some candidates during the electoral campaign period," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Whether by those who were lucky or those who did not succeed in the election, the extremist proposal was completely rejected by majority of the Kuwaiti people. They also voiced objection to deviating from the norms, values and principles of the Kuwaiti society, especially those who deliberately raised the ceiling of discourse for the sake of cheap political gain that some may admire and others may like. They could come together for a candidate in an electoral district that agrees with the irrational proposal, and he succeeds."

"Nevertheless, it is certain that he will not succeed in Abdullah Al-Salem Hall, because he does not represent the majority of the people -- the majority that constitutes a social weight in most electoral districts! It is assumed that the Kuwaiti people matured politically after their long experience with the democratic practice, which exceeded half a century. However, we see a decline in political maturity, which we notice through the results of the parliamentary election that clearly indicate a poor choice."

"We are not just talking about the results of the recent election, but all legislative elections. Most parliaments did not complete their term, ended with dissolution, and then the call for early elections. The real problem is that every time we express our dissatisfaction over the performance of the National Assembly that we elected freely and directly, we demand for its dissolution or applaud the dissolution decree, yet we go back and elect the same trends, if not the same names. Thus, we fall into the same mistake, and willingly accept that we are stung from the hole twice, thrice and four times."

"People are now talking about the possibility that this Assembly will be the last elected legislature in Kuwait, if it expires and does not complete its term. This talk did not come out of nowhere. The observer must note the percentage of those who cast their votes and the results of those who succeeded, and compare them to results of dissolved parliaments!"

"The competent authorities play a crucial role in re-arranging the political street by holding accountable everyone who insulted others during the election campaign in accordance with the law... and the conversation continues... Good."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Counting discrepancies cited

Candidates to challenge results

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Several candidates who were unsuccessful in the recent National Assembly elections are gearing up to contest the results before the Constitutional Court.

These candidates, who came in eleventh place in various constituencies, have highlighted discrepancies in the tallying process that they believe contributed to their defeat.

Lawyer Hani Hussein took to the social media platform "X" to declare his intention to file an appeal against the legitimacy of MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil's membership due to a previous criminal conviction on his record.

He stressed that the appeal has been prepared and will be promptly submitted once the Constitutional Court is ready to accept appeals.

Zakat-al-Fitr donations: Al Salam Society for Humanitarian and Charitable Works has announced its readiness to accept Zakat al-Fitr donations both in cash via the association's website and in-kind at the association's headquarters in Adailiya, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Dhari Al-Bajjan, the association's director, stated in a press release that Zakat al-Fitr is equivalent to a saa' of rice or other staple food items as prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Al-Bajjan highlighted that the acceptance of Zakat al-Fitr donations from benefactors begins well before the night of Eid, emphasizing that these contributions are promptly utilized to procure essential food and relief items for the needy.

This ensures that they can partake in the joy and happiness of the blessed Eid al-Fitr. He clarified that Zakat al-Fitr paid before the Eid prayer is considered valid Zakat, whereas if paid after the prayer, it is classified as regular charity.



Al-Shamaimari Café in the Sharq region.

Plan to revitalize, restore 'popular cafés' in Kuwait

KD10mIn collected for indebted Kuwaitis

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Ministry of Social Affairs, through the newly established Committee for the Development of Popular Cafés, is embarking on a comprehensive plan to revitalize and restore popular cafes scattered across various regions of the country, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Initiated by Ministerial Resolution No. 166/2023, the committee is laying out strategies and estimating budgets for this endeavor.

According to sources familiar with the matter, the committee has outlined a vision for the complete renovation of Suleiman Al-Shamaimari Café in the Sharq region, with an estimated cost of 432 thousand dinars.

The Committee has submitted designs and plans for the development of Al-Shamaimari Café, along with a proposed timeline, to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Chairman of the National Cooperative Projects Committee for approval.

Once approved and funded, the café will undergo redevelopment according to contemporary architectural styles while preserving its authentic Kuwaiti heritage, a hallmark of cafes across the country.

The Committee will oversee all stages of the café's development plan, with

particular attention to administrative and financial regulations. Proposals for their enhancement will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Additionally, the committee is examining contracts associated with the Café Fund, including investment and maintenance agreements, and will provide recommendations on their management.

Currently, there are five permanent cafes distributed across various governorates, with a sixth temporary café in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. Efforts are underway to secure permanent status for the latter pending approval from the municipal council, underscoring the importance of cafe development in preserving heritage and attracting younger generations.

In other news, the national campaign initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs to collect donations for clearing the debts of debtors has garnered significant support. The campaign, launched in collaboration with several government entities and organizations, has raised a total of 9 million dinars from 20 thousand donors.

A substantial contribution of 7 million dinars from Finance House Bank has significantly boosted the campaign's progress.

Abdulaziz Sari, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry, expressed optimism that donations will exceed 10 million dinars, urging cooperative and charitable societies, foundations, and individuals to contribute generously to alleviate the distress of indebted citizens during the holy month of Ramadan.

Army chief pays visit to 'land forces' base

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, conducted an inspection visit to the Land Force Operations Center, where he was warmly received by Force Commander Major General Khaled Zayed and several senior commanding officers, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

During the visit, Lieutenant General Al-Muzain was provided with a detailed explanation regarding the tasks and duties assigned to the ground force, as well as the implementation and follow-up processes.

Additionally, the discussion covered topics such as the absorptive capacity of human cadres within the force and the maintenance and sustainability of military installations. Following the briefing, Lieutenant General Al-Muzain praised the efforts of the ground force and commended its members for their capabilities, skills, and thorough understanding of their responsibilities.

Court upholds life in jail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Court of Cassation upheld the life imprisonment sentence issued against an individual with a criminal record, for impersonating a ruling family member on Instagram, swindling a woman of a diamond ring and more than KD 20,000 cash, and blackmailing her by threatening to post inappropriate clips on social media sites.

According to the case file, the woman lodged a complaint, stating that the man deceived her by impersonating a member of the ruling family, pretending to seek her legal advice as she is a lawyer, tricking her into marrying him, defrauding her and seizing a diamond ring and large sums of money.

Other Voices

Quick read of National Assembly '24 elections

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE results of the National Assembly elections, which many brothers followed with regret, and perhaps with envy, and were not to blame for that, were better than many expected.

Five days ago I tweeted that I was casting my electoral vote for five candidates: Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Abdul-Wahab Al-Issa, Muhallal Al-Mudhaf, Jenan Bushehri, and Ahmad Al-Fadhil. This is if Kuwait were one constituency, and I had the right to choose five representatives!

The final outcomes have not only met my expectations but have also fulfilled the aspirations of every patriot who holds Kuwait dear. The five victorious individuals, some of whom garnered the highest number of votes, mark a significant milestone for the upcoming council.

They are poised to collaborate, whether through prearranged agreements or otherwise, with other representatives, particularly the new addition, Muhammad Abbas Jowhar Hayat, to form a formidable team against any attempts to disrupt the council's work. They will undoubtedly confront and neutralize any futile opposition, thwarting their misguided agenda.

This five-member team, now bolstered by the inclusion of MP Muhammad Abbas Jowhar Hayat, stands out, with all due respect to other representatives, for their success being solely attributed to their individual merits and the collective efforts of their team.

Political influence, in the form of buying votes, played no part in their triumph. Furthermore, they achieved success without relying on tribal or sectarian affiliations, and without support from religious or civil parties, thus securing outstanding results independently.

The recent elections witnessed a significant resurgence in Kuwaiti people's awareness, marking a positive shift in attitudes, particularly concerning candidates affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. For the first time in sixty years, voters displayed a notable rejection of these candidates, evident in the unprecedented decline in their representation.

This reflects not only voters' distaste for them but also a deep-seated antipathy toward the representatives of the Kuwaiti branch of the Muslim Brotherhood Party and their supporters, whether overt or covert. This indicates a growing awareness among many, shedding light on their true allegiance to their leader, "The Supreme," and their allegiance to the broader international organization, rather than to the interests of their nation.

What's intriguing or perhaps ironic is that the downfall of four of the Brotherhood's candidates didn't just elicit joy from individuals like myself and many others who harbor disdain for the Brotherhood. It also brought a sense of jubilation to the Salafist Group, amplifying their happiness with the election results.

Religious parties harbor animosity towards certain factions more than others because each poses a significant political and financial threat to the others. In contrast, a civilian citizen poses no real threat to their vast financial or expansive political interests.

We remain hopeful that the true nature of religious parties, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, will continue to be unveiled, leading to their eventual defeat and eradication due to the security, economic, and moral threats they pose. It is imperative to recognize and address these dangers before they further destabilize our society.

It's worth noting the unprecedented challenges faced by Ahmad Al-Fadhil during his electoral campaign, including relentless attacks on his character, morals, financial standing, and heritage.

Despite facing opposition from various backward factions, he persevered with unwavering integrity and the support of loyal allies, enduring what could be considered the most vicious and slanderous campaign in Kuwait's parliamentary election history.

In light of their victory, I extend an invitation to the constituents of Representatives Jenan Bushehri and Ahmad Al-Fadhil for a celebratory reception at the Sheraton St. Regis Hotel next week. It's an opportunity to congratulate them on their success and honor their resilience amidst adversity.

□ □ □

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

مفـال مـحـال
Mafal Mahal

Ramadan Iftar Buffet

بوفيه إفطار رمضان

KD 7.450 ONLY
CHILD BUFFET KD 4.250

LARGEST SPREAD IN TOWN

MORE THAN 40 CHOICES

Serving in Hawally & Fahaheel branch

HAWALLY: 97644431 | FAHAHEEL: 97644421

Executive management's reports and board's approval taken into consideration

Competition Authority okays 4 economic concentration deals

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Competition Protection Authority of Kuwait has approved the completion of economic concentration for four deals, based on the executive management's reports and the approval of the board of directors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These approvals were granted after reviewing the Competition Protection Law and relevant regulations.

Acquisition of shares by the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia -- The Authority agreed to complete the economic concentration process for the acquisition of 49.9 percent of the shares of Diem Middle East Holding Company by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia. Diem Middle

East Holding Company is a simplified joint stock company based in Saudi Arabia.

Joint Project between PIF and Pirelli Tire Italy -- The economic concentration process was approved for a joint project between the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia (75 percent) and Pirelli Tire Italy (25 percent). The project involves establishing and operating a factory in Saudi Arabia to produce and sell certain tires for sports vehicles under a new brand.

Acquisition of Siemens Aktiengesellschaft by Valmet OYG Finland -- The Authority approved the economic concentration process for the acquisition of 100 percent of Siemens Aktiengesellschaft in Germany by Valmet OYG

Finland.

Joint Venture between Heinemann Africa and Arab Supply and Trade Company -- The economic concentration process was also approved for a joint venture between Heinemann Africa (Germany) with a 34 percent stake, Arab Supply and Trade Company in Saudi Arabia with a 33 percent stake, and the Jordanian Duty Free Shops Company with a 33 percent stake.

The Competition Protection Law defines economic concentration as a permanent change in control in the relevant market, which can occur through mergers, acquisitions, or the establishment of partnerships between entities engaged in economic activities independently.

MPW's 38 project tenders halted amid suspension of CAPT board

Delay reflects negatively on duration of projects' implementation

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: According to informed sources, there are 38 project tenders of the Ministry of Public Works that were suspended within the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) due to expiry of the legal term of CAPT's board of directors in January and the absence of a new board.

The sources explained that there are six important tenders in the tender stage, including the establishment of the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Complex for the Printing of Qur'an, the construction of the northern building of the State Audit Bureau, and the South Al-Mutlaa purification station, in addition to 27 tenders in the bid opening stage and five in the postponement stage.

Delaying the completion of these tenders reflects negatively on the duration of the implementation of these projects and the dates specified for them in the ministry's plan, especially since these tenders pertain to projects with commitments made by collaborating parties to execute according to a specific program.

There are also a number of consulting agreements and new tenders, such as the agreement to

CITRA gets approval for KD 3.078m project

By Mohammad Al-Misleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: According to informed sources, The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has obtained regulatory approval for the "Kuwait International Gateway Development" project worth KD 3.078 million.

They explained that five companies had submitted their bids for the project, and the tender was awarded to the company with the lowest bid based on the decision of the board of directors of

design a medical city in Sabah Al-Ahmad, and other projects that the ministry is preparing to announce and put forward through CAPT.

However, the lack of a board of directors hindered its proposal during the past months.

The sources called for the need to accelerate the formation of a new board of directors for CAPT, and resume work after the National Assembly elections and the formation of a new government, in order to conduct the procedures for these tenders.

On the other hand, informed sources said the Ministry of Finance is currently coordinating with

CITRA.

The State Audit Bureau agreed to contract with the company for an implementation period of up to 36 months, provided that it adheres to the rules for preparing general budgets and monitor their implementation and the final account regarding the correlation with the value of the subject of the research.

The portal aims to increase the capacity of data transit ports on the Internet, protect the portal in the event it is exposed to an information threat, renew licenses, and carry out maintenance, which contributes to developing the Internet's capacity in light of the continuous increase.

the Ministry of Public Works and Kuwait Municipality to develop the optimal vision for exploiting the Heritage Village project on Abdullah Al-Ahmad Street, taking into account the preservation of the heritage values surrounding it.

They affirmed that the Ministry of Finance is the body assigned by the Council of Ministers in coordinating with the parties it deems appropriate.

The sources indicated that the efforts were coordinated with the Ministry of Finance from the outset, and they prepared a technical report to assess the soil and structures, laying the groundwork for site readiness and asset inventorying.



American International University building.

AIU offers new computer science specialization to empower next-generation 'technology' leaders

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The American International University is excited to announce the introduction of specialized courses within its School of Engineering & Computing, catering to the rapidly evolving fields of Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cybersecurity, and Blockchain. These courses are designed to equip students with advanced expertise and knowledge to thrive in today's tech-driven world.

Recognizing the importance of staying informed of global technological advancements, the University aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and industry needs. Dr. Areej Theeb, Computer Science Program Coordinator and Instructor at AIU emphasizes, "We understand the significance of understanding and anticipating market needs, whether local or global. Therefore, our specialized courses provide students with the necessary advice, guidance, and practical skills to excel in their chosen fields."

In the course of Artificial Intelligence, students will delve into AI and Data Science systems, opening doors to opportunities as specialized data scientists or analysts. The curriculum is tailored to prepare students for analyzing intelligent business systems and leveraging AI technologies effectively.

Furthermore, the Blockchain specialization offers students the chance to become proficient blockchain developers, equipped with the skills to navigate the complexities of blockchain technology and its applications in various industries.

In addition to these leading fields, the University also offers specialized courses in Cybersecurity, empowering students to become specialists, experts, or advisors in Cybersecurity and Ethical Hack-

ing industries. These courses provide comprehensive training to combat cyber threats and protect digital assets.

With these specialized courses, American International University reaffirms its commitment to providing students with a dynamic and industry-relevant education, preparing them to become leaders and innovators in the ever-changing landscape of computer science.

With you, Arij Adib, Computer Science Program Coordinator, and Instructor at the School of Engineering & Computing, the American International University introduces a set of specialized courses in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cybersecurity, and Blockchain within its School of Engineering & Computing.

Recognizing the importance of keeping pace with the latest technological advancements globally, in the field of computer science and various domains, and the significance of understanding and anticipating market needs, whether local or global, we provide the necessary advice and guidance to students to help them understand and assess their capabilities and interests and assist them in planning for the future careers they desire.

In the field of Artificial Intelligence, students find opportunities to work in AI and Data Science systems and environments. It is possible for students to become specialized data scientists or analysts, or analysts for intelligent business systems.

In the Blockchain field, students can become blockchain developers, and in addition to Cybersecurity, students can become specialists, experts, or advisors in Cybersecurity and Ethical Hacking.

Entities authorized to submit applications

KDIPA registers 11 companies, offices for investor applications

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) has registered 11 companies and offices in the register of companies and offices accredited by the authority, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These entities are authorized to submit applications on behalf of investors for a period of one year from the date of issuance of the registration certificate. This decision was made through Resolution No. 184 of 2024, issued by the Director General of the Authority, Sheikh Dr. Meshal Al-Jaber.

According to the resolution, the competent authorities must implement this decision within their respective jurisdictions, and it will come into effect from the date of its publication.

The decision was made following a

review of the director general's decision regarding the system of registering and approving companies and consulting offices to submit applications on behalf of investors with the "Investment Promotion" team, along with recommendations from the team.

The registration of these companies and consulting offices in the Direct Investment Promotion Authority was based on memorandum 49/2024, and it was proposed by the assistant director general of the Investment Operations Sector.

The decision to restrict consulting, economic, and legal offices and companies was made after reviewing Law No. 116 of 2013 regarding encouraging direct investment in Kuwait and the executive regulations related to encouraging direct investment in Kuwait.

News in Brief

Completion of project: Around 10.9 percent of the construction of public buildings in plots One, Four, Five and Six in South Abdullah Mubarak has been completed as at the end of February, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Sources disclosed that the completion rate of the entire project has reached 42.6 percent; indicating the target completion date is on April 16, 2025.

Sources pointed out that the completion rate of school building works exceeded 40 percent, since the contractor has completed 100 percent of the foundations.

Sources said the completion rate of the concrete structure of the buildings exceeded 97.5 percent, while the wall finishing works reached the percentage

stipulated in the contract; in addition to the sanitary works, roofs, external cladding, site works and spaces.

On the contract for the construction of public buildings in plots Two and Three, sources affirmed that the works are progressing as per schedule or around 4.25 percent as at the end of last month and the total completion rate has reached 36.1 percent.

Police in summer uniform: Members of the police force began wearing summer uniforms as of April 1, reports Al-Anba daily.

This comes in accordance with a circular issued by the Public Relations and Security Media Department of the ministry, requiring the police force to wear summer uniforms as usual.




EID AL FITR

Special Promotion

Room Promotion
1st day of Eid – until 19th of April 2024

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

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

Food & Beverage Promotion
1st day of Eid till 14th April 2024

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

20% Happy Hours discount at **Andalucia Café** from 16:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs.

Terms and conditions apply

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

Calls to verify recipient's identity

NBK warns customers of 'scams' when donating online to charities

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Underscoring its active participation in enhancing financial awareness and inclusion among all segments of society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to promote the "Let's Be Aware" campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in collaboration with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

In this context, NBK intensifies awareness by publishing educational content including video clips and text communications, as well as awareness tips on all its social media platforms and other digital channels, in addition to re-posting of CBK's related communications. This aims to increase awareness among all segments of society and familiarize them with different fraud schemes and the precautions to steer clear of these threats.

NBK urges customers to be cautious when making donations to any charities online, and to verify the identity of the recipient, to avoid falling victim to fraud, especially with the increasing fraud schemes and scams used by fraudsters to deceive victims. This comes within the bank's commitment to raise customers' awareness and keep them updated on the latest fraud trends and how to avoid them.

The bank also warned against donating to unfamiliar charities, whether through links or on websites, as fraudsters may use fake websites similar to the websites of well-known charities, or claim affiliation to real charities raising funds for war or disaster-stricken people, then send the links to the victims which transfers them to the fake website page and

asks them to make payments.

Furthermore, the bank called customers to beware of e-mails, text messages or phone calls asking for donations for well-known charities, warning them of responding to such fraudulent messages attempting to obtain their banking information in order to steal their money or information.

NBK employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its digital channels, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks, to support the Central Bank's endeavors to protect customers and the national economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and participant in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As the leading financial institution in Kuwait, the bank frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as many training courses for its employees to enhance their knowledge and expertise in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime.

The "Let's Be Aware" campaign is the largest across the GCC region focusing on raising banking and financial awareness among banks' customers. The campaign covers a variety of crucial topics including: anti-fraud tips, awareness on high-risk investments, ways to maximize benefit from banking services, promoting savings and investment culture, as well as other related topics.

Every era

Continued from Page 1

the current parliamentarians, who will be facing a serious test - one that will determine their allegiance either to Kuwait or to personal interests. They know that compromise on strategic matters will not be tolerated.

History has revealed instances where certain parliamentarians engaged in arms dealing, advocating for specific companies to relevant authorities, and even overstepping their boundaries by meddling in the expertise of military technicians, and influencing decisions regarding aircraft, tanks, or artillery.

Even in employment, interference will not be allowed... Not only in sensitive jobs, but even in lowly ones.

Take for example the parliamentary interference in the Public Investment Authority, in which there were many experts who knew what "saving for a rainy day" meant, and used investments to serve Kuwait. However, when MPs began interfering in the appointment and power process, the smell of corruption began to emanate from there.

According to sources of experts and knowledgeable people, there is no doubt that the royal speech will put things in the right place. The leadership will not hesitate to take any measure that preserves the interest of the country and its people, and strengthens its immunity, because every era has its state and people.

Amir accepts

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Amir also received former National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim.

His Highness the Amir's receptions were part of current consultations for forming a new government.

In other news, MP-elect Bader Al-Dahoum has announced that the coordinative meeting of the newly elected MPs will be held at 12:30 pm on April 14, 2024 in the National Assembly building.

Al-Dahoum disclosed the MPs-elect agreed on this date as it is after the Eid Al-Fitr holiday. He said the Coordinative Committee for the 2023 Assembly will conduct this meeting to specify the agenda for the upcoming legislative round - two months until the annual parliamentary recess.

He added the coordinative meeting will not tackle the election of Assembly speaker and deputy speaker.

Meanwhile, MP-elect Saud Al-Asfour said the Coordinative Committee for the 2023 Assembly will continue its coordination task until a new committee is formed. He affirmed the 2023 committee will prepare for the meeting scheduled for April 14.

Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Al-Saadoun has declared that he will contest for the position of the Speaker of the National Assembly.

On his X account, he stated, "As a bearer of responsibility, I announce my candidacy for the presidency of the National Assembly."

Moreover, MP Fahd Falah bin Jamea has also announced his bid for the presidency of the National Assembly through a blog post on his official account, saying, "I announce my candidacy for the presidency of the National Assembly, and may God grant success."

MP-elect Jenan Bushehri has unveiled her plan to vie for the deputy speaker seat; indicating her aims are to improve relations between the executive and legislative authorities, for the MPs and ministers to compromise, and to enhance communication between the Assembly and HH the Amir as a partner of the executive authority in accordance with Article 51 of the Constitution.

Article 51 states: "In conformity with the Constitution, legislative power shall be vested in the Amir and the National Assembly."

MP-elect Osama Al-Zaid has announced that he will vote for former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun in the same position, while he is still undecided regarding the deputy speaker position.

He added that in case Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah remains in the government, he will file a grilling motion against the next prime minister.

2 more

Continued from Page 1

Ministers, following the recommendation of the Minister of Interior. Kuwaiti nationality must also be revoked from those who

acquired it through the dependency on the holder of such certificates."

The primary clause of the decree states: "The citizenship certificates of the aforementioned individuals shall be revoked, and Kuwaiti citizenship shall be withdrawn from any person who obtained it through dependency on the holders of these two certificates."

Arab nations

Continued from Page 1

Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon, while the outlook for six countries changed, according to the 4 major international agencies.

■ The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, then Morocco, Jordan and Egypt topped Arab rankings in most assessments related to indices of all kinds of risks.

■ The average global ranking of Arab countries declined in the Fitch and PRS indices that assess the countries' political, economic and financial risks in short, medium and long terms.

■ A decline in the position of Arab countries in the country risk indices for exports and direct investments, issued by "Credendo" agency and in the commercial risk index of the Japanese "NEXT" agency.

■ The average global ratings of Arab countries improved in country risk indices, issued by "Allianz Trade", "Atradius" and "Coface" agencies.

■ The rankings of most Arab countries stabilized in various risk ranking indices, published by "Dun & Bradstreet" agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), while the preferred payment terms remained unchanged in trade transactions with Arab countries.

■ The average rankings of Arab countries in the Global Peace Index improved, advancing in 10 countries, topped by Oman, while 7 countries fell off.

■ Economic risks came on top of the risks expected to threaten Arab countries in the next two years mainly including economic downturn, inflation, and public debt, according to the World Economic Forum.

Al-Sabeeh stated that in addition to the expected efforts of Arab countries to enhance their political, security, economic and financial stability to improve their rankings in these indices in the upcoming period, this depends on several factors, including:

■ Forecasts for the political and security situation in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, and Somalia, and to a lesser extent in Iraq, Tunisia, and Egypt.

■ The outlook of the external economic performance of the region's countries, mainly related to oil prices, trade, investment, tourism as well as borrowing and debt arrangements.

■ The reflections of international conflicts and events, chiefly the Russian-Ukrainian war, the U.S.-China conflict and the results of elections in 40 countries in 2024.

Al-Sabeeh noted that despite the reservations of the corporation and some regional governments and institutions about a number of these ratings issued by international agencies of sovereign and country risks assessment, this does not disparage the fact that they are significant and should be monitored. The aim is to improve the position of Arab countries and standing as a significant step towards developing the investment climate and business environment in the region.

In this context, he emphasized that the corporation's readiness to play its role in compiling specialized and comprehensive reports on Arab countries' situation, while underlining the significance of communication with research teams entrusted with issuing the indices of sovereign ratings, and political, economic, financial and operational risk ratings to improve the ratings of the region's countries and contribute to include the Arab countries that have been excluded from these ratings.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhahran) was established in 1974. It comprises as members all the Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries and promoting Arab exports and imports.

Egypt raises

Continued from Page 1

martyred and 71 injured in the last 24 hours by the ongoing Israeli occupation's war on Gaza.

In a press statement, the Health Authorities said that the death toll of martyred Palestinians has reached 33,175 with 75,886 injured since October 7, 2023.



Men and women worshippers praying on the 27th Ramadan night at the Grand Mosque.

Photo by Mohammad Morse

Thousands of people praying on the 27th Ramadan night

Bilal bin Rabah Mosque, the Grand Mosque and all other mosques in the country witnessed a huge turnout of worshippers -- citizens and expatriates -- on the 27th night of the blessed Ramadan, seeking the Night of Destiny and hoping that Allah will grant security, safety and prosperity to the homeland and all Muslim countries, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, the Organizing Committee at the Bilal bin

Rabah Mosque confirmed that thousands of worshippers thronged to the mosque on the 25th and 27th Ramadan night, stressing that preparations were completed and equipment provided to better serve the worshippers.

The committee prepared the schedule of an elite group of reciters with pure voices, indicating they were recruited to provide an atmosphere of faith for the religious from various parts of the country who visit the mosque on

the blessed nights.

It affirmed equipping the main site of the mosque and the attached halls, in addition to providing the women's prayer hall with various supplies like cold and hot drinks, golf carts as transportation to and from the parking lots, and wheelchairs for people with disabilities.

"A team consisting of personnel from the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Firefighting Force, and Medical Emergency Depart-

ment contributed to securing and serving the worshippers, in addition to a large number of volunteers serving the guests of the Most Merciful on these blessed nights," the committee revealed.

His Highness the former Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the 25th Ramadan night. He interacted with citizens and expatriates, and exchanged greetings with them after the prayer, the committee added.

MoH procures e-correspondence management system, invites bids

Participating companies urged to include PAM letter

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Ministry of Health has announced the initiation of a procurement process to acquire, design, and implement an electronic correspondence management system. This system will facilitate communication between specialized companies registered with the Central Agency for Information Technology, in accordance with specified general and special conditions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Companies interested in participating in this procurement process are urged to include a letter from the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), demonstrating compliance with the National Labor Support Law (Law No. 19 of 2000) and Cabinet Resolution No. 1104/Fifth of 2008, which aims to support and encourage national labor.

The deadline for submitting bids is set for Monday, April 29. Bids should be placed in the bidding box located at the General Office of the Ministry of Health in the Sulaybiqat region. Additionally, bids will remain valid for 90 days from the closing date.

A 2% initial guarantee of the bid value is required, which will be valid throughout the bid's duration. Priority will be given to small and medium-sized enterprises affiliated with the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

Furthermore, the ministry has proposed several procurement opportunities, including the purchase of laboratory solutions for various departments and councils, such as pediatric and premature infant departments, genetic diseases centers, and children's councils. Additionally, procurement is open for laboratory consumables required across all laboratories and histology units.

Moreover, the ministry has initiated procurement practices for specialized surgery departments at various hospitals and centers, such as Ibn Sina Hospital for Neurosurgery, Sabah Al-Ahmad Kidney Center, Salman Al-Dabbab Heart Center, and Chest Diseases Hospital.

Companies interested in participating in these procurement processes must be registered with the Department of Medical Engineering and possess relevant specialization in the field. They are required to pay the designated fees for purchasing practice documents in cash and provide certification supporting national employment.



The Kuwaiti surgeon at the College of Medicine -- Kuwait University -- Dr. Moussa Khorshid during the ceremony to grant the honorary fellowship from the American Surgical Association (ASA).

KUNA photo

'Applicants on CSC waiting list to be hired'

MoE to appoint college graduates in schools

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Graduates of the College of Education at Kuwait University and College of Basic Education in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) will be appointed soon in schools under the Education Ministry, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained that applicants with the required specializations on the waiting list of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) will be appointed in small

batches according to the academic manpower needs of the schools. Sources said these specializations include Islamic Studies, Social Studies and its branches, Geology, kindergarten for female applicants, Physical Education for males and others.

Asked about the mechanism for the legalization of surplus workers in some educational specializations, sources revealed there is an idea to activate the early retirement policy. They said this issue

will be a priority on the table of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Regarding the transfer of government employees to various government agencies, sources said this will be implemented once the CSC issues a decision in this regard; along with the approval of grades in order to place them in the same financial and functional grades in the government agencies to which they will be transferred.

TEC achieves success in '23, plans exciting projects in '24

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tourism Enterprises Company (TEC), Sheikh Mohammed Al-Sabah, said that the company worked seriously to achieve the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of the necessity of activating and developing the tourism and entertainment sector. This came in a speech by Sheikh Mohammed, recently, during the General Assembly of the Kuwait Tourism Projects Company for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2023, with an attendance rate of 100 percent. Al-Sabah added, "The company completed many projects and events and achieved unprecedented successes during the year 2023, which gave the company greater motivation to continue providing diverse, high-quality entertainment projects," pointing out that the company succeeded in implementing several strategic partnerships that achieved acceptance among the Kuwaiti street.

He stated that the Winter Wonderland Kuwait project, which is the largest entertainment complex in the country, was opened, as well as the South Sabahiya Park project,

which is one of the integrated entertainment facilities, was opened. Also, Al Blajat Beach "Phase One" was developed and opened, which is the first public beach facility that includes all beach services for visitors. Al-Sabah added that based on the role of the Projects Company in activating the tourism and entertainment sector, it has established several strategic partnerships with several international and local companies, which resulted in several successful entertainment events and projects.

He pointed to a number of the most prominent projects targeted for the year 2024, which were as follows: Implementing (the waterfront), the second phase, operating Messilah Beach, developing the People's Sea Club, developing (Hilton Al-Mangaf) Park, operating the Ras Al-Ard Club project, and finally, working on developing the final visions for the development of Al-Khiran Park and the Jahra Entertainment Hall. He stressed working to achieve the company's financial sustainability, strengthening the role of the private sector, ensuring the protection of public funds, accelerating the implemen-

tation of projects, developing the administrative system, teamwork, consolidating cooperation with regulatory authorities, and working hard to address all outstanding observations. He explained that the company aspires to achieve continuous successes commensurate with the great development in the entertainment and tourism sector and serving citizens and residents in Kuwait.

For his part, CEO of Tourism Projects, Fadel Al-Dosari, said that the Tourism Projects Company was able to create more than 600 job opportunities for national cadres, as they received training and qualifications through international companies specialized in the field of entertainment, facilities management, security and safety. More than 500 investment opportunities were provided for small and medium enterprises, explaining that the company's facilities were able to receive more than two million visitors in the year 2023. Al-Dosari indicated that the company has completed the development work of several projects, including Messilah Beach, the Nu-waiseeb Rest House, and the waterfront "the first phase."

World News Roundup

Europe

Pellegrini wins election

Poland's local polls test Tusk new govt

WARSAW, Poland, April 7, (AP): Voters across Poland are casting ballots in local elections Sunday in the first electoral test for the coalition government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk nearly four months since it took power.

Voters will elect mayors as well as members of municipal councils and provincial assemblies, an important exercise in self-governance that is one of the great achievements of the democratic transformation that Poland made when it threw off communism 35 years ago.

In all there are nearly 190,000 registered candidates running for local government positions in the central European nation of 38 million people.

Runoff votes will take place two weeks later, on April 21, in cases where mayoral candidates do not win at least 50% of the vote in Sunday's first round.

Opinion polls released in the days ahead of the vote showed the two largest political formations running neck-and-neck: Tusk's Civic Coalition, an electoral coalition led by his centrist and pro-European Union Civic Platform party, and Law and Justice, a national conservative party that governed the country from 2015 until last year.

Several other groups trail the two main groups, including the Third Way coalition, the Left and the radical right-wing Confederation party.

Tusk's coalition government, which includes the Third Way and the Left, together won the national election in October. The result amid record turnout spelled the end of eight bumpy years of rule by Law and Justice, which was accused by the European Union of violating democratic standards with its changes to the judicial system and public media.



Tusk

Pellegrini wins Slovakia election: A close ally of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico beat a pro-Western career diplomat to become Slovakia's new president, and succeed Zuzana Caputová, the country's first female head of state.

Parliamentary speaker Peter Pellegrini received 53.26% of the vote with the ballots from almost all polling stations counted by the Statistics Office in Saturday's runoff election, topping former Foreign Minister Ivan Koruok who had 46.73%.

"I can promise I will be a president of all Slovak citizens," Pellegrini said. "I can promise I'll be always by the side of Slovakia."

Pellegrini becomes Slovakia's sixth president since the country gained independence after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

Caputová, a staunch backer of neighboring Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion, didn't seek a second term in the largely ceremonial post.

Scholz warns of rise of right-wing populists: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz warned of threats posed by right-wing populists Saturday as he addressed a gathering of center-left European parties ahead of elections for the European Parliament in June.

Scholz arrived in Romania's capital Bucharest for a conference of the Party of European Socialists, part of the Socialists and Democrats group, the second biggest in the Parliament. Voters in the 27 EU member states go to the polls 6-9.

"Right-wing populists are running election campaigns against our united Europe," the German leader said at the Palace of the Parliament, which hosted the conference. "They are ready to destroy what we have built for the kids; they stir up sentiment against refugees and minorities."

Magyar outlines plan to unite nation: A rising challenger to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán mobilized tens of thousands of supporters in Hungary's capital on Saturday, outlining a plan to unite the country and bring an end to the populist leader's 14-year hold on power.

At the center of the demonstration, the latest in a recent series of protests against Orbán's right-wing nationalist government, was political newcomer Peter Magyar, a former insider within Hungary's ruling Fidesz party who has shot to prominence in recent weeks through his allegations of entrenched corruption and cronyism among the country's leaders.

Magyar addressed a crowd that filled the sprawling square near the parliament building in Budapest, announcing his creation of a new political community aimed at uniting both conservative and liberal Hungarians disillusioned by Orbán's governance and the fragmented, ineffectual political opposition.

Russia declares fed emergency in Orenburg: Russia's government has declared on Sunday flood-hit areas in the Orenburg region a federal emergency, state media reported.

The floods, caused by rising water levels in the Ural River, forced over 4,000 people, including 885 children, to evacuate, the regional government said. State news agency Tass said that a further 2,000 homes were flooded, bringing the total to nearly 6,300 in the region.

Russia's Emergency Situations Minister Alexander Kurenkov arrived in Orsk - one of the most hard-hit cities - on Sunday to supervise rescue operations. "I propose classifying the situation in the Orenburg region as a federal emergency and establishing a federal level of response," the minister said, according to RIA Novosti.

Norway wants increase in defense spending: The Norwegian center-left government said Friday it plans "a historic increase" in defense spending of 600 billion kroner (\$56 billion) over the next 12 years. "We need a defense that is fit for purpose in the emerging security environment," Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said.

"As our security environment is deteriorating, we need to spend more on and pay more attention to defense and preparedness," Gahr Store said, adding that his two-party government wants to spend a total of 1.624 trillion kroner (\$152 billion) between now and 2036.

He said NATO-member Norway wants to, among other things, buy at least five new frigates and submarines, plus the Scandinavian nation's first long-range air defense system, and expand the army from one to three brigades.



US President Joe Biden talks with the US Border Patrol and local officials as he looks over the southern border Feb 29, in Brownsville, Texas, along the Rio Grande. Democrats are trying to outflank Republicans and convince voters they can address problems at the US border with Mexico as immigration likely becomes a major issue in elections that will decide control of Congress. (AP)

Politics

'Trump campaign raised \$50.5m at Fla fundraiser'

Biden, Dems raise \$90 million-plus in March

WILMINGTON, Del., April 7, (AP): US President Joe Biden's reelection campaign and the Democratic National Committee said Saturday that they raised more than \$90 million in March and ended the year's first quarter with \$192 million-plus in cash on hand, further stretching their money advantage over Donald Trump and the Republicans.

The Biden campaign and its affiliated entities reported collecting \$187 million from January through March and said that 96% of all donations were less than \$200.

Bolstered

That total was bolstered by the \$26 million-plus that Biden reported raising from a March 28 event at Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan that featured former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton. Trump's campaign, meanwhile, said it raised \$50.5 million from an event Saturday with major donors at the Florida home of billionaire investor John Paulson, setting a single-event fundraising record.

Biden's campaign says the pace of donations has allowed it to undertake major digital and television advertising campaigns in key states and to work with the DNC and state parties to better mobilize would-be supporters before the November election.

The campaign said the \$192 million-plus as of March 31 was the highest total ever by any Democratic candidate. About 1.6 million people have donated to the campaign since Biden announced in April 2023 that he was seeking a second term. The campaign raised more than \$10 million in the 24 hours after the president's State of the Union speech in early March.

"The money we are raising is historic, and it's going to the critical work of building a winning operation, focused solely on the voters who will decide this election -- offices across the country, staff in our battleground states, and a paid media program meeting voters where they are," Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez said in a statement. She scoffed at "Trump's cash-strapped operation that is funneling the limited and billionaire-reliant funds it has to pay off his various

US Dems lean into border security as it shapes contest for control of Congress

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): With immigration shaping the elections that will decide control of Congress, Democrats are trying to outflank Republicans and convince voters they can address problems at the U.S. border with Mexico, embracing an issue that has traditionally been used against them.

The shift in strategy, especially from Democrats running in battleground states, comes as the Biden administration has struggled to manage an unprecedented influx of migrants at the Southwest border. Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has led his party in vilifying immigrants as "poisoning the blood" of the country and called for mass deportations of migrants. And as the GOP looks to flip control of the Senate, they are tying Democrats to President Joe Biden's handling of immigration.

The tactic has already figured large in elections like Arizona's Senate race, a seat Democrats almost certainly need to win to save their majority. Republican Kari Lake has repeatedly linked Rep. Ruben Gallego, the likely Democratic nominee, to Biden, telling the crowd at a March event that "there's really not

a difference between the two."

Democrats are no longer shrugging off such attacks: They believe they can tout their own proposals for fixing the border, especially after Trump and Republican lawmakers rejected a bipartisan proposal on border security earlier this year.

"It gives some Democrats an opportunity to say, 'Look, I'm here for solutions,'" Gallego said. "Clearly, the Republicans are here to play games. And so whether it's Kari Lake or Donald Trump, they're not interested in border security. They're interested in the politics of border security. And, we're here to actually do something about it."

During most of his five House terms, Gallego had been a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, but as he prepared for a Senate run, he quietly left the group. Now he's emphasizing his work on bolstering the ranks of US Customs and Border Protection and securing funding for communities impacted by recent spikes in immigration, which he calls a "crisis."

Standing in front of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office in Arizona last month, Gallego slammed the GOP for blocking the bipartisan border bill.

legal fees."

Also:

NEW YORK: Donald Trump's campaign said it raised \$50.5 million on Saturday, a staggering reported haul as his campaign works to catch up to the fundraising juggernaut of President Joe Biden and the Democratic Party.

The reported haul from the event with major donors at the Palm Beach, Florida, home of billionaire investor John Paulson sets a new single-event fundraising record and is almost double the \$26 million that Biden's campaign said it raised recently at a gathering with former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama at Radio City Music Hall in New York.

"It's clearer than ever that we have the message, the operation, and the money to propel President Trump to victory on November 5," his campaign senior advisers Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles said in a statement.

The event, billed as the "Inaugural Leadership Dinner," sends a signal of a resurgence of Trump and the Republican Party's fundraising, which has lagged behind Biden and the Democrats.

"This has been some incredible evening before it even starts because people - they wanted to contribute to a cause of making America great again, and that's what's happened," Trump said briefly to reporters as he arrived at the event with his wife Melania Trump.



Presidential candidate Peter Pellegrini, (centre), addresses supporters at his headquarters after a presidential runoff in Bratislava, Slovakia on April 7. A close ally of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico, (centre right), beat a pro-Western career diplomat to become Slovakia's new president, and succeed Zuzana Caputová, the country's first female head of state. (AP)



Brennan



Lopez

America

Bus crash injures 11: Eleven people were injured when a bus carrying University of South Carolina students blew a tire and hit a concrete barrier in Mississippi.

Mississippi state troopers said the driver and a student were critically injured and taken by helicopter to hospitals after the crash Friday, while nine other students were taken by ambulance.

The 56 passengers were members of the university's chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and their guests, who were traveling to New Orleans for an event.

Troopers said the driver, 55-year-old Tina Wilson of Roebuck, South Carolina, was traveling west on Interstate 10 near Bay St. Louis when a tire blew and the bus hit a center concrete barrier. Bay St. Louis Police Chief Toby Schwartz said the bus careened away from the collision on two wheels before Wilson wrestled it back down onto all four wheels. Schwartz told the Sun Herald of Biloxi that Wilson "took every piece of strength in her body to hold that steering wheel long enough to get it back down on the road." (AP)

Former gov Brennan dies: Democrat Joseph E. Brennan, whose hard-scrabble childhood shaped his working-class views in a political career that included two terms as Maine's governor and two terms in the US House, died Friday evening at his home in Portland. He was 89.

Brennan died with his wife at his side a few blocks from the third-floor tenement housing on Munjoy Hill where his Irish immigrant parents raised a family of eight children, Frank O'Hara, a longtime friend, said Saturday.

Brennan's experience in that neighborhood, a working-class melting pot, stayed with him when he entered politics with a campaign for the Maine Legislature at age 29, O'Hara said. (AP)

Police fatally shoot man: Police in central Arkansas shot a man who later

died after the man fired at officers at a shopping mall Saturday morning.

Conway police said on Facebook that officers responded to a report about a man who had driven a vehicle into a massage therapy business at the Lewis Crossing Shopping Center. A SWAT team found

an armed man who barricaded himself in a room. While Conway police officers were talking to the man, they said he shot at them and officers returned fire, striking the man. No officers were injured.

Officer Shad Foley, a spokesperson for the Conway Police Department, said the



In this image taken from a video released by the Russian Emergency Ministry Press Service on April 6, emergency workers evacuate local residents with their pets after a part of a dam burst causing flooding, in Orsk, Russia. Floods hit a city in the Ural Mountains areas after a river dam burst there, prompting evacuations of hundreds of people, local authorities said. Russia's government has declared on April 7 flood-hit areas in the Orenburg region a federal emergency, state media reported.

man was taken to a hospital. Police later said the man, who hasn't been identified by officials, died.

Foley said he could not confirm why the man crashed his vehicle into the Massage Envy storefront, or whether police would file charges against him. "The investigation is still completely fresh and underway," Foley said. (AP)

Gunfight leaves 2 dead, 7 hurt: A gunfight at a suburban Miami bar left two people dead and seven injured early Saturday.

Investigators said a fight between customers broke out around 3:30 a.m. at the Martini Bar in the CityPlace Doral development in Doral, Florida. When a security guard intervened, an unnamed man took out a gun and shot and killed the security guard, Miami-Dade Police Detective Alvaro Zabaleta said.

Two Doral police officers who were also providing security returned fire, with one of them killing the shooter. One of the officers, a four-year veteran of the force, was shot in the thigh and applied a tourniquet to himself, Doral Police Chief Edwin Lopez told reporters.

"Even after he discharged his firearm, the extensive training that our police officers undergo is a testament to why that officer is alive today," Lopez said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Judge recognizes abuse

Two women vie for Mexico presidency

MEXICO CITY, April 7, (AP) — Are Mexicans ready for a woman president?

As two female candidates lead in Mexico's presidential race, the question has appeared in polls, debates, media and conversations across Mexico. But it is also a sample of the sexism and "machismo" culture that continues to permeate Mexico, according to political analysts.

The question of whether Mexicans are ready - or not - for a female president carries an implicit doubt of whether a woman or, in this case, whether the two female candidates are prepared to govern the country, said Julia Zulver, a researcher from the Latin American Centre at Oxford University and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

"Questioning someone for their level of studies, for their experience, for their public policies, that is valid," Zulver said. "But questioning two women who have studied, who have experience in politics, for being women is where the questioning falls into sexism, into machismo."



Sheinbaum

In June, more than 100 million Mexican voters will go to the polls in the largest elections in the country's history. In the presidential race, they will have to choose between three candidates, but two women have taken the lead: the ruling party's **Claudia Sheinbaum**, 61, and the opposition candidate **Xóchitl Gálvez**, 61. One man, **Jorge Álvarez Máynez**, 38, a candidate with less political experience, lags behind in polls.

The three candidates will face off Sunday in the first presidential debate of the 2024 election cycle.

Governed

In all likelihood, Mexico - a country with soaring levels of violence against women - will be governed for the first time by a woman.

"It's a question I can't stand," said Karolina Gilas, a social and political sciences professor at (UNAM). "(It) carries all this weight of discrediting, of doubting whether women are capable of exercising power."

Gilas, an expert working with the Organization of American States, said the question should not even be a part of the electoral discourse, yet it has already permeated the candidates' own campaigns.

Gálvez, a former senator and technology businesswoman, directly addressed the question. "Is Mexico ready to have a female President? More than ready, it is ready. What do you think?" she wrote on X, formerly Twitter, in July - before making her candidacy official for a coalition of parties.

At the same time, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has defended Sheinbaum, the leading candidate in polls who is largely seen as a continuation of his populist government.

"She is more prepared than me, she speaks English," he said in a mid-March interview to Canal Red about the scientist and former mayor of Mexico City. "She is very intelligent. Academically, she is more advanced than me; I barely finished my bachelor's degree, she is a doctor. She is a woman with convictions, principles, honest, she has many merits."

AP asked the campaign teams of both candidates about the strategies they used to deflect gender-related questions. Neither of the two campaigns responded.

"It is curious that both candidates are emphasizing that they are prepared. I believe that this comes from machismo, a misogyny embedded in Mexican society," said Zulver.

The researcher sees the comments as a response to anticipated criticisms that "they know they are going to receive for the simple fact of being women in that position, in the presidency". And she posed a counterpoint: "It is interesting to contrast this with the fact that there are many women in politics."

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Authorities in one of Mexico's largest cities said Friday they have found seven bodies with five of them decapitated and another completely dismembered, in a car left in the middle of traffic on a main expressway.

Prosecutors in the central state of Puebla said all of the bodies bore messages supposedly outlining the reasons each were killed. Each was accused of having committed a particular crime, from street-level drug dealing to robbing freight trucks to extortion, prosecutors said.

"On each of the bodies, we found hand-written messages written on paper, each one detailing the reason they were killed," said Puebla state chief prosecutor **Gilberto Figueroa**.

Figueroa did not mention whether the deaths might be related to drug cartels. He said the stolen car was left in the middle of traffic on the expressway.

While vigilantes have sometimes left such messages on corpses, similar signs are far more frequently left on victims' bodies by drug cartels seeking to threaten their rivals or punish behavior they claim violates their rules.

Figueroa was extremely guarded in describing the evidence, but suggested it involved "not only a dispute (between gangs) but also something related to dominance over certain people, aimed at not only domination, but recruitment."

BUNEO AIRE, Argentina: An Argentine judge on Friday ruled that 20 cloistered nuns had suffered abuse for more than two decades at the hands of high-ranking clergy in the country's conservative north, and ordered the accused archbishop and church officials to undergo psychological treatment and training in gender discrimination.

The ruling in the homeland of **Pope Francis** cast a spotlight on the long-standing of abuse of nuns by priests and bishops in the Catholic Church.

Though long overshadowed by other church scandals, such abuses in religious life are increasingly being aired and denounced as a result of nuns feeling emboldened by the #MeToo movement, which has a corollary in the church, #NunsToo.

"I conclude and affirm that the nuns have suffered acts of gender violence religiously, physically, psychologically and economically for more than 20 years," Judge **Carolina Cáceres** said in the ruling from Salta in northwestern Argentina.

She also ordered the verdict be conveyed to Francis. The four accused clergy members have denied committing any violence. The archbishop's lawyer, Eduardo Romani, dismissed Friday's ruling as baseless and vowed to appeal. Still, he said, the archbishop would abide by the order to receive treatment and anti-discrimination training through a local NGO "whether or not he agrees with its basis."



Opposition presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez waves as she arrives for her opening campaign rally in Irapuato, Mexico, on March 1. Mexican voters will go to the polls in the largest elections in the country's history on June 2, 2024. In the presidential race, they will have to choose between three candidates, but two women have taken the lead: Gálvez and ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum. (AP)

Asia

Bishop named UN special envoy for Myanmar

HK new security law drives deeper changes

HONG KONG, April 7, (AP) — On the surface, life in Hong Kong after a broad new national security law recently took effect appears unchanged.

A 2020 security law drew thousands of protesters to the streets when it was enacted. Now, that's seen as too risky. This time, no arrests made headlines. There were no newsroom raids.

Instead, there's a deeper, quieter wave of adaptation underway among Hong Kong residents who are living under the threat of more extensive restrictions after the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance took effect on March 23.

At an immigration expo during the law's first two days, immigration consultant Ben Li's booth was constantly busy, its small white tables all occupied. Inquiries about moving abroad jumped about 40% from last year's expo. More than half of those asking cited the new ordinance, known locally as Article 23, as a reason to consider emigration.

"The Article 23 legislation has brought a significant catalyzing effect," Li said.

China promised to keep Hong Kong's relative freedom and way of life unchanged for 50 years when Britain handed over control of its former colony to Communist-ruled Beijing in 1997. Those Western-style civil liberties, such as free speech and a free press, were the cornerstones of the city's status as an international financial hub.

But since the 2020 law was imposed by Beijing after months of anti-government protests, they have been sharply curtailed. Many pro-democracy activists have been arrested, silenced or forced into exile. Dozens of civil society groups have been disbanded. Outspoken media like Apple Daily and Stand News have been shut down. And many disillusioned young professionals and middle-class families have emigrated to Britain, Canada and Taiwan.

Also:

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** appointed former Australian Foreign Minister **Julie Bishop** on Friday as his special envoy for Myanmar, a post that has been vacant for 10 months as the country's conflict escalated into the worst violence since the military takeover in 2021.

Bishop will replace **Noeleen Heyzer**, a former UN undersecretary-general for Singapore who left after 20 months at the end of her contract in June 2023. In a grim assessment to the U.N. General Assembly before

China says it patrolled S.China Sea in response to US naval drills with allies

BEIJING, April 7, (AP) — China's military said Sunday that it had conducted air and sea patrols and that all activities that "disrupt the South China Sea" are under control, an apparent response to naval exercises by the US and its allies.

The defense chiefs of the United States, Japan, Australia and the Philippines announced Saturday that they would hold joint exercises in the sea to safeguard the rule of law and uphold the right to sail through and fly over the waters.

China has long-simmering territorial disputes with a number of Southeast Asian nations in the South China Sea, a major shipping route. Skirmishes with the Philippines in particular have flared up since last year.

The US has conducted joint patrols with the Philippines in a show of support. China says the US is inflaming tensions by meddling in the disputes.

A brief statement from the Chinese military's Southern Theater Command said it had organized patrols and that "all military activities that disrupt the South China Sea and create hotspots are under

control."

The statement did not mention the United States or the joint exercises.

Likewise, the US and its allies did not mention China in their statement, but the four countries reaffirmed their stance that a 2016 international arbitration ruling - which invalidated China's expansive claims in the South China Sea - was final and legally binding.

2 Papuan leaders killed: Two Papuan separatist leaders were killed in a shootout between security forces and their rebel group near one of the world's largest gold mines in Indonesia's restive Papua region, police said Sunday.

Clashes Thursday between independence rebels of the Free Papua Movement and a joint police and military force near the mining town of Tembagapura in Central Papua province left two of the group's regional commanders dead; Abubakar Kogoya, known as Abubakar Tabuni and Damianus Magay, commonly known as Natan Wan-imbo.

leaving, Heyzer said the impact of the military takeover has been "devastating," with violence continuing "at an alarming scale."

The nationwide armed conflict in Myanmar began after the army ousted the elected government of **Aung San Suu Kyi** in February 2021 and suppressed widespread nonviolent protests that sought a return to democratic rule.

Thousands of young people fled to jungles and mountains in remote border areas as a result of the military's suppression and made common cause with ethnic guerrilla forces battle-hardened by decades of combat with the army in pursuit of autonomy.

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Defense Minister **Prabowo Subianto** won the election with 58.6% of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by each of the two runner-ups in the three-way race, accord-

ing to the General Election Commission.

The losing candidates - former Jakarta Gov. **Anies Baswedan** and former Central Java Gov. **Ganjar Pranowo** - say the election was marred by irregularities and are asking the Constitutional Court to annul the results and order a revote in separate lawsuits.

They say Subianto's victory was the result of widespread fraud and that outgoing President **Joko Widodo** and his administration bent laws and norms to support Subianto, with government social aid used as a tool to buy votes.

Indonesian presidents are expected to remain neutral in elections to succeed them, but Subianto, a former rival of Widodo who twice lost elections to him before joining his government, ran as his successor. He even chose Widodo's son, **Gibran Rakabuming Raka**, as his vice-presidential running mate, even though Raka did not meet a constitutional requirement that candidates be at least 40 years old.



Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati delivers her statement during a hearing on the presidential election result dispute at the Constitutional Court in Jakarta, Indonesia on April 5. Four Indonesian Cabinet members testified on Friday that no rules were violated in the distribution of government aid during the recent election campaign, despite claims by the two losing presidential candidates that it was used for the benefit of the election winner. (AP)



Tebboune



Bouteflika

Africa

'Leave the country': Somalia ordered Ethiopia's ambassador to leave the country within 72 hours, and the closing of Ethiopia's consulates in the breakaway region of Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland.

Diplomats and personnel stationed at the consulates must vacate Somalia within a week, according to a Cabinet resolution. Somalia's Foreign Ministry, in addition to expelling the Ethiopian ambassador, recalled its own ambassador to Ethiopia for consultations.

The Cabinet resolution cited Ethiopia's interference in Somalia's internal affairs as the reason for the decisions.

Ethiopia did not immediately respond to the vacation order but officials from the embassy in the capital Mogadishu confirmed that the communication had been received.

The decision comes three months after Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland, which Somalia denounced as infringing upon its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The memorandum was to allow Ethiopia's access to the sea through Somaliland and in return Ethiopia would recognize Somaliland as an independent country. (AP)

Rwanda marks genocide 'versary': Rwandans are commemorating 30 years since the genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people were killed by government-backed extremists, shattering the small East African country that continues to grapple with the horrific legacy of the massacres.

Rwanda has shown strong economic growth in the years since, but scars remain and there are questions about whether genuine reconciliation has been achieved under the long rule of President Paul Kagame, whose rebel movement stopped the genocide and seized power.

Kagame, who is praised by many for bringing relative stability but vilified by others for his intolerance of dissent, lead somber commemoration events Sunday in the capital, Kigali. Foreign visitors include a delegation led by Bill Clinton, the US president during the genocide.

Kagame lights a flame of remembrance and lay a wreath at a memorial site holding the remains of 250,000 genocide victims in Kigali.

The killings were ignited when a plane carrying then-President Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was shot down over Kigali. The Tutsis were blamed for downing the plane

and killing the president and became targets in massacres led by Hutu extremists that lasted over 100 days in 1994. Some moderate Hutus who tried to protect members of

the Tutsi minority were also killed. (AP)

Algerians question president: Like



Rwandan President Paul Kagame lights a memorial flame during a ceremony to mark the 30th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, held at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, in Kigali, Rwanda, on April 7. Rwandans are commemorating 30 years since the genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people were killed by government-backed extremists, shattering this small East African country that continues to grapple with the horrific legacy of the massacres. (AP)

many of the elections in more than 50 countries voting this year, the upcoming presidential race in Algeria was supposed to be a sleepy affair.

With few viable opposition candidates capable of mounting a serious challenge, President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** looked poised to sail to perfunctory victory and a second term.

But his March 21 decision to announce elections three months ahead of schedule surprised voters and reawakened the oil-rich North African country's political parties from a deep lethargy.

"Ma fhemna walou" - North African Arabic for "We didn't understand anything" - has since trended on platforms like YouTube and Tiktok. Scrambling opposition parties have promised to put forward challenger candidates for the poll on Sept. 7. And all the while, Tebboune himself has not formally announced plans to seek a second term.

"It's not the appropriate moment to answer that question," he said in a televised interview this week. "There's still a program that I'm in the middle of implementing."

Whether they turn out or stay home, the election will mark the next chapter for Algeria, five years after a nationwide peaceful protest movement forced octogenarian President **Abdelaziz Bouteflika** to resign. For weeks, demonstrators took to the streets demanding an overhaul of the country's corruption-ridden politics, in which the military has long played an outside role. (AP)



ABK announces Eid Al Fitr closure

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) extends its greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the government, people, and residents of Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr, hoping it bestows an abundance of blessings.

ABK discloses that its branches will be closed from Tuesday 9 April 2024 to Thursday 11 April 2024, to resume operations on Sunday, 14 April 2024. During this time, ABK's

newly launched digital branch in Al Khiran Mall will be functional to service customers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Bank has also confirmed its full operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms throughout the holiday. This includes Online Banking via eahli.com, Mobile Banking through the ABK app, as well as the Bank's call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 and its ATM network.

UAE leads Kuwait's non-oil imports

During the year 2023, the UAE emerged as the top importer of non-oil products from Kuwait, experiencing a significant growth rate of 31%. Kuwait's non-oil exports to the UAE amounted to 339.2 million dinars, out of a total of 1.8 billion dinars in Kuwait's non-oil exports for the same year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The list of the top five importing countries from Kuwait comprised three Arab nations, alongside the UAE, including Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The rankings were as follows: United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- Imported

products worth 339.2 million dinars from Kuwait in 2023.

India: Secured the second spot with imports valued at 326.4 million dinars, marking a 20% increase compared to the previous year.

Saudi Arabia -- Imported approximately 216.5 million dinars worth of non-oil products from Kuwait in 2023.

China: Ranked fourth, importing goods worth 181.2 million dinars, representing a 9% increase compared to the previous year.

Market Movements

07-04-2024

Change Closing pts EGYPT - EGX 30 Change Closing pts -354.50 28,151.66



Business

Firms secure 2.4 bln dinars in credit

Boursa Kuwait sees decline in March '24

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The performance of the Boursa Kuwait in March 2024 was less active compared to February, with negative performance across all price indicators. The Premier Market index decreased by about -1.5 percent, and the main market index by about -1.7 percent, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index, reflecting the performance of both markets, also decreased by approximately -1.5 percent, and the main market index 50 decreased by approximately -1.4 percent.

The absolute liquidity of the stock market decreased in March compared to February, reaching about 897.9 million dinars, down from 1.169 billion dinars, a decrease of -23.2 percent. The average daily trading value for March was about 42.8 million dinars, which is approximately -34.1 percent lower than the average value for February.

However, the volume of stock market liquidity in the first quarter of 2024 amounted to about 3.544 billion dinars. The average daily trading value for the period reached about 58.1 million dinars, an increase of about 34.2 percent compared to the same period in 2023 and an increase of about 35.4 percent compared to the entire year of 2023.

Regarding the distribution of liquidity among listed companies, the report highlighted that half of the companies received only 2.5 percent of the liquidity, while 50 companies received only about 0.7 percent, and 8 companies had no trading activity.

Conversely, smaller companies received a relatively higher share of liquidity, with 12 companies accounting for about 28.5 percent of the stock market's liquidity.

In terms of market distribution, the first market received about 77.9 percent of the stock market's liquidity, with a high concentration among a few companies. The main market received about 22.1 percent of the liquidity, with a similar concentration pattern.

Comparing liquidity distribution between the first and main markets, there was an increase in the main market's share of liquidity by the end of March 2024 compared to the entire year of 2023, indicating a positive trend.

Premier Market companies drive Boursa's performance

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Premier Market companies listed on the Boursa Kuwait play a pivotal role in driving the market's performance, liquidity, and capital value, reports Al-Anba daily.

Here are some key points regarding their performance and financial results:

Market capitalization and liquidity -- The 33 companies listed on the First Market account for approximately 84% of the total market value of the stock exchange, with a market capitalization reaching around 36.8 billion dinars. These companies also attract the majority of liquidity on the stock exchange, constituting about 74% of the total liquidity since the beginning of 2024.

Financial performance -- After announcing their financial results for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2023, the net profits of 31 First Market companies (excluding Boubyan Petrochemical Company and Alafco) increased by 21% to reach 2.11 billion dinars, compared to 1.72 billion dinars in 2022.

Dividend distribution -- The First Market companies distributed about 1.1 billion dinars as cash dividends for the year 2023, equivalent to 50% of their net profits for that year. Most companies saw a significant increase in net profits, while the net profits of 7 companies decreased, and one company incurred losses.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Between the beginning of 2023 and the present, 35 companies listed on the Boursa Kuwait have engaged in credit facility contracts totaling over 2.4 billion dinars, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These contracts encompass a variety of financial activities, including obtaining new financing, renewing existing facilities, re-scheduling debts, and extending repayment deadlines. The companies represent diverse sectors, with 12 in financial services, 15 in real estate, 3 in consumer services, and 3 in industrial sectors, along with one each in insurance and healthcare.

Local banks have been the primary providers of financing, with the majority of loans directed towards operational companies. In exchange for these loans, companies have provided guarantees as per instructions from the Central Bank.

Banks have expanded their lending activities to operational companies, restructuring loans, renewing facilities, and increasing credit limits for listed companies.

Some companies have actively sought to restructure their debts to bolster their financial positions, protect shareholder and stakeholder rights, and ensure sustainable financial stability, particularly in the face of rising interest rates.

Banks have demonstrated flexibility in the guarantees required for short-term facilities, often accepting target shares as collateral, especially for companies with strong financial positions and solid reputations.

The current environment is seen as an opportunity for attracting liquidity and establishing short-term investment centers. Banks have shown interest in diversifying financing sources, offering both traditional and Islamic options with flexible repayment terms.

Amidst increasing interest rates, banks have been selective in approving debt postponements, extensions, or renewals, favoring companies with strong operational efficiency, financial stability, clear future prospects, valuable assets, competent management, and stable ownership.

Banks prioritize companies that demonstrate the potential for achieving good profits, granting them new banking facilities to support their objectives.

Kuwait's fiscal year ends with oil revenues surpassing expectations

Nation faces potential deficit despite revenue growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Al-Shall's weekly report disclosed that with the conclusion of the 2023/2024 fiscal year, expenditure allocations in the budget reached approximately 26.32 billion dinars, while total revenues were estimated at around 19.46 billion dinars. Notably, oil and gas revenues accounted for roughly 88.2% of total revenues, totaling approximately 17.16 billion dinars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report emphasized the significance of actual results in the final account, which is typically delayed. It highlighted that the average price of a barrel of Kuwaiti oil for March 2024 was approximately \$84.4, exceeding the budgeted price of \$70 per barrel by \$14.4, or about 20.6%.

However, this average price was approximately 13.1% lower than the previous fiscal year's average of \$97.1 per barrel. This decrease was attributed to Kuwait's reduced oil production in accordance with the "OPEC+" agreements, stabilizing at 2.41 million barrels per day as of January 1, 2024, about 9.8% lower than budget estimates.

Regarding oil revenues, Al-Shall assumed that Kuwait earned about 21.28 billion dinars for the entire fiscal year 2023/2024, surpassing the budgeted estimate by approximately 24%. When combined with non-oil revenues totaling about 2.29 billion dinars, total expected revenues for the fiscal year are projected to reach approximately 23.58 billion dinars.

However, comparing this figure with expenditure allocations suggests a potential deficit of about 2.74 billion dinars unless total expenses are

reduced.

In the banking sector, Al-Shall's report highlighted significant growth in net profits for Kuwaiti banks in 2023 compared to 2022. Net profits for 2023 amounted to approximately 1.53 billion dinars, representing a record level and a 30.4% increase from 2022. Although profits for the fourth quarter of 2023 decreased compared to the same period in 2022, most banks experienced increased profitability throughout the year.

Additionally, the report noted a slight decrease in the total allocations held by banks in 2023 compared to 2022. Traditional banks accounted for 54.2% of total net profits, while Islamic banks contributed 45.8%, with both experiencing significant increases from 2022.

The price-to-earnings (P/E) multiplier for the banking sector decreased to approximately 15.6 times compared to 22.2 times in 2022. Profitability indicators, including return on total assets and return on equity, also improved compared to the previous year.

Furthermore, total cash distributions to the nine banks increased by about 16.6%. Kuwait Finance House recorded the highest contribution to bank profits in 2023, followed by the National Bank of Kuwait. These two banks accounted for about 74.6% of total profits, with the remaining banks contributing approximately 25.4%. Borgan Bank was the only bank to experience a decrease in profits, while the Commercial Bank of Kuwait had the highest participation percentage among the remaining banks.

Al-Shall indicated that oil revenues were estimated according to the following principles:

- The share of crude oil production is equivalent to 2.67 million barrels per day.
- The estimated price of a barrel of Kuwaiti oil is \$70 per barrel.

■ The approved exchange rate is 304 fils to the dollar.

■ Gas revenues amounting to about 297.3 million dinars.

■ Production costs estimated at 3.97 billion dinars were deducted.

■ Non-oil revenues were estimated at approximately 2.29 billion dinars.

According to the Al-Shall report, the performance of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait for the year ending December 31, 2023, exhibited significant improvements across various profitability indicators compared to the end of 2022.

Here's a summary of the key findings:
Return on Average Assets (ROA) -- Increased to approximately 2.6%, compared to around 1.7% at the end of 2022.

Return on Equity (ROE) -- Rose to about 16.8%, a notable increase from 9.9% recorded previously.

Return on Capital (ROC) -- Experienced a substantial rise to around 55.8% from the previous figure of 37.0%.

Earnings Per Share (EPS) -- Increased significantly to about 59.9 fils, compared to 37.2 fils previously.

Price/Earnings Per Share (P/E) Ratio -- Improved to approximately 8.7 times, indicating a better valuation compared to about 13.4 times at the end of 2022. This improvement resulted from a larger increase in earnings per share (approximately 61.0%) compared to the share price, which increased by about 4.0%.

Price/Book Value (P/B) Ratio rose to about 1.6 times from about 1.5 times at the end of 2022.

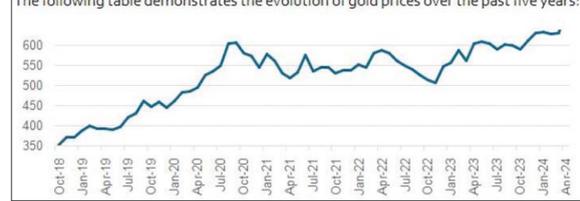
These results reflect the bank's enhanced profitability and shareholder value, as evidenced by improved returns on assets, equity, and capital, along with increased earnings per share and favorable valuation metrics.

'Zinah & Khazina' life insurance holders from Kuwait Insurance achieve increase in sum insured amount linked to gold prices

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Zinah & Khazina, from Kuwait Insurance Company, is the first product in Kuwait that indexes life insurance policies to gold ounce prices. By aligning the protection amount in life insurance policies with the price of gold ounce, policyholders can potentially shield themselves against inflation.

Life insurance linked to gold ounce prices has several benefits for policyholders, such as an increase in coverage amount when gold prices rise. This ensures that in cases of economic

The following table demonstrates the evolution of gold prices over the past five years:



instability or inflation, policyholders can be reassured that their coverage will adjust to future living costs. If the price of gold per ounce rises, the sum insured increases accordingly.

Conversely, if the price of gold per ounce falls below the contract date, Kuwait Insurance Company guarantees that the sum insured will not be less than it was at the policy issued date.

It is worth mentioning that launch of this unique product is part of the Company's efforts to develop the insurance sector by innovating new and diverse insurance products to meet the market's needs, especially with significant developments and changes in various sectors of the economy.

Eurozone CPI declines, ECB rate cut expected in June

US labor market shows resilience amid Powell's calls for rate cuts

United States
US PMI Data Mixed

The US manufacturing industry is showing signs of recovery after a year and a half of decline, with manufacturing PMI rising to 50.3 from 47.8 previously. Meanwhile, production and new orders components of the survey are also up. This is positive news for the overall economy, but there are some concerns. Employment in factories hasn't grown yet, and the cost of raw materials is rising. This could lead to higher prices for manufactured goods in the future, potentially impacting the Federal Reserve's decisions on interest rates as inflationary pressures persist. Meanwhile, services PMI fell to 51.4 from 52.6, indicating easing in price pressures on the services front. The Federal Reserve has lamented about services inflation, which is a big contributor to the overall squeeze that is being felt by the American consumer.

JOLTS Job Openings
US job openings edged up in February despite labor market conditions gradually easing since the start of the year. Job openings, a measure of labor demand, edged up by 8,000 to 8.756 million on the last day of February, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. Data for January was revised lower to show 8.748 million unfilled positions instead of the previously reported 8.863 million. There were 1.36 vacancies for every unemployed person in February, down from 1.43 in January. The decline in the ratio reflects a spike in unemployment at the start of the year, however most analysts argue the drop does not mark a material shift in the labor market.

Non-Farm Employment Surges More Than Expected

In another sign of a resilient labor market, the US economy added 303,000 non-farm jobs, significantly greater than the forecasted figure of 214,000 jobs, and more than the 270,000 jobs added previously. Additionally, the unemployment rate ticked down to 3.8% while labor force participation increased to 62.7%. The largest job gains were in the healthcare sector at 72,000 and the government sector at 71,000 jobs. The data overall indicates that the labor market remains historically tight, particularly at a time where the Fed indicated that some easing would relieve inflationary pressures to bring inflation down to their 2% target.

Rates - April 7th, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0786	1.0723	1.0876	1.0835	1.0720	1.0940	1.0879
GBP	1.2629	1.2536	1.2683	1.2636	1.2525	1.2750	1.2647
JPY	151.31	150.80	151.95	151.61	150.30	152.00	149.55
CHF	0.9017	0.8996	0.9095	0.9014	0.8900	0.9110	0.8927

narrowed, with markets now favoring a rate cut to occur in July.

The greenback ended the week at 104.29.

Europe
Eurozone PMI Data Mixed
Eurozone manufacturing activity further contracted in March, with the PMI falling slightly to 46.1 from 46.5 in February. This decline continues a trend of over a year. While the overall picture in the manufacturing sector remains gloomy, some bright spots emerged. Composite PMI climbed to 50.3 from 49.2 in the previous month driven by a rise in services and entering expansion territory. Services PMI increased to 51.5 from 50.2, beating expectations of a 51.1 rise and the highest level in nearly 9 months.

Eurozone CPI Declines in March
Eurozone inflation eased in March, reaching 2.4% year-on-year. This is down from 2.6% in January but still above the European Central Bank's (ECB) target of 2%. Core inflation softened to 2.9% from 3.1% previously. Despite the positive overall readings, monthly figures painted a different picture. Headline inflation rose 0.8% versus a 0.6% rise previously, while monthly core inflation increased to 1.1% from 0.7% the previous month. The declining nature of inflation, combined with the recent weakness in retail sales has markets pricing in an overwhelming

chance that the European Central Bank (ECB) will deliver their first rate cut in June.

On a weekly basis EUR/USD traded higher, closing at 1.0835.

Asia-Pacific
China PMI Figures Signals Cautious Optimism

PMI figures coming out of China show the fastest expansion of factory activity in 13 months, with the Caixin manufacturing PMI rising to 51.1 from 50.9 previously, while simultaneously beating market expectations of 51.0. The rise in manufacturing activity coincides with better than expected recent retail sales and export data, as the world's second largest economy attempts to recover from a variety of problems including weak demand, property sector slump, and deflation. Furthermore, the survey also showed services PMI edging up to 52.7 from 52.5 in February. At the annual meeting of the Chinese parliament, it was announced that the target growth rate for the year was around 5%. Oil prices are approaching a 5 month high, with Brent crude futures last trading \$91.17 per barrel.

The USD/CNY pair ended the week at 7.2330.

Kuwait
Kuwaiti Dirar

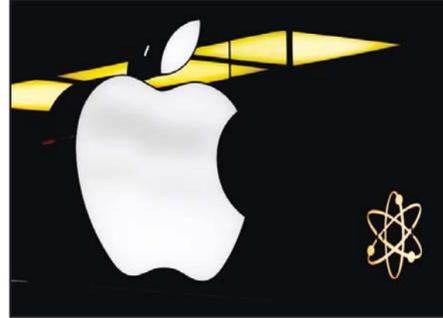
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30750.

Apple lays off over 600 workers in California

Apple is laying off more than 600 workers in California, marking the company's first big wave of post-pandemic job cuts amid a broader wave of tech industry consolidation. The iPhone maker notified 614 workers in multiple offices on March 28 that they were losing their jobs, with the layoffs becoming effective on May 27, according to reports to regional authorities. The workers were cut from eight offices in Santa Clara, according to the filings under the state's Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act,

also known as WARN. But it's not clear which departments or projects the employees were involved in. Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment early Friday. The Cupertino, California, company had been a notable exception as other tech companies slashed their workforces over the past two years. There was a massive surge in hiring during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people spent more time and money online, and big tech companies are still larger than

they were before the pandemic. Still, as growth slows, companies are focusing on cutting costs. In a recent regulatory filing, Apple said it had about 161,000 full-time equivalent employees. Amazon announced earlier this week a fresh round of layoffs, this time at its cloud computing business AWS. In recent months, video game maker Electronic Arts said it's cutting about 5% of its workforce, Sony said its axing about 900 jobs in its PlayStation division. (AP)



The Apple logo is illuminated at a store in Munich, Germany, Nov. 13, 2023. Apple is laying off more than 600 workers in California, marking the company's first big wave of post-pandemic job cuts amid a broader wave of tech industry consolidation. The iPhone maker notified 614 workers in multiple offices on March 28, 2024, that they were losing their jobs, with the layoffs becoming effective on May 27, according to reports to regional authorities. (AP)

Who decides when AGI is attained?

Tech companies want to build artificial general intelligence

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): There's a race underway to build artificial general intelligence, a futuristic vision of machines that are as broadly smart as humans or at least can do many things as well as people can.

Achieving such a concept - commonly referred to as AGI - is the driving mission of ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and a priority for the elite research wings of tech giants Amazon, Google, Meta and Microsoft.

It's also a cause for concern for world governments. Leading AI scientists published research Thursday in the journal Science warning that unchecked AI agents with "long-term planning" skills could pose an existential risk to humanity.

But what exactly is AGI and how will we know when it's been attained? Once on the fringe of computer science, it's now a buzzword that's being constantly redefined by those trying to make it happen.

Not to be confused with the similar-sounding generative AI - which describes the AI systems behind the crop of tools that "generate" new documents, images and sounds - artificial general intelligence is a more nebulous idea.

It's not a technical term but "a serious, though ill-defined, concept," said Geoffrey Hinton, a pioneering AI scientist who's been dubbed a "Godfather of AI."

"I don't think there is agreement on what the term means," Hinton said by email this week. "I use it to mean AI that is at least as good as humans at nearly all of the cognitive things that humans do."

Hinton prefers a different term - superintelligence - "for AGIs that are better than humans."

A small group of early proponents of the term AGI were looking to evoke how mid-20th century computer scientists envisioned an intelligent machine. That was before AI research branched into subfields that advanced specialized and commercially viable versions of the technology - from face recognition to speech-recognizing voice assistants like Siri and Alexa.

Mainstream AI research "turned away from the original vision of artificial intelligence, which at the beginning was pretty ambitious," said Pei Wang, a professor who teaches an AGI course at Temple University and helped organize the first AGI conference in 2008.

Putting the 'G' in AGI was a signal to those who "still want to do the big thing. We don't want to build tools. We want to build a thinking machine," Wang said.

Without a clear definition, it's hard to know when a company or group of researchers will have achieved artificial general intelligence - or if they already have.

"Twenty years ago, I think people would have happily agreed that systems with the ability of GPT-4 or (Google's) Gemini had achieved general intelligence comparable to that of humans," Hinton said. "Being able to answer more or less any question in a sensible way would have passed the test. But now that AI can do that, people want to change the test."

Improvements in "autoregressive" AI techniques that predict the most plausible next word in a sequence, combined with massive computing power to train those systems on troves of data, have led to impressive chatbots, but they're still not quite the AGI that many people had in mind. Getting to AGI requires technology that can perform just as well as humans in a wide variety of tasks, including reasoning, planning and the ability to learn from experiences.

Some researchers would like to find

consensus on how to measure it. It's one of the topics of an upcoming AGI workshop next month in Vienna, Austria - the first at a major AI research conference.

"This really needs a community's effort and attention so that mutually we can agree on some sort of classifications of AGI," said workshop organizer Jiaxuan You, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. One idea is to segment it into levels in the same way that carmakers try to benchmark the path between cruise control and fully self-driving vehicles.

Others plan to figure it out on their own. San Francisco company OpenAI has given its nonprofit board of directors - whose members include a former U.S. Treasury secretary - the responsibility of deciding when its AI systems have reached the point at which they "outperform humans at most economically valuable work."

"The board determines when we've attained AGI," says OpenAI's own explanation of its governance structure. Such an achievement would cut off the company's biggest partner, Microsoft, from the rights to commercialize such a system, since the terms of their agreements "only apply to pre-AGI technology."

Hinton made global headlines last year when he quit Google and sounded a warning about AI's existential dangers. A new Science study published Thursday could reinforce those concerns.

Its lead author is Michael Cohen, a University of California, Berkeley, researcher who studies the "expected behavior of generally intelligent artificial agents," particularly those competent enough to "present a real threat to us by out planning us."

Cohen made clear in an interview Thursday that such long-term AI planning agents don't yet exist. But "they have the potential" to get more advanced as tech companies seek to combine today's chatbot technology with more deliberate planning skills using a technique known as reinforcement learning.

"Giving an advanced AI system the objective to maximize its reward and, at some point, withholding reward from it, strongly incentivizes the AI system to take humans out of the loop, if it has the opportunity," according to the paper whose co-authors include prominent AI scientists Yoshua Bengio and Stuart Russell and law professor and former OpenAI adviser Gillian Hadfield.

"I hope we've made the case that people in government (need) to start thinking seriously about exactly what regulations we need to address this problem," Cohen said. For now, "governments only know what these companies decide to tell them."

With so much money riding on the promise of AI advances, it's no surprise that AGI is also becoming a corporate buzzword that sometimes attracts a quasi-religious fervor.

It's divided some of the tech world between those who argue it should be developed slowly and carefully and others - including venture capitalists and rapper MC Hammer - who've declared themselves part of an "accelerationist" camp.

The London-based startup DeepMind, founded in 2010 and now part of Google, was one of the first companies to explicitly set out to develop AGI. OpenAI did the same in 2015 with a safety-focused pledge.

But now it might seem that everyone else is jumping on the bandwagon. Google co-founder Sergey Brin was recently seen hanging out at a California venue called the AGI House.

Air travel sector soars to new heights

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The growth of the air travel sector has been remarkable over the past century, with projections indicating even greater expansion in the coming years, reports Al-Anba daily.

From a modest beginning in 1930, with only 6,000 passengers flying, the number skyrocketed to 4 billion passengers annually by 2019.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects this figure to double to 8 billion passengers by 2040, reflecting the booming demand for air travel worldwide.

To accommodate this surge in passengers, significant investments have been made in airport infrastructure globally. Existing airports have undergone 425 infrastructure projects valued at \$450 billion, while 225 new airport projects were initiated in 2022 alone.

However, traditional construction efforts alone are insufficient to address the challenges posed by the exponential growth in air travel.

SITA, (Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautiques) a leading provider of technology solutions for the air transport industry, emphasizes the crucial role of advanced digital solutions, particularly biometric technologies, in enhancing the efficiency and security of air travel. SITA's biometrics report, "Facing the Future," underscores how the increas-

ing number of air travelers strains existing resources and necessitates innovative solutions.

Biometric solutions, leveraging facial and fingerprint recognition technologies, offer a seamless and secure travel experience across various touch points, from check-in to boarding. SITA's "Smart Route" facilitates contactless identity management throughout the journey, enhancing the overall travel experience.

Moreover, SITA provides a range of biometric solutions for common-use passenger processing platforms and border management, enhancing security and efficiency at airports worldwide. Digital travel documents and identities enable seamless border crossings, prioritizing privacy and adaptability.

The Middle East has witnessed a surge in airports adopting biometric solutions to streamline passenger experiences. Zayed International Airport, for instance, has implemented advanced biometric systems in its new passenger terminal, enabling expedited transit through the airport.

Overall, the future of air travel lies in biometric solutions that ensure safety, efficiency, and ethical practices. With global travel demand on the rise, the implementation of biometric technologies represents a crucial step towards transforming the travel sector and meeting the evolving needs of travelers worldwide.

World is lagging behind on green energy investments

Development threatens climate targets

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The world is falling short on investing in green energy, which threatens to push global temperatures beyond the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius, as set by scientists in efforts to combat climate change, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) issued its annual report highlighting the insufficient increase in green spending to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite record growth in the renewable energy sector, CEO of REN21, Rana Adee, expressed concern that the pace of adoption and spread of renewable energy is not keeping up with the rising demand for energy.

While global production capacity for renewable energy reached a record level in 2023, investment in the sector needs to double to approximately \$1.3 trillion annually to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Currently, investments in renewable energy are disproportionately distributed, with developing markets, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, receiving minimal benefits.

The majority of clean energy investments are concentrated in China, Europe, and the United States, highlighting the need for more equitable distribution of investments to address climate change effectively. Without significant and immediate action from governments and other stakeholders, the world risks failing to meet its climate targets and facing severe consequences from climate change.

Boeing's CEO handed \$33m compensation

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): Boeing CEO David Calhoun received compensation valued at \$33 million last year, nearly all of it in stock awards, but his stock payout for this year will be cut by nearly one-fourth because of the drop in Boeing's share price since the January blowout of a panel on one of its planes in midflight.

The company said Friday that after the accident on the Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max, Calhoun declined a bonus for 2023 that was targeted at nearly \$3 million.

Calhoun announced this month that he will step down at the end of the year as Boeing deals with multiple investigations into the quality and safety of its manufacturing.

The company said in a regulatory filing that Calhoun got a salary of \$1.4 million last year and stock awards valued at \$30.2 million. Including other items, his compensation totaled \$32.8 million, up from \$22.6 million in 2022.

Since Jan. 5, when a door-plug panel blew off an Alaska Airlines Max jetliner flying 16,000 (4,800 meters) feet above Oregon, Boeing has been thrust into its deepest crisis since a pair of deadly crashes involving Max jets in 2018 in Indonesia and 2019 in Ethiopia.

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): America's employers delivered another outpouring of jobs in March, adding a sizzling 303,000 workers to their payrolls and bolstering hopes that the economy can vanquish inflation without succumbing to a recession in the face of high interest rates.

Last month's job growth was up from a revised 270,000 in February and was far above the 200,000 jobs that economists had forecast. By any measure, it amounted to a major burst of hiring, and it reflected the economy's ability to withstand the pressure of high borrowing costs resulting from the Federal Reserve's interest rate hikes. With the nation's consumers continuing to spend, many employers have kept hiring to meet steady customer demand.

Friday's report from the Labor Department also showed that the unemployment rate dipped from 3.9% to 3.8%. The jobless rate has now remained below 4% for 26 straight months, the longest such streak since the 1960s. The government also revised up its estimate of job growth in January and February by a combined 22,000.

Normally, a blockbuster bounty of new jobs would raise concerns that a vibrant labor market would force companies to sharply raise pay to attract and keep workers, thereby fanning inflation pressures. But the March jobs report showed that wage growth was mild last month, which might allay any such fears. Average hourly wages were up 4.1% from a year earlier, the smallest year-over-year increase since mid-2021. From February to March, though, hourly pay did rise 0.3% after increasing 0.2% the month before.

The economy is sure to weigh on Americans' minds as the November presidential vote nears and they assess President Joe Biden's re-election bid. Many people still feel squeezed by the inflation surge that erupted in the spring of 2021. Eleven rate hikes by the Fed have helped send inflation tumbling from its peak. But average prices are still about 18% higher than they were in February 2021 - a fact for which Biden might pay a political price.

In a statement Friday, though, Biden argued that the economy's strong performance means that his policies are paying off.

"My plan is growing the economy from the middle out and the bottom up, investing in all Americans and giving the middle class a fair shot," he said. "Inflation has come down significantly. We've come a long way, but I won't stop fighting for hard-working families."

The 303,000 jobs that the economy added in March were the largest gain since last May. And they boosted average monthly job growth so far this year to a vigorous 276,000, an improvement even on 2023's robust average of 251,000.

The unemployment rate fell last month even though a sizable 469,000



Waitress Rachel Gurcik serves customers at the Gateway Diner in Westville, Pa. on Oct. 22, 2023. On Friday, April 5, 2024, the U.S. government issues its March jobs report. (AP)

people entered the labor force looking for work. That influx increased the proportion of Americans who either have a job or are looking for one from 62.5% in February to 62.7%. A bigger labor force tends to ease pressure on companies to significantly raise wages, thereby slowing inflation pressures.

Though most industries added jobs last month, hiring was mainly concentrated in three categories: Healthcare and private education, leisure and hospitality and government accounted for nearly 69% of the hiring. In addition, construction companies added a solid 39,000 jobs.

Four years after the pandemic curbed travel and forced shutdowns of restaurants, bars and entertainment venues, those industries have finally regained their pre-pandemic employment level, with a category that includes such businesses adding 49,000 jobs in March.

The Fed's policymakers are tracking the state of the economy, the job market and inflation to determine when to begin cutting interest rates from their multi-decade highs. Rate cuts by the Fed would likely lead, over time, to lower borrowing rates across the economy.

The central bank's policymakers started raising rates two years ago to try to tame inflation, which by mid-2022 was running at a four-decade high. Those rate hikes - 11 of them from March 2022 through July 2023 - helped drastically slow inflation. Consumer prices were up 3.2% in February from a year earlier, far below a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

The much higher borrowing costs for individuals and companies that resulted from the Fed's rate hikes were widely expected to trigger a recession, with waves of layoffs and a painful rise in unemployment. Yet to the surprise of just about everyone, the economy has kept growing steadily and employers have kept hiring at a healthy pace.

Some economists believe that a rise

in productivity - the amount of output that workers produce per hour - made it easier for companies to hire, raise pay and post bigger profits without having to raise prices. In addition, an influx of immigrants into the job market is believed to have addressed labor shortages and slowed upward pressure on wage growth. This helped cool inflation even as the economy kept growing.

"This report is like the macroeconomist's Holy Grail," said Julia Pollak, chief economist at the online job marketplace ZipRecruiter. "It's pointing toward noninflationary growth."

Noting the strong job growth, influx of new workers, declining unemployment and slowing wage growth, Pollak said, "It suggests that the Fed can walk and chew gum at the same time, bringing down inflation without crippling the labor market."

In the meantime, the Fed has signaled that it expects to cut rates three times this year. But it is awaiting more inflation data to gain further confidence that annual price increases are heading toward its 2% target. Some economists have begun to question whether the Fed will need to cut rates anytime soon in light of the consistently durable U.S. economy.

The still-strong demand for labor has meant that some employers are still struggling to fill vacancies. One of them is John Zmuda, president of Moseys Production Machinists in Anaheim, California, who said it's still "extremely hard" to find workers.

Though he receives plenty of resumes, Zmuda said "it seems like most people are just wage-hunting" rather than seeking a long-term career.

Moseys, a family-owned company that supplies the defense, aerospace, healthcare industries, wants to add three or four workers to a staff of 27. Zmuda said he has raised wages 10% over the past year or so. But California's high cost of living, especially for housing, puts off some potential recruits.

Natural gas poised for golden era as AI revolution spurs energy demand

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The increasing demand for electricity to support data centers and power the AI revolution is anticipated to usher in a golden era for natural gas, as the energy needs of AI surpasses what renewable energy sources and batteries alone can provide, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Despite government pledges to reduce fossil fuel usage, the Financial Times reported that shale oil producers in the United States are poised to benefit from this trend more than the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry.

Toby Rice, CEO of EQT, the largest gas producer in America, highlighted the emerging market for energy demand driven by the AI boom, paralleling the growth of LNG. Despite

substantial incentives offered by the US government for clean energy development, fossil fuel executives argue that renewables alone cannot reliably power energy-intensive data centers.

Energy Capital Partners emphasizes the necessity of gas-fired power generation to supplement renewable energy supplies for data centers, citing its cost-effectiveness and reliability. This sentiment is echoed by Doug Kimmelman, founder and senior partner at ECP, who emphasizes that gas is the only viable option to provide consistent, 24/7 power required by major tech companies to fuel the AI boom.

However, analysts caution that the rise of green power generation could

challenge the bullish outlook for gas consumption, especially as companies like Google and Microsoft commit to using certified green electricity. Xichu Zhu of Standard & Poor's anticipates a decline in gas-fired power generation by the end of the decade, as green power generation continues to rise.

Peter Herwick of Schneider Electric underscores that many data center customers have committed to net-zero CO2 emissions, signaling a shift towards renewable energy sources. Rich Forberg, president of Siemens Energy North America, also anticipates a decline in gas usage in the coming years.

Despite the enthusiasm from fossil fuel producers, the projections come amidst weak natural gas prices and

concerns about the environmental impact of expanding gas infrastructure. Climate scientists warn that increasing gas usage could undermine global efforts to combat climate change.

Nevertheless, the exponential growth of data centers driven by cloud storage, cryptocurrency mining, and artificial intelligence is expected to drive up energy demand significantly. Dominion Energy, a key supplier to Virginia's data center sector, highlights the necessity of gas-fired power generation until carbon-free energy sources can provide consistent power. Gas-fired power generation currently accounts for over 40% of energy demand in the US, underscoring its importance in the energy landscape.

What's On



KFH volunteer team at the Red Crescent Society headquarters.



KFH volunteer team with the Food Bank Team.

Recognition of KFH's social leadership strengthens its commitment to CSR excellence: Al-Ruwaieh

KFH concludes 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan' program with remarkable success

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) wrapped up its successful "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan" program for the year 2024. This program included a variety of community initiatives and volunteer campaigns designed to benefit all segments of society.

These efforts promoted the values of social responsibility, fostering happiness, connection, and solidarity. In line with KFH's commitment to social responsibility and sustainable growth, the program also promoted the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Iftar meals campaign

In a press release, KFH Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh announced the success of the Iftar campaign. The campaign reached a wider range of beneficiaries across Kuwaiti governorates. KFH volunteers distributed more than 15,000 Iftar meals daily throughout the holy month. Collaborating with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait Food Bank, and the Ministry of Interior, they also distributed snacks to drivers at busy intersections and crowded areas during Maghrib prayer time, promoting safe driving practices and accident prevention.

KWD 1 million for Kuwait Food Bank

Al-Ruwaieh pointed out that KFH provided one million Kuwaiti dinars to Kuwait Zakat House for the procurement of essential food items. This contribution supports needy families in Kuwait, reflecting KFH's commitment to fulfilling its social and humanitarian responsibilities.

Ramadan Food Basket

He added that KFH took the initiative to distribute food baskets to families in need, collaborating with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society. KFH volunteers also assisted in distributing Ramadan Baskets to individuals in need at the Red Crescent Society's office.



Al-Ruwaieh

KFH also hosted a Ramadan breakfast for personnel of the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Central Operations. This gesture served as a token of appreciation for their hard work during Iftar times and throughout their entire shifts.

Qurra'a Baitek

Al-Ruwaieh mentioned the 11th edition of the annual "Qurra'a Baitek" competition, a Quran recitation competition for KFH customers under 18. Known for its valuable prizes, the competition attracted a large number of participants, with over 50 contestants recognized by expert judges who ensured a fair and professional evaluation.

KFH's Ramadan Hospitality Services

He mentioned that KFH provided hospitality services during Ramadan at several mosques across various areas of Kuwait. These services were offered for Taraweeh prayers throughout the holy month and for Qiyam prayers during the last ten days of Ramadan.

KFH Volunteering Team

KFH's volunteer team played a leading role in the community by successfully managing and delivering all aspects of the Ramadan program, according to Al-Ruwaieh. This initiative significantly contributed to promoting a spirit of volunteerism within the community.

Virtual Walking Challenge (V-Fit)

To promote physical fitness and health during Ramadan, Al-Ruwaieh commended KFH's successful organization of various sports activities and events. Notably, the V-Fit virtual walking challenge, held in collaboration with the V-Thru application, attracted around 10,000 participants. The challenge spanned locations like Al Shaheed Park and the Avenues Mall, allowing people to participate before or after Iftar.

Partnership with Circuit+

In collaboration with (Circuit+) Health and Sports Club, KFH hosted a sports event named the "KFH Fitness Challenge" at Al Hamra Mall branch. This event was open to both men and women and featured competitions and prizes. It aimed to promote a competitive spirit and encourage individuals to embrace exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

Arena and KFH Challenge

He mentioned KFH's participation in the sports events held

at the 360 Arena Hall. Opened on the third day of Ramadan, the 10-day event saw participation from both men and women. The Arena Challenge, held for the first time, featured a variety of sports activities including walking, weightlifting, and padel, as well as informative sessions and workshops on health and fitness by experts. Furthermore, a showcase was held for small and medium enterprises focusing on public health, sports, and nutritional supplements.

Sports activities for employees

Al-Ruwaieh mentioned that KFH organized several sporting events for its staff, including the Employees Indoor Football Championship, the inaugural US penalty shootout tournament, and a padel tournament held during The Arena Challenge.

Sustainability and V-Fit

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized KFH's commitment to integrating sustainability standards into its initiatives and activities. He highlighted that the virtual walking challenge (V-Fit) aligns with KFH's strategy of supporting Kuwaiti youth projects and environmental preservation efforts. Through V-Fit, participants earn credits that can be used for purchases at participating projects or to contribute an equivalent amount towards planting and greening efforts in Kuwait, supporting the "Keep It Green" initiative. Each kilometer walked translates to one dinar in credit.

Geergean Events

Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH arranged multiple Geergean events for children at various locations including Sadu Street, The Avenues, Winter Wonderland, and several schools. He emphasized how these events not only brought happiness and enjoyment to children, but also helped to preserve traditional Kuwaiti customs.

AlSadu Society

In a strategic partnership with AlSadu Society, KFH organized several events, according to Al-Ruwaieh. Children in AlSadu Society also completed the "Fun with Weaving" program, sponsored by KFH, and showcased their handicrafts. AlSadu Society is a noteworthy organization that aims to preserve Kuwait's cultural and textile traditions. It is also considered an advisory body for UNESCO.

Cooking Course

In collaboration with Kuwaiti Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi, KFH offered a cooking workshop for female customers and employees, Al-Ruwaieh added.

KFH Social Media Channels

He emphasized that KFH utilizes social media to engage with the public and followers. During Ramadan, it shared health tips and guidance through awareness videos created in collaboration with doctors and nutritionists. KFH further partnered with the Ministries of Health and Interior to broadcast awareness messages, daily Ramadan prayers, and coverage of the bank's activities throughout the holy month.

Quran Application

He added that KFH delighted its customers and audience by offering a Holy Quran application available on both iOS and Android devices. The app has seen a significant increase in users and offers exclusive benefits.

Eidiya ATM's

Al-Ruwaieh revealed that KFH provided customers with Ayadi in various cash denominations through Ayadi ATMs in Avenues, KFH Go smart branches spread across Kuwait, Mubi Baitek vehicles, and KFH branches.

Global recognition

Al-Ruwaieh concluded that KFH demonstrates its significant impact on society through various community and sustainable initiatives. The bank prioritizes open communication channels for all stakeholders, launches awareness campaigns, organizes social and volunteer activities, and champions environmental protection and sustainability. This dedication was recognized internationally when KFH received the Corporate Social Responsibility Middle East Award for 2023 by EMEA Finance magazine. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, Euromoney bestowed upon KFH the CSR Market Leader rank for Kuwait in 2023. These achievements motivate KFH to further excel in social responsibility and continue to promote sustainability globally, while also strengthening its economic and social standing in Kuwait and beyond.

50th anniversary celebration since establishment in 1974

Markaz hosts its annual staff Ghabga

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" hosted its annual staff Ghabga at St. Regis, in line with its continued efforts to promote team building and rapport and in celebration of Ramadan and its golden jubilee since the establishment of Markaz in 1974. The event was attended by the board of directors, executive management and Markaz's staff and their families, highlighting the key milestones and values of Markaz that marks its position as a pioneer in the investment sector. The Ghabga featured several celebratory segments, starting with a series of speeches by the chairman and the executive management, in addition to engaging competitions amidst live oriental music performance and celebrations.



Photos during Markaz annual staff Ghabga.

Commemorating the 50th anniversary, Mr. Diraar Y. Alghanim, Chairman at Markaz said during his speech: "Looking back at Markaz's phenomenal achievements over the decades, reflecting a rich history of milestones and commitment to excellence we embodied right from our inception. Being the first private financial institution for investment services in Kuwait since 1974, and crossing borders to reach South Korea and the United States, we have contributed to the evolution of the investment industry standards and practices. As an organization, we have always acted in the best interests of our stakeholders, helping them make informed decisions powered by our well-researched market knowledge and expertise. Our 50 years history is rooted with our legacy in sustaining our relationships with the clients, and for years to come."

During his keynote speech, Mr. Ali H. Khalil, Chief Executive Officer at Markaz addressed the staff to highlight the key milestones, he said: "Our achievements are a testament to the power of innovation. Through devotion, each of us at Markaz has contributed to offering diversified investment opportunities delivering sustainable returns for clients. The working environment at Markaz, in line with the directives of the board of directors, is one of the key pillars for the company's success in enhancing the capabilities of the staff towards attaining clients' needs. Our track record pays tribute to the stance that we are marking in the financial services sector, through innovation and commitment across all our business offerings."

From his side, Mr. Abdullatif Al-Nusif, Managing Director - Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz said: "Over the years, Markaz has proven its flexibility and

steadiness in withstanding challenges, while maintaining its corporate values.

We are committed to providing our clients with our offerings, in line with our strategy that focuses on ethics being an integral part to achieve our visions of being the partner in wealth creation. Our client-centric approach has not only shaped our business practices but has become the heartbeat of our organization, steering us towards catering to clients' need with dedication and commitment."

Speaking at the event, Mrs. Sondos Saad, VP - Corporate Communications at Markaz, addressed the importance of integral events that bring together the staff at large, and fosters a supportive work environment to its people. The company's efforts to promote sustained employee communication, reflect its belief in human capital development and sustainable human resources policy, which is a key pillar of Markaz's corporate social responsibility strategy. She also shed the light on the creative campaign that was

launched in celebration of Markaz's 50th anniversary, under the theme: You are the 'centre', signifying the clients at the center of the celebratory occasion and staff alike, to continue its journey.

The event featured an exclusive celebratory segment by the Kuwaiti sand and light artist, Suleiman Al Enezi, who animated the illustrious journey of Markaz using sand art to highlight the key milestones over the past five decades and in celebration of the 50th anniversary, which was greatly received by the attendees.

It is worth mentioning that Markaz celebrates its golden jubilee this year, since its establishment in 1974. Over the years, Markaz has sustained a number of key changes in Kuwait and the region, which had contributed to the evolution of the investment sector in Kuwait, in line with its commitment to offering innovative investment offerings and retaining their trust for the past 50 years, embodying its visions of being the partner in wealth creation.

Cementing its commitment to nationwide development of Kuwait's human capital

Ro'ya talent program concludes, marking milestone for Burgan Bank's leadership development

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Burgan Bank recently celebrated 37 of its high-potential, aspiring talents who graduated from the second round of the Bank's flagship talent development program, Ro'ya. The Bank's management attended the graduation ceremony in recognition of the graduates' impressive dedication and performance, which they exhibited along the learning tracks of the program. Ro'ya, among several other educational and training programs, comes as part of Burgan's steadfast strategy for human capital development, which aims to enhance the personal and professional skills of its employees and Kuwaiti caliber in adherence to the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) mandates.

"On behalf of the Bank's Executive Management and staff, I congratulate our 37 exceptional graduates on their outstanding performance during the full length of the Ro'ya 2 program," Mr. Naqeb Amin, General Manager - Human Resources and Development Group at Burgan Bank, said. "In a market where new technologies are emerging every day and customers' needs and aspirations are evolving at a phenomenal speed, it is essential for our success that we continue to enhance our training and development programs at an equally fast pace. Every new round of Ro'ya is developed in collaboration with some of the best national and international educational institutions to cater to the market's and the program attendees' modern needs."

"Innovation is an essential tenet of our Burgan philosophy that influences the design and development of everything from products and services to talent development and the overall Burgan culture," Mr. Bashar Al-Qattan, Senior Manager - Talent Empowerment at Burgan Bank, said. "Today's graduation ceremony is an excellent example that showcases our dedication to merging innovation with education and development, guaranteeing that our top talents are qualified to respond with proficiency to the market's arising needs and to lead by example in their disciplines. Among the most prominent topics that dominate talent development and training in the banking industry is the impact of technology



Group photo during the graduation ceremony attended by bank's management.

on the evolution of financial products and services, which we ensured our Ro'ya 2 graduates are all well-versed in and up to date on."

Similar to the first round of the program, Burgan Bank developed and delivered Ro'ya 2 in collaboration with a number of top-tier educational institutions including the American University of Kuwait (AUK), Harvard Business School (HBS), London Business School (LBS), and INSEAD, among others. The one-year program, which began in Q4 of 2022 and ended in Q4 of 2023, offered its participants a comprehensive and immersive educational experience that

prepares them for bigger responsibilities and leadership roles within Kuwait's banking industry.

Burgan Bank's learning and development strategy remains one of the most robust in the market, guaranteeing that every employee is guided along a tailored journey of development throughout their employment periods. In recognition of these efforts and others, Burgan Bank was the first in Kuwait's banking sector to receive the Great Place to Work® certification. It was also listed as one of the Best Workplaces in Asia™ - a Great Place to Work® Middle East recognition.

AU organizes Ramadan 'meal distribution drive'

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Australian University (AU) held its annual meal distribution drive during the holy month of Ramadan, providing meals to areas with a higher population of laborers, as well as needy individuals and families.

The university considers this initiative as an essential component of its annual Ramadan agenda, aligning with its corporate social responsibility strategy.

This effort underscores AU's continuous commitment to charity and volunteering in the community.

Ms. May Al Musallam, Senior Manager of Public Relations, and Marketing emphasized the significance of the annual meal distribution drive in AU's commitment to community outreach.

She stated, "Giving back is not only a responsibility, but a privilege.

Through our community service initiatives, we aim to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need, embodying the true spirit of compassion and solidarity specially in Ramadan."



Al Musallam

ABK surpasses 10m views for electronic fraud through Ramadan TVC

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: As part of its social responsibility and commitment to the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) took the opportunity to shed light on electronic fraud through its annual Ramadan TVC. In addition to the Bank's social media channels, the advertisement has been broadcast on Kuwait TV, Al Rai TV, and MBC.

Launched at the beginning of the holy month, it has garnered significant publicity, surpassing 10 million views. Delving into electronic fraud, the content focuses on cautioning against clicking on links from suspicious sources, sharing OTP codes, and entering CVV codes during online purchases. It also emphasizes the importance of verifying transaction details received through payment links.

Commenting on this initiative, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, said, "Promoting financial inclusion through interesting campaign content is of paramount importance to ABK. We aim to continue to raise awareness on various preventive measures against electronic fraud and the importance of safeguarding banking information."



Albenali

ABK, within its social responsibility framework, promotes the significance of good deeds and donations, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. While doing so, the Bank advises customers to remain vigilant and refrain from sharing personal and banking information with suspicious parties.

Albenali elaborated, "This can help prevent electronic fraud and safeguard customers' bank accounts. To support, we remain committed to upholding our high security and privacy measures."

Albenali affirmed that ABK will persist in disseminating awareness content through its website and social media platforms to keep customers informed about the various topics related to the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, which is recognized as the first and largest of its kind in Kuwait and the GCC region.

This endeavor, amongst others, reaffirms ABK's dedication to supporting the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign for the fourth consecutive year. This nationwide campaign aims to achieve financial inclusion in Kuwaiti society by educating customers on their rights and duties when conducting financial and banking transactions as well as using local banks' various services and solutions.

Television

Variety



A still from the ABK's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign which sheds light on the electronic fraud through its annual Ramadan TVC has received over 10 million views.

Film

New docu sheds light on high school girls' political ambitions

In 'Girls State,' teens start a mock govt

By Lindsey Bahr

What would an all-female government look like in the US? Or even a majority female government? It's something that remains a fantasy. But for the ambitious high school students in the Girls State program, given the spotlight in a new documentary released on Apple TV+ Friday, it's something they can play at for at least a week.

Six years ago, documentary filmmakers Amanda McBaine and Jesse Moss brought their cameras to the Boys State camp in Texas in the aftermath of a historic and, according to that 2018 class, embarrassing stunt in which their predecessors voted to secede from the US. By the time the filmmakers were finishing that effort, they were already thinking about a follow up focused on the girls' program.

In "Girls State" they move away from Texas and to Missouri, and give voice to several midwestern teens during a heightened week in which a draft of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion nationwide, had leaked to the press. This is hardly a consensus issue among the young women at the camp: Even at a single lunch table, many sides of the debate are represented. One girl is firmly pro-choice, but even those opposed also have differing viewpoints of what the government's purview should be.

During another moment, two girls talk about the right to bear arms. One preaches the importance of protecting a constitutional right, the possibility of arming teachers and the comfort she would get from having access to a bedside automatic rifle should an armed intruder enter her house at night. The other wonders if that's more of a danger to the household than anything else. And they eventually agree to disagree. Minds are not necessarily being changed through these talks, but all seem excited for the opportunity to be heard (and, sometimes, to hear what others have to say).

McBaine and Moss take pains to find a group of main characters with different backgrounds and viewpoints. There's the city girl from St. Louis who thinks she's probably the most liberal of the bunch. There's the reformed conservative who once followed her family but in recent years has started disagreeing. There's a moderate conservative who truly believes

in bipartisanship. And there is one Black girl who wonders if she's the first Black person that some of the others have seen. The microaggressions, she says, have been few at least. She ends up being elected attorney general, while the others run for the highest office: governor.

Perhaps the most compelling turn of events is how a bit of camp gossip about Boys State, being held on the same campus for the first time ever, evolves into a movement. The girls are dispirited by rumors of more funding and less fluff for the boys. They also all cringe when time is taken to scold them for wearing shorts and tops that are too revealing and wonder if the boys are getting similar lectures. After the election, one girl takes it upon herself to do some investigative journalism about the rumored inequities.

Democracy

Like "Boys State," this film presents a fascinating microcosm of American teenagers. Granted, it's a rather narrow, self-selecting group of kids who choose to spend a week of their summer vacation creating a mock government. You wonder whether four or eight years from now, when they are voting and entering the workforce, they'll have a similar interest in politics and policy and the ambition to do something about it. For the sake of democracy, let's hope so - these kids are really something.

In the summer of 2022, days before the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, some 500 high school girls gathered in Missouri for a weeklong mock government camp in which they elected their own governor and seated an all-female Supreme Court that would rule on their own bodies.

Not everyone came from the same part of the political spectrum or felt the same way about abortion. But, for a handful of days, theirs were the voices that counted. It was during that week that documentary filmmakers Jesse Moss and Amanda McBaine chose to film the follow-up to their award-winning 2020 film "Boys State."

"It felt like we had gone from this sort of - not quite utopia - but this imagined, wonderful world where we had control of our bodies and we were involved in these conversations," says Nisha Murali, one of the handful of young women followed in the film. "And then it just got ripped away from us."

"The programs are uniquely sensitive instruments, picking up these frequencies of American political life. It's not a surprise that abortion would be front and center in that conversation," says Moss. "We knew the court would hear a single case. We prayed it wouldn't be speed limits - which has happened."

Even before "Boys State" premiered, the filmmakers were contemplating a "sibling" film. While there are many corollaries, "Girls State" is, in compelling and illuminating ways, not a twin to "Boys State."

The Boys State program, run by the American Legion since 1935, is more well known and better funded. The 2020 documentary, which chronicled the Texas Boys State, sought to capture whether the political attitudes of former President Donald Trump had filtered into young men. The results were a riveting microcosm.

Missouri teenager Emily Worthmore signed up for Girls State expecting an experience like she saw in that film. Worthmore, an affable, ambitious, conservative-leaning young woman from the St. Louis suburbs, arrived ready to engage in passionate political debates.

"But ours, because of the way it played out, it wasn't set up for us to be having these big debates and be fighting and all of that," says Worthmore. "Instead it was like: So why is it like this?"

What Worthmore and others realized was that the system of Girls State wasn't the same as the Boys State being held across the campus at Lindenwood University. The girls' program was funded by a separate organization, the American Legion Auxiliary, had a dress code that some deemed too strict and didn't schedule sports activities the way the boys did. There was a camp cheer for the girls but not the boys. The Missouri governor attended the final ceremony at Boys State, but not Girls State.

As they do in so many facets of life, the young women of "Girls State" found themselves simultaneously pursuing a goal while being keenly aware of limitations placed on them. (AP)

"To me, one of the powers of this movie is making an invisible thing that's baked into the structure of everything visible," says McBaine. "I love that that then becomes part of the conversation after watching this film." (AP)

MEXICO CITY: They prowl through palace gardens stalking pigeons and make cameos on televised press briefings. Some greet tourists at the doors, while others take a sneaky lick of ice cream from staff.

Nineteen feral cats have free rein of Mexico's National Palace, long roaming the lush gardens and historic colonial halls of the most iconic buildings in the country.

"They have access to every part of the palace, so they walk in on meetings, interviews and wander onto camera," said Jesús Arias, the palace veterinarian, as a handful of feline friends brush against his ankles.

Now, the palace cats have made history after the government of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador declared them to be "living fixed assets," the first animals in Mexico to receive the title.

The investment term "fixed assets" usually applies to buildings and furniture, but by applying it to cats, López Obrador's government has obligated the country's Treasury to give them food and care for them for the rest of their lives, even after the leader leaves office in October.

"The cats are now a symbol of the National Palace. Just as we understand this world, I wouldn't understand the National Palace without the presence of these cats," said Adriana Castillo Román, general director of the National Palace and Cultural Heritage Conservancy. "We have to make sure the cats are taken care of."

Nestled in the heart of Mexico City, the presidential palace has long been the seat of Mexico's executive branch. Now the residence of López Obrador, it is built upon the former palace of Indigenous Emperor Moctezuma. Ironically, Moctezuma's ancient Aztec culture honored not cats, but hairless dogs known as Xoloitzcuintle, who were even buried with their masters.

But these days, López Obrador is accompanied by Bowie, Bellof, Nube, Coco, Yema, Ollin, Balam and more, who seem to have found a purr-fect home in the building. López Obrador himself has said the cats "dominate" the palace and often walk in front of him during official ceremonies.

Some are named after artists, like an orange tabby "Bowie" named after the rockstar David Bowie, who visited the palace 1997 to see the famous mural by Mexican painter Diego Rivera. Others are named after native rocks or words in the region's ancient Aztec language, like Ollin,

which means "movement." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: "Dora the Explorer" debuted in 2000 as a groundbreaking, award-winning children's show about an adventurous young Latina. The character returns in a new CG animated series called "Dora" on Friday,



Obrador



Xuande

April 12 on Paramount+. She's still got her purple backpack and sidekick monkey named Boots, but this "Dora" has evolved with the times. Dora has family from Peru, Mexico and Cuba, and the show celebrates a variety of Latin culture including music, folklore, architecture and food. Diversity exists behind the scenes as well,

with a majority of the writing staff identifying as Latino.

Meanwhile, HBO has adapted the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Sympathizer" by Viet Thanh Nguyen into a new series of the same name. It follows a North Vietnam plant known as the Captain (played by Hoa Xuande) in the South Vietnam army who

flees to the United States when the Vietnam War is ending.

The Captain lives among South Vietnamese refugees and continues to spy on the community by reporting back to the Viet Cong. This leads to struggles as the Captain attempts to build a new life. Recent Oscar winner Robert Downey Jr. plays multiple roles. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024

People & Places

Lifestyle

Timeless symbol

Why people still buy globes in digital age

LONDON, April 7, (AP): Find a globe in your local library or classroom and try this: Close the eyes, spin it and drop a finger randomly on its curved, glossy surface.

You're likely to pinpoint a spot in the water, which covers 71% of the planet. Maybe you'll alight on a place you've never heard of - or a spot that no longer exists after a war or because of climate change. Perhaps you'll feel inspired to find out who lives there and what it's like. Look carefully, and you'll find the cartouche - the globemaker's signature - and the antipode (look it up) of where you're standing right now.

In the age of Google Earth, watches that triangulate and cars with built-in GPS, there's something about a globe - a spherical representation of the world in miniature - that somehow endures.

London globemaker Peter Bellerby thinks the human yearning to "find our place in the cosmos" has helped globes survive their original purpose - navigation - and the internet. He says it's part of the reason he went into debt making a globe for his father's 80th birthday in 2008. The experience helped inspire his company, and 16 years later is keeping his team of about two dozen artists, cartographers and woodworkers employed.

Or, as Scottish-born American explorer John Muir wrote in 1915: "When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with continents and islands, flying through space with other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty."

Beyond the existential and historical appeal, earthly matters such as cost and geopolitics hover over globemaking. Bellerby says his company has experience with customs officials in regions with disputed borders such as India, China, North Africa and the Middle East.

Relevant

And there is a real question about whether globes - especially handmade orbs - remain relevant as more than works of art and history for those who can afford them. They are, after all, snapshots of the past - of the way their patrons and makers saw the world at a certain point in time. So they're inherently inaccurate representations of a planet in constant flux.

"Do globes play a relevant role in our time? If so, then in my opinion, this is due to their appearance as a three-dimensional body, the hard-to-control desire to turn them, and the attractiveness of their map image," says Jan Mokre, vice president of the International Coronelli Society for the Study of Globes in Vienna. "Perhaps a certain nostalgia effect also plays a role, just as old cars and mechanical watches still exert a certain attraction on people."

Joshua Nall, Director of the Whipple Museum of the History of Science in Cambridge, says a globe remains a display of "the learning, the erudition, the political interests of its owner."

Bellerby's globes aren't cheap. They run from about 1,290 British pounds (about \$1,900) for the smallest to six figures for the 50-inch Churchill model. He makes about 600 orbs a year of varying size, framing and ornamentation.

Creating them is a complex process that starts with the construction of a sphere and progresses to the application of fragile petal-shaped panels, called "gores," that are fitted together around the sphere's surface. Artists perched around Bellerby's London studio painstakingly blend and apply paint - dreamy cobalt and mint for the oceans, yellow, greens and ochre for the landscape.

The imagery painted on the globes runs the gamut, from constellations to mountains and sea creatures. And here, The Associated Press can confirm, be dragons.

Bellerby doesn't name clients, but he says they come from more socioeconomic levels than you'd think - from families to businesses and heads of state. Private art collectors come calling. So do moviemakers.

Bellerby says in his book that the company made four globes for the 2011 movie, "Hugo." One globe can be seen in the 2023 movie "Tetris," including one, a freestanding straight-leg Galileo model, which features prominently in a scene.

And yes, some of the planet's wealthiest people buy them. The family of German tool and hardware company chairman Reinhold Würth gave him a Churchill, the largest model, for his 83rd birthday. It is now on display at the Museum Würth 2 in Berlin.

His granddaughter, Maria Würth, says in an Instagram video that the piece highlights the history of the company and the magnate's travels.

Territory

There is no international standard for a correctly drawn earth. Countries, like people, view the world differently, and some are highly sensitive about how their territory is depicted. To offend them with "incorrectly" drawn borders on a globe is to risk impoundment of the orbs at customs.

"Globemaking," Bellerby writes, "is a political minefield."

China doesn't recognize Taiwan as a country. Morocco doesn't recognize Western Sahara. India's northern border is disputed. Many Arab countries, such as Lebanon, don't acknowledge Israel.

Bellerby says the company marks disputed borders as disputed: "We cannot change or rewrite history."

Scientists since antiquity, famously Plato and Aristotle, posited that the earth is not flat but closer to a sphere.

No one knows when the first terrestrial globe was created. But the oldest known surviving one dates to 1492. No one in Europe knew of the existence of North or South America at the time.

It's called the "Erdapfel," which translates to "earth apple" or "potato." The orb was made by German navigator and geographer Martin Behaim, who was working for the king of Portugal, according to the Whipple Museum in Cambridge. It contained more than just the cartographical information then known, but also details such as commodities overseas, market places and local trading protocols.

It's also a record of a troubled time.

"The Behaim Globe is today a central document of the European world conquest and the Atlantic slave trade," according to the German National Museum's web page on the globe, exhibited there. In the 15th century, the museum notes, "Africa was not only to be circumnavigated in search of India, but also to be developed economically."

If you've got a globe of any sort, you're in good company. During World War II, two in particular were commissioned for leaders on opposite sides of the Atlantic as symbols of power and partnership.



Bellerby



Shiites attend Eid al-Fitr prayers at Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq, April 22, 2023, to mark the end of the holy Islamic month of Ramadan. (AP)



Women and children gather before Eid al-Fitr prayers, April 21, 2023, at the Muslim Community Center in Silver Spring, Md. (AP)



Muslim girls display their hands painted with traditional henna to celebrate the Eid al-Fitr holiday, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, in Peshawar, Pakistan, May 13, 2021. (AP)

Lifestyle

Islamic holiday: A global tradition of joy and unity

Diversity in Eid al-Fitr celebrations

CAIRO, April 7, (AP): Muslims around the world will soon bid farewell to the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and start celebrating the holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Eid is marked with congregational prayers and festivities that typically include family visits, gatherings and new clothes.

This year, Eid will come just after the Israel-Hamas war crosses the somber milestone of having stretched on for half a year. During Ramadan, as Muslims around the world savored the traditions of their diverse communities, advocacy, prayers and charity for Palestinians in Gaza were high on the minds of many.

It's an Islamic holiday marking the end of Ramadan, the month when devout Muslims fast daily from dawn to sunset. Ramadan is a time of increased worship, charity, and good deeds.

Festival

Eid al-Fitr means the feast, or festival, of breaking the fast.

Islam follows a lunar calendar and so Ramadan and Eid cycle through the seasons. This year, the first day of Eid al-Fitr is expected to be on or around April 10; the exact date may vary among countries and Muslim communities.

Eid Mubarak, or Blessed Eid, and Happy Eid.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, many people embark on an exodus to their hometowns to celebrate the holiday with loved ones. This year, an estimated 193.6 million travelers are expected to crisscross the vast archipelago for Eid in a homecoming tradition known locally as "mudik."

In the past two years of Eid celebrations, Indonesians crammed into trains, ferries, buses and onto motorcycles as they poured out of major cities amid severe traffic congestion to return to their villages to celebrate the holiday with families. Flights were overbooked and anxious relatives, weighed down with boxes of gifts, formed long lines at bus and train stations for the journeys.

MUSCAT, April 7, (KUNA): The gracious fasting month of Ramadan brings with it an air of high spirituality where worshippers deeply sense His Almighty's mercy and blessing and seek acceptance of their good deeds at Al-Qadr Night that falls in the last 10 days of the month.

Omanis embrace the month with family visits and gatherings before they start fasting, breaking their fast at sundown and performing Al-Taraweeh prayers at the mosques, in addition to intensive recitation and memorization of the Quran.

Among the celebrations is "Al-qarnshwah," known in Kuwait as "girgeaan," where children are particularly involved in celebratory activities.

The Omanis organize "Al-habbat," special bazaars for trading food and products particularly favored in Ramadan. They gather at the family eldest's house for the iftar banquets. And neighbors swap dishes before the fast break.

They gather for Quranic teachings, recitation and memorizing. Best recit-

ers and memorizers are celebrated in the end of the month in "Al-taamina" or "Al-toumina" ceremony.

Mohammad Al-Hanaei, a journalist, said in a statement to KUNA that the social bonds are strengthened among the neighbors and relatives by swapping food and sweets, holding large banquets and grouping to recite the Quran or address lessons about Islam.

In Bahla region in Al-Dakhiya province, the locals set a day for selling food, proceeds of which are dedicated for the charities and some preoccupied workers.

Mohammad Al-Khosabi, an employee, said in remarks to KUNA that the Omanis, during Ramadan, visit relatives, friends and hold family gatherings. "These are genuine traditions that we have inherited from the ancestors," he said, calling for maintaining these traditions to cement social solidarity and bonds, indicating that some peoples' obsession with the social media might distract them from doing their social duties.

visit their homes.

In Egypt, families partake in Eid prayers amid a festive atmosphere. Many visit relatives, friends or neighbors and some travel to vacation spots. Children, usually wearing new Eid outfits, receive traditional cash gifts known as "eidiya."

Making or buying Eid cookies dusted with powdered sugar is another fixture of marking the holiday in the country.

In the United States, where Muslims make up an ethnically and racially diverse minority, many come together for Eid prayers and for festivals featuring fun activities for children and families. These often include such things as face painting and balloon twisting.

Before the holiday, popular markets teem with shoppers buying clothes, shoes, cookies and sweets.

In Malaysia, Muslims also have a homecoming tradition for Eid. The first day usually begins with a morning prayer in the mosque, seeking forgiveness from family and friends, and visiting loved ones' graves.

There's an "open house" spirit that sees friends and families trading visits to celebrate Eid and enjoy traditional delicacies such as ketupat, rice cooked in a palm leaf pouch, and rendang, a meat dish stewed in spices and braised in coconut milk.

Older Muslims give money in green packets to children and guests who

that our music has become a constant in your lives is a wonderful thing." (AP)

INNSBRUCK, Austria: Skiing power couple Mikaela Shiffrin and Aleksander Aamodt Kilde have announced they're engaged to be married.

Shiffrin, a two-time Olympic champion who has won a record 97 World Cup races, holds her ring up to the camera in one of several photos they posted on their social



Ulvaeus



Shiffrin

media accounts.

Aamodt Kilde is a former overall World Cup champion and two-time Olympic medalist. The 31-year-old Norwegian's season ended in January when he sustained injuries in a crash during a downhill race in Wengen, Switzerland.

They've been dating for several years. The 29-year-old Shiffrin completed her season three weeks ago with her record-extending 60th win in slalom and 97th overall at the World Cup finals. (AP)



Actor Courtney Eaton, (from left), director Brittany Snow and actor Thomas Mann attend the premiere of 'Parachute' at the Crosby Street Hotel on Saturday, April 6, in New York. (AP)

Variety

LONDON: It's 50 years since ABBA won a major battle with "Waterloo."

A half-century ago on Saturday, the Swedish quartet triumphed at the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest with the peppy love song, which opens: "My my, at Waterloo, Napoleon did surrender, and I have met my destiny in quite a similar way."

The song rang out again Saturday at London's Waterloo railway station - also named after the 1815 battle that dealt defeat to the French leader - where a choir belted out a rendition for commuters.

In the English coastal town of Brighton, where the 1974 competition was held, fans were staging a flashmob dance and silent ABBA disco to mark the anniversary.

Eurovision victory turned ABBA into a pop juggernaut, by far the most successful band to win the pan-continental music contest, which will hold its 68th edition in May in ABBA's home country, Sweden. The Eurovision final will take place May 11 in Malmö, after Swedish singer Loreen won last year's competition with "Tattoo."

ABBA's melodic disco pop sold hundreds of millions of records worldwide. The stage musical "Mamma Mia!" based on its songs is 25 years old and spawned two movies.

The band members have not performed together live for four decades, but released a comeback album, "Voyage," in 2021. Every day, fans attend a concert by digital "ABBA-tars" at the hit show "Abba Voyage," which opened in London in 2022.

In a thank-you message to fans on Saturday, the four band members said it was "slightly dizzying and deeply humbling" to know that their songs had been passed down the generations and "still resonate around the world."

"Music you discover and learn to love when you grow up or even later in life has a way of staying with you forever," said Agnetha Faltskog. Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson and Anni-Frid Lyngstad. "We share that experience with you and to know

The Conversation

A biochemist explains how different people convert energy differently

Decoding metabolism: How it shapes health and wellness

By Travis Nemkov

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

If you've spent any time scrolling through the health and wellness corners of social media, you've likely come across many products claiming to improve your metabolism. But what exactly is your metabolism?

Everything you expose your body to - from lifestyle to an airborne virus - influences your physical characteristics, such as your blood pressure and energy levels. Together, these biological characteristics are referred to as your phenotype. And the biological system that most directly influences your phenotype is your metabolism.

So if you are eating something, take medications, smoke or exercise, your metabolism is responsible for transferring that biological information throughout your body for it to adapt.

Your metabolism consists of a network of tens of thousands of molecules and proteins that convert the food you eat into the energy and building blocks your body uses to move, grow and repair itself. At the chemical

level, energy metabolism begins when the three macronutrients - carbohydrates, fats and protein - are broken down atom by atom to release electrons from chemical bonds. These electrons charge components in cells called mitochondria.

Akin to how batteries work, mitochondria harness this electrical potential to create a different form of chemical energy that the rest of the cell can use.

Simply put, a primary role of metabolism is to convert chemical energy into electrical energy and back into chemical energy. How this energy is transferred throughout the body might play a central role in determining whether you're sick or healthy.

I am a biochemist who studies the various networks of metabolism that are used as your body changes. My team and I have been able to define specific traits of metabolism, such as the presence and amount of certain metabolites - products made from breaking down macronutrients - across a wide range of conditions.

Diseases

These conditions include diseases such as COVID-19, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and sickle cell anemia, to experiencing unique environments such as radiation exposure, high altitude, aging and sports performance. Each of these settings influences which parts of your metabolic network are used and how they communicate with one another.

Given the alarming rise in obesity and its associated metabolic syndrome - about 1 in 8 people across the globe were living with obesity in 2022 - defining a healthy or impaired metabolism can help identify what's gone wrong and how to address it.

Elite athletes offer a prime population to study metabolic function at its best, since their network of molecular and chemical reactions must be finely tuned to compete on the world stage.

Traditionally, lactate threshold has been a critical measure of athletic performance by pinpointing exercise intensity when lactate starts to rise in muscles and blood.

Contrary to common belief, lactate is not merely a waste product but an energy source as well, and it accumulates when it's

produced faster than mitochondria can use it. While a moderately active person might reach their threshold at an exercise intensity of around 2 watts per kilogram, elite cyclists can sustain an intensity up to nearly two to three times higher.

When comparing the lactate thresholds of a group of elite cyclists, we found that the cyclists with higher thresholds had markers of better mitochondrial function. One of these markers was higher production of co-enzyme A, a molecule that shuttles carbon around cells and is important for breaking down carbs, amino acids and fat into chemical energy.

Higher-performing cyclists also appeared to burn more fat and burn fat longer during a multistage world tour compared with lower-performing cyclists.

Your metabolism also changes if you get an acute illness such as COVID-19.

In contrast to elite cyclists, COVID-19 patients have an impaired ability to burn fat that appears to persist with long COVID. The blood of these patients at rest is similar to that of an elite cyclist's at exhaustion. Considering that exercise intolerance frequently occurs with long COVID, this suggests mitochondrial dysfunction may play a role in COVID-related fatigue.

Burning fat uses a lot of oxygen. COVID-19 damages the red blood cells that deliver oxygen to organs. Because red blood cells have a limited ability to repair themselves, they might not function as well during the remainder of their roughly 120-day life span. This may partially explain why COVID symptoms last as long as they do in some people.

Transfusions

Blood transfusions are one of the most common clinical procedures. Over 118 million pints of blood are donated by millions of people worldwide every year. Because blood donors undergo screening to ensure they are healthy enough to donate, they are typically moderately healthy, somewhere between acute illness and elite athletic performance. Blood donors, coming from every walk of life, also have a diverse range of biological traits as a study population.

My team and I looked at blood from over 13,000 blood donors to shed light on their metabolic diversity. We found specific traits that could predict how well a donor's blood would work in patients, which also has implications for how well that blood works in the donors themselves.

We found that one of these traits is a metabolite called kynurenine, which is produced from the breakdown of the amino acid tryptophan. We found that blood from donors with higher levels of kynurenine was less likely to restore hemoglobin levels in transfusion recipients compared with donors with lower kynurenine levels.

Kynurenine levels are higher in older donors and donors with a higher BMI, and may potentially be tied to higher levels of inflammation. In support, our group also found that kynurenine increases dramatically in runners participating in the 171-kilometer (106 miles) Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc. In addition, we also identified that kynurenine is a strong marker of COVID-19 severity.

The relationship between metabolites and health outcomes reinforces the important role metabolism plays in the body. Getting a better understanding of what healthy metabolism looks like can offer unique insights into how it deviates when someone gets sick and may offer new approaches to medical treatments. (AP)



Nemkov

'End 'commercialization of life' through surrogacy'

Right to children or children's rights?

ROME, April 7, (AP) - An international campaign to ban surrogacy received a strong endorsement Friday from the Vatican, with a top official calling for a broad-based alliance to stop the "commercialization of life" catering to wealthy would-be parents.

A Vatican-affiliated university hosted a two-day conference promoting an international treaty to outlaw surrogacy, based on the campaigners' argument that the practice violates U.N. conventions protecting the rights of the child and surrogate mother.

At issue is whether there is a fundamental right to have a child, at any cost, or whether the rights of children trump the desires of potential parents.

The conference, which also drew UN human rights representatives and experts, marked an acceleration of a campaign that has found some support in parts of the developing world and western Europe. At the same time, Canada and the United States are known for highly regulated arrangements that draw heterosexual and homosexual couples alike from around the world, while other countries allow surrogacy with fewer rules.

Pope Francis in January called for an outright global ban on the practice, calling it a despicable violation of human dignity that exploits the surrogate mother's financial need.

Trauma

On Thursday, Francis met privately with one of the proponents calling for a universal ban on surrogacy, Olivia Maurel, a 33-year-old mother of three.

Maurel was born in the US in 1991 via surrogacy and attributes a lifetime of mental health issues to the "trauma of abandonment" she says she experienced at birth. She says she was separated from her biological mother and given to parents who had contracted with an agency in Kentucky after experiencing infertility problems when they tried to have children in their late 40s.

Maurel says she doesn't blame her parents and she acknowledges there are "many happy stories" of families who use surrogate mothers. But she says that doesn't make the practice ethical or right, even with regulations, since she said she was made to sacrifice "for the desire of adults to have a child."

"There is no right to have a child," Maurel told the conference at the LUMSA university. "But children do have rights, and we can say surrogacy violates many of these rights."

Monsignor Miloslaw Wachowski, undersecretary for relations with states in the Vatican secretariat of state, concurred, saying the practice reduces human procreation to a concept of "individual will" and desire, where the powerful and wealthy prevail.

"Parents find themselves in the role of being providers of genetic material, while the embryo appears more and more like an object: something to produce - not someone, but something," he said.

He called for the campaign to ban the practice not to remain in the sphere of the Catholic Church or even faith-based groups, but to transcend traditional ideological and political boundaries.

"We shouldn't close ourselves among those who think exactly the same way," he said. "Rather, we should open up to pragmatic alliances to realize a common goal."

The Vatican's overall position, which is expected to be crystallized in a position paper Monday on human dignity, stems from its belief that human life begins at conception and must be given the consequent respect and dignity from that moment on. The Vatican also holds that human life should be created through intercourse between husband and wife, not in a petri dish, and that surrogacy takes in vitro fertilization a step further by "commercializing" the resulting embryo.

As the conference was getting underway, Italy's main gay family advocacy group, Rainbow Families, sponsored a pro-surrogacy rally to counter proposals by Italy's hard-right-led government to make it a crime for Italians to try to use surrogates abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.



This is a handout photo issued by Guinness World Records on Saturday, April 6, 2024 of John Alfred Tinniswood. (AP)

World's oldest man shares longevity secret

The world's oldest man says the secret to his long life is luck, moderation - and fish and chips every Friday.

Englishman John Alfred Tinniswood, 111, has been confirmed as the new holder of the title by Guinness World Records. It follows the death of the Venezuelan record-holder, Juan Vicente Pérez, this month at the age of 114. Gisaburo Sonobe from Japan, who was next longest-lived, died March 31 at 112.

Tinniswood was presented with a certificate by Guinness World Records on Thursday at the care home where he lives in Southport, northwest England.

Born in Liverpool on Aug. 26, 1912, a few months after the sinking of the Titanic, Tinniswood lived through two world wars,

serving in the British Army Pay Corps in World War II.

The retired accountant and great-grandfather said moderation was key to a healthy life. He never smokes, rarely drinks and follows no special diet, apart from a fish and chip supper once a week.

"If you drink too much or you eat too much or you walk too much - if you do too much of anything - you're going to suffer eventually," Tinniswood told Guinness World Records.

But ultimately, he said, "it's pure luck. You either live long or you live short, and you can't do much about it."

The world's oldest woman, and oldest living person, is 117-year-old Maria Branyas Morera of Spain. (AP)

Parental rights debated

US court defines embryos as children, sparks debate

By Dara E. Purvis
Penn State

The Alabama Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 21, 2024, that the word "child" also means frozen embryos, which are typically implanted via in vitro fertilization.

Within a week of the decision, three of the state's seven IVF clinics temporarily stopped all IVF services. Three others announced they would no longer discard any embryos in storage. Spokespeople for the clinics said they were worried that the Supreme Court decision meant that they would be liable for wrongful death if any embryos were destroyed, even as part of normal clinic operations.

Patients planning to undergo IVF treatment at the clinics that stopped services were devastated.

One woman, Gabrielle Goidel, was planning IVF after three previous pregnancies ended in miscarriage. The fertility clinic told her that it could move forward with her scheduled egg retrieval, but it was not sure if doctors could then create or store embryos made with her eggs.

Goidel said it was "absolutely my worst fear," and she found a Texas clinic that could continue her treatment.

In response to confusion about whether IVF services in Alabama could legally continue, the Alabama Legislature passed a law exempting people who receive or provide IVF services from legal liability. After Gov. Kay Ivey signed the bill into law on March 6, two of the clinics that had paused IVF procedures said they would resume providing IVF.

But the court decision still creates a confusing, murky zone for people in Alabama who are considering IVF or already have embryos stored. I am a law professor who has written about legal disputes over frozen embryos. The Alabama Supreme Court's decision contradicts all of the previous lawsuits across the country that are fights over stored embryos.

The Alabama Supreme Court case arose out of unusual circumstances. In 2020, a hospital patient walked through an unlocked door into a fertility clinic housed within the hospital, worked to find a container of frozen embryos and intentionally dropped it on the floor.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE
الفروانية FARWANIYA

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Our gynecology department, the most dependable one in Kuwait, offers below services:

- Special Care and treatment during prenatal and postnatal periods.
- Treatment of other gynecological problems such as disturbances of menstruation recurrent miscarriages etc.,
- Diagnosis and treatment of infertility cases.
- Treatment of patients with high-risk pregnancies; managing complex problems related to reproductive endocrinology and infertility
- Screening programmes for early detection of tumours, breast cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer etc.

Dr. Rehab Mohamed
MBBS, MS
(Mansoura University, Egypt)
17 years' experience

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya

24 734 000 60 749 749
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

UConn returns to NCAA title game



UConn guard Hassan Diarra (10) steals the ball from Alabama guard Mark Sears during the first half of the NCAA college basketball game at the Final Four in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)

Purdue beats N.C. State 63-50

GLENDALE, Ariz., April 7, (AP): The final result showed UConn winning its 11th straight NCAA Tournament game by at least 13 points.

The reality: The Huskies were tested unlike any other time during their run toward a possible second straight national title.

BASKETBALL

UConn kept its composure and its bid to repeat as national champion intact, getting 21 points from freshman Stephen Castle while clamping down defensively in the second half of an 86-72 win over Alabama in the Final Four on Saturday night.

"Our identity is to be pretty relentless," UConn coach Dan Hurley said. "We might not break you for 18 minutes, 25 minutes, but at some point if what we're doing at both ends and on the backboard is at a high level, it just becomes hard for the other team to sustain it."

The top-seeded Huskies (36-3) put on a March Madness show before arriving in the desert, a stretch that included a 30-0 run in a decimation of Illinois in the Elite Eight.

This was more of a slow burn. Alabama (25-12) made the most of its first Final Four, hitting a flurry of 3-pointers to go toe to toe with a team that trailed for 28 total seconds during its first four NCAA Tournament games.

Crafty point guard Mark Sears did his best to keep Alabama in it, scoring 24 points. Grant Nelson had another big game in March Madness, finishing with 19 points, 15 rebounds and one highlight-reel dunk over UConn big man Donovan Clingan.

UConn, as it usually does under Hurley, wore the Tide into submission. Clingan started asserting himself in the post offensively, finishing with 18 points and four blocked shots. Castle and Alex Karaban (14 points) hit big shots as the Huskies stretched the lead.

And one of the nation's best defenses flexed at just right time, holding the Tide without a field goal for a game-turning five-minute stretch that put UConn on the cusp of becoming the first repeat champion since Florida in 2006-07.

"They're close to being bullet-proof," Alabama coach Nate Oats said. Next up for the Huskies is what should be a heavyweight bout in Monday's national championship game against Purdue. It will not be for the meek, with the 7-foot-2, 280-pound Clingan facing the rare person on Earth who's bigger than him in 7-foot-4, 300-pound Zach Edey.

"A battle of the giants. I think it's just great for college basketball. Us and Purdue have clearly been the two best teams in the country the last two years," Hurley said. "I think it's just great for college basketball to get the two big dogs playing on Monday."

The Huskies spent the tournament's first two weeks terrorizing opponents to the tune of a 27.8-point average margin of victory.

Alabama stuck a stick in the spokes of the juggernaut by pulling Clingan away from the basket and burying 3-pointers.

Clingan had two early blocks and appeared to be on his to duplicating his Elite Eight performance, when Illinois went 0 for 19 on shots he contested.

Once the Crimson Tide started forcing Clingan into high pick-and-rolls, lanes to the basket starting opening up - as did the 3-point line.

Alabama thrived from 3 all season, taking down Clemson in the Elite Eight by making 16 shots from deep. The Tide kept it rolling against UConn, making 8 of 11 in the first half while Sears repeatedly got to the rim, putting the Huskies seemingly right where they wanted them.

Nope. The Huskies kept their composure amid the Alabama 3-point barrage, calmly ran their offense and led 44-40 at halftime. "We just had to stay together, tighten up on the defensive end," Karaban said.

UConn kept rolling in the second half and Nelson kept the Tide within reach. His thunderous dunk over Cling-



UConn forward Samson Johnson celebrates a basket during the second half of the NCAA college basketball game against Alabama at the Final Four in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)

an had Oats screaming and squatting like he was doing the Haka.

Oats' friend Hurley had the last laugh - or scream.

Hurley has built UConn in arguably the best two-way team of a generation, and the Huskies showed off both sides in their closing flourish.

UConn shut down Alabama's open looks from the 3-point arc and started getting the ball into Clingan, who overpowered the Tide when he got near the rim.

"They're a really great team," Sears said. "We turned the ball over and they made us pay for it."

The Huskies gradually stretched the lead, pushed the Tide back every time they made a run and put themselves in position to make history.

In Glensdale, Ariz. there was more than one team that came to the Final Four with a dream - more than one team hoping to add its own unforgettable chapter to college basketball's colorful history book.

Zach Edey and Purdue have been thinking big all year, and after snuffing out North Carolina State's magical season with a 63-50 victory Saturday, it's the Boilermakers who find themselves a win away from the program's first NCAA title.

"It's the one we've been talking about all year," said Edey, the 7-foot-4 center who played all 40 minutes and finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds.

For the past three weeks, though, a lot of the country has been caught up in N.C. State. The Wolfpack, 11th-seeded dreamers, were dialing up a classic reboot of 1983, when they won nine straight postseason games to capture an unlikely title that left their frenetic coach, Jim Valvano, running onto the court looking for someone to hug.

In 2024, the Wolfpack went 9 for 9 under similar must-win conditions to get this far.

Only this time, they came two wins short of a repeat shot at glory.

"Didn't get the big one," said N.C. State guard DJ Horne, who finished with 20 points. "But it's definitely a big accomplishment in my career."

N.C. State aside, some might call this run by top-seeded Purdue as big as anything in college hoops this year.

This is a program well-versed in the art of disappointment and missed expectations. Edey returned for his senior season and led the Boilermakers to the Final Four for the first time since 1980 - one season after they became the second No. 1 seed to fall in the first round.

The Boilermakers (34-4), top-seeded again, will play Alabama or defending champion UConn in the final Monday night.

"The reason I came back is for playing games like this," Edey said. "It's the reason I'm playing college basketball for four years, to finally get this game, big-time."

N.C. State (26-15) poked and jabbed at Edey and gave him fits all night during a slugfest of a game. He still dominated the battle of big men against 6-9, 275-pound Wolfpack forward DJ Burns Jr., who labored to eight points and four assists.

Burns wasn't the only one having trouble finding the basket. The N.C. State team that outscored Duke 55-37 after halftime in the Elite Eight - the team that had outscored seven of nine opponents in the second half since its season became a win-or-go-home affair - shot 28.6% over the last 20 minutes this time.

Tourney sets scene for game at Paris Oly

NZ teams sweep Hong Kong Sevens titles

HONG KONG, April 7, (AP) - New Zealand won the men's and women's titles at the Hong Kong Sevens on Sunday to cap off a tournament that sets a scene for rugby at the Paris Olympics.

The All Blacks Sevens scored the first two tries in a 10-7 win over France in the men's final to successfully defend their title and bring an end to the three-day carnival in the traditional home of the rugby sevens format.

Michaela Blyde scored three tries in a player-of-the-final performance and Mahina Paul crossed for a late double in New Zealand's 36-7 win over the United States for the women's title.

It was the third consecutive tournament title for the Black Ferns Sevens and moved them above Australia in the women's world series standings.

After a free-flowing women's final, the men's decider was dominated by defense. France denied the New Zealanders a try with some desperate covering defense late in the first half and it remained a 0-0 stalemate at the break.

Scott Curry scored the opening points when he dived into the left corner after New Zealand took two quick penalty taps. Cody Vai swooped after an errant pass from a backpedaling French lineup to score soon after, but New Zealand only led 10-0 after missing both conversions.

RUGBY

Varian Pasquet scored right on fulltime to close the gap to three points, but France had to end the final with a conversion rather than a kick restart because time was out.

"Man, what a final," Curry said. "That first half was so tough. So physical. Credit to France, that was a tough match."

"This place is so special. It means a lot to our team. It's the one tournament we put up there - we want to win here every year. To do it again, it's awesome."

The New Zealand men ousted two-time Olympic gold medalist Fiji with a last-minute try in the quarterfinals on Saturday and had too much firepower for Australia in the semifinals with a 26-7 win.

For the New Zealand men, it was a 68th tournament title in the world series. The French fell just short of a third title overall, and second in about a month as they continue to build momentum toward the Olympics.

France ended its long sevens drought by winning the Los Angeles title on March 4 with Antoine Dupont in the squad.

Without Dupont this time, the French only narrowly missed out.

He's widely expected to play for the home nation in July when Paris hosts the Olympics.

They made it to back-to-back deciders with a commanding 26-10 semifinal win in Hong Kong over Ireland, which rallied to beat Australia 14-5 for the bronze.

The Australian women won bronze with a late 24-21 win over France in the third-place playoff, scoring three quick tries after falling behind 21-7.

That came on the rebound from a semifinal when the Australian women conceded the last three tries in a 28-14 loss to New Zealand.

The women's final was lopsided, with New Zealand scoring three tries before the U.S. cut the margin to 17-7 at halftime.

The U.S. women were playing their first cup final this series, reaching the gold medal game after Jaz Gray's tip-toe run down the right sideline sealed a 19-5 semifinal victory over France.

But the American women weren't able to build any momentum in the second half as the Olympic champion New Zealanders turned on the speed.

"We wanted to come to Hong Kong with the mindset of a peak tournament, so we treated it like it was an Olympic Games," Blyde said after scoring her hat-trick in the final. "Obviously, it's a good feeling right now. We're going to put our foot to the pedal even more when we get home - it's only going to get harder."

The next stop in the global sevens series is Singapore from May 3-5.

Pulisic achieves personal best scoring season in Milan victory

MILAN, April 7, (AP) - United States standout Christian Pulisic reached double figures in goals for the first time in a league season after his sublime strike began AC Milan's 3-0 win over 10-man Lecce in Serie A.

Pulisic's early goal and 10th in the Italian league surpassed his previous best of nine in the 2019-20 English Premier League for Chelsea. The winger also has three goals in Europe and had already bettered his overall scoring record.

Olivier Giroud and Rafael Leão also scored against Lecce, which played the entire second half with 10 men after forward Nikola Krstovic was sent off.

SOCCER

Milan could even afford to ring the changes in the second half with Thursday's Europa League quarterfinal against Roma in mind. Roma beat Lazio 1-0 in the capital derby.

Second-placed Milan trimmed the gap to runaway Serie A leader Inter Milan to 11 points ahead of the Nerazzurri's match at Udinese on Monday.

Lecce remained four points above the drop zone.

On a warm and sunny day at San Siro, Samuel Chukwueze did well to cut inside from the right and beat two defenders before finding Pulisic on the edge of the area. The American controlled the ball and unleashed an unstoppable left-footed strike.

That was with less than six minutes on the clock. Pulisic almost doubled his tally immediately but Lecce goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone parried the header from point-blank range.

Milan got the second in the 20th when Yacine Adli whipped in a corner from the left and Giroud headed it in at the near post.

Lecce almost pulled one back but Joan Gonzalez's header came off the crossbar and the visitors' chances diminished on the stroke of halftime when Krstovic was shown a straight red card for a high tackle on Chukwueze.

Milan sealed the match in the 57th after Leão raced onto a Theo Hernandez throughball and fired it into the bottom right corner.

Hernandez also hit the crossbar seven minutes later, after Milan coach Stefano Pioli took off Pulisic, Giroud and Matteo Gabbia in a triple substitution.

Former Roma captain Daniele De Rossi won his first capital derby as a coach to end his team's dismal run in the Derby della Capitale.

Roma hadn't won or scored in the derby since a victory in March 2022. That was followed by three losses and a draw, including an Italian Cup defeat in January that effectively cost coach Jose Mourinho his job.

Lazio had an even newer coach after Igor Tudor took over last month.

Gianluca Mancini scored the only goal shortly before halftime when he headed in a Paulo Dybala corner.



New Zealand's players celebrate with their trophy after winning the women's final match against the United States in the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament in Hong Kong. (AP)

Change Name

I, Ajay S/o Ramesh Rana, holder of Indian Passport No. R 5319236 having permanent Address Village Biralsi, Distt Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh-247772 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under. Given Name Ajay and Surname Rana

Buttler ton trumps Kohli ton as Rajasthan wins 4th straight IPL game

JAIPUR, India, April 7, (AP) - Jos Buttler's 100 trumped Virat Kohli's 113 as Rajasthan Royals overhauled Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Indian Premier League on Saturday.

Kohli anchored Bengaluru to 183-3 with a record-extending eighth IPL century that equaled his highest score. His unbeaten 113 off 72 balls including 12 boundaries and four sixes came at a venue where the Indian batting maestro had struggled in Twenty20s and never scored a half-century.

But Buttler outdid him with his own unbeaten 100 off 58 balls. Buttler and

captain Sanju Samson (69) combined in a 148-run second wicket stand to help Rajasthan reach 189-4 in 19.1 overs.

Rajasthan earned its fourth straight win by a clinical six wickets. Bengaluru lost for the fourth time in five games.

Buttler was elated to raise his century in his 100th IPL game in the final over by pulling Cameron Green to midwicket for his fourth six of the innings that also featured nine boundaries.

Buttler scored 11, 11 and 13 in his previous IPL games and finally hit batting

form after struggling teammate Yashasvi Jaiswal was dismissed for a second-ball duck by Reece Topley, 2-27.

Bengaluru's depleted spin attack struggled to collar Buttler and Samson, who shared the highest partnership of the season.

Earlier, Kohli and Bengaluru captain Faf du Plessis (44) put on a 125-run opening stand in 14 overs.

But Ravichandran Ashwin (0-28) and Yuzvendra Chahal (2-34) kept the runs in check in the middle overs.

MARTINSVILLE, Va., April 7, (AP) - Aric Almirola grabbed the lead by going three-wide on the outside in a two-lap dash to the finish and won the NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Martinsville Speedway on Saturday night.

Almirola, driving for Joe Gibbs Racing, outran Sam Mayer and teammate Chandler Smith before a crash by Riley Herbst made the race official. Carson Kvapil was fourth in his Xfinity debut and Justin Allgaier was fifth in a race that featured 15 lead changes, eight different leaders and 11 cautions.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you coach, for calling me to give me this opportunity to come and have some fun. It still scratches the itch of racing but I get to spend a lot of time with my family," Almirola said after climbing from his car. "I get so much pressure to win. I mean, I think everybody expected me to just get in and go win, but the reality is it's really hard to jump

in these cars and race against the guys that do it week in and week out."

Almirola led six times for 148 laps in his fifth career victory in the series. He also won \$100,000 as the top finisher among four drivers eligible for the Dash for Cash.

Mayer had the lead for the overtime restart with Almirola to his outside, and when Sheldon Creed tried to dive underneath Mayer, Almirola went to the outside and cleared both.

"On that restart, I knew it was going to be tough, but I was really thankful to be able to hold on," Almirola said.

Mayer, who led twice for 11 laps, was not as thankful.

"Got one I feel like stolen from me there," he said. "A tough deal but we're going to move on to - I don't even know where we are next week. Probably a good track for me so I ain't worried about it. We're going to go there and try to haul the mail there."

Smith started from the back after crashing in practice on Friday.

SPORTS

Kazma 'inch' closer to Premier League safety

Al-Jahra edge Al-Shabab

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Kazma is on the verge of securing its position among the Zain Premier League clubs after attaining 26 points in the second round of relegation group matches in the Premier League. This achievement follows its 3-1 victory over Khaitan on Saturday evening. Meanwhile, Al-Jahra has revived its hopes of competing to remain among the top tier teams after a crucial 2-1 win against Al-Shabab.

With Kazma leading the relegation group league with 26 points, they now require just two more points to ensure its continued presence among the Premier League clubs. Khaitan remains in second place with a frozen score of 15 points. Al-Jahra, buoyed by its recent victory, is holding onto hopes of staying in the Premier League, having amassed 11 points after defeating Al-Shabab, while the latter's score halted at 14 points.

Kazma demonstrated dominance throughout the match, securing a hat-trick with goals from Nigerian professional Benjamin Teddy and Algerian Imad Eddine Ezzi, scoring in the 2nd, 22nd, and 37th minutes. Khaitan managed to score a goal through Yaqoub Al-Tarawa in the 34th minute.

In another challenging encounter, Kuwait Club faces Al-

SOCCER

Salmiya at 9:30 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium to conclude the third round of championship group matches in the Zain Premier League. Kuwait Club, leading the league with 47 points, aims to secure victory to maintain its lead and potentially clinch the title. Conversely, Al-Salmiya, with 25 points, enters the match comfortably assured of remaining in the Premier League and aims for an advanced position, also preparing for the upcoming Amir's Cup final against Al-Qadisiya.

In the second clash, both Al-Fahaheel and Al-Nasr, each with 24 points, harbor similar ambitions of securing a win to vie for fourth place and make their mark before the end of the season.



Players fight for the ball during the Zain Premier League match in Kuwait.

'We have been fighting for this for a long time'

Bilbao edge Mallorca on penalties to win first Copa del Rey in 40 years

SEVILLE, Spain, April 7, (AP): After four decades and a half dozen finals that ended in defeat, Athletic Bilbao was able to lift a cathartic Copa del Rey trophy No. 24 after edging Mallorca 4-2 on penalties.

The team from northern Spain was favored entering the final thanks to its up-tempo attack, but instead it had to grind out a win against the modest Mallorca to finally deliver for its long suffering fans.

Athletic goalkeeper Julen Agirrezabala saved a penalty by Manuel Morlanes, while Mallorca's Nemanja Radonjic shot high. Raul Garcia, Iker Muniain, Mikel Vesga, and Alejandro Berenguer - all substitutes - converted their spot kicks past Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif.

Extra time in the final ended 1-1 after Dani Rodriguez gave Mallorca the lead in the 21st minute and Athletic's Oihan Sancet leveled in the 50th.

SOCCER

Muniain received the trophy from Spanish King Felipe VI before lifting it high for his team and fans to celebrate.

"This is incredible. Our fans have always been behind us and now it is time to enjoy this," Athletic forward Nico Williams said. "We have been fighting for this for a long time."

Athletic won its 23rd and last Copa in 1984. Since then it had lost six straight finals, including in 2020 and 2021. To win this one, it had to first beat both Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in the quarter- and semi-finals.

"Now it is time to celebrate. We sure make it hard for ourselves to hold a party, it took us 40 years, but now we are going to do just that," said Athletic coach Ernesto Valverde.

"Considering all the finals we have lost, and what the Copa means to Athletic, nothing compares to this."

The club is expected to celebrate the trophy by parading the team on a barge in the river that runs through Bilbao, a victory tradition that it has not carried out in four decades.

While other teams will often prioritize the Spanish league and rest start-

The Financial Committee begins salary transfers for Al-Jahra & Al-Nasr players

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The General Sports Authority has announced that the financial committee tasked with disbursing payments to the technical and administrative staff as well as employees of Al-Jahra Club and Al-Nasr Club, led by Faisal Al-Yateem, Deputy Director General of the Authority for the Finance and Administrative Sector, has initiated the process of transferring overdue salaries to players' bank accounts. Additionally, the com-



Faisal Al-Yateem, Deputy Director General of the Authority for the Finance and Administrative Sector.

mittee has begun issuing checks for the professional players' outstanding dues.

Faisal Al-Yateem, also serving as Chairman of the Committee for Disbursing Dues to the Technical and Administrative Staff and Workers of Al-Jahra and Al-Nasr Clubs, confirmed that the committee has successfully deposited the delayed financial payments to the players following approval from the Committee Chairman and Vice President Bashar Abdullah, Deputy Director General of the Competitive Sports Sector.

Al-Yateem emphasized the Authority's commitment to promptly supporting all clubs and resolving their issues in accordance with directives from the Director General of the General Sports Authority, Yousef Al-Baidan, who has mobilized the Authority's resources as instructed by the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Daoud Marafi.

Acknowledging the efforts of committee members, Al-Yateem commended their dedication and efficiency in completing procedures within a short timeframe since the committee's formation. He also expressed appreciation for their commitment to fulfilling the promise of disbursing financial dues before the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

ers in the cup, especially in the early rounds, Athletic prioritizes the knockout tournament despite fielding players only from or near Spain's Basque Country region. Only Barcelona and its 31 Copas has more than Athletic.

NBA great Steve Nash, a minority owner of Mallorca, was at the game, as well as Rafael Nadal, a native of the island of Mallorca. Each club had 20,000 tickets for traveling fans at the packed 57,000-seat La Cartuja Sta-

dium. Some 40,000 more fans, mostly for Athletic, were expected to descend on Seville without tickets.

Even though Athletic is fifth in the Spanish league and Mallorca down in 15th place, there was little difference between them in the final. Javier Aguirre, Mallorca's journeyman coach, succeeded in nullifying the more explosive attack of Valverde's Athletic.

"The first thing I have to do is to congratulate Athletic and its fans.

Villa implode in draw with Brentford

Man City and Arsenal earn away wins in EPL title race

LONDON, April 7, (AP): Arsenal and Manchester City did their bit in the latest chapter of the English Premier League's tight title race, negotiating potentially tricky away matches to maintain unbeaten streaks in the competition stretching back to December.

After City overcame an early scare to overwhelm Crystal Palace 4-2 largely on the back of Kevin De Bruyne's masterful performance, Arsenal won at Brighton 3-0 thanks to goals from the returning Bukayo Saka, Kai Havertz and Leandro Trossard.

City and Arsenal must now turn their attention to the Champions League as they face difficult games against Real Madrid away and Bayern Munich at home, respectively, on Tuesday.

City heads to the Spanish capital having rediscovered its scoring form and with the team's undefeated run in all competitions now beyond four months.

Importantly for City, Erling Haaland is back among the goals.

And De Bruyne is back scoring screamers.

City recovered from conceding in the third minute to cruise to victory at Selhurst Park, with De Bruyne equalizing with a curling shot into the top corner that was so exquisite that Pep Guardiola blew kisses to the Belgian playmaker.

After Rico Lewis put City ahead in the 47th, Haaland scored his first goal in four games for City to earn De Bruyne his latest assist. De Bruyne then buried a left-footed piledriver for his second goal to finish off Palace.

"Kevin won the game," Guardiola

said. "Without Kevin today, maybe we would not be able to win, so when we talk about tactics, about managers, having players like Kevin in these kinds of games, it's easy."

"The numbers, the presence, the consistency have been amazing."

SOCCER

He's one of the best players in the history of Manchester City."

City struggled to create chances in a 0-0 draw against Arsenal last weekend that proved to be a setback in its attempt to win the league for a fourth straight season - a feat never achieved in English soccer's 135-year history.

Since then, City has beaten Aston Villa 4-1 and won at Palace.



Arsenal's Declan Rice (left), challenges for the ball with Brighton's Carlos Baleba during the English Premier League soccer match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Arsenal at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, England. (AP)

Arsenal, meanwhile, hasn't lost in the league since Dec. 31 amidst a three-game losing streak which threatened to rock its campaign.

Now, Mikel Arteta's team is looking rock solid, with the shutout at Amex Stadium making it four straight clean sheets in all competitions.

Saka was declared fit after missing the midweek win over Luton and opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 33rd after Gabriel Jesus was adjudged to have been tripped. Saka has converted all five of his penalties this season and has 14 goals in the league, tying his career-best haul.

Havertz tapped in Jorginho's cross in the 62nd, then played in Trossard to run through and chip the goalkeeper to score against his former



Players in action during the futsal friendly encounter between Kuwait and Myanmar.

Kuwait suffer loss against Myanmar

The Kuwait futsal team suffered a 4-2 defeat against Myanmar in a friendly match held as part of their training camp in Bangkok.

The training camp is geared towards their preparation for the upcoming Asian Cup finals, scheduled from April 17 to 28, which also serves as a qualifier for the

World Cup finals.

The goals for Kuwait were scored by Ahmed Al-Farsi and Abdul-Rahman Al-Tawael.

The Blues arrived in Thailand last Tuesday to commence their training camp, which includes a series of four friendly matches ahead of the Asian Cup finals.

They have been waiting a long time for this," Mallorca scorer Rodriguez said. "I am moved because I am very proud of my teammates and our supporters who accompanied us. Our dream was to win this cup. We tried to, but it wasn't to be."

Athletic was unable to stop Mallorca from getting three consecutive shots in its area after a corner kick before Rodriguez opened the scoring. The midfielder curled a shot into the corner of the net after Antonio Rafflo controlled a rebound and laid the ball off for his open teammate.

Athletic took time to finally click in attack, and when it did most of the damage was done by Williams. The Spain winger had a goal waived off for offside before he shot into the side netting in first-half injury time. Grief also saved an early shot by Iñigo Galarreta, while Gorka Guruzeta shot wide.

Canada forward Cyle Larin had an opportunity to double Mallorca's lead seconds after halftime, but Agirrezabala saved his effort on the break.

Williams helped produce Sancet's equalizer when he recovered the ball and fed a throughball to the midfielder to beat Greif.

But Sancet's goal did not fluster Mallorca's defense, which again clamped down after Aguirre refreshed his side with substitutes.

After a long stalemate without any clear chance, Williams had a point-blank shot that grazed Mallorca defender Pablo Maffeo and hit the post.

Bayern collapse in Heidenheim

Leverkusen just a win away from title

BERLIN, April 7, (AP): Just one more win.

Bayer Leverkusen can clinch the Bundesliga next weekend after Bayern Munich squandered a two-goal lead and lost at promoted Heidenheim 3-2 on Saturday.

A Florian Wirtz penalty was enough for Leverkusen to beat Union Berlin 1-0 away and move 16 points clear of Bayern with six rounds remaining.

Leverkusen's ninth consecutive league win stretched its German record unbeaten run to 41 games across all competitions this season.

It just needs one more win from its remaining games to win the Bundesliga for the first time. Next up is Werder Bremen at home on April 14. Leverkusen first hosts West Ham in the Europa League on Thursday.

SOCCER

"Nothing is decided. We wait a little," Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said. "We'll stay focused, concentrate on Thursday, then maybe we'll have something to celebrate on Sunday."

Alonso's team would almost certainly have won the title even without Bayern's help. He acknowledged he was surprised Leverkusen could wrap up the title already in the second week of April. "I had planned on it a bit later," Alonso joked.

But Bayern, the 11-time defending champion, is a shadow of itself after slumping to its sixth defeat. It's Bayern's second consecutive loss after last week's Klassiker defeat to Borussia Dortmund. Only goal difference was keeping Bayern ahead of Stuttgart.

Harry Kane's form is the only solace in an otherwise disappointing season.



Leverkusen's Betis' Borja Iglesias (9) fights for the ball with Union's Diogo Leite and Kevin Vogt during a German Bundesliga soccer match, in Berlin. (AP)

Serge Gnabry set up Kane in the 38th for his 32nd league goal, then got Bayern's second before the break with a header to Alphonso Davies' cross.

But Kevin Sessa pulled one back after it and Tim Kleindienst equalized a minute after that. Kleindienst scored the winner in the 79th for Heidenheim's first ever win over Bayern, which next plays Arsenal away in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal on Tuesday.

Serhou Guirassy scored for Stuttgart to beat Borussia Dortmund 1-0 away and make it three wins from three across all their meetings this season including the cup. Guirassy finished off a brilliant team move on a counterattack midway through the second half. It was the Guinea forward's 24th league goal.

Dortmund finished the game with forwards Jamie Bynoe-Gittens, Sébastien Haller, Youssoufa Moukoko and Marco Reus all on, but couldn't force an equalizer.



Denver Nuggets guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, (left), and Atlanta Hawks forward DeAndre Hunter pursue a loose ball in the second half of an NBA basketball game Saturday in Denver. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Nuggets take sole possession of lead

Russell and James combine for 52 points as Lakers move into 8th in West

Verstappen bounces back with 'dominant' win at Japanese GP

Perez, Sainz complete the podium

SUZUKA, Japan, April 7, (AP): Max Verstappen's record-breaking dominance in Formula 1 resumed Sunday with his victory in the Japanese Grand Prix, leading almost the entire race on a sunny day in central Japan.

His abrupt breakdown two weeks ago in Melbourne, Australia, looks like a blip in his total command over F1. He was out on the fourth lap when he rear brakes caught fire.

Nothing like that this time. Verstappen basically led from start to finish except briefly after a pit stop. He was followed across the finish line by Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez - 12.5 seconds behind - and Carlos Sainz of Ferrari. Sainz was 20 seconds off the pace.

The three-time defending F1 champion is again this season's points leader and now has won 22 of the last 26 races dating from the start of the 2023 season. Only two other drivers have won in that span - Red Bull teammate Perez and Sainz, the winner in Australia two weeks ago.

Responding to a question, Sainz suggested that Verstappen and Red Bull



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands celebrates his win during the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix at the Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka, central Japan. (AP)

are so dominant that the season might already be over after just four of 24 races.

MOTOR RACING

Verstappen, of course, said the season would be competitive and suggested Red Bull might struggle in street races.

A red flag just seconds into the tightly packed first lap when Alex Albon and Daniel Ricciardo clipped each other on the second turn and crashed out halted the race.

That was basically the only real drama.

Both Albon and Ricciardo walked away, apparently without serious injuries. The restart was delayed 30 minutes to get the cars off the track and clear debris.

Verstappen, who now has 57 career wins, pushed his season points total to 77 and is 13 clear of Perez on 64. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc follows with 59 with Sainz on 55.

"It's nice to win, and it's nice to win here in Japan," said Verstappen, whose car is powered by a Honda engine. "It's always an important race for us and it's great to win here in front of Honda."

Japanese drive Yuki Tsunoda, driving for the RB team, finished 10th to earn a point.

The next race is the Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai in two weeks. F1 has not run there since 2019 with four races called off because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An F1 sprint race will be run in China a day before the GP, cutting down practice time on an unfamiliar track.

"It's going to be quite hectic," Verstappen said. "We've haven't been there in a while - only one practice session to get into it again. So I think it will be quite interesting."

Verstappen, Perez and Sainz were all critical of squeezing in the sprint, which cuts out practice time. But they said it might make the weekend more entertaining for fans and drive interest and revenue. Sainz added: "I think it's not a good choice to put the sprint after four or five years absence. We also heard there is resurfacing going on."

LOS ANGELES, April 7, (AP): D'Angelo Russell scored 28 points, LeBron James added 24 and the Los Angeles Lakers extended their winning streak to four with a 116-97 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Saturday, moving into eighth place in the Western Conference.

Anthony Davis added 22 points and 13 rebounds in the Lakers' (45-33) ninth win in 10 games.

Darius Garland scored 26 points for Cleveland and Caris LeVert had 21 off the bench. The Cavaliers (46-32) remained in third place in the East but have dropped two straight and three of their last four.

Russell had six 3-pointers, including five in the first half, when his 23 points helped the Lakers take a nine-point lead.

James improved to 18-4 against his former team, where he played for 11 seasons in two different stints. He had a pair of alley-oop dunks against



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) makes a lay-up under pressure from Cleveland Cavaliers center Jarrett Allen (31) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

BASKETBALL

the team he led to its lone NBA title in 2016.

Davis scored 11 points in the third quarter, including nine during a 19-0 run. Cleveland led 71-67 before the Lakers regained control during a four-minute span.

Nuggets 142, Hawks 110

In Denver, Jamal Murray returned to Denver's lineup after missing seven games with a strained right knee and scored 16 points over 21 minutes in a clobbering of.

Nikola Jokic recorded his 25th triple-double of the season even as he took the fourth quarter off and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added a season-high 24 points, propelling the Nuggets (54-24) into sole possession of first place in the Western Conference, a half-game ahead of the idle Minne-

sota Timberwolves, who visit Denver on Wednesday night. Clint Capela led Atlanta with 19 points.

The showdown between the Wolves and Nuggets could decide the top seed in the West, although Oklahoma City is just a game back. Nuggets coach Michael Malone has insisted he's more concerned with his team's health than its seeding, but Denver did parley the No. 1 seed a year ago into a 10-1 home record in the playoffs as its way to winning the franchise's first NBA championship.

Jokic had 19 points, 14 boards and 11 assists, while Murray added six assists in his first appearance since getting hurt March 21 in a game against the New York Knicks.

76ers 116, Grizzlies 96

In Memphis, Joel Embiid had 30 points and 12 rebounds in just 23 minutes, Kelly Oubre Jr. added 17 points and Philadelphia pulled within a half-game of seventh place in the Eastern Conference by beating short-handed Memphis.

Embiid was 9 of 13 from the floor, making both of his 3-point attempts. He checked out with seven minutes left in the third quarter and coach Nick Nurse saw no reason for him to return as Philadelphia maintained a comfortable lead in the second half en route to its fourth consecutive win.

Scotty Pippen Jr. led the Grizzlies with 24 points, while GG Jackson finished with 17. Jordan Goodwin added 15 for Memphis, which had its three-game winning streak snapped. Maozhinha Pereira had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

The Grizzlies had little answer for Embiid in the first half. The Philadelphia center collected 22 points on 7-of-10 shooting from the floor, plus 10 rebounds as the 76ers built a 62-42 halftime advantage. Memphis was just 2 of 12 from outside the arc, part of the Grizzlies shooting 37%.

Nets 113, Pistons 103

In New York, Cam Thomas scored 32 points and Brooklyn rallied with a big fourth quarter for a victory over Detroit.

Dennis Schroder added 24 points and Noah Clowney had 17 off the bench for the Nets, who their second straight game. Mikal Bridges chipped in with 13 and Jalen Wilson finished with 10.

Detroit dropped to 13-65 with its fourth straight loss. Chimezie Metu led the Pistons with 20 points. Marcus Sasser finished with 18 and Jaden Ivey added 16.

Troy Brown Jr. had 15 and Jaylen Nowell contributed 12 off the bench for the Pistons, who led by 19 and were still ahead 83-75 after three before the Nets outscored them 38-20 over the final 12 minutes. Trailing 99-91 after Schroder knocked down a jumper with 6:28 remaining, the Nets used a 22-4 run to clinch the win.

L AFC end Galaxy's unbeaten start to the season

Messi scores in return as Inter Miami salvage draw against Colorado

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., April 7, (AP): Lionel Messi returned and helped salvage a tie for Inter Miami.

Messi scored shortly after checking in to begin the second half and helped set up Leo Afonso's go-ahead score two minutes later. But Cole Bassett scored in the 88th minute for the Colorado Rapids and the game ended in a 2-2 tie on Saturday night.

It was Messi's first appearance for Inter Miami since a hamstring issue led to him getting subbed out early in the second half of a CONCACAF Champions Cup match against Nashville on March 13. He had missed four Inter Miami games since, plus two games with Argentina.

He wasted little time announcing his return Saturday. Messi's fourth goal in as many MLS matches this season came in the 58th minute, beating Colorado keeper Zach Steffen with a low shot that hit the left goalpost, then skidded back across the goal mouth before settling into the next just inside of the right post.

Not long after play resumed, Messi sent a pass to David Ruiz, who found Afonso all alone in front. Afonso put it home for his first MLS goal, giving Inter Miami the lead.

It didn't last. Bassett knotted things late in regulation and Inter Miami (3-



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10), (front right), vies with Colorado Rapids forward Kimani Stewart-Baynes (left), during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

leg of a CONCACAF Champions Cup matchup 2-1 to Monterrey at home on Wednesday and hosted the Rapids on Saturday. It then goes to Mexico for the second leg of the CONCACAF series this coming Wednesday before finishing the stretch at Kansas City on April 13.

Messi emerged from the bench area in the 35th minute to start warming up behind one of the end lines, the mere sight of him sending fans into a frenzy.

They almost missed a Miami goal at the other end.

Simultaneous to the initial Messi sighting, Julian Gressel found a bit of room and fired a 30-yarder from straightaway. The ball curved just left, keeping the match scoreless.

It didn't stay that way. Colorado's Kevin Cabral got taken down in the box - a few yards from where Messi was going through his warmup routine - and Navarro beat Inter Miami goalie Drake Callender with the penalty kick for a 1-0 lead.

Timothy Tillman and Denis Bouanga scored in the first half, and Los Angeles FC ended archrival LA Galaxy's

unbeaten start to the season with a 2-1 victory.

Bouanga converted a penalty off a questionable call against Miki Yamane in the 35th minute, and that goal turned out to be the winner in the latest edition of the El Tráfico rivalry.

L AFC rebounded from the worst start in franchise history (2-3-1) for its eighth win in 22 meetings with the Galaxy, including five of the last seven matchups between the rivals separated by 12 miles of LA freeway. Julian Aude scored his first MLS goal in the first half for the rejuvenated Galaxy, which took its first loss after a 3-0-3 start.

Galaxy goalkeeper John McCarthy made seven saves against his former team while L AFC controlled long stretches of play in the second half, but the Galaxy couldn't counter. Hugo Lloris made three saves as L AFC improved to 3-0-1 at home this season.

L AFC went ahead in the fourth minute when Mateusz Bogusz's corner flicked off Ilie Sanchez's head and went straight to Tillman, who deflected it home with his body at the far post.

Mbappé sets up equalizer, PSG held by Clermont

PARIS, April 7, (AP): Kylian Mbappé came off the bench and set up a late equalizer as runaway French league leader Paris Saint-Germain and rock-bottom Clermont finished 1-1.

Mbappé took a pass from striker Goncalo Ramos and masterfully played it back into his path as Ramos ran into the penalty area in the 85th minute.

PSG is 13 points clear of second-placed Brest, which hosts relegation battler Metz on Sunday, and a record-extending 12th league title seems a formality. After this weekend, there are only six rounds and 18 points remaining.

PSG faces Barcelona in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal at Parc des Princes on Wednesday, and coach Luis Enrique left out Mbappé, goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and other first-teamers. Mbappé went on against Clermont



PSG's Manuel Ugarte, (left), and Clermont's Yohann Magnin vie for the ball during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Clermont at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)

midway through the second half. Enrique has been rotating Mbappé

in recent weeks, even taking him out midway through the second half against bitter foe Marseille last Sunday.

Midfielder Senny Mayulu and defender Yoram Zague, who are both 17, started their first games for PSG.

But PSG gave away a sloppy goal in the 32nd when central defender Milan

SOCCER

Skriniar failed to deal with a cross. The ball was quickly played back into the penalty area, where Clermont defender Habib Keita hit a scuffed shot which bobbed past goalkeeper Annu Tenas. Mayulu scored with a fine shot deep into first half stoppage time, but the goal was ruled out after video picked up a blatant foul by Zague moments earlier.