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Page 10

# A happy Eid Al-Fitr to all

There will be no issue of the Arab Times on Thursday and Friday. The next issue of the Arab Times will appear on Sunday morning. — See you then

## Amir exchanges Eid greetings with Arab, Muslim leaders

Wishes pour in

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday exchanged congratulations and greetings with kings and presidents of Arab and Muslim countries on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

In the cables, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere wishes for the Arab and Muslim nations to enjoy more security, stability and progress.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Tuesday congratulatory cables on Eid Al-Fitr from His Highness KNG Chief, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received cables from His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

In their cables, Their Highnesses expressed best wishes and prayers on the blessed occasion, wishing many returns.

In turn, His Highness the Amir thanked them for their kind words and sentiments.



Photo by Ihab Qurtal

The Muslim faithful stand in prayer on the 29th day of Ramadan for 'qiyam' at one of the mosques in Kuwait. There is no 'qiyam' prayer on the 30th fasting day of Ramadan as the next day is celebrated as Eid-Al-Fitr. The celebrations continue for three days when people feast over food delicacies, meet family and friends as life returns to the old routine. The Ministry of Awqaf has designated 53 open areas and mosques for Eid prayers to be held at 5:45 am, early morning.

### Expats can return sans 'biometrics'

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** Expatriates, who travel without undergoing biometric fingerprinting, are allowed to return to the country, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a source from the security sector.

The source vehemently denied the rumor that expatriates, who have not undergone biometric fingerprinting, will not be allowed to enter the country after the expiry of the deadline set by the Ministry of Interior on June 1.

Continued on Page 5

## Amir postpones Assembly opening

Inaugural session date sparks Constitutional dispute

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed Monday a decree postponing the first regular session of the National Assembly's 18th legislative term to Tuesday, May 14.

Meanwhile, Saleh Ashour, the oldest elected lawmaker, will invite the MPs-elect to the

inaugural session of the National Assembly on April 17 as per the Constitution, which states such session should be held within two weeks after the parliamentary election.

Ashour will moderate the session as he is the oldest MP-elect, after Ahmed Al-Saadoun who announced his intention to run for the speaker election.

A number of MPs-elect announced that they will attend the inaugural session on April 17, shortly after the issuance of Amiri Decree no. 67/2024 on postponing it until May 14 as per Article 106 of the Constitution.

Article 106 states: "The Amir may, by Decree, prorogue the National Assembly's session for a period not exceeding one month. Prorogation shall not be repeated in the same annual session save

with the Assembly's consent and for once only. The prorogation period shall not be reckoned in the session's term."

In a related development MP-elect Abdulkareem Al-Kandari argued that Article 106 cannot be implemented unless Article 87 is enforced in view of the constitutional position of the legislature.

Article 87 states: "The Amir shall convene the National Assembly to its first meeting after the general election within two weeks of the date of the conclusion of the election. Should no summoning Decree be promulgated within that period, the Assembly shall be deemed convened to meet in the morning of the day following the two weeks period mentioned above."

Continued on Page 5

### Newswatch

**RIYADH:** Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan met late Tuesday in Makkah with Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa, discussing with him the latest developments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the two touched on efforts to bring on a sustainable ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which would allow for the safe entry of humanitarian aid.

The two officials also explored the agenda of the Palestinian government. (KUNA)

**DAMASCUS:** Iran's foreign minister Monday accused the United States of giving Israel the "green light" for a strike on its consulate building in Syria that killed seven Iranian military officials including two generals.

Hossein Amirabdollahian reiterated Tehran's vows that it will respond to the attack, widely blamed on Israel, that appeared to signify an escalation of Israel's targeting of military officials from Iran, which supports militant groups fighting Israel in Gaza, and along its border with Lebanon. (AP)

**TEHRAN:** Iran has released two conservationists who worked to save the endangered Asiatic cheetah before spending five years in prison on espionage charges, local media reported on Tuesday.

A report by the Tehran newspaper Etemad said authorities had released Niloufar Bayani and Houman Jowkar on Monday night, who were part of a group of five activists convicted in 2019. They were among more than 2,000 prisoners granted amnesty on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, which celebrates the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. (AP)

**BRUSSELS:** The commander of a European Union naval mission in the Red Sea wants to significantly increase its size to better defend against possible attacks by Houthi rebels based in Yemen, as just four warships are patrolling an area twice the size of the 27-nation bloc.

The EU mission - dubbed Aspides, from the Greek for "shield" - has escorted 68 ships and repelled 11 attacks since it was established less than two months ago. (AP)

### Eid Prayer Timings

Eid prayer ..... Wednesday..... 05:43

## New health center in Kuwait to serve expatriate workers

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inaugurated the Fahaeel Health Center for medical testing of expatriate workers in the Ahmadi Health Zone. This health center has many diverse medical services as part of the ministry's efforts to enhance and provide exceptional healthcare services.

In a press statement issued after the inauguration of the center, Minister Al-Awadhi explained that the center has three floors for providing primary health care services to workers who are holders of article 18 visa. It has nine clinics, including diabetes, diabetic foot, chronic diseases, and others.

It is one of the eight centers serving the Ahmadi health zone. There is an integrated center for school health services that has ten clinics, in addition to two laboratories to provide integrated laboratory services linked to the electronic system of Adan Hospital.

The expatriate medical test center will serve 300 to 500 expatriates per day. It has four X-ray machines, as well as a Dental Department for Ahmadi School Health Zone program for oral and dental health, in addition to ten

clinics, two X-ray machines, and two sterilization clinics.

All of these services operate under one roof in the Fahaeel Health Center. This is considered a qualitative leap for the ministry to reduce the pressure on many of the services provided in the Ahmadi Health Zone.

The minister stressed that this center is designated for both expatriates and citizens but the Fahaeel Specialized Center will provide its services only to citizens.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Undersecretary for Health Care Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr. Nadia Jumaa said, "The Expatriate Medical Test Center receives male applicants holding Article 18 and operates throughout the week from 7:00 am to 12 midnight.

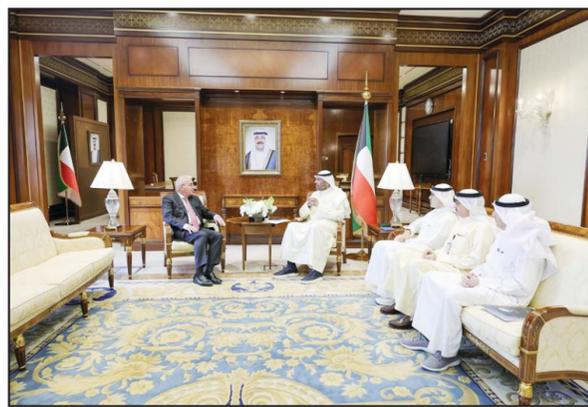
The Fahaeel Health Center includes specialized clinics, including diabetes, chronic diseases, diabetic foot, children, bedwetting, obesity, ENT (ear, nose, throat), eyes, dermatology, and internal medicine clinics. The center receives about 1,054 cases per month."

Regarding future openings, she indicated that the Mutlaa Center N10 will open soon and will have many specialized clinics such as dermatology, maternity, and others.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo  
Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Kuwait's Health Minister, attentively receiving briefings and explanations during his tour of the newly opened Fahaeel Health Center.



MoFA photo  
Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs discusses conditions in occupied territories with Palestinian envoy.

Germany denies Gaza assault role

## Kuwait condemns Israeli occupation in talks with Palestinian ambassador

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya held a meeting on Monday with Palestine's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Rami Tahboub discussing conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The two sides, during the meeting held at the foreign ministry headquarters, discussed the continuing breaches by the Israeli occupation entity of the international norms and laws.

Minister Al-Yahya renewed during the meeting the State of Kuwait's unwavering and principled stance of condemning the continuing aggression by the Israeli occupation forces against the brotherly Palestinian people.

These systematic Israeli attacks constitute blatant violation of the humanitarian values and the international laws and norms, he stressed.

In other news, Germany on Tuesday strongly rejected a case brought by Nicaragua at the United Nations' top court accusing Berlin of facilitating breaches of the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law by providing arms and other support to Israel in its deadly assault on Gaza.

"The minute we look closely, Nicaragua's accusations fall apart," Christian Tams, a member of Germany's legal team, told the 16-judge panel at the

International Court of Justice.

On Monday, Nicaragua urged judges to order a halt to German military aid to Israel, arguing that Berlin's support enables acts of genocide and breaches of international humanitarian law in Gaza.

The head of Germany's legal team, Tania von Usler-Gleichen, said Nicaragua's claims "have no basis in fact or law. They are dependent on an assessment of conduct by Israel, not a party to these proceedings."

Preliminary hearings held Monday and Tuesday are focused solely on Nicaragua's request for so-called provisional measures, including a court order for Berlin to halt military and other aid to Israel and reinstate funding to the U.N. aid agency in Gaza.

Closing Germany's arguments, Von Usler-Gleichen urged judges not to impose preliminary measures and to toss out Nicaragua's case.

Tams said that Germany had licensed only four exports of weapons of war to Israel since October, "three of which concern test or practice equipment." He said 98% of military exports to Israel since the Oct. 7 attacks were not weapons of war, but other equipment.

Continued on Page 5

FOLLOWING the recent elections, many opposition Members of Parliament have returned to the National Assembly. This development presents a phenomenon that warrants consideration from both positive and negative perspectives.

Undoubtedly, the voters were swayed by grandiose slogans espoused by certain MPs. These slogans, though often unattainable, resonate deeply with people, igniting a sense of hope that reverberates through communities. Despite being unrealistic, these slogans serve as a beacon of aspiration for those who earnestly believe in them, shaping their lives around these ideals.

The simplicity of the messages conveyed in campaign tents may bring temporary joy, yet the stark reality remains unchanged - the impossible cannot be achieved merely through rhetoric. While the drums of hope may sound enticing, they often drown out the harsh truths of feasibility.

In essence, while it's essential to acknowledge the optimism stirred by these slogans, it's equally imperative to recognize the limitations and challenges inherent in their realization.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:08	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:29	Maghrib ..	18:11
Zohr .....	11:50	Isha .....	19:30

# Local

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

## Weather

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Rather hot and partly cloudy with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

**By Night:** Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-50 km/h causing rising dust.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	32	24

Kuwait Airport	33	23
Abdaly	35	23
Jahra	35	23
Salmiyah	32	23
Nuwaisib	32	23
Wafra	34	21

## Kuwait sets '24 economic tone with better finances, investments

### 'Diversification of economy, reforms in governance vital for economic growth'

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: According to a recent report by the Oxford Business Group, Kuwait commenced 2024 from a position of economic strength, benefiting from improved financial balances and increased foreign investments, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Economic policymakers have been presented with opportunities since late 2023 to promote sustainable long-term growth, although these efforts may be hindered by prevailing challenges in local markets.

Looking forward to 2024, Kuwait's economic landscape is expected to be characterized by both obstacles and potential gains. Challenges such as decreased oil demand and political issues may pose hurdles, but overall, Kuwait's financial prospects remain positive due to enhanced financial and external balances.

The report highlights opportunities for the Kuwaiti economy, particularly in financial and structural reforms, diversification, and strategic investments. Initiatives such as the launch of a development fund and a four-year government work program are seen as crucial steps towards stimulating the economy and attracting investment. However, realizing the full potential of these opportunities depends on resolving political differences and implementing significant reforms, including

the introduction of new taxes.

Internal economic challenges and delays in necessary financial and structural reforms could lead to an unbalanced financial policy and erode investor confidence. Political stagnation may hinder the acceleration of reforms necessary to enhance investor confidence and stimulate the private sector.

Despite these challenges, Kuwait maintains positive financial expectations, having improved its public financial balances and increased external financial reserves. Efforts to diversify the economy are crucial, with a focus on enhancing non-oil revenues and investment spending to support economic growth.

Measures to increase revenues may include imposing excise and value-added taxes, expanding the scope of income taxes, and reducing government expenditure on wages and energy subsidies. While imposing a value-added tax may not currently be on Kuwait's agenda, the government aims to implement corporate taxes in 2024.

Structural policies aimed at diversifying the economy, alongside reforms in governance and investment in infrastructure and service sectors, are essential for Kuwait's economic growth and transition towards a more sustainable and diversified economy.



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed  
 Carpets are being laid in an open area near a mosque at an unidentified location in preparation for Eid prayers in the early morning on Wednesday, April 10. Despite spacious mosques the space is not enough for worshippers during Eid prayers as thousands of people turn up for the occasion with family and friends.

### 'Eid' here as Ramadan draws to close

## Mosques in Kuwait wrap up 'Tahajjud' prayer of ten days

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait's mosques wrapped up their 'Tahajjud' prayers with the arrival of the 30th night of Ramadan, marking the completion of the final ten nights of intense worship. These nights were filled with fervent supplications, prayers, and acts of devotion, seeking acceptance of the Almighty for their fasting, prayers, and charity. The faithful prayed for Allah's satisfaction and redemption from Hell as Ramadan draws to a close.

In the Grand Mosque, thousands of worshippers - both citizens and residents - came from all over Kuwait. They lined up to perform their night prayer on the last night of the month of Ramadan, submissive to Allah and seeking His mercy, satisfaction, and forgiveness.

In the first four rak'ahs, the worshippers were led by the reciter Sheikh Bader Al-Ali, and the second four rak'ahs were delivered by the reciter Sheikh Omar Al-Damkhi. Sheikh Saleh Al-Qahtani delivered a sermon.

In the Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Mosque in Saad Al-Abdullah, Jahra Governorate, the Imam of the congregation was the reciter Mohammad Al-Saeedi, and the Yemeni reciter Mohammad Al-Hamidi.

In the Ghasham Al-Basman Ramadan Center, the mosque was filled with people who recited prayers for forgiveness and mercy for this night. The first four rak'ahs were given by the reciter Sheikh Ahmed Fadhil, and the last four rak'ahs were given by the reciter Abdullah Salem. The sermon was delivered by Sheikh Ahmed Fadhil.

In the Khalid Al-Yaqout Mosque in Siddiq area, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nafis led the worshippers in full prayer on the last night, and recited what he could from Surat Al-Waqi'ah (Chapter 56).

In the Aqla Al-Dhafiri Mosque in Jahra, the night prayer was performed by imam Yusuf Hadroos in the first four rak'ahs, Masoud Al-Halafawi and

in the last four rak'ahs. Those rak'ahs included a sermon delivered by Issa Dakhil.

On the occasion of the end of the holy month, the Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika gave a speech to the sheikhs, imams of mosques, muezzins and reciters, saying, "May Allah reward you with the best for your effort, patience and endurance in enlivening his nights and filling his days with lessons and sermons. Your effort in this month is equivalent to the effort of years in others, and you deserve abundant thanks, praise and appreciation."

The imam of the Mubarak Al-Hasawi Mosque in Jahra Sheikh Dr. Farhan Obaid said, "Now the lamps will go out and the Taraweeh prayers will stop. We will return to the custom and part with the month of worship, and the people of diligence will take away the reward for their diligence in Ramadan. So continue your obedience, I ask Almighty Allah to accept from us and from you, and record the reward for us and you, and make us, you, and our parents among those who have been redeemed from Hell and among those who are accepted."

Sheikh Rashid Al-Alimi said, "At the end of Ramadan, we should ask forgiveness a lot, and ask God for acceptance, and not with expressions of sorrow, or songs containing crying, or poems containing sorrow over parting with Ramadan."

In addition, a faculty member in the Department of Fundamentals of Jurisprudence at Kuwait University Dr. Fawaz Al-Otaibi said, "We realized during the month of Ramadan that we can fast, recite the Qur'an, perform prayers, and night prayers continuously. We also practice remembrance, safeguard the tongue, and stay away from forbidden things, with the help of Allah, and then have the determination to do good, so the shortcomings after that are only from yourself. Therefore, force it to work and promise it obedience, and it will become accustomed to seeking help from Allah."

### Traffic crackdown in Jahra

## Citizen accuses man in murder bid

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The concerned authorities at the Ministry of Interior opened an investigation into the case of a citizen, born in 1975, who accused an individual of trying to kill him by running over him in Taima, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source told the daily that the ministry's Operations Unit received a telephone call from the citizen who reported the incident. Two securitymen responded to the call and found the victim who got injuries after an individual beat him and knocked him down with his vehicle in Block Nine, East Taima. The citizen was rushed to Jahra Hospital where he will undergo surgery.

Attempted murder Case No. 41/2024 was registered and investigations are underway.

**Traffic crackdown:** A campaign launched by the General Traffic Department (GTD) in Jahra Industrial Area recently resulted in the issuance of 110 citations and impounding of two vehicles for various traf-

fic violations, reports Al-Rai daily.

This is in line with the ongoing efforts of the Traffic and Operations Sector to arrest violators and outlaws. An inspection team under the supervision of the assistant director general for Traffic Technical Affairs carried out the campaign with the aim of controlling vehicles that make annoying sounds, placing stickers on violating vehicles and changing the basic appearance of the vehicle.

The General Traffic Department confirmed the continuation of traffic and inspection campaigns in industrial areas to strictly implement the law on everyone, warning that no violation will be tolerated.

**Man falls in manhole:** A worker was injured when he fell into a sewage manhole in the Mishref, reports Al-Rai daily.

Firefighters rushed to the location upon receiving a report about the accident and referred the injured worker to the medical emergency personnel dispatched to the accident site.

## Expats scramble to rectify residential status before holiday for 'Eid' begins

Priority for those with expired 'iqama'; 1,200 cases dealt with

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Various departments at the Interior Ministry were crowded on the last working day before the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, especially the Residency Affairs General Department, which received a directive from Assistant Undersecretary for Residency and Nationality Affairs Major General Ali Al-Adwani to complete the transactions of clients before the holiday without violating any law, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting a reliable source from the security sector.

According to the source, the Farwaniya Governorate Residency Affairs Department completed 1,200 transactions with the satisfaction of clients who, along with their employers, thronged to the department on the last working day before the holiday.

The daily's staff visited the department in Reggae to personally observe the work atmosphere on the last day before the Eid holiday. They were surprised by the large number of expatriates who came to submit their applications. Deputy Director of the department Colonel Adeb Al-Suwaidan spearheaded the implementation of the plan to ensure the smooth processing of transactions despite the huge crowd, which included sorting the transactions in order to prioritize the urgent ones.

Al-Suwaidan supervised the distribution of numbers to the clients after checking their documents at the main door of the department, such that those with urgent transactions were allowed to enter immediately to complete them within the official working hours. The transactions included renewal of residency permits, issuance of visit visas, amending the status, transferring information, and renewing the residency permits of wives and children for those who hold family visas among others. Urgent corporate transactions were received since the morning, and were completed at the end of the official working hours.

The department instructed those whose transactions are not urgent to come back after the holiday. A limited number of commercial and family visit visa transactions were received, so they were completed quickly; while other visit visa transactions were postponed until after the holiday due to the heavy work load on the last day before the holiday.

After the holiday, priority will be given to expatriates whose residency permits expired during the holiday.

## Police jailed in disciplinary cases to be released on Eid

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The Interior Undersecretary General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday ordered the release of policemen held behind bars for disciplinary cases.

The duration they had spent behind bars was considered a sufficient penalty, and their release would be effective as of the end of the last day of Ramadan, the undersecretary ordered, noting that the gesture was made on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr (falling on Wednesday).

The public relations and information directorate general of the Ministry of Interior said in a press release that the decision was made upon instructions by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah on the Eid occasion.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense declared that upon instructions by minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf, the army Chief of Staff, Air Marshal Bandar Al-Mazyen, ordered release of military personnel held for disciplinary cases.

It said in a statement that the gracious gesture by the minister came out of his faith in participating with the military personnel and their families on the happy Eid occasion.



Some of the staff taking care of the elderly.

### Promoting community engagement

## Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa 'shares a smile' with the elderly

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa organised a CSR program in collaboration with the Farah Elderly Care Centre on 7 April. Held at the centre's premises, the program included a multifaceted approach, providing the elderly beneficiaries with companionship, resources, and activities, building stronger ties with them.

The event featured a Ramadan Ghabga buffet, gathering the elderly to commemorate the spirit of the holy month. Gifts were distributed among them to enhance the festive mood and lift their spirits. Team members from Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa engaged with the elderly residents, fostering positivity and cheer throughout the interaction.

The program was part of 'SHARE A SMILE', the CSR strategy of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, through which it has been delivering multifarious benefits through community engagement. Through the various initiatives under this strategy, the hotel has been demonstrating its commitment to the local community, particularly the elderly population.

Commenting on the CSR program held at Farah Elderly Care Centre, Director of PR and Communications at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Yasmine Ismail, said: "Within our SHARE A SMILE initiative, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa has been actively implementing impactful pro-

grams aimed at benefiting the communities around us, in line with our broader social responsibility efforts. One of our core focuses has been on enhancing community engagement, with a special emphasis on improving the well-being of the elderly through meaningful interactions and providing essential support. Through our CSR initiatives, we aim to strengthen our reputation as a leading socially conscious and community-driven brand within the industry while also enabling our guests to actively join us in our impactful social outreach endeavours."

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa delivers significant impact across the Kuwaiti community, environment, and economy through wide-ranging initiatives under its sustainability commitment. With a strategic focus on key sustainability pillars - Planet, People and Culture, Responsible Supply Chain, Governance, and Corporate Social Responsibility - the hotel develops specialised programs to drive lasting positive change. Beyond its own endeavours, the hotel collaborates with, sponsors, and supports organisations and businesses that share similar sustainability objectives, inspiring empathy and compassion, promoting empowerment and inclusion, and encouraging its diverse stakeholder groups to give back to society.

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa's Ramadan exclusives will be available from March 10 to April 9. To make a reservation or for more information, call +965 22269666 or email [jumeirah-restaurant@jumeirah.com](mailto:jumeirah-restaurant@jumeirah.com).

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## The 'hypocritical' world and Israeli trump cards

"THE audio-visual media was abuzz with the news of armed men breaching the Egyptian border with Gaza via Jordan. Who entered and brought in some aid? Israel (the occupying state) denies knowledge of the force that entered, Egypt also denies, and Hamas also denies," columnist **Fakhri Hashem Al-Sayyid Rajab** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Fakhri Rajab

"Netanyahu, carried out an operation that was not at all dangerous, yet it became the most prominent event and certainly the purpose is not for the world to understand that it has officially broken up. It is exaggeration for the sake of exaggeration, this criminal who answered a journalist's question about how the world had turned against Israel, and his usual answer was that what happened was the result of the world's ignorance and anti-Semitism, so how can the world forget the great massacre against the Jews.

"The reality is that the entity is working madly to expand the circle of war. It is preparing for an all-out war. It does not hesitate, on an almost daily basis, to attack sites in Lebanon, whether in the south or even around the capital.

"As for Syria, whose bombing has become daily bread without any Arab, Western or humanitarian reaction! In the end, it was the bombing of a building next to the Iranian consulate, and the bombing of the headquarters of an embassy or consulate of any country means, according to international law, a direct attack on the state itself. Here some Arab countries were quick to condemn, but it certainly did not end with the government of Iran, so why this Zionist escalation and persistence that is expanding without deterrence?

"The holy month is over and many Arab television stations are celebrating in their empty way comedy, drama, and competitions until the fasting person forgets his hunger, while we did not find anyone who sheds light on the corpses of innocent children, elderly, and women in Palestine without any emotion.

"Do we blame the Western governments that only speak half the truth, despite their knowledge that the occupying state is violating international law? They have forgotten that it is an imaginary rogue state whose existence violates international laws.

"They are still supplying it with weapons, despite the issuance of the law stopping the sale of weapons, but it is nothing more than a media measure. In fact, the price of bombs imported to it has recently reached more than a billion dollars, whether from Britain, France or others.

"Turkey did not sever its relations with the occupying state and did not stop trade exchange, the latest of which was the arrival of a naval fleet consisting of 96 ships that transported goods, foodstuffs, and oil. A few days ago, a Libyan representative spoke before the Arab Parliament, saying, 'Our hearts have stopped at what is happening in Palestine, but what are we to do?'

"It is the right time for us to do something. There is no real supporter except us. We must support the Palestinians militarily. Yes, we do not even have time to think about our brothers being slaughtered in a holy month. One goal that the entity is working on today is it plays the trump cards throughout the world to fight the war that it wants."

**Also:**

"Kuwaiti by establishment... I do not know of a single convincing reason that makes some people upset, take stock of the world and do not sit still when we mention the founding families, even if that is as a matter of historical narration or a reminder of our country's past" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"But when we say Kuwaiti by founding, we praise the descendants of those whose ancestors established the State — whether inside or outside the wall, the people of land and sea. They are known to everyone, and they know each other.

"We affirm that they must be given special treatment befitting the history of their fathers and grandfathers, even if some are upset with the newcomers out of the fulfillment of rights. One of the commandments of the Beloved Chosen One (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is his saying: 'Put people down in their homes.'

"This does not mean in any way disrespectful. It seems that the founding families are closed in on themselves, or have a racist mentality, or have their own club that only they can enter. Nevertheless, it is wrong to blame them for their pride that they are the sons and grandchildren of the founders. It is their right to have the State treat them in a way that befits their history, which is inseparable from the history of Kuwait. Do not be afraid of blaming anyone!

"Recently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrated the men of the founding king — King Abdulaziz — may Allah have mercy on him, who were with him in the conquest of Riyadh. They were celebrated by name. They were honored through their children or grandchildren, and no one was upset or protested.

"Likewise, no one denounced the founding king's men or ignored them, even though Saudi Arabia is considered an entire continent, and there are many great names among the loyal men who

supported the Saudi flag. Not a single person among them protested, because the beginning was in the conquest of Riyadh. This is also the case in the rest of the Gulf countries, so why do discordant voices rise only here when we mention the founders..."

"Settle it... This was confirmed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah prolong his life and keep him as the support and asset of the honorable people of Kuwait. As soon as the Ministry of Information announced the date of His Highness' speech, the citizens began anticipating this date to hear reassurance about the future of the coming generations. They are certain that HH the Amir of firmness and determination was one of the first to preserve national identity and protect it from tampering," **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"When he said it without opening his mouth, he relieved all his loyal people. It was an indirect order to His Excellency, the Minister of Interior, to continue what he started and rid the country of forgers wherever they may be.

"Thank you, sir, for all the advice and guidance you have given to your children for the common good.

"We congratulate our representatives, wishing them success in playing an effective role in the interest of the public, while preventing tension and crises without interfering in governmental affairs, so that the National Assembly can continue its work. There is no harm in us repeating what we said and being true to our expectation of dissolving the last Assembly before a year passed. We say to those who were unlucky: Follow the sessions of the representatives. Do not go far, and be prepared either to reserve your temporary positions or for your positions to be fixed in your homes, to remind you of the proverb, 'Beware of the evil of the forbearing one when he gets angry.'

"Slow down... Pen owners and social media program participants are requested not to rush into judgment that leads to attacks on ministers and officials whenever they issue disciplinary decisions for their employees, as they are legally entitled to do what they deem appropriate.

"This does not mean that officials are infallible, such that, you will then have the right to criticize the minister and object to his procedures, before you do injustice to yourselves because of the speed of your judgments on one hand and diminishing the minister's prestige in front of his employees on the other hand.

"Importance of the title... No two people disagree on protecting national identity, as it is not a fad or an urgent idea, it is rather a national duty stemming from the loyalty, love, and devotion of the Kuwaiti to the soil of his homeland.

"Thankfully, the 'Group of Eighty' is doing this. Nevertheless, I do not agree with it regarding the name, as eighty represents a limited number of the total Kuwaitis. It is contrary to reality, so they must change the name to include all the loyal people of Kuwait, such as the 'National Group', 'Kuwaiti Passion and Identity', or 'Monastery People Group' and the like.

"May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and harm."

"Ramadan is gone... The holy month is about to depart. We ask Allah Almighty, Lord of the Great Throne, to free our necks from the fire, to accept good deeds from us and from you, to make this month a witness for us not against us, and to accept fasting and prayers from us and from you," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"With the last days of the holy month, the election page was closed whoever won the voters' trust and whoever lost. This is the rule of life. All we hope for is that the successful candidate represents the entire nation, as described by the Kuwaiti Constitution, not a representative of a party, tribe or group. The nation's hope is pinned on its representatives. Hopefully, they will not be disappointed. Then, we return to square one: dissolution and early elections, accompanied by political instability, lack of achievement and so on! The Kuwaiti voter expects this after electing each legislature. Unfortunately, the previous assemblies, which ended in dissolution, were frightening.

"Then, there remains the problem of the one who boycotted the election. He is the problem, not the one who cast his vote for the wrong person. This particular person must bear responsibility for his choice and wait for the end of the term of the current legislature to correct his mistake, and then vote after thinking and channeling for the right person! The real problem is those who boycotted the election and then objected to the outcome, as is the case currently, forgetting that they gave up their constitutional right and left the field empty for others to choose without any sense of national responsibility!

"Whoever does not participate in the election does not have the right to criticize the work of the Assembly or the government in the next stage. Everyone should know this. Just as we respect a person's desire not to vote, the choices of others must be respected as well. 'Grumbling' does not build a country and it does not advance the process. Straight ahead..."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



The Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah pictured with the distinguished ministry employees from various sectors.

### Minister honors outstanding Mol employees

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, bestowed honors upon several exemplary employees of the Ministry of Interior across various sectors, acknowledging their exceptional contributions. The General Administration of Security

Relations and Media, in a press statement, relayed that during the ceremony, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef extended gratitude to 88 officers and non-commissioned officers for their commendable dedication to duty. He emphasized their worthiness of respect and admiration, commending their steadfast commitment

to excellence and proactive approach. Sheikh Fahad urged them to sustain their outstanding performance, serving as an inspiration for themselves and their colleagues to further contribute towards ensuring the security and stability of our beloved homeland. (KUNA)

## 'MoE fails to tackle phenomenon of mass absenteeism in schools'

'Well-thought-out plans, proactive measures needed'

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The National Integrity Society has expressed deep concern over the widespread issue of student absenteeism across public education schools in Kuwait, spanning from kindergarten to secondary levels.**

This trend, coupled with the Ministry of Education's inability to enforce adherence to the academic calendar, has created an environment where students are encouraged to provide false medical information to justify their absences.

Such practices not only undermine the values of integrity but also pose a significant educational challenge, hindering the state's efforts to instill integrity in society, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Despite Kuwait boasting the shortest academic year globally, with only 174 days according to the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the problem of absenteeism persists. Last-minute attempts by educational authorities to curb this phenomenon have proven ineffective, as tackling mass absenteeism requires well-thought-out plans and proactive measures rather than reactive responses.

Reports indicate that some school administrations and teachers are sending reassuring messages to students, implying that the ministry is not serious about addressing absenteeism. This perpetuates a culture of non-compliance and undermines efforts to enforce attendance policies.

Moreover, the practice of obtaining false medical certificates from health dispensaries not only promotes dishonesty but also strains healthcare resources and leads to unnecessary medication consumption.

The tolerance of mass absences by school administrations and teachers is indicative of the shortcomings of the Code of Professional Conduct, overseen by the Anti-Corruption Public Authority (Nazaha). The National Integrity Society has previously raised concerns with Nazaha regarding

### Disturbing trend in educational system: Dr. Al-Tawala

'Over 400,000 students present medical leave'

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Dr. Ibrahim Al-Tawala, the President of the Medical Association, highlighted a concerning trend where over 400,000 students in public education are flooding health centers with medical excuses to cover**



Dr Al-Tawala

their absences due to illness. This issue, as expressed by Dr. Al-Tawala on his social media account, has become a daily occurrence since the start of the second semester, resulting in a strain on health facilities and indicating a significant disruption in Kuwait's educational system. Despite this, the Ministry of Education has yet to implement effective measures to address the situation, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In contrast, the Ministry of Health has taken proactive steps by inaugurating an emergency dental clinic for children at the Jahra Specialized Center for Pediatric

Dentistry. This clinic aims to cater to emergency cases among children under 16 years old during holidays and official breaks, demonstrating a commitment to providing timely medical assistance to those in need.

Shifting focus, Professor Jassim Al-Hashel, a neurology consultant at Ibn Sina Hospital, shed light on historical medical practices wherein fasting was utilized as a treatment for epilepsy. He explained that fasting triggers the production of ketones in the body, which possess antiepileptic properties. Professor Al-Hashel emphasized the importance of adhering to medication schedules during Ramadan, advising patients to take their medications with suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (evening meal), even if the interval between doses is less than 12 hours. Furthermore, he urged individuals with epilepsy, as well as parents of affected children, to prioritize regular sleep patterns and avoid late-night activities, exposure to bright screens, and excessive use of electronic devices, all of which could potentially trigger seizures.

these issues.

To address this multifaceted challenge, the National Integrity Society proposes the following recommendations:

The Ministry of Education should develop deliberate plans informed by behavioral science to address student absenteeism effectively. Drawing upon international best practices in behavioral interventions, experts in behavioral experiments and payment should be consulted to design tailored strategies. The National Integrity Society stands ready to contribute to the development of these

measures.

Nazaha should reassess its approach to issuing the Code of Job Conduct, acknowledging the evident shortcomings of the current framework. A thorough review is necessary to ensure that the Code effectively addresses issues of integrity and professional conduct within the education sector.

By implementing these recommendations, Kuwait can work towards fostering a culture of integrity within its education system, thereby safeguarding national values and promoting academic excellence.

### 'Pay engineer his salary'

## Life-term upheld for fake royal in indecent assault

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Court of Cassation has affirmed the verdict of life imprisonment for an individual, previously convicted of a crime, who posed as a sheikh on Instagram, with the sinister intent of committing indecent assault. This person not only deceived their victim but also unlawfully obtained valuables, including a diamond ring and over 20,000 dinars, while resorting to blackmail tactics. Additionally, they posted inappropriate content on various social media platforms, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

According to the complaint, the accused manipulated the victim by pretending to be a member of the ruling family and persuading her to seek legal advice under false pretenses of being a lawyer. However, the victim was subjected to assault and indecent behavior instead. Furthermore, the perpetrator deceitfully pursued marriage with the victim, only to continue their deception and exploitation, ultimately seizing valuable assets.

This decision by the Court of Cassation underscores the severity of the crimes committed and upholds justice for the victim.

**'Pay unpaid salaries':** The Administrative Section in the Court of Appeals has obliged the Ministry of Education to pay KD24,000 to an engineer -- the value of unpaid salaries from May 2022, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Attorney **Abdullah Amin** filed the case on behalf of his client -- a senior computer engineer in the ministry who was surprised when the salary was not paid from May 2022 under the pretext of work interruption.

Earlier, the Administrative Court dismissed the case, but **Amin** maintained his defense at the Appeals Court. He presented a documentary portfolio and evidence of his client's right to receive the unpaid salaries retroactively; taking into consideration that no penalty has been imposed on his client and was neither suspended from work nor referred for investigation.

He argued the non-payment of salary decision was marred by arbitrariness and misuse of authority, as it was issued due to disagreements between the engineer and the direct supervisor (department head), as the latter was eligible for promotion to the department head's position.

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'Themes of kindness and love prevalent throughout the holy month'

# Bishoy sends Eid greetings to Kuwaiti leadership and people

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Bishop Bigol Bishoy, the pastor of the Egyptian Coptic Church in Kuwait, extended warm congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti government led by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and the people of Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

He wishes Kuwait continued progress and prosperity, with joyous holidays and celebrations marking further achievements in civilization.

Father Bigol also conveys the greetings of Bishop Tawadros II, Pope and Patriarch of the See of St Mark in Egypt and all countries of the Diaspora, and Bishop Anthony, Bishop of Jerusalem, Kuwait, and the Near East. They express their best wishes for Kuwait's

leadership in its endeavors towards success and ongoing renaissance.

Reflecting on the significance of Ramadan this year, Father Bigol highlights the themes of kindness and love prevalent throughout the month. He emphasizes the gratitude for the blessing of communication and gathering, particularly considering the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years. He acknowledges the collective prayers answered by God, leading to the restoration of normalcy in life.



Bishop Bishoy

Furthermore, Father Bigol appreciates the diverse gatherings during Ramadan, likening them to "miniature Kuwait" where various segments of society come together in an atmosphere of friendliness, safety, and mutual respect. He acknowledges the contributions made by embassies and foreign communities, including the Egyptian Coptic Church, which has served Kuwait for over a quarter of a century with its motto of "Love".

Father Bigol underscores the spiritual significance and joyous nature of holidays, emphasizing their role in fostering positive energy and communication. He concludes by praying for continued blessings, peace, and prosperity for both Kuwait and Egypt under the wise leadership of their respective countries, as they chart a bright future ahead.



Workers in a queue to receive iftar meals.



KRCS volunteers prepare to distribute meals.

KUNA photos

# PAHW excels with over 43,000 transactions in month of March

Citizen Service Dept addresses issue of rented housing

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Housing Welfare, through its diligent efforts manifested by the dedicated work of the Citizen Service Department, proudly announces the successful completion of a substantial volume of transactions during the month of March.**

An impressive total of 43,065 transactions were processed, underscoring the authority's unwavering commitment to serving the needs of citizens with efficiency and effectiveness.

Of particular note within this comprehensive set of transactions were the initiation of 186 new housing applications and the processing of 117 allocation transactions. These milestones represent significant progress in addressing the housing needs of the community, reflecting the authority's

proactive approach to housing welfare.

Moreover, the Citizen Service Department took significant strides in addressing the issue of rented housing, opening 45 new files in this category during the same period. This underscores the authority's dedication to providing comprehensive housing solutions to citizens, regardless of their specific housing requirements.

In addition to these key accomplishments, the Reception Department within the authority facilitated 169 rental allowance transactions, further assisting citizens in meeting their housing-related financial needs. Furthermore, the issuance of 63 certificates for various purposes served to streamline administrative processes and enhance overall service delivery.

The diligent efforts of the authority's staff were further evident in the exemplary performance of the telephone customer service in the Communications Department. Handling a total of 1,819 direct calls from citizens demonstrates the department's commitment to providing accessible and responsive assistance to individuals seeking information or support.

Additionally, the Statistical Department of the Follow-up Department played a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating the authority's performance. The receipt of 53 petitions submitted to the institution reflects the department's proactive approach to addressing citizen concerns and ensuring transparency and accountability in its operations.

It is noteworthy that while traditional channels of service delivery continue to be utilized effectively, the authority has also made significant strides in embracing digital innovation. A total of 23 transactions were successfully completed through the authority's website, demonstrating its commitment to leveraging technology to enhance accessibility and convenience for citizens.

Furthermore, the Sahl application has emerged as a vital tool in facilitating service delivery, with an impressive 22,921 service completions recorded during the month. This underscores the authority's commitment to embracing digital transformation and harnessing the power of technology to streamline processes and improve service delivery outcomes.

## KRCS distribute meals to workers

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) on Monday distributed 1,600 meals to laborers as part of its charitable project "iftar saem."

The society has expanded humanitarian activities during the fasting month of Ramadan, in line with the religion of Islam.

It had distributed such meals since onset of the blessed month and carried out various charitable projects in and

outside Kuwait. (KUNA)

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The legitimate crescent sighting authority announced on Monday that Tuesday would be the last day of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Justice Adel Bouresli, reading the authority's statement, affirmed that the crescent was not sighted, thus Tuesday would be a day of fasting and Wednesday would be the first day of Eid Al-Fitr. (KUNA)

## French envoy hails Kuwaiti diwanias

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: French Ambassador to Kuwait Claire Le Flécher, recently expressed her admiration for the Kuwaitis' preservation of their heritage and their respect for the customs of their fathers and popular traditions, citing the 'diwaniya' as a manifestation of the strong cultural heritage in the country and that the Ramadan nights here are memorable, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a post on X, Le Flécher stated: "Since

the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, I have met many Kuwaiti families in a number of diwanias and ghabgas. The Kuwaiti hospitality and warm welcome make Ramadan nights in Kuwait very special and unforgettable."

She expressed her admiration for the 'diwaniya' in the country. "I am very happy to see the strong cultural heritage of the diwaniya being preserved and shared between different generations," she added.

## Other Voices

### 'Navigating legal evolution'

#### A guide to developing law in Kuwait

By **Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainain**  
Lawyer

Kuwait, with its rich history and vibrant culture, stands at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. As the nation progresses, so too must its legal framework evolve to meet the demands of a dynamic society. Developing law in Kuwait is a multifaceted endeavor, blending tradition with innovation, and balancing local values with global standards. In this blog, we explore the process of legal development in Kuwait and offer insights into navigating this complex landscape.



Alhusainain

Before delving into the development of law, it's essential to grasp the foundations of Kuwait's legal system. Kuwait follows a civil law system, heavily influenced by Islamic law (Sharia). The Constitution of Kuwait serves as the supreme law of the land, delineating the framework of governance and fundamental rights. Additionally, Kuwait has a dual court system comprising civil courts and Sharia courts, each with its jurisdiction over specific matters.

Several factors contribute to the evolution of law in Kuwait. Kuwaiti society is diverse, with a mix of traditional values and modern aspirations. Social changes, such as urbanization, globalization, and demographic shifts, influence legal needs and expectations. Economic Growth: Kuwait's economy is rapidly evolving, driven by its oil reserves and diversification efforts. Economic development necessitates legal frameworks to regulate commerce, investment, and employment, among other aspects. As a member of the United Nations and signatory to various international treaties, Kuwait is committed to aligning its legal framework with international standards and obligations.

The digital revolution has transformed various aspects of life, including governance and law. Developing

laws to address cybercrime, data protection, and e-commerce is imperative in the digital age. Developing law in Kuwait involves a systematic approach that balances legal tradition with contemporary needs. Legal development begins with thorough research and consultation with experts, stakeholders, and the public. Understanding societal needs and concerns is crucial for drafting effective laws.

Drafting new laws or amending existing ones requires careful consideration of constitutional principles, international norms, and societal expectations. Legislation must be clear, coherent, and enforceable. Kuwait's National Assembly plays a pivotal role in the legislative process. Proposed laws undergo review and debate in the parliament, allowing elected representatives to scrutinize and refine legal provisions.

Engaging the public in the legislative process enhances transparency and legitimacy. Public consultations, hearings, and feedback mechanisms enable citizens to contribute their perspectives and concerns. Developing a robust legal framework necessitates investing in legal education and capacity building. Training programs for lawmakers, judges, lawyers, and legal professionals ensure a competent workforce capable of interpreting and applying the law effectively.

Despite the strides made in legal development, Kuwait faces several challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, judicial backlog, and the need for legal reform in specific areas. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and reform.

Developing law in Kuwait is a dynamic process shaped by societal, economic, and global dynamics. By embracing change, fostering dialogue, and upholding the rule of law, Kuwait can navigate the complexities of legal development while safeguarding its values and aspirations. With a strategic approach and collective effort, Kuwait can continue to evolve its legal framework to meet the evolving needs of its people and the demands of the modern world.

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# EID AL FITR

Special Promotion

## Room Promotion

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

<p><b>Book for One-night</b> (Inclusive of breakfast)</p> <p><b>Book for Two nights and get 15% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)</p> <p><b>Book for Three nights and get 25% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)</p>	<p>Queen Cabana (2 persons). 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons).</p> <p>Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.</p> <p>Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.</p>	<p><b>BHD 76.230 net</b> <b>BHD 170.247 net</b></p> <p><b>BHD 64.800 net</b> <b>BHD 144.800 net</b></p> <p><b>BHD 57.200 net</b> <b>BHD 127.700 net</b></p>
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In house guests can get a **15% discount** on all food and beverage consumption

## Food & Beverage Promotion

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

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

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

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## Al-Alati appointed assistant undersecretary in Finance

# Schools told to activate fingerprint attendance for employees

### 'Let's unite to save lives together'

## IMA Kuwait to conduct 'Blood Donation Camp' on 12th April

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Responding to Kuwait Central Blood Bank urgent call of critical blood shortage; Join IMA & celebrate this Eid for the noble cause! Let's unite to save lives together.

Date: 12-April-2024  
Time: 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM  
Venue: Al-Adan Hospital, Blood Bank <https://bit.ly/3ZuFxs>

Organized by: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait in coordination with Central Blood Bank, Kuwait

'Anyone who saves a life is as if he saved entire Mankind' – Quran 5:32

Your blood donation can be a lifeline for someone in dire need.

Reflecting on the benefits of regular blood donation to donor:

- Promotes cardiovascular health and reduces cancer risk

- Regulates cholesterol levels, safeguarding against heart diseases

- Acts as a vital source of replenishment for the blood supply

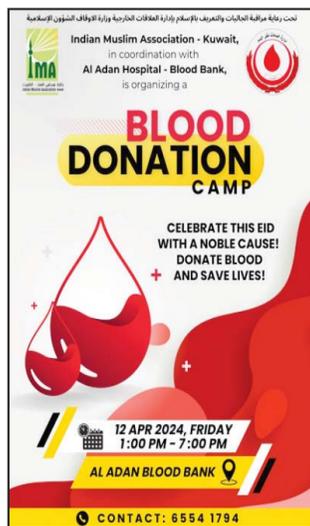
- Aids in weight management, while fostering overall well-being

- Assists in combating hemochromatosis, a disorder of excess iron absorption

- Stimulates the production of red blood cells, ensuring vitality

- Instills a sense of fulfillment and psychological rejuvenation

Registration: [www.imakuwait.com](http://www.imakuwait.com)



IMA Blood Donation Camp flyer.

org/join

Eligibility criteria:

- 6 months should be passed from malaria area/country arrival

- 2 months interval required between 2 blood donations

- Pregnant & menstruating females are not eligible for blood donation.

Help Line: Br. Ansari – 65541794

Let's make a difference! Donate Blood, Save Lives!

be formed by then. Therefore, this session is just a formality aimed at preserving the constitutional position of the Assembly; hence, the election of parliamentary positions and formation of committees will not take place that day.

## Kuwait condemns

Continued from Page 1

Showing judges a photo of German aid being airdropped over Gaza. Tams added that Berlin continues to provide humanitarian support to Palestinians "every single day under extremely difficult conditions, constructively engaging with international partners."

Nicaragua's case is the latest legal attempt to rein in Israel's offensive by a country with historic ties to the Palestinian people, after South Africa accused Israel of genocide at the same court late last year. It also comes against a backdrop of growing calls for Israel's allies to stop supplying the country with weapons - and as some supporters, including Germany, have grown more critical of the war.

Speaking in Berlin, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock told reporters that "from day one after Oct. 7, Germany has faced up to the incredible dilemma that Hamas deliberately entrenched itself behind civilians, deliberately used the human suffering of Palestinians and Palestinians in Gaza to expand its attack on Israel."

Echoing comments by the German lawyers in court, Baerbock added that Germany is committed to international law, including the right to self-defense. "This means that Israel has the right to defend itself, like every country in the world, against these terrorist attacks that continue to be carried out with the aim of destroying Israel as a state," she said.

At Monday's hearings, Nicaragua's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Carlos José Argüello Gómez, accused Germany of "failing to honor its own obligation to prevent genocide or to ensure respect of international humanitarian law."

However, another lawyer for Germany, Samuel Wordsworth, argued that the court could not rule Germany was violating the obligation to prevent genocide because its judges have not ruled that Israel is breaching the Genocide Convention.

In a preliminary phase of the case brought late last year by South Africa, the U.N. court has said that it is "plausible" that Israel's actions in Gaza could amount to breaches of the convention. "How can it be said that there was a failure to ensure respect of a third state, if the failure on the part of that third state to respect is not established in the first place?" Wordsworth said.

The court will likely take weeks to deliver its preliminary decision, and Nicaragua's case will probably drag on for years.

Israel strongly denies that its assault amounts to genocidal acts, saying it is acting in self defense after Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people.

Since then, more than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry. Its toll doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants, but it has said women and children make up the majority of the dead.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Germany is second only to the U.S. in supplying arms to Israel - but it would be harder, if not impossible, for the U.S. to be brought before the court because Washington does not recognize the ICJ's power to compel countries to appear before it. The U.S. also has not signed a protocol to the Genocide Convention that allows countries to bring disputes to the court.

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Hessa Al-Mutawa, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education at the Ministry of Education, has issued a directive to the educational districts emphasizing the urgent need to activate the fingerprint system for school employees no later than April 18, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a letter, Al-Mutawa urged the districts to expedite the activation process and ensure that all necessary data is provided.

She emphasized that the financial sector would take decisive ac-

tions, including withholding salaries without prior notice, for those employees who fail to activate their fingerprints until the required procedures are completed.

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**Ministerial decision:** Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem has issued a ministerial decision appointing Saad Al-Alati, the Assistant Undersecretary in the Ministry of Finance for the General Budget Affairs Sector, as the deputy representative of the Min-

istry of Finance on the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Kuwait, replacing Abdulaziz Al-Mulla, reports Al-Anba daily.

Saad Al-Alati, who has held the position of Assistant Undersecretary since May 2023, was appointed by the former minister of finance and minister of state for economic affairs, Manaf Al-Hajri. Al-Alati, a graduate with a Bachelor's degree in economics from Kuwait University, brings over 30 years of experience in the field of preparing government budgets.

In his role, Al-Alati oversees the preparation of estimates for the state's general budget, analyzing budget projects submitted by ministries, agencies, and independent entities while aligning them with the state's general policies.

He is also responsible for preparing the annual statement of the minister of finance on economic and financial conditions, as well as drafting and analyzing the budget. Additionally, he supervises the development of implementation rules for government agency budgets.

# Kuwait sees 45% surge in special companies set up in January '24

MoC identifies 400 sites for vehicle owners

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The number of companies of a special nature established during the first month of the current year saw a significant increase of 45% in January compared to the previous month (December 2023), reports Al-Anba daily.

Data from the Single Window Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry revealed that 694 companies of a special nature were established in January, compared to 479 companies in December 2023, marking an increase of 215 companies within just one month.

Companies of a special nature are those that carry out activities performed by their owners without the need for workers, a commercial premises, or the approval of another regulatory body. They serve to facilitate and support projects and are an exception to the requirements stipulated in the executive regulations of the Commercial Shop Licensing Law.

### Issuance

Since the issuance of the decision by the former minister of commerce in May 2023, the total number of companies of a special nature established in Kuwait has reached approximately 2,620. This includes 839 companies established in October, 608 companies in November, 479 companies in December, and 694 companies in January 2024.

In addition, the number of micro-companies increased from 153 in December 2023 to 208 in January 2024, representing a growth of 55 companies and a growth rate of 36%. Similarly, the number of private companies experienced significant growth in January 2024, reaching 993 companies compared to 851 companies in December 2023, with a growth rate of 17%.

However, the issuance of new mobile vehicle licenses has been suspended since March 2021 until the sector is organized and new sites are identified for these vehicles in cooperation with Kuwait Municipality.

The Ministry of Commerce has identified 400 sites for vehicle owners, including parking lots for public parks, waterfront areas, club parking lots, and external parking lots in some public benefit associations, in accordance with regulations set by the Kuwait Municipality, the General Traffic Department, and other relevant authorities.

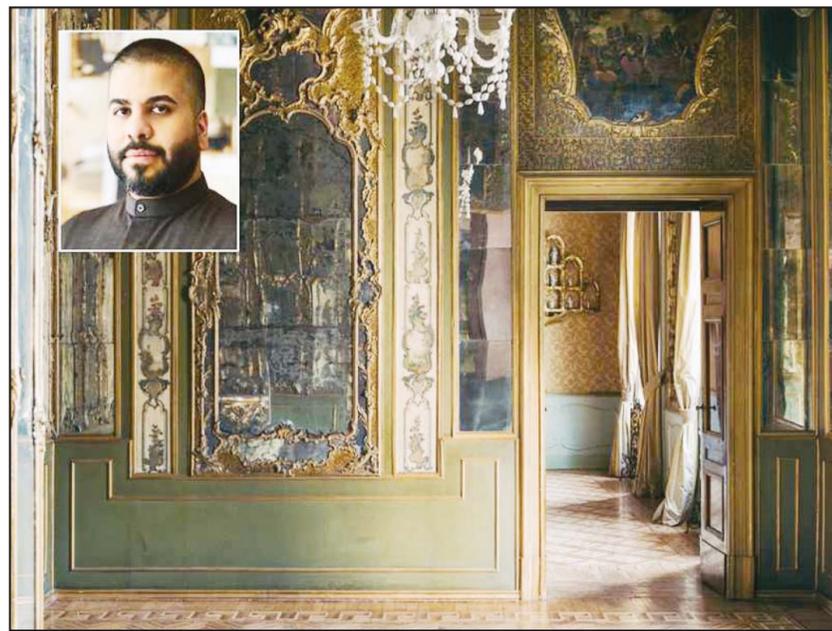
## Kuwait real estate cos see growth in assets, liabilities during 2023

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The value of assets held by real estate companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange totaled 5.8 billion dinars for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, marking a 4.3 percent increase from the 5.55 billion dinars recorded during the same period in 2022, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Conversely, the liabilities of these real estate companies amounted to approximately 2.89 billion dinars in 2023, reflecting a 5.1 percent increase from the 2.75 billion dinars reported in 2022. These liabilities represented about 49.9 percent of the total assets of the companies.

Mabane Company led the real estate companies in terms of asset value, reaching 1.35 billion dinars, followed by United Real Estate Company with assets worth 665.4 million dinars and Tamdeen Real Estate with assets totaling 562.5 million dinars.

Among the companies that experienced significant asset growth, Sanam Real Estate Company saw the highest increase of 35.7 percent, followed by Mabane Company with a growth rate of 19.4 percent.



Al-Nassar (inset) with one of the designed rooms.

Qabas photo

## Al-Nassar participates in int'l design exhibition

Kuwaiti designer Mishari Al-Nassar has been chosen among six international designers to collaborate with the renowned brand "Artemest" on the interior design of rooms within a historic palace in Milan, built in 1905, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This achievement underscores Kuwait's creative potential in design and architecture on the international stage. The designs will be showcased at Milan Design Week as part of an exhibition titled L'Appartamento by Artemest,

welcoming visitors from April 15 to 21 to view the creations.

Each of the six international designers, including Al-Nassar, will design different rooms in the palace using pieces of furniture, accessories, and sculptures from the "Artemest" platform, which includes more than 60,000 pieces handcrafted by the most skilled Italian designers.

Commenting on this achievement, Al-Nassar said: "It is a great honor for me to represent Kuwait and the region in the field of inter-

national design, stressing that Kuwait possesses amazing creative potential in the field of design and architecture that deserves attention and appreciation."

Regarding the mechanism for selecting the six designers, Al-Nassar explained that "Artemest" International evaluates architectural and interior design offices in America, Europe and the Middle East based on their work and their general taste in the field of design, and the selection is made after that.

## 'Complete appointment procedures within 30 days'

# CSC mulls new rules for gov't employment

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Civil Service Commission (CSC) Director Dr Issam Al-Rubaian issued Circular No. 4/2024 on the mechanism for approving the manpower needs of government agencies covered by the central employment system; indicating the commission automatically receives the manpower needs in April and October, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular stating that candidates for public sector jobs must complete the appointment procedures within 30 days; otherwise, such right will be forfeited, unless the concerned entity confirms causing the delay. Whoever refuses nomination to two government agencies will lose his right and his application will be returned to the system as a first-time registrant.

Following is the new mechanism for approving manpower needs, including the regulations for employment nomination in general and for categories not restricted by registration periods in particular:

1. The CSC receives a letter approved by the competent minister stating the manpower needs of the government agency, provided such needs are distributed among the approved job titles according to the classified job groups and not exceeding the number of vacancies in the financial grades allocated in the government agency's budget. Manpower requests are submitted twice a year - from April 1-30 and from Oct 1-31. These requests are automatically entered into the integrated systems of the CSC. It is not possible to enter only one manpower re-

quest for the purpose of nominating a specific person.

2. The CSC reviews the manpower requests received from ministers in a manner that is consistent with the nature of the government entity's work, the scientific specializations in the central employment system, and the number of employees in each job group in the entity, so that the manpower needs are reflected after review along with the number of vacancies in the financial grades allocated in the budget for each entity. This is in addition to the compatibility of scientific specializations with the nature of the government entity's work and the compatibility of manpower needs with the number of employees who hold the same approved job titles according to the job groups classified in each entity.

3. After completing the review in accordance with the previous clause, the commission shall present it to the Civil Service Council to approve the functional needs of each government agency based on what it deems appropriate and the commission's technical opinion. After the Council's decision is issued in this regard, the manpower requests are entered and automatically approved by the integrated civil service systems.

4. It is not permissible to amend the number of manpower needs for each entity in light of the number of vacancies in the financial grades allocated in the budget for each government entity except through the approval of the Civil Service Council in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the CSC.

5. For job categories that are

not restricted in terms of registration periods or roles in the central employment system, the CSC is authorized to complete their nomination procedures directly in accordance with the number of vacancies in the financial grades allocated in the budget for each government agency.

6. The candidate for employment must visit the entity for which he is nominated and complete all procedures and justifications for appointment within 30 working days from the date of the announcement of his nomination; otherwise, his right to be nominated to the entity will be forfeited, unless the entity for which he is nominated confirms it caused the delay.

7. The candidate who rejects the nomination for two different government agencies loses his right to the role he reached in the central employment system and is returned to the system as an employment registrant for the first time.

Therefore, all government agencies covered by the central employment system are requested to take into account the implementation of the aforementioned decision, without prejudice to Cabinet Resolution No. 1248 taken at its meeting No. 42-3 of 2023 on Nov 6, 2023. It stated: "Do not send any letters to the Civil Service Commission from the government entity that include only one need for a certain specialization for the purpose of nominating a specific person for employment. If they are sent, no measures will be taken regarding them and they will be considered as if they do not exist."

## Expats can

Continued from Page 1

The source pointed out that the period specified by the ministry is enough for all citizens and expatriates to undergo biometric fingerprinting, indicating that failure to do so will result in halting the transactions of those who failed to comply with the ministry's directive, but they will be prevented from entering the country.

The source stated that these expatriates will be required to complete the process upon their return; whether at the airport, in the fingerprinting centers in the six governorates or the shopping centers. He added that biometric fingerprints are taken only once and transformed into digital evidence, enabling the security services to verify the identity of any person and permanently prevent the entry of deported or banned people.

## New health

Continued from Page 1

In addition, Director of the Preventive Health Department Dr. Fahad Al-Ghamlas highlighted the ministry's expansion plan in services.

He explained that a large part of the Fahahel center is designated for testing expatriate workers as a form of health security, and is allocated to provide medical test services for new arrivals and for renewing the residency of existing expats.

Dr. Al-Ghamlas said, "An appointment needs to be booked in advance on the website, after which blood tests and X-rays are carried out. After completing the tests, the rest of the residency procedures will be completed with the Ministry of Interior."

It is one of the safety lines within the ministry's strategy to provide the service to facilitate citizens and all segments of expatriate workers, irrespective of whether they are under Article 18 or Article 20."

He highlighted the ministry's keenness to reduce waiting times.

## Amir postpones

Continued from Page 1

According to Al-Kandari, the inaugural session should be held within the specified period; in addition to the election of the speaker, deputy speaker and National Assembly Office members, and formation of parliamentary committees.

MP-elect Fayed Al-Jomhour called on his colleagues to attend the opening session on April 17, pointing out that the executive authority is suffering from unprecedented confusion. He said the people of Kuwait fulfilled their commitments, while the government is busy engaging in disputes.

The MPs-elect who announced that they will attend the inaugural session on April 17 are Bader Al-Dahoum, Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi, Muhanad Al-Sayer, Anwar Al-Fikr, Fahd Falah Bin Jame'e, Obaid Al-Wasmi, Jenan Bushehri, Bader Nashmi and others.

MP-elect and former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun affirmed there is no violation in Amir Decree no. 67/2024, since Article 106 stipulates the right of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to postpone parliamentary sessions for one month. He said this article does not specify if the postponement should be done in the beginning, middle or towards the end of the legislative term. He stressed that the decree does not contradict Article 87.

It should be noted that if the inaugural session is held on April 17, the government will be absent as it is not expected to

## World News Roundup

## Europe

**UK's Cameron in Washington for Ukraine talks:** British Foreign Secretary David Cameron is in Washington on Tuesday to press senior Republicans to unlock money for Ukraine, after meeting a skeptical Donald Trump in Florida.

Cameron says victory for Ukraine is "vital for American and European security," but the former president and presumptive Republican candidate is a critic of continued US support, and lawmakers aligned with him are holding up an aid package for Kyiv in Congress.



Cameron

The UK's Foreign Office confirmed the meeting and said it's "standard practice" for government ministers to meet allied nations' opposition leaders in election years.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in February with UK Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, who is the favorite to become prime minister in an election later this year. When Cameron was prime minister in 2012, he met the then-Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

British officials did not say how the meeting went. Cameron and Trump have had several notable differences of opinion in the past. Cameron called Trump's proposal during his first presidential campaign to ban Muslims from the US "divisive, stupid and wrong." (AP)

**Russians stage a rare protest:** Russians in the city of Orsk gathered in a rare protest Monday, calling for compensation following the collapse of a dam and subsequent flooding in the Orenburg region near the border with Kazakhstan.

Protests are an unusual sight in Russia where authorities have consistently cracked down on any form of dissent following President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Hundreds of people gathered in front of the administrative building in Orsk Monday, Russian state news agency Tass said, while videos shared on Russian social media channels showed people chanting "Putin, help us," and "shame."

The floods, caused by rising water levels in the Ural River, forced over 4,000 people, including 885 children, to evacuate in the Orenburg region, the regional government said Sunday. Tass said Monday that around 10,000 homes, including some 7,000 in Orsk, were flooded in the region and that floodwaters in the city are continuing to rise. Footage from Orsk and Orenburg showed water partially submerging buildings, including homes, as well as nearby fields. (AP)

**Bulgaria parliament approves caretaker govt:** Bulgaria's parliament on Tuesday formally approved an interim government to run the EU member country until snap parliamentary and regular European Parliament elections on June 9.

Dimitar Glavchev, 60, was sworn in as interim prime minister in a ceremony at the National Assembly, where his ministers were also taking the oath of office. He was picked by Bulgarian President Rumen Radev under recent constitutional amendments that limited his choice to just a few senior state officials.

Glavchev, the head of the National Audit Office and a former legislator from the center right GERB party and speaker of parliament, said the ministers he selected for his interim Cabinet are "equally distant from all political parties." (AP)

**Georgia governing party tries to pass law:** The governing party in the country of Georgia on Monday submitted to parliament a draft law calling for media and non-commercial organizations to register as being under foreign influence if they receive more than 20% of their budget from abroad.

The measure is nearly identical to a proposal that the governing Georgian Dream party was pressured to withdraw a year ago after large street protests.

Opponents of the measure denounce it as "the Russian law" because it is similar to a law that Russia uses to stigmatize independent news media and organizations seen as being at odds with the Kremlin.

Its foes also say that passing the law would obstruct Georgia's aim of joining the European Union, which issued the country long-desired candidate status last year. (AP)

**Tusk fails to win decisive victory in polls:** Poland's local and regional elections over the weekend failed to give Prime Minister Donald Tusk the sweeping victory he had hoped for in his efforts to reverse eight years of rule by a populist party that was accused by the European Union of eroding democratic norms.

Exit polls released after voting closed Sunday show that Tusk's centrist Civic Coalition did well in big cities, where it is popular with social liberals. However, the opposition Law and Justice party won more votes in elections for the country's 16 regional assemblies, maintaining its dominance in conservative rural areas in eastern Poland.

The elections were a test for Tusk four months after he returned to power as prime minister, a job he held previously from 2007-2014. (AP)

**6 northern European nations sign deal:** Six northern European countries bordering the North Sea said Tuesday that they have signed an agreement to work together to protect underwater infrastructure in the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean from an increased risk of sabotage.

The Danish Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities called the North Sea a hub for critical infrastructure that connects Europe through electricity cables, gas pipes and telecommunications connections and is an important source of renewable energy.

"An increasing mutual dependence across borders has arisen - and with it an increased risk of sabotage and unwanted attention from hostile actors," the Danish ministry said.

The move comes after the yet-unsolved 2022 explosions that damaged the Nord Stream gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea. (AP)

**Vatican top diplomat visits Vietnam:** The Vatican's top diplomat began a six-day visit to Vietnam on Tuesday as part of ongoing efforts to normalize relations between the two sides.

Richard Gallagher, the Holy See's foreign minister, will meet with his Vietnamese counterpart Bui Thanh Son and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and visit a children's hospital in the capital, Hanoi, state media Vietnam News Agency reported.

Gallagher will also hold Mass in Hanoi, in Hue in central Vietnam and in the financial hub of Ho Chi Minh City in the south.

Last December, Archbishop Marek Zaleski became the first Vatican representative to live in the Southeast Asian country and open an office there.

Vietnam described that appointment as a "historic moment," underscoring a stronger relationship that could have implications in the future for the Holy See's ties with China. The Vatican's relationship with Vietnam has long been seen as a model for its relations with China. (AP)

**Italy's police arrest Tajik man:** Police on Monday arrested a Tajik national accused of being an active member of the Islamic State group after he landed at Rome's international airport on a flight from the Netherlands, authorities said.

An international arrest warrant accused the man, identified only as S.I., of having gone to Syria to fight for IS in 2014. The man was described as a fugitive who has used numerous aliases, birth dates and nationalities, including from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

Police said he was arrested after landing on a flight from Eindhoven, Netherlands, just before noon, as part of beefed up security in Rome as a result of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. (AP)



Louisiana Gov Jeff Landry addresses members of the House and Senate on opening day of a legislative special session focusing on crime, Feb 19, 2024, in the House Chamber at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, La. Louisiana's Republican-controlled Senate has advanced a bill on April 8, that would empower state and local law enforcement to arrest and jail people in the state who enter the US illegally, similar to embattled legislation in Texas. (AP)

## Politics

## Mayorkas impeachment trial set to start

## Biden promotes student loan relief in Wis

MADISON, Wis., April 9, (AP) — US President Joe Biden said Monday that more than 30 million borrowers would see "life-changing" relief from his new plan to ease their student loan debt burdens, a fresh attempt by the Democratic president to follow through on a campaign pledge that could buoy his standing with younger voters.

He detailed the initiative, which has been in the works for months, during a trip to Wisconsin, one of a handful of battleground states that could decide the outcome of Biden's likely November rematch with Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee.

Biden said he wanted to "give everybody a fair shot" and the "freedom to chase their dreams" as he lamented the rising cost of higher education.

"Even when they work hard and pay their student loans, their debt increases and not diminishes," he said. "Too many people feel the strain and stress, wondering if they can get married, have their first child, start a family, because even if they get by, they still have this crushing, crushing debt."

Biden's trip, which included a stop at a Chicago fundraiser on the way back to Washington, comes a week after primary voting in Wisconsin highlighted political weaknesses for him as he prepares for the general election.

## Double

More than 48,000 Democratic voters chose "uninstructed" instead of Biden, more than double his narrow margin of victory in the state in 2020.

Trump also saw a significant number of defections during the state's primary, with nearly 119,000 Republicans voting for someone other than him.

But Biden's results, which echoed similar protest votes in states like Michigan and Minnesota, have rattled Democrats who are eager to solidify the coalition that catapulted him into the White House in the first place.

A critical fracture has been the Israel-Hamas war. Younger voters are more likely to disapprove of Biden's

ending support for Israel's military operation in Gaza, which has caused heavy casualties among Palestinian civilians.

Concerns about the war have spread throughout the Madison area, said Democratic Rep Mark Pocan, who represents the city. Pocan said he was "surprised to see the intensity on the issue" from all ages of voters, and he wanted Biden to be aware.

"I just want to make sure he knows that if we're going to have a problem, that could be the problem in Wisconsin," Pocan said.

Some young voters have been impatient with Biden's attempts to wipe away student loan debt. The Supreme Court last year foiled his first attempt to forgive hundreds of billions of dollars in loans, a decision that Biden called a "mistake."

## Targeted

Since then, the White House has pursued debt relief through other targeted initiatives, including those for public service workers and low-income borrowers. Administration officials said they have canceled \$144 billion in student loans for almost 4 million Americans.

At the same time, the Department of Education has been working on a more expansive plan to replace Biden's original effort. Monday's announcement was an opportunity to energize young voters whose support Biden will need to defeat Trump in November.

Vice President Kamala Harris went to Pennsylvania, another battleground state, on Monday to promote debt relief in a meeting with city and school employees in Philadelphia.

"You shouldn't have to make a decision whether you serve or be able to pay your bills," she said.

Republicans said Biden's plan shifts the financial burden of college tuition onto taxpayers who didn't take out loans to attend school, and Kris Kobach, the Republican attorney general in Kansas, accused him of trying to twist the law "beyond recognition."

The Job Creators Network, a conser-

vative advocacy group that challenged Biden's original plan, is considering legal action as well. The organization is backed by Bernie Marcus, a Republican donor who is also hosting a fundraiser for Trump in Atlanta on Wednesday. Trump described Biden's debt relief initiative as an "election-enhancing money grab" two years ago.

Biden's new plan would expand federal student loan relief to five new categories of borrowers through the Higher Education Act, which administration officials believe puts it on a stronger legal footing than the sweeping proposal that was killed by a 6-3 court majority last year.

The plan is smaller and more targeted than Biden's original plan, which would have canceled up to \$20,000 in loans for more than 40 million borrowers. The new plan would cancel some or all federal student loans for more than 30 million Americans, the White House said. The Education Department plans to issue a formal proposal in the coming months, with plans to start implementing parts of the plan as early as this fall.

## Also:

**WASHINGTON:** House Republicans will bring their case against **Alejandro Mayorkas** to the Senate this week, two months after impeaching the Homeland Security secretary. It will be the third time in five years that senators are sworn in as jurors in the court of impeachment.

The Republican-controlled House impeached Mayorkas by a single vote margin on Feb. 13, recommending that Mayorkas be removed from office over his handling of the U.S.-Mexico border. With two articles of impeachment, the House charges that Mayorkas has "willfully and systematically" refused to enforce existing immigration laws and breached the public trust by lying to Congress and saying the border was secure.

After holding back for several weeks, House Speaker **Mike Johnson** said at the end of March that he would send the two articles to the Senate on April 10.

Jennifer and James Crumbley are scheduled to appear in court Tuesday for the close of a pioneering case: They are the first parents convicted in a US mass school shooting.

The Crumbleys did not know their son, Ethan Crumbley, was planning the shooting at Oxford High School. But prosecutors said the parents failed to safely store a gun

and could have prevented the shooting by removing the 15-year-old from school when confronted with his dark drawing that day.

Prosecutors are seeking at least 10 years in prison for involuntary manslaughter.

Defense attorney Shannon Smith said Jennifer Crumbley is "not a threat to the community." Smith said she is even willing to put Jennifer Crumbley up in a guest house at her property, outfitted with an electronic tether. (AP)

**'Killer had specific targets':** A man opened fire Monday during a deposition hearing in a child custody case at a law office in an affluent neighborhood of Las Vegas, leaving two "very specific targets" dead before the shooter killed himself, police said.

Las Vegas police homicide Lt. Jason Johansson said at a news conference that the shooter, a man in his 70s, killed himself after shooting across the table and killing a man in his 50s and a woman in her 30s. Johansson said the shooting in the mid-rise office building in the Summerlin neighborhood happened several minutes after the hearing began Monday morning.

"It appears our two victims were very specific targets," Johansson said.

Seven people were in the room at the time of the shooting, Johansson said. The four others, including a court reporter, were able to quickly escape and call police, he said, and the children at the center of the custody case were accounted for and safe. (AP)



President Joe Biden speaks at an event about canceling student debt, at the Madison Area Technical College Truax campus on April 8 in Madison, Wisconsin. Biden said on Monday that more than 30 million borrowers would see 'life-changing' relief from his new plan to ease their student loan debt burdens. (AP)



Hodges



Trump

## America

**'Reject Trump immunity claims':** Special counsel Jack Smith's team urged the Supreme Court on Monday night to reject former President **Donald Trump's** claim that he is immune from prosecution in a case charging him with scheming to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The brief from prosecutors was submitted just over two weeks before the justices take up the legally untested question of whether an ex-president is shielded from criminal charges for official actions taken in the White House.

"A President's alleged criminal scheme to use his official powers to overturn the presidential election and thwart the peaceful transfer of power frustrates core constitutional provisions that protect democracy," they wrote.

The outcome of the April 25 arguments is expected to help determine whether Trump faces trial this year in a four-count indictment that accuses him of conspiring to block the peaceful transfer of power after losing the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden. (AP)

**Louisiana proposes bill:** Louisiana's Republican-controlled Senate advanced a bill Monday that would empower state and local law enforcement to arrest and jail people in the state who entered the US illegally, similar to embattled legislation in Texas.

Amid national fights between Republican states and Democratic President Joe Biden over how and who should enforce the US-Mexico border, Louisiana joins a growing list of legislatures seeking to expand states' authority over border enforcement.

Proponents of the bill, such as the legislation's author GOP state Sen **Valarie Hodges**, say Louisiana has the "right to defend our nation." Hodges has accused the federal government of neglecting responsibilities to enforce immigration law, an argument heard from GOP leaders across the country.

Opponents argue the bill is unconstitutional, will not do anything to make the state safer, and will only fuel negative and false rhetoric directed toward migrants. (AP)

**Shooter's parents seek mercy:** The parents of a Michigan school shooter are asking a judge to keep them out of prison as they face sentencing for their role in an attack that killed four students in 2021.



Lithuanian Defense Minister Laurynas Kasciunas, (left), welcomes German Army Chief Lt. Gen Alfons Mairs as members of the Headquarters initial command element of the Bundeswehr's 45th Brigade Lithuania arrival by plane at an airport in Vilnius, Lithuania, on April. Germany has made a commitment to deploy a heavy brigade with three maneuver battalions and all necessary enablers, including combat support and provision units, to Lithuania. (AP)

## Lat/Am

## Noboa fulfills role

## Haiti police recover hijacked cargo ship

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, April 9, (AP): Haiti's National Police agency says that it has recovered a hijacked cargo ship laden with rice following a gunbattle with gangs that lasted more than five hours.

Two police officers were injured and an undetermined number of gang members were killed in the shootout that occurred Saturday off the coast of the capital, Port-au-Prince, authorities said in a statement.

It was a rare victory for an underfunded police department that has struggled to quell gang violence following a spate of attacks that began Feb. 29.

Police said in the statement Sunday that those responsible for the hijacking were members of two gangs, named the 5 Seconds and the Taliban gang. They said gunmen seized the transport ship Magalie on Thursday as it departed the port of Varreux.

Radio Télé Métropole reported that the gangs kidnapped everyone aboard the ship and stole some 10,000 sacks of rice out of the 60,000 sacks it was carrying.

The ship was headed to the northern coastal city of Cap-Haïtien.

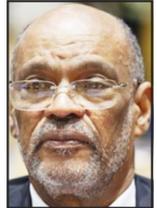
Also on Sunday, online news site Radio graphic reported that the Taliban gang used a front loader to demolish a police station in the Port-au-Prince suburb of Canaan where at least four police officers were killed in a recent attack. The station was no longer operational.

Gang violence continued on Monday, with police using megaphones to order the evacuation of the Champ de Mars area near the National Palace in downtown Port-au-Prince as heavy gunfire erupted nearby.

The most recent gunbattle between police and gangs comes more than a month after gunmen began targeting key government infrastructure. They have burned down multiple police stations, opened fire on the main international airport that remains closed and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

The ongoing violence forced Prime Minister Ariel Henry to announce he would resign once a transitional presidential council is formed.

Henry was in Kenya to push for the UN-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country when the attacks began and remains locked out of Haiti.



Henry

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**Protesters set state gov't building afire:** Protesters in southern Mexico set the state government building afire Monday and torched at least a dozen cars in the parking lot.

The protests occurred in the violence-wracked city of Chilpancingo, the capital of the Pacific coast state of Guerrero.

The protesters are demanding answers in the case of 43 students at a rural teachers college who disappeared in 2014. Another student from that college was killed in a confrontation with police in March.

The Guerrero state government said in a statement that it "regrets and condemns the violent acts." The government noted the state interior secretary had resigned following the March confrontation with students. The police officers involved are under investigation in the death.

Images of the protests showed at least a dozen vehicles engulfed in fire and flames shooting out of the windows of the state office building, which is near the main highway leading from Mexico City to Acapulco. The building, which houses the governor's office, was ransacked.

Students at the radical Ayotzinapa teachers' college, located on the outskirts of Chilpancingo, are known for their violent protests, which often involve hijacking buses and delivery trucks.

In March, protesters allied with the college commandeered a pickup truck and used it to ram down the wooden doors of Mexico City's National Palace.

□ □ □

**Retired Venezuela gen gets over 21 yrs in jail:** A retired three-star Venezuelan army general who twice tried to mount coups against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was sentenced Monday to over 21 years in prison after he admitted providing weapons to drug-funded rebels.

Oliver Alcalá, 62, of Caracas, Venezuela, was sentenced by US District Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein in Manhattan after pleading guilty last year to charges that he supported a terrorist group and gave weapons to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC - considered by the US to be a foreign terrorist organization.

Prosecutors had sought a 30-year prison sentence, saying he'd accepted millions of dollars in cocaine-fueled bribes. His lawyers had requested a six-year sentence. Hellerstein ordered him to spend 21 years and eight months in prison.

In a release after the sentencing, US Attorney Damian Williams said Alcalá and his co-conspirators tried to weaponize cocaine by helping the FARC with weapons as tons of drugs were shipped to the United States.

He said Alcalá "corrupted the vital institutions of his own country as he helped the FARC flood this country with cocaine - but no longer. Instead, he will now spend more than two decades in a United States prison."

□ □ □

**Ecuador's Noboa fulfills role:** While world leaders have expressed shock and bewilderment over Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa's decision to raid Mexico's embassy last Friday, the extraordinarily unusual move - and Noboa's relative silence about it - is unlikely to hurt him with his constituents. In fact, it's exactly the sort of no-holds-barred crimefighting they expect and voted for.

Ecuadorians were looking for their action man last election, fed up with widespread corruption and the robberies, kidnappings, extortions and murders fueled by the growing presence of international drug cartels. Noboa, often sporting bulletproof vests, sunglasses and leather jackets as well as the occasional smart-casual white T-shirt, so far seems to be fulfilling that role. If stopping lawbreakers in their tracks means breaching an embassy, then so be it. Ecuadorians interviewed over the weekend told The Associated Press.

"President Noboa has given a strong message to the nation," said Carlos Galecio, a political communications consultant and coordinator of the communications program at Ecuador's Casa Grande University. "(It's) a very powerful image boost."



An aerial drone photo taken on April 8 shows a view of the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda scenic area in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. (Xinhua)

## Asia

## Myanmar's KNU looks set to seize Myawaddy

## US Army to hold combat training in Manila

MANILA, Philippines, April 9, (AP): The US Army is introducing a joint battlefield training in the Philippines to improve combat readiness including by ensuring adequate supply of ammunition and other needs in difficult conditions in tropical jungles and on scattered islands, a U.S. general said.

The Biden administration has been strengthening an arc of military alliances in the Indo-Pacific to better counter China, including in any future confrontation over Taiwan. The US moves dovetail with Philippine efforts to shore up its territorial defenses amid disputes with China in the South China Sea and ability to respond to frequent natural disasters.

## Backed

About 2,000 US and Philippine army forces will join the dayslong combat drills backed by helicopters and artillery fire against armed adversaries in a jungle setting in the northern Philippines in June, Maj Gen Marcus Evans, commanding general of the US Army's 25th Infantry Division, said Sunday.

The combat training will be held in the Philippines for the first time at Manila's request. It's not clear whether the longtime treaty allies would decide to turn the maneuvers into an annual exercise, Evans said.

The drills from June 1 to 10 come at the conclusion of two larger back-to-back exercises between the allied forces - the Salaknib army-to-army exercises, which opened Monday, and the Balikpapan, which will start later in April and involve about 16,000 US and Philippine forces. Several countries including Japan will send observers.

"We have to be prepared to respond to humanitarian crisis, natural disaster crisis, and that is what this training affords us the opportunity to do," Evans told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "While we feel confident in our overall readiness and training path, it's something that we can never be complacent in."

The combat-readiness drill in June "provides an excellent venue for us to get better in terms of our warfighting readiness, to enhance our partnership and then strengthen both our army profession by working together in a very challenging environment," Evans said.

The training was designed to be monitored live to show, for example, how much ammunition, batteries for two-way radios and food would be carried by US and Philippine forces and how they planned for resupplies in a remote battlefield. "It really is a way for soldiers, leaders and units to be able to see themselves during a simulated combat environment

## China's Xi meets with Lavrov in show of 'support' against Western democracies

BEIJING, April 9, (Agencies): Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Tuesday in a sign of mutual support and shared opposition to Western democracies amid Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"We would like to express our highest appreciation and admiration for the successes that you have achieved over the years and, above all, over the last decade under your leadership," Lavrov told Xi, according to Russian media.

"We are sincerely pleased with these successes, since these are the successes of friends, although not everyone in the world shares this attitude and are trying in every possible way to restrain the development of China - in fact just like the development of Russia," Lavrov said.

Russia's growing economic and diplomatic isolation has made it increasingly reliant on China, its former rival for leadership of the Communist bloc during the Cold War. In past decades, the two have closely aligned their foreign policies, held joint military exercises and sought to rally non-aligned states in groupings such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

## Also:

**BEIJING:** China stands ready to work with neighboring countries to expand the convergence of interests, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

Spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks at a daily press briefing when answering a relevant query. According to media reports,

scenario," Evans said.

## Also:

**BANGKOK:** Guerrilla fighters from Myanmar's Karen ethnic minority claimed Monday to be close to seizing control of a major trading town bordering Thailand, as soldiers and civil servants loyal to the military government appeared to be preparing to abandon their positions.

The occupation of Myawaddy town by the Karen National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Karen National Union, or KNU, appeared imminent as the guerrillas seized or besieged strategic army outposts on the town's outskirts, a spokesperson and

April has witnessed a host of high-level visits from Southeast Asian countries to China. Indonesian President-elect Prabowo's visit to China was the first leg of his first overseas visit as President-elect. Last week, Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Lao Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith, Timor-Leste's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Bendito dos Santos Freitas, and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son respectively in Guangxi. This week, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, Vietnamese National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue and Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat are visiting China.

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**BEIJING:** A top Chinese leader will lead a delegation to North Korea this week, both countries announced Tuesday.

Zhao Leji, who is chairman of the National People's Congress and considered the No. 3 official in the ruling Communist Party, will visit North Korea from Thursday to Saturday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

No details were released on what was described as a goodwill visit, except that the delegation would attend the opening ceremony for the "China-North Korea Friendship Year."

"The specific arrangements for the visit are still under negotiation," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said.

members of the KNU said Monday.

Myawaddy, in Kayah state, is Myanmar's most active trading post with Thailand, and its fall would be the latest in a series of shock defeats suffered by the army since last October, when an alliance of three other ethnic rebel groups launched an offensive in the country's northeast. Over the past five months, the army has been routed in northern Shan state, where it conceded control of several border crossings, in Rakhine state in the west, and is under growing attack elsewhere. The military government under Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing has acknowledged it is under pressure, and recently introduced conscription to boost its ranks.

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**Rwanda's leader concerned:** Rwandan President Paul Kagame said Monday he was concerned by what he saw as a US failure to characterize the 1994 massacres as a genocide against the country's minority Tutsis.

Kagame told reporters that the issue was an "element of discussion" in talks with former US President Bill Clinton, who led the American delegation to a ceremony Sunday commemorating the 30th anniversary of the genocide in which Hutu extremists slaughtered about 800,000 people, most of them Tutsis, in a government-orchestrated campaign.

Many Rwandans criticized US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for failing to specify that the genocide targeted the Tutsis when he wrote late Sunday: "We mourn the many thousands of Tutsis, Hutus, Twas, and others whose lives were lost during 100 days of unspeakable violence."

Responding to a journalist's question about Blinken's post on the social platform X, Kagame said he believed he had reached an agreement with US authorities a decade ago for them not to voice any criticism on the genocide anniversary. (AP)



Police take cover during an anti-gang operation next to the National Palace in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 8. Haiti's National Police agency says that it has recovered a hijacked cargo ship laden with rice following a gunbattle with gangs that lasted more than five hours. (AP)



Kagame



Blinken

## Africa

**Rescue operation in N.Kenya:** Police and Red Cross workers are engaged in a rescue operation at a swollen river in northern Kenya after a bus carrying an unknown number of passengers was swept away by floodwaters.

Police say some of the passengers managed to escape just before the bus was submerged while others climbed onto the roof.

It is not clear how many are still trapped inside the bus.

The incident happened just hours after Kenya's roads agency announced the closure of another section of the same road that was flooded after the Tana River swelled due to continuing heavy rains.

Kenya Red Cross said it had dispatched two rescue boats to "ensure swift and effective response."

The government had on Monday issued a flood alert to residents of Tana River and Lamu counties after a dam upstream was breached by flooding. (AP)

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**Storms kill 1 in S.African coast:** Storms with heavy rain and strong winds battering South Africa's coastal province of Western Cape, which includes Cape Town, have left at least one person dead, officials said on Monday.

The severe weather led to the closure of schools and highways mainly in the Cape Winelands, Overberg and West Coast regions where damage to houses, roads and public infrastructure was reported. Officials remained on high alert for more extreme weather on Monday.

The one person who died was a security officer who was patrolling on a bike when a tree that was uprooted by heavy winds fell on him, officials said.

Heavy winds also fanned wildfires in the Glencairne area in Cape Town, where at least eight houses were gutted, according to a local representative.

By Monday afternoon, some parts of the city of Cape Town were without electricity because of power outages. Western Cape Premier Alan Winde said that the provincial government deployed emergency services.

"We appeal to everyone to please exercise extreme caution and avoid unnecessary travel," he said, adding that at least 26 schools had suffered weather-related damages across the province.



In this video grab provided by Television Mozambique, people stand on April 8, next to a boat that local media say capsized on April 7 off Mozambique's northern coast in Nampulua province. The makeshift ferry reportedly was overcrowded with residents fleeing a feared cholera outbreak when it capsized, killing at least 98 people including children, media reports say. (AP)

## oil down

The price of Kuwaiti oil per barrel went down 80 cents to USD 90.63 per barrel on Monday compared to last Friday's price which was USD 91.43 pb, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation on Tuesday.

In international markets, the Brent crude oil future contracts decreased by 79 cents to USD 90.38 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude went down 48 cents to USD 86.43 pb. (KUNA)

The US investment bank Goldman Sachs has upheld its forecast for Brent crude oil to reach \$100 per barrel within its baseline scenario, reports Al-Anba daily.

This decision is underpinned by several key factors outlined in a research note: Strong Growth in Global Oil Demand -- Goldman Sachs anticipates robust growth in global oil demand in 2024, projecting an increase of 1.5 million barrels per day. This forecast exceeds the expectations of both the International Energy Agency and the market consensus.

Balanced Risks -- The bank identifies balanced risks associated with its forecast. While there are factors that could push expectations for oil prices higher in Europe, there are also factors that may dampen expectations in China.

Geopolitical Stability -- Goldman Sachs assumes that there will be no additional negative impacts on oil supplies due to geopolitical tensions. This stability contributes to the bank's confidence in maintaining its price forecast.

OPEC+ Production -- The bank ex-

## strong global oil demand boosts Goldman's confidence

pects OPEC+ to boost production, driven by the bloc's high spare capacity. This anticipated increase in production is seen as a key factor in maintaining oil price stability.

Commercial Oil Reserves -- The bank's OPEC model suggests that the decline in commercial oil reserves in OECD countries makes an increase in production more likely.

Avoidance of Extreme Price Levels -- Goldman Sachs believes that OPEC+ will not push oil prices to extreme levels. Ex-

treme prices, as seen in the 2022 energy crisis, can negatively impact long-term demand for OPEC oil.

Recent market dynamics, such as heightened expectations for oil demand, geopolitical risks, and strong economic data, have also contributed to the rise in crude oil prices.

These include positive indicators from manufacturing activity in key economies like China, the United States, and India, as well as strong employment numbers in the US.

## Market Movements 09-04-2024

		Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+426.09	39,773.13			
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+632.16	70,352.19			

# Business

## Mixed performance in stock market

### Leading stocks drive surge in Kuwait stock market liquidity

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Stock market liquidity surged in the closing session of the holy month of Ramadan, jumping by 36% to reach a total of 43.3 million dinars, compared to 31.7 million dinars the day before yesterday, reports Al-Anba daily.

Notably, liquidity was concentrated around leading stocks such as KFH, Watani, Zain, and Boubyan Bank, with the primary market receiving 90% of this liquidity, amounting to about 39 million dinars.

The stock market's performance yesterday was mixed, with the first market index declining due to profit-taking from stocks that had seen significant increases during the disclosure of last year's

financial results and accompanying cash dividends and grants. However, the main market witnessed a limited rise as some stocks listed in the market were targeted for investment.

Despite the mixed performance, the market's value decreased as a result of profit-taking operations, with the value decreasing by about 50 million dinars, constituting a 0.11% decline from the previous day's total value of 42.33 billion dinars.

Trading volumes increased by 28%, with 110 million shares traded compared to 86 million shares the day before yesterday. However, most market sectors tended to decline, with the weighted indices for 8 sectors, led by the Industrial sector, decreasing by

2.8%, followed by consumer services by 1.6%. The banking sector, however, saw a slight increase of 0.48% in yesterday's session.

At the close of trading, the Premier Market Index declined by 0.17%, losing 13.5 points to reach 7,859 points, while the Main Market Index rose by 0.16%, adding 9.4 points to reach 5,960 points; the General Market Index declined by 0.12%, losing 8.4 points to reach 7,187 points.

In another development, the Kuwait Stock Exchange announced the Eid Al-Fitr holiday schedule, with work suspended from Tuesday, April 9, is scheduled to resume as usual on Sunday, April 14.

# Gold prices reach record highs amid economic, geopolitical uncertainties

Iron ore prices surge, with futures climbing above \$100 per ton

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Gold prices continue to soar, breaking numerous record levels amid a backdrop of economic and geopolitical factors. Analysts express optimism about the precious metal's prospects, but caution that its continued ascent hinges on evolving economic conditions and central bank decisions throughout the year, reports Al-Anba daily.

Gold achieved a record settlement at the close of last week's trading, marking the thirteenth time since the beginning of 2024. Futures contracts for June delivery ended at an unprecedented \$2,345.40 per ounce. The metal has seen its third consecutive weekly gain, rising over 4% in the past week alone. Despite this, gold remains distant from its inflation-adjusted record of \$3,000 per ounce set in 1980.

Several factors have fueled this rise. Geopolitical uncertainties, including the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and tensions in the Middle East, have bolstered gold's status as a safe-haven asset. Speculation surrounding potential interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve has also contributed, alongside significant purchases of gold by central banks worldwide.

China, in particular, has led the trend of increasing gold reserves, acquiring the metal for the 16th consecutive month in February. Its gold reserves have seen a substantial uptick, with 2023 marking the largest increase in purchases since data collection began in 1977.

Despite these bullish factors, gold's upward trajectory faces challenges. While US stock indices reached record highs in March, concerns over the Federal Reserve postponing interest rate cuts have emerged. The strength of the US dollar, which negatively impacts gold prices by making them more expensive for holders of other currencies, presents another obstacle.

Analysts hold cautious but positive expectations for gold's future. Many anticipate continued upward movement, driven by expectations of lower real interest rates and geopolitical tensions. However, some analysts remain

skeptical about gold's potential for significant gains compared to other commodities like cocoa, which have experienced surges exceeding 100% in 2024 due to supply constraints in countries like Ivory Coast and Ghana.

Meanwhile, the Al-Jarida daily reported the iron ore prices surged, with futures climbing above \$100 per ton, driven by speculation of increased demand in China, the world's largest steel producer. Futures contracts soared more than 4 percent, reaching close to \$103 a ton in Singapore. This rebound followed two consecutive weeks of losses, during which prices hit their lowest levels since May of the previous year. The uptick coincided with the return of Chinese traders after an extended weekend.

According to a research note from China Industrial Futures, there is potential for improvement in steel demand from both the construction and manufacturing sectors following recent stimulus measures. Additionally, factories are gradually restarting smelting furnaces amid improved profits.

Despite being among the worst-performing commodities since the beginning of 2024, iron ore witnessed a

notable increase during trading, rising by 4.5 percent to \$102.80 per ton in Singapore as of 10:48 am. Meanwhile, futures contracts denominated in yuan also surged in Dalian, alongside an increase in steel futures in Shanghai.

As the largest importer of iron ore globally, China's factories rely heavily on seaborne shipments, predominantly sourced from mining companies in Australia and Brazil, such as Rio Tinto Group and Vale. Despite concerns surrounding China's real estate crisis impacting demand, recent macroeconomic data from the country showed slight improvements, with factory activity surpassing expectations in March.

Copper prices on the Shanghai Stock Exchange surged to an all-time high, mirroring the gains seen on the London Metal Exchange last week, amidst expectations of a potential interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve. Copper futures for May delivery on the Shanghai Stock Exchange soared by 2.1 percent today, reaching a historic level of 75,170 yuan (\$10,390) per ton.

Conversely, copper futures on the London Metal Exchange experienced a slight decline of 0.6 percent, settling at \$9,273.50 per metric ton, after surging approximately 5.2 percent the previ-

ous week. The upturn observed on the London Stock Exchange, which influenced Shanghai this week, stemmed from investors' optimism about a Federal Reserve interest rate cut, coupled with a weakened dollar that propelled copper prices on the London Stock Exchange to their highest point in 14 months last Thursday.

However, robust jobs data released on Friday indicated that the largest global economy added more jobs than anticipated in March, suggesting that the Federal Reserve may not be eager to implement interest rate cuts in the immediate future. Market participants are eagerly awaiting the release of inflation data in the United States later this week, hoping for insights into the Federal Reserve's monetary policy trajectory.

Meanwhile, aluminum futures contracts on the London Stock Exchange declined by approximately 0.4 percent, lead prices dipped by 0.6 percent, and zinc experienced a decrease of about 1.9 percent. In contrast, the same commodities on the Shanghai Stock Exchange witnessed gains of around 1.4 percent, 1.7 percent, and 2.2 percent, respectively.

## Dubai company's Africa land deals spark indigenous livelihood fears

ABUJA, April 9, (AP): Matthew Walley's eyes sweep over the large forest that has sustained his Indigenous community in Liberia for generations. Even as the morning sun casts a golden hue over the canopy, a sense of unease lingers. Their use of the land is being threatened, and they have organized to resist the possibility of losing their livelihood.

In the past year, the Liberian government has agreed to sell about 10% of the West African country's land - equivalent to 10,931 square kilometers (4,220 square miles) - to Dubai-based company Blue Carbon to preserve forests that might otherwise be logged and used for farming, the primary livelihood for many communities.

Blue Carbon, which did not respond to repeated emails and calls seeking comment, plans to make money from this conservation by selling carbon credits to polluters to offset their emissions as they burn fossil fuels. Some experts argue that the model offers little climate benefit, while activists label it "carbon colonialism."

### Legal

Activists say the government has no legal right over the land and that Liberian law acknowledges Indigenous land ownership. The government and Blue Carbon reached an agreement in March 2023 - months after the company's launch - without consulting local communities, which are concerned about a lack of protections.

"There is no legal framework on carbon credits in Liberia, and so we don't have rules and regulations to fight for ourselves as a community," said Walley, whose community, Neezuin, could see about 573 square kilometers signed away to Blue Carbon.

A raft of agreements between at least five African countries and Blue Carbon could give the company control over large swaths of land on the continent. In Kenya, Indigenous populations already have been evicted to make way for other carbon credits projects, according to rights groups like Amnesty International and Survival International.

They have criticized the projects as "culturally destructive," lacking transparency and threatening the livelihoods and food security of rural African populations.

"Many such projects are associated with appalling human rights abuses against local communities at the hands of park rangers," said Simon Counsell, an independent researcher of conservation projects in Kenya, Congo, Cameroon and other countries.

"The majority had involved evictions, most were involved in conflict with local people, and almost none had ever sought or gained the landholders' consent," said Counsell, former director of Rainforest Foundation UK, a nonprofit that supports both human rights and environmental protection.

Africa contributes the least to greenhouse gas emissions, but its vast natural resources, such as forests, are crucial in the fight against climate change. Indigenous populations traditionally rely on forests for their livelihoods, highlighting the tension between climate goals and economic realities.

Cash-strapped governments in Africa are attracted to these kinds of conservation initiatives because they generate badly needed income despite concerns about human rights abuses and transparency.

Blue Carbon has only one project under development in Zimbabwe, which involves approximately 20% of the country's land, according to the company's website.

However, through opaque agreements, the company has potentially secured staggering amounts of land across other countries, including Kenya, Liberia, Tanzania and Zambia, since forming in late 2022.

In Liberia, the government is required to obtain prior, informed consent from communities before using their land for such deals. However, former President George Weah's government moved forward without it, according to activists and communities.

Communities only became aware

after activists mobilized against the deal following a leak through a network of nongovernmental organizations. Although the agreement said talks with communities would be done last November, locals and activists reported that they did not happen.

"There is no opposition to fighting climate change, but it has to be done in a way that respects people's rights and does not breach the law," said Ambulah Mamey, a Liberian activist who has helped galvanize opposition to the Blue Carbon deal.

After protests from communities and activists, Weah's government halted the deal before the presidential vote last year, but he still lost the election.

"We resolved to vote the George Weah government out to stop the deal, which will devastatingly affect communities, but we don't know if the new government will restart it," said Walley, the community leader. "We are waiting for them."

The new director of Liberia's Environmental Protection Agency, Emmanuel Yarkpawolo, said the Blue Carbon deal was rushed through "a quick process that does not lend itself to a good level of transparency."

He confirmed the deal is on hold and said Liberia is now developing rules for selling carbon credits, which will "emphasize balance between environmental goals and economic well-being of our people and take care of concerns about Indigenous people's rights, including alternative livelihood means."

Blue Carbon in March sent out invitations to developers, asking for proposals for carbon offset projects. The company document, which activists shared with The Associated Press, does not say which countries it is targeting, just that basic land information will be shared with applicants.

The process seems "extraordinarily opaque" given the significant amount of some countries' land involved, said Counsell, the conservation researcher. He raised concerns about whether governments understand it, let alone the people living in those areas.

"They are precisely the kind of opaque and inequitable arrangements that the U.N. should very specifically be guarding against as it continues to develop the rules for a global carbon market," Counsell said in an email.

### Founded

Blue Carbon was founded by Emirati royal Sheikh Ahmed Dal-mook Al Maktoum, whose private holdings include fossil fuel operations. It has not disclosed the governments or companies that will buy the credits generated from its carbon projects.

The effectiveness of carbon offsetting itself is debated. One concern is the concept of "additionality," or the amount of carbon that a project claims it reduces through preventing deforestation. In many cases, it's possible those reductions could have happened anyway.

A study by Counsell and Survival International on one carbon credit initiative, called the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project, says livestock farmers whose livelihoods were upended by the project had operated within "broadly sustainable limits."

This, Walley said, is similar to the practice of communities in Liberia, where they have a duty to conserve forests under government rules. In addition, 40% of Liberia's forestland is already protected.

"This means that the project, in climate terms, has no 'additionality,' and any carbon credits generated do not represent genuine new savings of carbon," Counsell said.

Plus, over time, trees release the carbon they're storing back into the atmosphere through natural aging, forest fires or commercial use, which undermines the idea of forests absorbing carbon permanently, Counsell said.

There is also the problem of a "zero" benefit to the climate. Protecting forests in one area may result in deforestation elsewhere as communities affected by conservation projects move to earn a living.

## New TV channel to focus on positivity and success stories

# Al Habtoor Group unveils ground-breaking investment in new television channel dedicated to spreading positivity

DUBAI, April 9: In an era where the clamour of negative news often overshadows moments of joy and success, Al Habtoor Group announced its pioneering venture into the broadcasting realm with the launch of a new television channel. This initiative is not just an expansion of Al Habtoor Group's diverse portfolio; it is a beacon of positivity, designed to motivate, inspire, and spread happiness across the globe.

Set to be launched from an Arab country outside the United Arab Emirates, this television channel aims to break the cycle of negativity that currently pervades media landscapes.



Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Chairman of Al Habtoor Group.

Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Founding Chairman of Al Habtoor Group, shared his vision behind this ambitious project: "We are surrounded by negative news and dread, which is why we need to focus on positivity and highlight successes and good news around the world to motivate people to be happier and more productive. Think positively, and you'll attract positivity and have the energy to produce better. I am personally looking forward to embarking on this journey to reshape the narrative and bring positivity back into focus."

Marking Al Habtoor Group's first foray into broadcasting, this television channel is not just an addition

to the media landscape; it is set to revolutionise it. By promoting content that uplifts, inspires, and entertains, Al Habtoor Group aims to create a ripple effect of positivity that encourages viewers to see the world through a lens of optimism and possibility.

Scheduled to launch within the year, this channel promises to offer a diverse array of programming designed to elevate the human spirit and celebrate the countless success stories unfolding around us every day. Al Habtoor Group will reveal further details about the channel, including its name, programming line-up, and exact launch date, in the coming weeks.

**'Panama Papers' trial starts, 27 charged**

The trial of 27 people charged in connection with the worldwide "Panama Papers" money laundering started Monday in a Panamanian criminal court.

Those on trial include the owners of the Mossack-Fonseca law firm that was at the heart of the 2016 massive document leak.

The Panama Papers include a collection of 11 million secret

financial documents that illustrate how some of the world's richest people hide their money.

The repercussions of the leaks have been far-ranging, prompting the resignation of the prime minister of Iceland and bringing scrutiny to the leaders of Argentina and Ukraine, Chinese politicians and Russian President Vladimir Putin, among others.

The often-delayed trial opened Monday, with lawyers Juergen Mossack, Ramón Fonseca and other former representatives, lawyers or ex-employees of the firm facing money laundering charges.

Mossack was present in the courtroom, and said "I am not guilty of such acts."

Lawyers for Fonseca said he was in a hospital in Panama.

The case centers on allegations the firm set up shell companies to acquire properties in Panama with money from a sprawling corruption scheme in Brazil known as the Car Wash, or Lava Jato in Portuguese.

Fonseca has said the firm, which closed in 2018, had no control over how its clients might use offshore vehicles created for them. Both Mossack and

Fonseca have Panamanian citizenship, and Panama does not extradite its own citizens.

The two were acquitted on other charges in 2022.

The records were first leaked to the German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung, and were shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which began publishing collaborative reports with

news organizations in 2016.

U.S. federal prosecutors have alleged that Mossack Fonseca conspired to circumvent American laws to maintain the wealth of its clients and conceal tax dollars owed to the IRS. They alleged the scheme dates to 2000 and involved sham foundations and shell companies in Panama, Hong Kong and the British Virgin Islands. (AP)

**Biden admin makes announcement****\$6.6b set aside to ensure leading-edge microchips are built in US**

WILMINGTON, Del., April 9, (AP): The Biden administration pledged on Monday to provide up to \$6.6 billion so that a Taiwanese semiconductor giant can expand the facilities it is already building in Arizona and better ensure that the most-advanced microchips are produced domestically for the first time.

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said the funding for Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. means the company can expand on its existing plans for two facilities in Phoenix and add a third, newly announced production hub.

"These are the chips that underpin all artificial intelligence, and they are the chips that are the necessary components for the technologies that we need to underpin our economy," Raimondo said on a call with reporters, adding that they were vital to the "21st century military and national security apparatus."

The funding is tied to a sweeping 2022 law that President Joe Biden has celebrated and which is designed to revive U.S. semiconductor manufacturing. Known as the CHIPS and Science Act, the \$280 billion package is aimed at sharpening the U.S. edge in military technology and manufacturing while minimizing the kinds of supply disruptions that occurred in 2021, after the start of the coronavirus pandemic, when a shortage of chips stalled factory assembly lines and fueled inflation.

The Biden administration has promised tens of billions of dollars to support construction of U.S. chip foundries and reduce reliance on Asian suppliers, which Washington sees as a security weakness.

"Semiconductors - those tiny chips smaller than the tip of your finger - power everything from smartphones to cars to satellites and weapons systems," Biden said in a statement. "TSMC's renewed commitment to the United States, and its investment in Arizona represent a broader story for semiconductor manufacturing that's made in America and with the strong support of America's leading technology firms to build the prod-

ucts we rely on every day."

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing produces nearly all of the leading-edge microchips in the world and plans to eventually do so in the U.S.

It began construction of its first facility in Phoenix in 2021, and started work on a second hub last year, with the company increasing its total investment in both projects to \$40 billion. The third facility should be producing microchips by the end of the decade and will see the company's commitment increase to a total of \$65 billion, Raimondo said.

The investments would put the U.S. on track to produce roughly 20% of the world's leading-edge chips by 2030, and Raimondo said they should help create 6,000 manufacturing jobs and 20,000 construction jobs, as well as thousands of new positions more indirectly tied to assorted suppliers in chip-related industries tied to Arizona projects.

The potential incentives announced Monday include \$50 million to help train the workforce in Arizona to be better equipped to work in the new facilities. Additionally, approximately \$5 billion of proposed loans would be available through the CHIPS and Science Act.

"TSMC's commitment to manufacture leading-edge chips in Arizona marks a new chapter for America's semiconductor industry," Lael Brainard, director of the White House National Economic Council, told reporters.

The announcement came as U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is traveling in China. Senior administration officials were asked on the call with reporters if the Biden administration gave China a head's up on the coming investment, given the delicate geopolitics surrounding Taiwan. The officials said only that their focus in making Monday's announcement was solely on advancing U.S. manufacturing.

"We are thrilled by the progress of our Arizona site to date," C.C. Wei, CEO of TSMC, said in a statement. "And are committed to its long-term success."

**China conveys 'concerns' to US during Yellen's visit**

Issues relate to sanctions, tariffs, investment restrictions

BEIJING, April 9, (Xinhua): During U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's visit to China, China clearly expressed its serious concerns to the U.S. side about U.S. sanctions on Chinese companies, tariffs levied on Chinese goods, and restrictions on investment in China, according to China's Ministry of Finance.

Addressing a press briefing regarding Yellen's visit from April 4 to 9, Vice Minister of Finance Liao Min said that such actions by the United States harm the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies and people, and are also not conducive to the well-being of U.S. companies and people.

"China welcomes the U.S. statement that it does not seek to decouple from China, and hopes that the U.S. side will take concrete actions to stop sanctions and restrictions on Chinese companies," Liao said.

"The two sides believe that every country has legitimate needs to safeguard national security, but China stressed that the concept of 'national security' should not be generalized, and the so-called 'diversification' should not be used as an excuse to undermine the normal trade and investment exchanges between the two countries and around the world, as well as the stability of the industrial production and supply chains," Liao said.

He noted that in addition to these issues, the discussions between Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng and U.S. Treasury Secretary Yellen also covered other major topics, including the macroeconomic situations of both nations, the response to global challenges, and the exchange of mutual concerns.

According to Liao, China and the United States have reached two new consensus outcomes during Yellen's trip. First, the finance departments of both nations will take the lead in exchanges on the issue of balanced economic growth of the two countries and the world under the framework of the China-U.S. economic working group. Second, led by the People's Bank of China and the U.S. Department of the Treasury, discussions on financial stability, sustainable finance, anti-money laundering and other issues under the framework of the bilateral financial working group will be held continuously.

He added that the fourth meeting of these two working groups will also be held separately in the middle of this month in the United States.



U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen attends a press conference in Beijing, China, Monday, April 8, 2024. Ever since she ate mushrooms that can have psychedelic effects in Beijing last July, Americans and Chinese have been united in their interest in what Janet Yellen will eat next. (AP)

**Alibaba slashes cloud computing prices amidst intense competition**

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. has implemented significant price cuts for its cloud computing services, reducing prices for customers by as much as 59%. This move comes amidst intense competition in the cloud computing market and as Alibaba's cloud division faces challenges in maintaining its growth, reports Al-Anba daily.

The price cuts reflect Alibaba's efforts to remain competitive and stimulate growth in its cloud business. CEO Eddie Wu is leading a comprehensive reform process to revitalize Alibaba's core businesses, including e-commerce and cloud computing.

Alibaba's decision to scrap plans for a public listing of its cloud business in November was influenced by difficulties in obtaining the ad-

vanced Nvidia Corp chips needed to compete effectively. Additionally, increasing competition from rivals like Tencent Holdings Inc and state-backed service providers has posed challenges for Alibaba's cloud division.

The company has reduced prices for approximately 500 cloud products by an average of 23% across 13 regions, including Japan, Indonesia, the UAE, and Germany. These price cuts aim to attract new customers and retain existing ones amidst intensifying competition.

Despite being the largest provider of cloud services in China, Alibaba faces stiff competition from global giants like Amazon and Microsoft. Market share losses in China and limited expansion abroad have contributed to chal-

lenges for Alibaba's cloud business.

Alibaba's cloud division, which generated over \$11 billion in revenue in the last fiscal year, is expected to see a decline in revenue of 2% in the March quarter. Restrictions on US chips have been cited as a major challenge for Chinese cloud service providers, impacting their ability to access advanced AI hardware.

The price cuts announced by Alibaba follow previous domestic price reductions in February, signaling a broader strategy to stimulate growth and remain competitive in the cloud computing market. These price reductions are expected to benefit both new and existing international customers, making Alibaba's cloud services more affordable and accessible.

**Higher economic growth predicted for sub-Saharan Africa**

NAIROBI, April 9, (Xinhua): The World Bank has projected economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa to rebound to 3.4 percent in 2024, up from 2.6 percent in 2023.

According to the latest World Bank's Africa's Pulse report in the April 2024 edition, the recovery is primarily driven by greater private consumption growth as declining inflation boosts the purchasing power of household incomes.

"Investment growth will be subdued as interest rates are likely to remain high while fiscal consolidation constrains government consumption growth," says the World Bank's biannual survey of African

economies.

The report notes that increased conflict and violence in the sub-Saharan region will continue to weigh on economic activity.

The World Bank said that although civil strife is confined to small economies so far, military coups and the risk of coup contagion significantly impact international investor sentiment and the perception of risk toward the entire region.

According to the global lender, economic growth reduces poverty in sub-Saharan Africa less than in other regions, as measured by the growth elasticity of poverty.

Andrew Dabalen, chief economist for Africa at the World Bank, said in the report that per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 1 percent is associated with poverty reduction of only 1 percent in the region, compared to 2.5 percent in the rest of the world.

"In a context of constrained government budgets, faster poverty reduction will not be achieved through fiscal policy alone.

"It needs to be supported by policies that expand the productive capacity of the private sector to create more and better jobs for all segments of society," Dabalen said.

**JPMorgan's Dimon warns****Inflation & wars creating risks not seen since WWII**

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): The nation's most influential banker, JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, told investors Monday that he continues to expect the U.S. economy to be resilient and grow this year. But he worries geopolitical events including the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war, as well as U.S. political polarization, might be creating an environment that "may very well be creating risks that could eclipse anything since World War II."

The comments came in an annual shareholder letter from Dimon, who often uses the letter to weigh in broad topics like politics, regulation and global events and what it might mean to JPMorgan Chase, as well as the broader economy.

Dimon also used his letter to forcefully defend the firm's diversity and equality efforts, pushing back on the arguments from Republicans who have said such efforts at Fortune 500 companies, colleges and universities are discriminatory and promote left-wing ideology.

"America's global leadership role is being challenged outside by other nations and inside by our polarized electorate," Dimon said. "We need to find ways to put aside our differences and work in partnership with other Western nations in the name of democracy. During this time of great crises, uniting to protect our essential freedoms, including free enterprise, is paramount."

Dimon had particular concerns with continued large amounts of deficit spending by the U.S. government and other countries, as well as the need for countries such as the U.S. to re-militarize and continue to build out green infrastructure, all of which will likely keep inflation higher than investors expect.

Because of these issues, Dimon said he is less optimistic that the U.S. economy will achieve a "soft landing," which he defined as modest growth along with declining inflation and interest rates, compared to the broader market. While he says the investors are pricing in a "70% to 80%" chance of a soft landing, Dimon thinks the chances of such an ideal outcome are "a lot less" than that.

Also, at a time when some investors and economists are questioning whether the Federal Reserve can make good on its projection for three interest rate cuts this year, Dimon warned of the possibility of rates rising to 8% or higher. The Fed's benchmark rate is currently in a range of 5.25% to 5.50%.

"These significant and somewhat unprecedented forces cause us to remain cautious," he said.

As he has done in previous letters, Dimon said he continues to believe that the U.S. must take a significant leadership position in the world through trade, military might and a resilient economy backed by strong infrastructure spending. He has long argued that the U.S. must continue to hold its leadership role in the West, or it will eventually cede that role to China as an authoritarian superpower. This includes continuing to support Ukraine in its war against Russia, Dimon argued.

"Ukraine needs our help immediately, but it's important to understand that much of the money that America is directing to Ukraine is for purchasing weapons and equipment, most of which will be built in America. Not only is our aid helping Ukraine, but it is going directly to American manufacturers, and it is helping the country rebuild our military industrial capacity for the next generation."

Deepening communication, coordination of economic, financial policies and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation between the world's two largest economies are of great significance in stabilizing the economy and finance of both sides and the whole world, as well as promoting post-pandemic recovery and development, Liao said in response to a media inquiry during a press briefing.

"China always adopts an open and positive attitude towards this," Liao said.

The two sides agreed to hold in-depth discussions on balancing the growth of the two countries and

the global economy, and are willing to further strengthen economic exchanges and cooperation.

They also agreed to maintain communication on issues, such as debt handling of developing countries as well as the strategic reform of international financial institutions under multilat-

eral channels, such as G20, and advance cooperation on jointly addressing global challenges, according to Liao.

In the financial field, both sides agreed to carry out continuous exchanges and cooperation on issues including financial stability, sustainable finance, anti-money

laundering and countering terrorism financing.

In the next stage, China is ready to work with the United States to translate the above consensus into practical cooperation outcomes under the China-U.S. economic and financial working group.

**China, U.S. reach consensus on economic, financial cooperation**

BEIJING, April 9, (Xinhua): China and the United States have reached important consensus on economic and financial cooperation after in-depth consultations and discussions during U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's visit to China, China's Vice Finance Minister Liao Min said Monday.

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## Empowering individuals within the community through various initiatives

## stc concludes its 'With good, we go further' 2024 Ramadan campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the conclusion of its 2024 Ramadan campaign, which was launched throughout the holy month under the slogan "With good, we go further". The campaign, organized by stc on an annual basis, consisted of different activities and programs designed to emphasize the importance of performing good deeds for the greater good of the community. The initiatives launched under the campaign strongly aligned with stc's social responsibility and sustainability frameworks, while leveraging the Company's relationship with partners and collaborators.

Upon successfully concluding the campaign, stc indicated in a statement that the initiatives organized alongside key partners helped spread the overall message behind the campaign while empowering individuals during this special time of the year. Throughout the month, stc launched different campaigns and participated as a main sponsor in activities that helped support the objective behind its campaign, as well as the religious and traditional values behind the Holy Month of Ramadan. The approach behind the "With good, we go further" campaign was to show participants and the public the trickle effect of doing good in the community, and how the impact can grow towards a positive sustainable future.

**Empowered by Goodness**

With the main theme this year focusing on the importance of doing good, stc organized several to give back to different segments of the community. Following its Ramadan campaign theme, stc, with the support of its various partners, launched initiatives that aimed to spread goodness in the community in ways that positively impact members of the community. These initiatives came in the form of distributing meals, supporting worshippers during Ramadan, spreading awareness on various issues, and engaging with the community.

**Partnering with Zajel Volunteer Team to spread good**

As part of its Ramadan campaign, stc partnered with the Zajel Volunteer Team to help support members of the community during this special time of the year. Supporting the community and providing a helping hand to those in need are two essential factors under stc's corporate social responsibility framework, focusing primarily on creating a positive and lasting impact. The collaboration with the Zajel Volunteer Team included a variety of initiatives and activities that are aimed at supporting those who are in need and giving back to the community, reflecting the true essence behind the Holy Month of Ramadan. With the campaign embodying the theme of performing good deeds, stc and the Zajel volunteer team aimed to touch the lives of thousands throughout Kuwait. The activities under the campaign include distributing Iftar Saem meals throughout the month of Ramadan, accommodating those praying at Al-Rashid & Moza Al Salem Mosques, organizing a large Futoor with over 3,000 meals distributed in Mubarakiya in collaboration with the Kuwait Municipality, Gastronomia chain of restaurants as well as Jahez-Kuwait.

Additionally, the collaboration between stc and Zajel will include distributing Eid gifts to families in need at the Zajel Expo that will take place at Kaifan. As part of stc's Ramadan campaign, "Your calories = internet," and in cooperation with Flare Fitness, an internet line will be distributed to needy families during the exhibition, in addition to distributing gifts to children.

**Engaging with the younger generation through the Aspire Kids Club**

For the 3rd year in a row, stc sponsored the Aspire Kids Club to spread positivity and empower the younger generation through exclusive events. The initiatives include involving the kids to distribute iftar meals to those who are in need, memorizing and reciting the Holy Quran in collaboration with the Imam of Grand Mosque Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi, celebrating Gergean and distributing coloring books to children at Dar Al-Shoun, as well as additional initiatives that support kids in the country.

**Uniting the Community**

Over the years, stc has been active in introducing different concepts and initiatives that aim to bring the community together. The Company utilizes its vast resources to create different atmospheres that tailor to the different segments within the community. This year, stc, in collaboration with various partners, is set to amplify its impact by hosting a diverse array of events that not only entertain but also serve the community's broader needs. Reflecting the spirit of Ramadan, these initiatives are a testament to stc's dedication to enriching lives, strengthening communal bonds, and contributing to the societal fabric with generosity and goodwill.

**AL Qabas 2024 Padel Tournament**

For the 3rd year in a row, stc sponsored the widely popular Al Qabas Padel Tournament that is held during the Holy Month of Ramadan. This year's tournament included a range of categories that drew in a crowd of attendees of over 5000 on a daily basis that cheered on their favorite players. A total of 630 players as well as families with their children participated in the Al Qabas Padel tournament, the largest of its kind in Ramadan. It worth mentioning that tournament lasted for 10 continuous days and witnessed intense matches across the 9 different categories.

During the tournament days, the 'stc village' stood out



CEO Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab and Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi honor the children of the company's employees participating in the competition.



stc was honored during the closing ceremony of the tournament.



A group photo of Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi, middle school, competition participants, and the stc work team.



A group photo of Zajel volunteer work teams, stc public relations, and stc ambassadors.

**AlJasem:**

Whether it is helping individuals, giving back to the community, or educating the public, we can collectively work towards a positive change that can impact the future.



A group photo of children participating in Ramadan initiatives.

as a vibrant reflection of stc's dedication to innovation, community engagement, and upholding Ramadan traditions, both new and old. Showcasing the latest in digital and telecom solutions, stc provided the attendees with the new exclusive 'youth all the way' plans designed for the youth, the first of its kind in Kuwait.

The collaboration with Flare Fitness introduced the "Your calories = internet" competition, emphasizing stc's commitment to health and wellness. Furthermore, the Gergean activity brought a festive and cultural dimension to the event, enhancing the atmosphere with traditional acts in addition to the distribution of sweets to children, which highlighted stc's efforts to foster community spirit and create lasting memories.

**Quran memorization contest**

In collaboration with the Imam of Grand Mosque Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi, stc hosted a Quran memorization contest as part of its initiatives for its 2024 Ramadan campaign. The contest was held at the Al-Rashid Mosque in Adaliya and welcomed more than 80 contestants between the ages of 7-9 years old in the first category and 10-13 years old in the second category. As the hosts of the competition, stc encouraged its employees to enroll their children in the contest in commemo-

ration of the Holy Month of Ramadan. A total of 4 winners were announced at the end of the contest who received valuable prizes from stc and were recognized for their outstanding capabilities in memorizing versus from the Holy Quran.

**Worshippers' hospitality service during the last 10 days of Ramadan**

During the Qiyam prayers in the last ten days of Ramadan, a special service for worshippers was organized by stc during the last 10 days of Ramadan at different mosques in Kuwait. The worshipper's hospitality service was comprised of several initiatives that aimed to provide comfort and convenience during the last 10 days of Ramadan, which is considered a special spiritual time of the Holy Month. The activities launched under the hospitality service included supplying refrigerators filled with water and juices, distributing coffee and ice cream, supplying extra seating for worshippers, and additional services that aimed to enhance the experience for worshippers.

**Celebrating Gergean**

Spreading good amongst the younger generation, stc hosted several Gergean celebrations as part of its 2024 Ramadan campaign. One of the initiatives was held during the Al Qabas Padel Tournament, where stc brought a festive and cultural dimension to the event, enhancing the atmosphere with traditional Ramadan-themed music. Additionally, stc organized a Gergean event at its booth in Winter Wonderland Kuwait, where it distributed treats to visitors while hosting an interactive event for the children to participate in. The event witnessed popular games, traditional performances, the distribution of Gergean, in a fun filled atmosphere.

**Sharing Knowledge and Advice for the Good of the Community****Instagram stories with dawrat**

Within the framework of its strategic partnership with dawrat, stc launched an informative Instagram talk show to educate the public on the health benefits of fasting, as well as providing information on the Holy Month of Ramadan. The Instagram stories were conducted by Dr. Bassam Al Buthi, a seasoned professional and consultant in family medicine with a prestigious academic background. The stories were posted on stc's Instagram account throughout the month of Ramadan, witnessed positive engagement from followers and the community.

**The essence of Ramadan with Sheikh Fahad Al Moteary**

Spreading knowledge in the community leads to a more well-versed culture that embraces traditions. During its 2024 Ramadan campaign, stc collaborated with Sheikh Fahad Al Moteary to inform the public about the significance of the Holy Month of Ramadan for Muslims. Al Moteary shared a history of significant events during the Holy Month of Ramadan that were mentioned in the Holy Quran. He also provided an overview of the traditions and values behind the holy month.

**Cooking with Chef Ali Al Sadeq**

Considering that fasting is one of the core pillars during the Holy Month of Ramadan, stc collaborated with Chef Ali Al Sadeq to provide viewers with different cooking lessons to help prepare for Iftar meals. Al Sadeq showcased his cooking skills during Instagram stories that were posted on stc's social media platforms.

**Health tips with Dalal Bouhamdi**

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is essential not only in Ramadan but throughout life. To provide viewers with exceptional advice on eating habits and maintain a proper

regimen while fasting, stc collaborated with dietitian Dalal Bouhamdi. Through engaging story posts, Bouhamdi gave tips and health advice on how to manage food intake during the holy month, as well as ways to manage sugar intake while upholding a proper diet.

**Celebrating the stc family**

stc once again hosted its annual Ghabga, where the company extended a warm invitation to its employees and success partners. Under the leadership of Eng. Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab, CEO of stc, alongside the executive management team and staff from all subsidiaries, the event helped strengthen the internal bond amongst team members from the stc family.

stc also welcomed their partners in success as they are part of the Big stc family, and one of the main pillars in order to achieve our vision of excellence and leadership, as it was an opportunity to communicate, socialize and build relationships outside the scope of work.

**stc sofara'a program/initiative**

stc's 2024 Ramadan campaign witnessed the active participation of members from the Company's Sofara'a program, who contributed to various initiatives organized throughout the month-long campaign. The Sofara'a Program is an essential program launched by stc to provide employees from different departments with the opportunity to become stc ambassadors, representing the Company in forums, activities, and social media campaigns.

The initiative serves as an integral part of the Company's strategy, which aims to empower its exceptional employees while strengthening the stc brand in Kuwait. stc thanked all members of sofara'a program for their active and outstanding contribution in the various activities during Ramadan.

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "We are proud to witness the successful outcome of our 2024 Ramadan campaign, which held the slogan "With good, we go further". Every year, we try to introduce new initiatives under our campaign, while leveraging our past partnerships to continue organizing the initiatives that have become a tradition in Kuwait during the holy month. This Ramadan we also aimed to diversify our range of activities, programs and sponsorships, positively aligning with the core objectives behind our CSR and sustainability frameworks."

AlJasem added, "Our campaign this year focused on the importance of practicing and performing good deeds and actions for the greater good of the community. Whether it is helping individuals, giving back to the community, or educating the public, there are different ways in which individuals of all ages can work towards a positive change that can impact the future. Through our various initiatives, we tried to highlight how impacts, whether small or big, can lead to a brighter future."

AlJasem concluded, "As our Ramadan campaign draws to a close this year, stc wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the entities and organizations that joined us in collaboration. Additionally, we would like to thank the stc PR team, the stc Sofara'a members, and the Company's creative partners who worked side-by-side throughout the successful collaborations that took place during this campaign. We are profoundly thankful for the opportunity to contribute to the community and are proud of the continuous expansion and enrichment of our CSR framework. We look forward to continuing our mission of spreading good in the community, and hope that we have had a positive impact on all the individuals that participated and supported our initiatives this Ramadan."

Best account of its kind in Kuwait offering highest monthly expected returns

## KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's monthly and weekly draw

## ABK announces Halimah Abdul Jalil Boland as winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw prize

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Halimah Abdul Jalil Boland, as the KD10,000 Alfouz weekly draw winner on Monday, 8 April 2024, whereby the draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Since its launch, the Alfouz account continues to offer an impressive weekly draw of KD10,000. The Bank has recently expanded its offering by adding a new alluring monthly draw of KD20,000, and an exceptional quarterly draw of KD100,000.

The account also retains its hallmark mega annual draw of a KD5,000 monthly salary for ten years. Furthermore, the Bank now offers customers an increased opportunity to win for every KD10 as opposed to KD100 previously.

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account and/or increase their balances to



Alfouz winner flyer

have more chances in winning in the upcoming weekly draw winner announcement, which will take place on Monday, 15 April 2024. The higher the deposits, the higher the chances to win. For

more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the monthly and weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The monthly and weekly draw, based on customers' March deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. Abdulaziz Ridha Rajab Ridha and Alaa Jameel Abduljawad were named the lucky winners in the monthly draw, with each customer walking away with a prize of KD 5,000. As for the first weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Zeinab Bagheri, Saleh Mahdi Sulaiman Alshammari, Bader Haif Saad Alhajraf, Khaled Mohammad Khaled Alkhaleel, Ahmad Ali Ahmad Almansour, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Mohammad Motlaq Mohammad Alotaibi, Mohammad Tayeb Mohammad Bastaki, Abdulmohsen Haidar Abbas Yateem, Aisha Abdulrahman Ismael Alotaibi, Amany Abdelhamid Elbasmy Abdelkarim, Ahmad Qasem Abdulrahman, Tahany Abdelhamid Hassanin Elshaiat. As for the second weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Saad Owayed Marzouq Abu Alqoloub, Yousef Ali Yousef Bu Abbas, Ahmad Hani Khaleel Alhamar, Jasmeat Kaur Mohan Singh Chadha, Abdulrahman Saud Abdulaziz Almnayea, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Ah-

mad Yousef Rashed Alrashed, Hamed Hamed Salman, Mostafa Mohamed Abdulrahman, Thamer Hezam Tuwairish Alsaedi, Raghad Osamah Hussain Alkandari, Abdulaziz Saffah Shebeeb Al Khaldi, Yousef Khalid Mohammad Aljumaah.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are

automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.



Dirwaza poster

# Missy Elliott teams up with Busta Rhymes and Ciara for epic tour

LOS ANGELES, April 9, (AP) — At a 24,000-square-foot studio near downtown Los Angeles, Missy Elliott, Busta Rhymes and Ciara are preparing to film the video announcement for a tour no one saw coming.

This summer, the trio — along with legendary producer Timbaland — will hit the road for Elliott's first headlining arena tour, appropriately titled "Out of This World - The Missy Elliott Experience."

"Listen, I didn't realize I never had my own tour," says a smiling Elliott, holding her tiny Yorkie, named Fendi, dressed in Gucci. "The last real tour that I went on — like, consistent days — was with Beyoncé and Alicia (Keys)."

That was in 2004. Call it long overdue, but the timing is ideal. Over the last few years, Elliott — the forward-seeking artist — has been recognized for her talents as a musician, producer, songwriter and beyond.

In 2019, she became the first female rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and received the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award at the MTV Video Music Awards. In 2021, she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 2022, her hometown of Portsmouth, Virginia, named a boulevard after her. Last year, she became the first female hip-hop artist inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

"Getting those accolades, I feel like I've finally made it," Elliott says. "It feels amazing. I feel so blessed."

"What we're seeing now is kind of the rest of the world catching up," says Mona Scott-Young, Elliott's longtime manager and co-producer of the tour. "She's always been ahead."

In his green room, Busta Rhymes tells the AP that a tour had never come up in conversation across his decades of friendship and collaboration with Elliott.

"She doesn't really tour and she doesn't perform often. I just kind of understood my sister — the unspoken thing," he says. "You knew that if she decided to do this, go to the place where she was actually ready to tour, the s--- was going to be crazy because one thing Missy never did was play with her production. And you saw that in everything she did, from her shows to her videos."

He continued: "Missy will turn down \$10 million to do a show. ... She's super in control of her destiny in that way, and without compromise, is what made her super incredibly great. You can't do nothing but love her for that. She's a true artist in the purest form of the word."

## Nostalgia

And make no mistake, this isn't a nostalgia tour. "We are in the best spaces in our lives, individually and collectively, we're at the most experienced spaces in our lives," Rhymes says. "We're no longer Daniel-san. We're now all Mr. Miyagi senseis. You know what I'm saying? We're all at our perfection levels of what we've been doing and building together as a collective family for 30 years."

Elliott echoed the sentiment. "The lineup feels something special," says Elliott. "It's family. It's not put together."

On set, the trio are styled by longtime collaborator June Ambrose — all-black looks, like if the Avengers were impeccably dressed and made up of R&B and hip-hop legends. They take photos as a group

and individually.

After her solo photo shoot, Ciara starts to tear up.

"When I was a little girl, a little artist coming up, and you would ask me, 'Who inspires you?' I would infuse a combination of people: Michael Jackson and Prince and I would say Missy Elliott. She's one of the best performers of all time," she said.

"She means a lot to me as an artist but also as a person, as a sister. She's always someone I can call for the truth, and she's got to keep it real with me. She's someone I can call and cry to if I need to."

But ask her if there will be any on-stage collaborations — Elliott wrote and was featured on Ciara's huge hit "1, 2 Step"; Ciara's on Elliott's "Lose Control" — she laughs. "Missy's very particular. I don't want to ruin any surprises," she says. "I think from beginning to end, people will be on their feet. All of us have a lot of energetic records."

"Somebody's gonna die!" Rhymes jokes.

"And come back to life," Ciara cuts in.

"Let's keep it positive," Rhymes laughs. "Someone is gonna die and come back to life."

Later, Elliott offers a hint at what fans can expect from the show. "It's an experience, it's not just you seeing the artist on the stage," she says. "I want people to travel to those moments, those (music) videos, I want you to relive it on stage. It is most definitely a lot of good, good stuff. Expensive stuff!"

The "Out of This World - The Missy Elliott Experience" kicks off in Vancouver, British Columbia, on July 4 at Rogers Arena and concludes in Rosemont, Illinois, at Allstate Arena on Aug. 22.

Music

## Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Dev Patel on the set of 'Monkey Man.' (AP)

## Film

Dev Patel's directorial triumph amidst adversity

# A tale of faith, revenge in 'Monkey Man'

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., April 9, (AP) — Dev Patel first pitched "Monkey Man" as "a revenge film about faith."

"Faith can be such a beautiful, powerful thing. It can bring us together. At its best, it should make us fight for each other instead of fighting against each other," says Patel, who is making his feature directorial and screenwriting debut with the action thriller out Friday.

"Monkey Man" was inspired by the legend of Hanuman — a Hindu deity revered for his strength, loyalty and courage. Patel says that he saw a lot of parallels between Hindu mythology and the iconography of the superheroes that we know of today, like Superman.

The film centers on a character named Kid — played by Patel — who makes a living working in an underground fight club and who later seeks to avenge his mother's horrific death by infiltrating the elite class of a Mumbai-like city.

"Every day I've prayed for a way to protect the weak," Kid says in a scene from the film's trailer. Throughout the film, we learn that his mission extends beyond his family. Patel's character becomes a symbol of freedom, seeking justice for those who have been oppressed and displaced in the name of power, money and religion.

"We're talking about religion and how religion can weaponize a large mass of people. And it can be used to a horrible extent to inflict violence. At the same time, it can be such a beautiful teacher," Patel says. "The iconographies, the stories, the morals of right and wrong and courage, there's this duality to it. ... You look at these old temple carvings in India and it was so much more free, open, and radical in a way."

The Oscar-nominated British actor grew up inspired by action heroes like Bruce Lee and fell in love with action films at a young age.

"I was like, 'I can use a genre that I love so dearly to talk about the caste system,'" he says. "It came from a place of rage too, against what was happening in India. And it happens everywhere, really."

The film is "is pointedly political in its fictional-

ized echoes of modern, Modi-led India," Associated Press film critic Jake Coyle wrote in his review, referencing its skewering of Hindu nationalism. (In India, where movies and politics are often intertwined, "Monkey Man" is still awaiting clearance by the country's censor board and doesn't yet have a confirmed release date.) For Patel, the film, which features many Indian actors, speaks to issues of violence against women, the caste system and police brutality — all issues that he says that, while taking place in India in the film, are also universal.

"I've got a place here in LA, and you don't need to look far to look at cases of police brutality or, you know, every society faces a sort of caste system," Patel says.

He describes the action film's commentary as a way to reach individuals who might be on the wrong side of history.

## Challenges

"How do I get them to watch this and feed them vegetables through a sort of entertaining Trojan horse so it doesn't feel like a lesson in politics or morals or whatever?" he asks.

In addition to the fraught topic, the directorial debut was beset with challenges during production, including the coronavirus pandemic-driven shutdown, limited crew members and a series of physical injuries. "I broke my hand, I broke my foot, I tore my shoulder. Everything that could have possibly gone wrong in the making of this film did go wrong," he told reporters at SXSW. "And it's really been a humbling experience."

Sharlto Copley, who plays Tiger, says Patel went through an unusual hell during the filming process. "I'm just filled with gratitude, really," Copley says. "I keep saying to Dev, it's like this grace that helped us through this one."

After surviving the grueling production process, the film was dropped by Netflix. Netflix did not respond to multiple requests for comment from the AP. "The studio that first acquired it, they didn't really

know what they'd bargained for," Patel says. "The actual film itself is a lot denser and it's saying a lot. Let's say that it's not your usual action scene on page one, and then you continue fighting nonstop. It's trying to do a bit more."

It was "just sitting there gathering dust," Patel says. He was ready to let it go when Oscar-winning writer and director Jordan Peele — and Founder of Monkeypaw Productions — swooped in to save the day, purchasing the film through his production partnership with Universal Pictures.

"He saw me as a filmmaker. He saw the pain I'd been through," recalls Patel. "He said, 'I hope you don't mind. I've shared it with Universal and we're going to buy it.' I literally — I fell off my seat."

For Peele, "Monkey Man" reminded him of the '80s and '90s, when "movies were good."

"It was iconic. I felt passionately that it was demanding to be on the big screen," Peele says. "I could immediately see that this was a director who had gone through lengths and pushed and pushed and pushed because it really makes it to the screen. I mean, you have a film that is just absolutely huge, and the story of it is really intoxicating."

"Monkey Man" received a standing ovation at its SXSW premiere. Video shows Patel standing on stage, moved to tears.

"I did cry. I couldn't help it, man. You feel so raw up there, and the response was just magical," he says.

After investing so much time into this debut, Patel says it was a quote from the legendary writer Rabindranath Tagore his father shared with him that finally allowed him to let go and release "Monkey Man" to the masses.

"It's something about 'I've spent many days stringing and unstringing my instrument. And the song I came to sing remains unsung.' Something like that," Patel says. "I was like, 'Dad, I get you, man. I got to sing this song. I got to let it go.' And it's the biggest leap of faith when you finally just say, 'It's not perfect, but it's me. It represents me in this moment in time, in history, warts and all.'"

NEW YORK: Billie Eilish announced Monday that her highly anticipated third studio album, "Hit Me Hard and Soft," will be released on May 17.

The news arrived via Instagram, where Eilish shared the album artwork showing the pop singer floating in a body of water after being ejected from a door. In the caption, she wrote that she will not drop singles in advance of the release.

"I wanna give it to you all at once," she captioned the image. "I truly could not be more proud of this album."

Eilish worked with her brother and longtime collaborator Finneas on "Hit Me Hard and Soft." The pair recently took home their second Oscar for their big "Barbie" ballad "What Was I Made For?" In doing so, Eilish, 22, became the youngest person by far to have won two career Oscars.

Earlier this month, Eilish signed a new open letter submitted by the Artist Rights Alliance nonprofit, calling on AI tech companies, developers, platforms, digital music services and platforms to stop using artificial intelligence "to infringe upon and devalue the rights of human artists," according to the letter.

All physical variants of "Hit Me Hard and Soft" will feature the same tracklist and will be made of 100% recyclable materials, a press release from Eilish said. (AP)

NEW ORLEANS: Clarence "Frogman" Henry, who was one of New Orleans' best known old-time R&B singers and scored a hit at age 19 with "Ain't Got No Home," has died. He was 87.

Henry died Sunday night, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation said on social media. It didn't give the cause of death.

Henry, who had been scheduled to perform at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival later this month, imitated the voice of a frog in "Ain't Got No Home." It was a hit in 1956 and later brought Henry renewed fame when it was featured on the "Forrest Gump" and "Mickey Blue Eyes" soundtracks.

He credited disc jockey Poppa Stoppa, whose real name was Clarence Hayman, as coming up with the nickname the "Frogman,"

which mimicked Fats Domino's moniker the "Fatman."

By 1958, Henry's popularity waned and he took to playing nightclubs on Bourbon Street.

"I thought the sun would shine. I thought my record would always stay out there and stay on the top, but in 1958, the rain came and bring me back to New Orleans,"



Henry



Eilish

Henry told The Associated Press in 2003.

But in 1960, a new song, "I Don't Know Why But I Do" by Cajun songwriter Bobby Charles and arranged by Allen Toussaint, brought Henry renewed success.

With the Bill Black Combo and the Jive Five he opened for the Beatles for 18 dates in 1964 during

their first US trip and toured extensively, from Scotland to New Zealand. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: One of the defining American rock bands of the 2000s, Linkin Park will release their first career-spanning greatest hits collection, "Papercuts

(Singles Collection 2000 - 2003)," on Friday, April 12. Headbangers should expect a comprehensive retrospective from the band as well as a previously unreleased track, "Friendly Fire," originally recorded around their 2017 album "One More Light" and featuring their late vocalist Chester Bennington. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Travel

## Shhh... on vacation

## Travellers are on a quest for the quiet

By Kim Cook

At home in the New York City suburbs, Oscar Sandoval has lots of friends and an active social life. But when it's time for vacation, he prefers to keep it quiet. Like, literally.

Sandoval began practicing Zen Buddhism a few years back, and has been on silent retreats to Buddhist monasteries around San Francisco and elsewhere. He'd stroll, sit, do some gardening and generally contemplate life for a week. More recently, he's done solo backpacking trips across Spain.

"The internal experience varies from times of very little thinking to periods of many thoughts or songs playing in my head," he says. "The utter peace and stillness is impossible to put into words."

Travel journalist **Chloe Berge** bemoaned the buzzing interruption of a drone while she was hiking the Faroe Islands' remote coastline during the pandemic. "The world is getting louder, and it's increasingly harder to escape the noise, even in nature."

But it's worth a try, say the travelers who are seeking relief in silence. Or as close as they can get to it.

From serene nature retreats to silent walking, the quest for quietude has become one of modern travel's latest trends. Conde Nast Traveler said last month it was "the travel trend we're most obsessed with this year."

For many, quiet travel goes beyond escaping the cacophony of everyday life while on vacation. It can be a shift toward introspection: a deeper connection with where we are both literally and figuratively.

You might even feel healthier. In a study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry in late 2022, for instance, mindfulness meditation worked as well as a standard drug for treating anxiety. "Transformative travel's a trend we're tracking for growth," says Alex Hawkins, editor at the trend forecaster and consultancy The Future Laboratory. "It taps into consumers' desire for self-reflective tourism experiences."

## Wellness

The "wellness tourism industry," he says, includes "demand for hyper-personal holidays and health-driven stays."

The company Dark Retreats Oregon offers a five-day "Dark Retreat" in Tidewater, Oregon, as "a great space for self-care" through darkness, digital detox and a healthy diet. Participants can keep the lights off as much as they want during their stay, and can also decide how much they talk to others.

BookRetreats, which urges clients to "Unplug. De-stress. Recharge," offers silent meditation retreats in Bali, Portugal, Mexico and the Netherlands, and closer to home in North Carolina, Quebec and California.

Finland's Utula Nature offers a silent stay amidst the pines on Lake Saimaa, about five hours from Helsinki.

Ditching the phone, zipping your lip, and putting on your comfy hikers; that's the silent walking trend that's found thousands of friends on TikTok.

Gordon Hempton is an acoustic ecologist in Washington State also known as The Sound Tracker. He's spent several decades roaming rainforests, coastlines and deserts looking for interesting and often rare nature sounds - sounds you can't easily hear when there's a lot of human-made noise. "I care very deeply about quiet," he says.

He's a co-founder of Quiet Parks International, a non-profit created to raise awareness of the benefits for both people and wildlife of less noise. Ecuador's Zabalo River park was the first to receive quiet park designation - it's not technically "quiet," of course: Howler monkeys, birds, insects and the thrum of the river provide a natural soundtrack. But the nearest concentration of human activity is a village of roughly 200 people, about 10 miles away.

There are even a couple of urban areas designated as quiet parks - one just outside the bustling metropolis of Taipei, Taiwan's capital. Another is in Hampstead Heath, about 30 miles from central London. The grassy, 800-acre park inspired C.S. Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia."

Quiet Parks International offers experiences like forest bathing, where you open your senses to the meditative and relaxing elements of a walk in the woods.

For those who can't get out to nature, the Quiet Parks website has recordings of wildlife and weather in the rainforest; morning in the West Texas desert; and sounds of day and nightfall in northern Alaska.

Black Tomato's got an interesting proposition for you. The avant-garde travel company offers a trip they call Get Lost. You fill out an extensive questionnaire on what you're expecting from your escape, but you'll have no idea where you're going till they get you there. Environment options are Polar, Desert, Coastal, Jungle or Mountain.

You're given pre-trip prep advice and navigation instruction, and then, at trip time, all the transfers, gear and mapped-out checkpoints you'll need. Your progress is monitored by a specialist in the chosen environment and by a local guiding support team. You can bail out at any time.

"We've sent clients to Iceland and Alaska," says Black Tomato's co-founder Tom Marchant. "We sent one solo traveler to Mongolia." A woman trekked on her own across Morocco's Atlas Mountains.

Marchant says there's the challenge of managing the environment, but "it's also a time to truly disconnect from daily life in an entirely new way."

## Also:

**ISTANBUL:** Five new hires are selflessly roaming the halls of one of the world's busiest transportation hubs, hoping to provide a paw-sitively stress-free travel experience for anxious passengers.

Meet Istanbul Airport's therapy dogs - always ready to offer support with snuggles, belly rubs and sloppy kisses.

The Associated Press caught up with Kuki and Alita, two of the dogs taking part in the pet-friendly airport's new pilot project aimed at easing stress and anxiety among travelers.

All four-legged members of the program are certified therapy dogs, professionally trained and conditioned to comfort humans.

The "Therapy Dog Team" has been on duty since late February following months of preparation and intensive training, learning desensitization to distracting stimuli, like sounds and people.



This photo provided by Black Tomato shows the Redwood National Park in California. From serene nature retreats to silent walking, or just the soothing soundtracks of nature on your headphones while commuting, the quest for quietude has become one of modern travel's new trends. (AP)

## Television

## An American's Italian adventure takes a deadly turn

## A transatlantic thriller in 'Ripley'

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): It's time to take another trip to Italy, to the charming, cobblestoned streets of the Amalfi Coast, sipping coffee at cafes and looking for the la dolce vita. And it just wouldn't be fun without our favorite serial killer, right?

Tom Ripley is back for another turn at wearing dressing gowns and having a drink on the terrace in "Ripley," a thrilling new Netflix series based on the enduring character created by novelist Patricia Highsmith in "The Talented Mr. Ripley." It premiered April 4.

"The idea that we know we're not supposed to like him, but we do want to see him get away with it is very interesting. What's it say about us?" asks Steven Zaillian, who created, directed and wrote the eight-episode adaptation.

Andrew Scott steps up to play Ripley, a scrappy check fraudster in grimy New York who is hired to locate a rich dilettante in Italy, but kills him and then impersonates him, leading to more murders and scams.

"Like with any sort of iconic literary character like that, people have very strong opinions - he's a psychopath, he's a serial killer," says Scott. "Part of the challenge was how do you make an audience feel like what it's like to be Tom Ripley, rather than what is usually done, which is to want to feel like to be a victim of Tom Ripley."

The eight-hour canvas allows viewers time to watch him figure out how to get out of jams in real time, like a murder he commits in his apartment in the fifth episode. He needs to find the victim's car, clean up the crime scene, move the body and make it all seem like an alcohol-induced accident.

"I think because we sort of see every little step of how he figures things out and does things that we take part in them," says Zaillian. "He often doesn't know what he should do next, and neither do we. And so we become part of the process in that way."

Scott, known for his stage work, the Emmy-winning "Fleabag" and recent

film "All of Us Strangers," says it may take some viewers raised on TikTok a little while to adjust to a more sedate, deliberate storytelling pace - one in which characters climb staircases, look at waves and make small talk. There is time to watch where an ashtay is bought before it's later used to bludgeon someone to death.

"You have to teach the audience how to watch it to a certain degree," he says. "There's certain times the pacing is really quite fast and there's certain times where you think this would take time and you have to stay with the agony and the thrill and the tension when things aren't going right. That's the way life is."

## Screenplay

Zaillian, an Oscar winner for the screenplay of "Schindler's List," refused a suggestion to update Highsmith's book series and is careful to keep everything very early 1960s, even filming it all in black and white, like "Schindler's List."

"It puts us in that time period effortlessly and immediately. But more than that, I did not want what I would call a color postcard sort of Italy for this story, with sunny blue skies and lots of colorful outfits. That was not something I saw in my mind when I read the book and not something that I wanted to do in the show," he says.

If other TV shows are dialogue-driven, "Ripley" is more interested in the spaces between dialogue. It's all about suspicious looks, wary interactions and putting on a brave face with police inspectors and hotel clerks.

"I was so excited by getting to communicate so much with micro-movements in the face and a look - that thing where you can read someone's thoughts through their eyes," says Dakota Fanning, who plays the suspicious girlfriend of the rich dilettante Dickie Greenleaf.

Zaillian is faithful to Highsmith's novels but adds some of himself into the series, like making Ripley a fan

of Italian painter Caravaggio, who worked with intense and unsettling realism and was also a killer.

"I found as I was writing it there's actually a connection between him and Caravaggio. They were both these sort of rascals and both ended up killing somebody. So it sort of grew from a personal moment that I had into a motif and then kind of into an aspect of his character," he says.

Like Caravaggio, the series is grounded in realism, from the rusty showerheads and the gritty, screeching subways of New York to the crumbling walls and pigeon poop-streaked statues in Italy. Cleaning up blood takes what seems like hours.

Ripley, who over the years has been portrayed by, among others, Matt Damon, John Malkovich, Ian Hart and Dennis Hopper, is played understated by Scott as a killer who makes mistakes, improvises and must double back to correct errors.

Zaillian thought of Scott for the role very early in the casting process, aware of his work in "Fleabag" and as Moriarty on the BBC series "Sherlock." He was smitten.

"I just found him really sort of watchable," Zaillian says. "I knew that since we spend so much time with somebody alone - there's a lot of scenes where it's just us and him - that he has to be watchable. We have to be able to see him think and express himself in a way that lets us know what he's thinking. And I found that Andrew was able to do that."

Johnny Flynn, who plays the golden boy Greenleaf, says filming in Italy took him to some of the most beautiful places on the planet but ones that got darker as the summer tourists left and the sun got lower, perfect for a noirish vibe. He and the cast were also reminded that many small Italian towns built on cliffs have many, many steps.

"We were just out of breath all the time," he says, laughing.

Which is what can be said for lots of people who meet Ripley.



Andrew Scott arrives at the premiere of 'Ripley,' April 3, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Majors



Wallen

## Variety

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.:** Country music singer **Morgan Wallen** has been arrested after police say he threw a chair off the rooftop of a newly opened six-story bar in downtown Nashville.

Wallen, 30, was booked into jail early Monday on three felony counts of reckless endangerment and one misdemeanor count of disorderly conduct, Metro Nashville Police tweeted.

The charges stem from a chair being thrown from the rooftop of Chief's bar and landing on Broadway near two police officers.

An arrest affidavit says the chair landed about 3 feet (1 meter) from officers, who talked to witnesses and reviewed security footage. Witnesses told officers that they watched Wallen pick up a chair, throw it over the roof and laugh about it.

Wallen's attorney, **Worrick Robinson**, confirmed the arrest late Sunday and said the singer was cooperating fully with authorities. He was released from custody, and has a court date scheduled May 3.

Wallen is one of the biggest names in contemporary country. His third studio album, 2023's "One Thing at a Time," was the most-consumed album in the US last year. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Actor **Jonathan Majors** has been ordered to complete a yearlong counseling program but avoided jail time Monday for assaulting his ex-girlfriend in a high-profile case that derailed the once-promising star's career.

The 34-year-old star of "Creed III" and other films had faced up to a year behind bars after he was convicted of misdemeanor assault by a Manhattan jury in December.

In court Monday, Judge **Michael Gaffey** sentenced Majors to conditional discharge after noting that both sides in the case agreed the charges did not warrant jail time, given the actor was a first-time offender with no prior criminal record.

He said Majors must complete a 52-week, in-person batterer's intervention program in **Los Angeles**, where the actor lives. He also has to continue with the mental health therapy his lawyers say he's been participating in. Majors faces a year in jail if found in violation of the terms, which also included a no contact order with his former girlfriend, **Grace Jabbari**.

Majors, dressed in all black and accompanied by his girlfriend, actor **Meagan Good**, declined to address the court and left the courthouse without speaking to

reporters.

His lawyer, **Priya Chaudhry**, said the actor did not want to make any public statement that Jabbari could use against him in the civil suit she's filed against the actor.

Majors, she added, is "committed to growing as a person" and will complete any court-mandated programs "with an open heart" even as he maintains his innocence

and plans to appeal.

"He's lost his whole career," Chaudhry said in court. "This has been the most challenging year of his life."

But Jabbari, fighting back tears as she addressed the court, said Majors refuses to acknowledge his guilt and remains a danger to those around him.

"He's not sorry. He has not accepted

responsibility," she said. "He will do this again and he will hurt other women. He believes he is above the law."

Jabbari said Majors had made her believe the two were in a loving relationship, but, in reality, he isolated her from the rest of the world and cut her off from family and friends.

"I was so emotionally dependent on him," she said. "I became a different person around him - small, scared and vulnerable." (AP)



Jack O'Connell, (from left), Marisa Abela, director Sam Taylor-Johnson, and Eddie Marsan pose for photographers upon arrival at the World premiere of the film 'Back to Black' on Monday, April 8, in London. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** **Terry Tang**, who has been leading the Los Angeles Times newsroom since January on an interim basis, on Monday was formally named executive editor. She is the first woman to hold the post in the newspaper's 142-year history.

Since being tapped for the interim role, Tang moved to reorganize the newsroom, form her own leadership team and place a heavier emphasis on traditional news reporting, the Times said in a report announcing the appointment.

"Terry in short order has demonstrated the capability of building on our legacy of excellence in journalism with stories that matter," the Times' owner, **Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong**, said in a statement. "She understands our mission to be a thriving pillar of democracy and the critical role that the LA Times' voice plays - to our city, and to the world - in bringing attention to issues that matter most, especially for those whose voices are often unheard." (AP)

## DOH urges parents to have early vaccination for infants

## Infectious pertussis disease rising in Philippines with 54 deaths

MANILA, April 9, (Xinhua): The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Tuesday said that the contagious bacterial disease called pertussis continues to spread in the country, noting that 54 children have died from the respiratory disease.

From Jan. 1 to March 30, the DOH tallied 1,112 cases, or "almost 34 times that of the same period last year," with 54 deaths. "All 54 deaths are less than 5 years old," DOH Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo told reporters.

In the past six weeks, Domingo said the DOH noted "a continuous increase in the number of pertussis cases" in five regions in the main Luzon island, the central and the southern Philippines.

"Of the total pertussis cases thus far recorded, 77 percent were less than 5 years old. Adults aged 20 and older account for only around 4 percent of cases," he added.

According to Domingo, the number of cases "may still change as there may be late consultations and reports."

## New WIC rules include more money for fruits and veggies

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): The federal program that helps pay for groceries for millions of low-income mothers, babies and young kids will soon emphasize more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, as well as provide a wider choice of foods from different cultures.

The final rule changes for the program known as WIC were announced Tuesday by the Food and Nutrition Service, and will take effect within two years with some exceptions.

Last updated a decade ago, the new WIC rules make permanent a bump in monthly cash vouchers for fruits and vegetables - something first enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Shoppers can also add canned fish,

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacterium *Bordetella per-*

fresh herbs and lactose-free milk to their carts, among other changes. The voucher piece will take effect by June, officials said.

"It places a heavy emphasis on fruits and vegetables, which we think is an important component of a healthy diet," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in an interview. "It's designed to fill the nutrition gaps that are often in the diets of many of us."

The WIC program served an average of about 6.6 million low-income Americans a month in 2023 at a cost of a little more than \$7 billion. It's designed to supplement the food budgets for pregnant, nursing and postpartum women, as well as to feed babies and young kids up to age 5. That's done

by providing vouchers to mothers and children who qualify and specifically listing the amount and types of food they can buy.

But officials have said only about half of those eligible are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

Under the new rules, fruits and vegetable vouchers in 2024 will provide \$26 per month for kids ages 1 through 4; \$47 per month for pregnant and postpartum women; and \$52 for breastfeeding women. The changes also expand access to whole grains like quinoa, wild rice and millet and to foods such as teff and whole wheat naan. They also remove or reduce monthly allowances for juice and cut

back on allowances for milk.

Food plans in the program are based on recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine and the federal 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The plan failed to include a change requested by top allergists in the U.S. that would have added peanut products to foods allowed for babies ages 6 months to 11 months to help prevent peanut allergies.

Research published in 2015 showed early introduction to peanut foods can reduce the chance of allergy development in kids who are at high risk, and several U.S. guidelines suggest exposing high-risk children to peanuts

as early as 4 months.

Adding peanut to the WIC guidelines may have prevented more than 34,000 infants from developing a peanut allergy, said Dr. Gideon Lack of King's College London, who led the study. But federal nutrition officials concluded that the change was "outside the scope" of the final rule.

Dr. Ruchi Gupta, a pediatrics professor and child allergy expert at Northwestern University, called the omission "disappointing." She noted that WIC enrollees often include children of color who are at higher risk of developing dangerous peanut allergies.

The decision "can only increase disparities we are already seeing in food allergy prevalence," she said.

The DOH has urged parents to have their infants as young as 6 weeks old vaccinated.

## Program designed to fill nutrition gaps

## The Conversation

## Mental, physical health affected

Loneliness can kill and it hits the middle-aged people hard

By Frank J. Infurna  
Arizona State University

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

Middle-aged Americans are lonelier than their European counterparts. That's the key finding of my team's recent study, published in *American Psychologist*.

Our study identified a trend that has been evolving for multiple generations, and affects both baby boomers and Gen Xers. Middle-aged adults in England and Mediterranean Europe are not that far behind the US. In contrast, middle-aged adults in continental and Nordic Europe reported the lowest levels of loneliness and stability over time.

We used survey data drawn from over 53,000 middle-aged adults from the US and 13 European nations from 2002 to 2020. We tracked their reported changes in loneliness every two years across the midlife years of 45 to 65. This span provided us data from the so-called silent generation of people born between 1937 and 1945; baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; and members of Generation X, born between 1965 and 1974.

## Middle-aged

Our study makes clear that middle-aged Americans today are experiencing more loneliness than their peers in European nations. This coincides with existing evidence that mortality rates are rising for working-age adults in the US.

We focused on middle-aged adults for several reasons. Middle-aged adults form the backbone of society by constituting a majority of the workforce. But they also face increasing challenges today, notably greater demands for support from both their aging parents and their children.

Following the Great Recession from late 2007 to 2009, middle-aged adults in the US reported poorer mental and physical health compared to same-

aged peers in the 1990s.

Compared to several European nations, US middle-aged adults currently report more depressive symptoms and higher rates of chronic illness, pain and disability. The desire to belong is an innate and fundamental need. When this is lacking, it can have downstream consequences.

## Loneliness

Loneliness is bad for your health. Researchers have found that loneliness is as dangerous as smoking. Loneliness increases one's vulnerability to sickness, depression, chronic illness and premature death.

Loneliness is considered a global public health issue. The US surgeon general released an advisory report in 2023 documenting an epidemic of loneliness and a pressing need to increase social connection. Other nations, such as the UK and Japan, have appointed ministers of loneliness to ensure relationships and loneliness are considered in policymaking.

Why are middle-aged Americans exceptional when it comes to loneliness and poorer overall mental and physical health?

We did not directly test this in our study, but in the future we hope to zero in on the factors driving these trends. We think that the loneliness Americans are reporting compared to peer nations comes down to limited social safety nets and to cultural norms that prioritize individualism over community.

Individualization carries psychological costs, such as reductions in social connections and support structures, which are correlates of loneliness.

Relative to the other nations in our study, Americans have a higher tendency to relocate, which is associated with weak social and community ties.

One of the reasons why we chose countries from across Europe is that they differ dramatically from the US when it comes to social and economic opportunities and social safety nets. (AP)

It spreads quickly from person to person, mainly through droplets produced by coughing or

sneezing.

The disease can cause complications and even threaten lives, espe-

cially for babies. The best way to prevent pertussis is through immunization.

The DOH has urged parents to have their infants as young as 6 weeks old vaccinated.

## Smart textile breakthrough

## China develops new luminous smart fiber that generates light, electricity

SHANGHAI, April 9, (Xinhua): A Chinese research team has developed a new type of smart fiber that can emit light and generate electricity without being plugged in.

The fiber integrates functions including wireless energy collection, information perception and transmission, and can be made into textiles that can realize human-computer interaction functions such as luminous display and touch control without chips and batteries.

The study, recently published in the journal *Science*, is expected to change the way people interact with the environment and between people, and is of great significance for the application of smart textiles.

Smart wearable devices have become part of daily life and play an important role in health monitoring, telemedicine, human-computer interaction and other fields.

## Flexible

Compared with traditional rigid semiconductor components or flexible thin film devices, electronic textiles made of smart fibers are more breathable and softer.

However, the current development of smart fibers uses complex multi-module integration, which increases the volume, weight and rigidity of textiles.

A research team from Donghua University's College of Materials Science and Engineering accidentally discovered that fibers emitted light in a radio field during an experiment.

Based on the findings, the team developed a new type of smart fiber that uses electromagnetic energy as a wireless driving force. This new type of fiber is featured with cost-effective raw materials and mature processing technology, said Yang Weifeng, a member of the research team.

It can realize fabric display, wireless instruction transmission and other functions without using chips and batteries. Clothes made of the new fibers can be interactive and luminous, and can also remotely control electronic products wirelessly by generating



A researcher shows the luminous mechanism of new smart fiber at Donghua University in Shanghai, east China, in March 2024. (Xinhua)

## Study sheds light on stellar orbits

## Galaxies growing chaotic with age: study

SYDNEY, April 9, (Xinhua): A project led by the Australian research center ASTRO 3D has recently highlighted age as one of the most crucial drivers in how stars orbit within galaxies, suggesting that the arrangement of stars gets messier over time.

In their study recently published in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* journal, a group of international researchers analyzed observations by the SAMI Galaxy Survey, which covered over 3,000 galaxies across a large range of environments.

Using a partial correlation analysis, they consistently found that age or specific star formation rate is the primary parameter correlating with spin.

"We do know that age is affected by the environment. If a galaxy falls into a dense environment, it will tend to shut down the star formation. So galaxies in denser environments are, on average, older," Jesse van de Sande, an astronomer from the University of New South Wales and second author of the study, noted in a statement released on Monday.

"The point of our analysis is that it's not living in dense environments that reduce their spin, it's the fact that they're older," said the expert.

The research team said that they will further study how to make the new fiber collect energy from space more

effectively to develop more functions including display, deformation, and computing.

Young galaxies tend to have stars rotating in an orderly pattern, but in older ones, the motion of stars can get more turbulent.

While most previous works indicated that environment or mass plays a more important role, the new study by ASTRO 3D was regarded as instrumental in updating people's understanding of the chaos in the galactic structure.

According to the statement, the Hector Galaxy Survey will help the ASTRO 3D team expand their work using a new instrument on the Anglo-Australian Telescope.

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## Djere of Serbia retires injured

## Tsitsipas and Dimitrov reach second round at Monte Carlo

MONACO, April 9, (AP) — Two-time champion Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters after Laslo Djere of Serbia retired injured on Monday.

The 12th-seeded Tsitsipas was leading 6-3, 3-2 when the unseeded Djere pulled out with an unspecified injury. Djere walked up to the net during the change-over and shook hands with Tsitsipas.

The big-serving Greek won the title in 2021 and went on to the French Open final that year. He followed with another Monte Carlo trophy in 2022 but went out

at the quarterfinal stage last year. Tsitsipas next faces Nicolas Jarry of Chile or Tomas Etcheverry of Argentina.

Ninth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov had little trouble beating local player Valentin Vacherot of Monaco, targeting his opponent's weaker backhand in a 7-5, 6-2 win. The Bulgarian is chasing his second title of the year.

Dimitrov next plays Matteo Berrettini - who on Sunday won the Grand Prix Hassan II in Morocco - or Miomir Kecmanovic.

Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime didn't concede a break point in beating Italian qualifier Luca

Nardi 6-2, 6-3, although things should get tougher in the second round against third-seeded Carlos Alcaraz.

## TENNIS

However, Auger-Aliassime holds a 3-2 career record against the Wimbledon champion and two-time Grand Slam winner. Furthermore, Alcaraz has been practicing with strapping to his right forearm.

Alexei Popyrin of Australia next faces defending champion Andrey Rublev after beating French quali-

fier Corentin Moutet 3-6, 7-5, 6-2.

No. 14 Ugo Humbert rallied to beat Federico Coria 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 and No. 15 Karen Khachanov saved two set points before downing Britain's Cameron Norrie 7-5, 7-6 (3) in a contest featuring nine breaks of serve.

Sebastian Ofner of Austria won against Britain's Dan Evans 6-1, 6-4 and will play fifth-seeded Alexander Zverev, a French Open semifinalist in 2022.

Indian qualifier Sumit Nagal rallied to beat Matteo Arnaldi 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 to set up a meeting with seventh-seeded Holger Rune, last year's runner-up.

Roman Safiullin won his opener and faces top-ranked Novak Djokovic on Tuesday, while Arthur Fils, Francisco Cerundolo and Alejandro Tabilo also advanced at the first clay-court Masters of the season. The tournament is one of the first big warmups for the French Open, which begins on May 25 at Roland Garros.

Djokovic is looking to win Monte Carlo for the third time but first since 2015.

The top-ranked Serb hasn't made it past the quarterfinals since then, and he could face Rublev in the quarters.

With record 11-time Monte

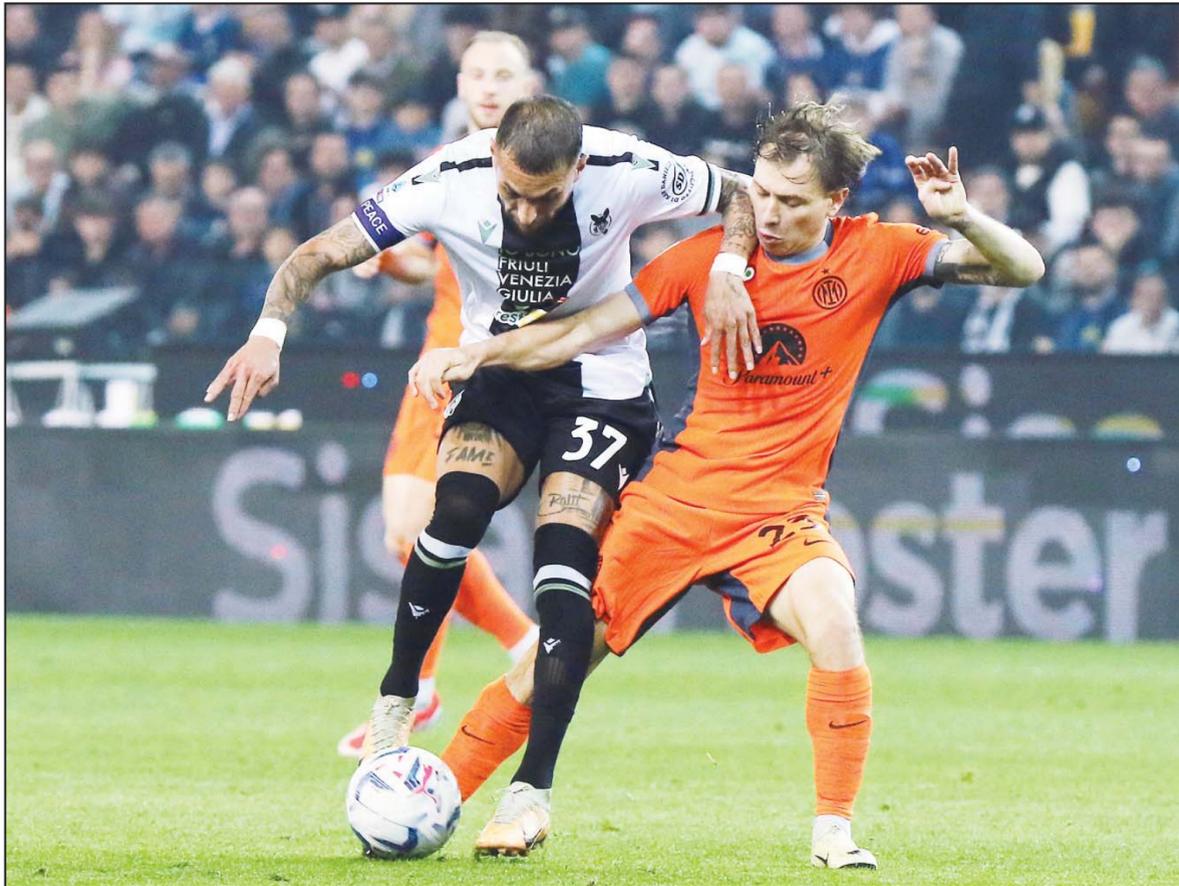
Carlo champion Rafael Nadal out injured, second-ranked Jannik Sinner is becoming the player to beat.

The Australian Open champion from Italy is 22-1 with three titles in 2024, including the Miami Open, where he dominated Dimitrov in the final.

Sinner takes on American Sebastian Korda or Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina on Wednesday.

The presence of Alcaraz and former U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev means the top four men's players are all in action, with byes into the second round.

# 'Champions-elect' Inter come from behind to beat Udinese



Udinese's Roberto Pereyra, (left), and Inter Milan's Barella challenge for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Inter at the Bluenergy Stadium in Udine, Italy. (AP)

## Bochum fire coach Letsch after poor form despite shock win over Bayern

ROME, April 9, (AP) — Davide Frattesi scored a dramatic stoppage time winner for Inter Milan to edge Udinese 2-1 and extend its lead in Serie A to 14 points.

The victory was Inter's 25th consecutive match without defeat in its seemingly inexorable march toward a 20th Serie A title. It has seven games left.

The champion-elect dominated with 78% possession and 23 shots at goal compared to Udinese's three, but it had to come from behind after a calamitous bit of defending after 40 minutes.

## SOCCER

Lazar Samardžić's shot from the corner of the penalty box was not powerful but it took a slight deflection off Carlos Augusto. Even though the ball appeared to pose little danger, goalkeeper Yann Sommer and defender Denzel Dumfries left it to each other and it rolled in at the far post.

Inter got back on track with a 55th-minute penalty from Hakan Çalhanoğlu. He sent the goalkeeper the wrong way to score his 10th goal.

The winner didn't come until the fifth minute of stoppage time when Frattesi pounced to tap home a rebound after Lautaro Martinez's low shot came off the post.

Udinese remained 15th and only two points above the relegation zone.

With bottom club Salernitana almost definitely doomed, another seven clubs are fighting not to be the other two relegated. Only five points separated Sassuolo at second to last from Cagliari in 13th.

Bochum fired coach Thomas Letsch on Monday after a poor run of form left the team in danger of relegation from the Bundesliga.

Letsch's team shocked Bayern Munich 3-2 in February to put a dent in the champion's title hopes, but Bochum has earned only one point in six games since then.

On Saturday, Bochum conceded two late goals and lost to fellow

## All set for Al-Ittihad and Al-Hilal face-off



The referee shows a red card to Cristiano Ronaldo during the Saudi Super Cup match between Al-Nasr and Al-Hilal.



Inter Milan's team players celebrate after Davide Frattesi scored his side's second goal during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Inter at the Bluenergy Stadium in Udine, Italy. (AP)

relegation candidate Cologne 2-1 to leave the team 15th in the 18-team Bundesliga.

Letsch took over Bochum in September 2022 with the team last in the

table, and ensured the team avoided relegation last season.

There was no word from Bochum on the new coach. Bochum hosts Heidenheim on Saturday.

ABU DHABI, April 9: The highly anticipated match between Al-Ittihad and Al-Hilal is on the horizon as the two teams gear up to face off in the Diriyah Saudi Super Cup final at the Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

Al-Ittihad, holders of both the Saudi Roshan League and Super Cup titles, secured their spot in the final with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Al-Wahda. Meanwhile, Al-Hilal, boasting an impressive 33 consecutive victories across all competitions, booked their place in the final with a 2-1 win over Al-Nasr.

## SOCCER

In a twist of fate, Cristiano Ronaldo, captain of Al-Nasr, received his 12th career red card in the semi-final clash against Al-Hilal. The Portuguese superstar was sent off in the 85th minute for a clash with Al-Hilal defender Ali Al-Bulaihi.

This marked Ronaldo's first red card while donning the Al-Nasr shirt since joining the club in January 2023.

Previously, he had received six red cards during his tenure at Real Madrid (2009-2018), four while playing for Manchester United, and one during his stint at Juventus.

Despite Ronaldo's dismissal, Al-Hilal secured their victory over Al-Nasr, setting up a final showdown with Al-Ittihad Jeddah next Monday.

Al-Hilal has maintained their dominance over Al-Nasr throughout the season, clinching victories in both the semi-finals of the Diriyah Saudi Super Cup and other encounters. As the final approaches, anticipation mounts for what promises to be an electrifying match between two football powerhouses.

## The club will appeal

Everton docked two more points by EPL for second financial rules breach

LONDON, April 9, (AP) — Everton was docked two more points for its latest breach of the English Premier League financial rules, plunging the team back toward the relegation zone with seven games remaining on Monday.

Everton had already received a six-point deduction - reduced from 10 following an appeal - for the club overspending in a three-year spell up to the end of the 2021-22 season.

## SOCCER

This latest punishment, handed out by an independent commission, came after Everton was found to have spent too much in the three seasons up to 2022-23.

The league profit and financial sustainability rules allow clubs to lose a maximum of 105 million pounds (\$132.5 million) over a three-year period or face sanctions. Everton overspent by 16.6 million pounds (\$21 million), the league said.

Everton had, in effect, already been punished for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 seasons, partly explaining why the second points deduction was less.

The club did, though, say it was "extremely concerned by the inconsistency of different commissions in respect of points deductions applied," and it was preparing to launch an appeal against the decision.

By appealing, Everton potentially risks an increased punishment as it would be heard by another panel, which could decide the sanction was not harsh enough.

The deduction meant Everton dropped below Brentford into 16th place on 27 points, only two points above Luton in 18th in the 20-team league. Three teams will be relegated.

Everton, a nine-time English champion, has been an ever-present in the top division since 1954.

The Merseyside club has worked closely with the league over its finances and, after being charged, said in the disciplinary hearing that there were some "significant mitigating circumstances" such as the admission of the breach, the club's "high level of co-operation" and the war in Ukraine.

The reference to the war is linked to Everton majority owner Farhad Moshiri, a British-Iranian billionaire, and his close business relationship with Russian metals tycoon Alisher Usmanov. Usmanov was sanctioned by the European Union in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, prompting the need for Everton to halt its major sponsorship with companies belonging to Usmanov in March 2022.

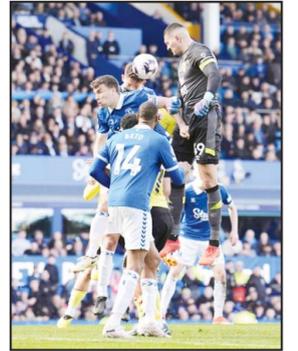
In the written reasons published

## Marin appointed as Kuwait futsal team coach

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: In a recent development, the Football Association revealed the termination of the contract with Sayed Nazim Al-Sharia, the Iranian coach of the Kuwaiti national indoor football team. The decision, made by mutual consent between the parties, was announced on Monday. Subsequently, the Association inked a contract with David Marin, the current Spanish coach of Kazma, to take over the reins of the national team for the remainder of the preparation program.

## FUTSAL

David Marin will lead the team through the ongoing training camp in Thailand as they gear up for the upcoming Asian Cup finals set to commence in Bangkok next week. The Federation's Board of Directors expressed gratitude to the outgoing technical staff for their efforts and wished them continued success in their future endeavors.



Burnley goalkeeper Arijanet Muric (right), attempts a headed shot towards goal, during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Burnley, at Goodison Park, in Liverpool, England. (AP)

by the Premier League, Everton invited the independent commission to defer the second sanction until next season. The commission said it did not consider that to be appropriate.

The written reasons also showed the league felt five points was the appropriate starting place for the sanction - three for the breach and two more for exceeding the upper loss threshold by 15.8%.

The commission knocked off two points because of the overlapping two seasons and another point because of the mitigating circumstances.

Everton ultimately received the six-point penalty for the first breach for overspending by around 20 million pounds (\$25 million).

Nottingham Forest, which is two points and a place below Everton, is another club to have been sanctioned for breaching the league financial rules after admitting to going over the threshold by 34.5 million pounds (\$44 million). Forest was handed a four-point deduction and is also appealing against the decision.

The results of the appeals of Everton and Forest might not be announced before the end of the season. That would create a potential scenario where the identity of the relegated teams may not be known until days after the season has finished, which would be huge controversy.

In a separate disciplinary case, Manchester City is in a legal fight with the league after the competition accused the English and European champions of its financial rules from 2009-18 and 30 more relating to its alleged failure to co-operate with an investigation.

The outcome of City's case isn't expected to be known until midway through next season, at the earliest, because of the number of alleged breaches involved.



The new coach David Marin.

Bringing local expertise to the forefront, David Marin boasts prior coaching experience with several Kuwaiti clubs over the years. Hussein Habib, Director of the National Teams Department, cited the decline in Al-Azraq's performance in the previous period as the driving factor behind the decision to relieve the technical staff of their duties.

## SPORTS

# Kuwait Club take control of Zain Premier League

Al-Fahaheel secure 4th

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** Kuwait Club surged to the top of the Zain Premier League standings after a commanding 3-1 victory over Al-Salmiya, marking the end of the third round of championship stage competitions.

With this win, "Al-Abyad" propelled their tally to 50 points, securing the top position, leading by three points over runner-up Al-Arabi and four points ahead of third-placed Al-Qadisiya. Meanwhile, Al-Salmiya dropped to fifth place with 25 points.

Kuwait Club capitalized on the draw between rivals Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi, leveraging their "disrupted" match to claim sole leader-

## SOCCER

ship in the standings. However, they anticipate tough challenges ahead as the league resumes on April 27th, facing Al-Qadisiya in the fourth round before concluding the first part of the competition against Al-Arabi.

League fixtures will temporarily halt after this round to accommodate the participation of the national Olympic team in the AFC U-23 Cup, a qualifier for the 2024 Paris Olympics, set to commence in the Qatari capital next week.

In the showdown between "Al-Abyad" and "Al-Samawi," Kuwait Club displayed an assertive performance, applying pressure from the outset. Mohamed Dahham opened the scoring in the 24th minute with a penalty, swiftly followed by Youssef Nasser's goal just four minutes later.

Although Al-Salmiya rallied in the second half, Youssef Nasser secured his brace with Kuwait's third goal in the 68th minute, earning him the accolade of the round's best player. Substitute Isaka managed to net Al-Salmiya's solitary goal in the 71st minute.

In another fixture, Al-Fahaheel triumphed over Al-Nassr with a 3-1 scoreline. Al-Fahaheel's victory propelled them to 27 points, securing fourth place, while Al-Nassr remained at 24 points in sixth position.

## FIFA to 'consider' changes to policy

**NEW YORK, April 9, (AP):** FIFA said it will consider changes to its policy that blocks league matches from being played in other countries as part of an agreement with a soccer promoter to dismiss the world governing body from a lawsuit challenging that policy.

Relevant Sports lawyer Jeffrey L. Kessler filed a letter Monday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan stating FIFA and his client agreed to the dismissal. Keller wrote FIFA agreed to abide by any injunction arising from the suit, which also includes the U.S. Soccer Federation as a defendant. The agreement did not alter the suit against the USSF.

"FIFA and Relevant have agreed to resolve this matter as it concerns FIFA, pending FIFA's consideration of changes to existing FIFA policies with respect to playing official season games outside of a league's home territory," FIFA said in a statement. "FIFA has not admitted any liability and continues to deny the legal claims alleged in Relevant's complaint."

Relevant, controlled by Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross, announced in August 2018 it planned to host a Spanish league match between Barcelona and Girona at Miami Gardens, Florida, the following January.

In October 2018, FIFA said its ruling council adopted a policy that "emphasized the sporting principle that official league matches must be played within the territory of the respective member association." Barcelona then withdrew its commitment to play in Florida.

Relevant in 2019 also was refused permission by the USSF to sanction a league match between two teams from Ecuador.

Relevant sued the governing bodies, claiming violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act and tortious interference.

"Bringing official matches from Europe to the U.S. is an exciting proposition but it must be done thoughtfully and collaboratively," Relevant CEO Daniel Sillman said in a statement. "We look forward to partnering with FIFA to support the global growth of the game and the best leagues in the world."

Caproni in July 2021 granted the USSF's motion to dismiss the antitrust claim but the case was reinstated in March 2023 by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The USSF asked the Supreme Court in August to take the case, and the Biden administration last month said the Supreme Court should let the appellate decision stand.

"FIFA and Relevant Sports have agreed to resolve this matter specific to FIFA while FIFA considers changes to its existing rules about whether games can be played outside of a league's home territory," the promoter said in a statement. "Relevant Sports looks forward to supporting FIFA as both sides work to grow the game."



Kuwait Club celebrate with the U-15 Promising League title.

## Kuwait Club win U-15 Promising League

Kuwait Club emerged victorious as champions of the U-15 Promising League, with Al-Arabi securing second place and Al-Qadisiyah finishing in third. The Secretary-General of the Federation, Salah Al-Qenaie, awarded the top-rank-

ing teams in the competition. This ceremony was attended by Khaled Al-Ghanem, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Sports Club, and Muhammad Al-Otaibi, Director of the Promising and Budding Department of the Federation.



Kuwait Club player is fouled as he controls the ball.

## National Authority for Sports Arbitration upholds decision of Al-Nasr Club's board

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** The National Authority for Sports Arbitration has upheld the decision endorsing the validity of the recommendation made by the Board of Directors of Al-Nasr Club, led by Khaled Al-Shraida for the 2024-2028 term. Al-Shraida was elected



Khaled Al-Sharida

during the regular general assembly meeting held on February 15th of last year. This decision was aimed at affirming the legitimacy of the general assembly announcement and its subsequent implications, including the confirmation of the appellant's victory in his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Furthermore, the National Authority for Sports Arbitration has dismissed the plaintiffs' plea to nullify the defendant's acknowledgment of his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Nasr Club. This ruling was based on the validation of all acknowledgment procedures. Additionally, the Authority rejected the plaintiffs' appeal to invalidate any decisions and actions taken by the Board of Directors, its executive office, and the Electoral Committee before January 12, 2023.

## Kazma beat Burgan

# League leaders Al-Salmiya suffer first loss of season

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** In a decisive match held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, Kuwait Club secured a significant victory over Al-Salmiya, ending their unbeaten run with a commanding 37-24 victory in the league's ninth round. Concurrently, Kazma beat Burgan 25-20 in the same venue.

Despite the loss, Al-Salmiya maintains its lead in the stand-

## HANDBALL

ings with 15 points from nine matches. Kuwait Club follows closely in second place with 14 points from eight matches, tied with Kazma in third place (with goal difference favoring "Al-Abyad"). Al-Arabi sits in fourth place with 12 points, followed by Al-Sulaibkhat and Al-Qadisiya in fifth and sixth place, respectively, both with nine points. Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel and Burgan share eighth place with eight points each, followed by Al-Qurain with seven points,

and Al-Nasr and Yarmouk with five points each. Khaitan occupies the penultimate spot with

four points, while Al-Sahel and Al-Tadamon trail without scoring.



Players fighting for the ball.

The ninth round concluded with matches between Al-Yarmouk and Al-Nasr, as well as Al-Arabi against Al-Qadisiya. The upcoming ninth round, commencing next Saturday, will witness three matches, featuring Al-Nasr against Al-Sahel, Al-Qurain against Al-Arabi, and Al-Tadamon against Al-Salmiya.

The recent victory of "Al-Ameed" over "Al-Samawi" injected new energy into the league, intensifying the competition among the leading teams. As the battle for supremacy heats up, every point becomes crucial in the pursuit of the league title. The forthcoming rounds will be pivotal in narrowing the points gap among the top six teams.

In other news, our national youth handball team is gearing up to participate in the upcoming Gulf Games in Sharjah from April 19 to 24. Additionally, our national youth team is set to compete in the Arab Championship, scheduled to commence in Morocco on the 20th of this month.

## YOUTH GAMES

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Olympic Committee has greenlit the Kuwaiti delegation set to partake in the inaugural Gulf Youth Games hosted by the United Arab Emirates from April 16 to May 2. The delegation will be led by Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf, Vice President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee. The administrative team includes Mohammed Al-Khalifan, Director General of the Olympic Committee, along with committee members Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Jaber, Ali Al-Marri, and Fatima Hayat. Mohammed Al-Saadi will serve as the technical director. Additionally, 210 players will compete across 19 sports, accompanied by administrative and media representatives.



Kuwait Olympic Committee member Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah.

participating in Gulf sporting events and fostering cooperation among Gulf countries. He underscored the significance of the tournament for Kuwaiti youth, expressing hope for their success and thanking Kuwait's leadership for their unwavering support of sports in the country.



Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf.

## Best of the Rest

**Rings on Tower:** The Olympic rings will be displayed on the Eiffel Tower, organizers said in a statement on Tuesday, as the French capital prepares to mark 100 days until the start of the Paris Games.

A 29-meter (95-foot)-long and 15-meter (49-foot)-high structure of five Olympic rings, made entirely of recycled French steel, will be displayed on the south side of the 135-year-old historic landmark in central Paris, overlooking the Seine River. About 10,500 athletes will parade through the heart of the French capital on boats on the Seine along a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) route in the opening ceremony at sunset on July 26.

The Eiffel Tower will feature prominently in the July 26-Aug. 11 Paris Games and the following Paralympics. The Olympic and Paralympic medals in Paris are being embedded with pieces from a hexagonal chunk of iron taken from the monument.

The hugely popular 330-meter (1083-foot) landmark in central Paris has seen soaring visitor numbers in the lead-up to the 2024 Games.

Work on the Eiffel Tower to install the rings is set to begin at the end of the month, the organizers said. (AP)

**Maryland lawmakers OK plan:** Maryland lawmakers approved a plan to rebuild Baltimore's storied but antiquated Pimlico Race Course and transfer the track to state control in the waning hours of the state's legislative session.

The measure would use \$400 million in state bonds to rebuild the home of the second jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown, the Preakness Stakes. The legislation also calls for transferring Pimlico from the Stronach Group, which is the current owner of Pimlico and nearby Laurel Park, to a newly formed nonprofit that would operate under the state. The 105-32 vote in the Maryland House sends the bill to Gov. Wes Moore, who has expressed support for it.

"We think it's important to not just make sure that we're protecting an industry that means a lot to this state, but just in terms of its history, but also in terms of its future, but also this is an important bill for the community," Moore, a Democrat, told reporters earlier in the day.

Under the plan, the Preakness would relocate to Laurel Park in 2026 while the new facility is being built, before returning to Pimlico, likely in 2027. The temporary move would come as the third Triple Crown race, the Belmont Stakes, is scheduled to return to Belmont Park from a two-year hiatus at Saratoga Race Course while the New York track undergoes a \$455 million reconstruction. (AP)

**Ballo enters transfer portal:** Arizona center Omar Ballo entered the transfer portal on Monday, leaving coach Tommy Lloyd with a huge hole to fill.

"I would like to thank my coaches, teammates, friends and family for their ongoing support to make me the best player and person I can be," Ballo wrote on X. "I especially would like to thank coach Lloyd for the impact he has had on my life -- Arizona is in great hands. With that being said, I have decided to enter the transfer portal as a graduate student for my final year of eligibility."

Ballo, who's from Mali, started his career at Gonzaga under coach Mark Few and Lloyd, then an assistant. (AP)



Chennai Super Kings' captain Ruturaj Gaikwad plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders in Chennai, India. (AP)

# Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

## Kuwait Club win league title to complete treble



Kuwait Club players celebrate with officials and fans after winning the volleyball league title.

### Whites beat Al-Qadisiya again

**Khaled El Anzi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9:** The Kuwait Club volleyball team clinched the league title in the 57th edition of the 2023-2024 season, securing victory over Al-Qadisiya for the second consecutive time.

The showdown unfolded in the golden square, with Kuwait Club prevailing in three games 25-22, 18-25, 25-23, and 25-23 at the Al-Itihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, Kuwait Club had previously bested the Al-Qadisiya in their initial encounter in the Golden Square playoffs, sweeping three games to claim the 57th league shield.

### VOLLEYBALL

Al-Qadisiya secured the runner-up position, with Al-Arabi securing third place. This victory marked the "Sons of Kaifan's" achievement of the treble, adding the league title to their earlier victories in the Federation Championship and the Super Cup, while the "Sons of Hawalli" claimed the Federation Cup championship title.

Following the final match, Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, President of the Volleyball

Federation, along with the federation's members and Khaled Al-Ghanim, President of the Kuwait Club, ceremoniously crowned the "Dean" with the league shield, awarded silver medals to Al-Qadisiya, and bronze medals to Al-Arabi.

It is notable that Al-Qadisiya has secured the championship title 23 times since its inception, followed by Kazma with 15 and Kuwait with 14, while Al-Arabi has clinched the title four times and Al-Jahra once.

Jaber Al-Marri, President of the Football Association, extended congratulations to the victorious teams of the season, while expressing wishes for success to all teams in the upcoming season.

Meanwhile, Mueleh Al-Rashidi, Director of Volleyball at the Kuwait Club, conveyed congratulations to Marzouq Al-Ghanim, the Honorary President of the Kuwait Club, the Chairman, members of the Club's Board of Directors, and its supporters for securing the "Triple" after capturing the well-deserved league title.

Reflecting on the season, Abdul Rahman Al-Otaibi, a star player for the "White" team, noted their ambition to claim all championships but acknowledged the Cup eluded them, extending gratitude to Al-Ameed fans for their support.

Bahraini coach of the "Yellow" team, Reda Ali, highlighted Kuwait's pivotal last-minute plays in the final match, crediting the experience of Iranian player Saber Kazemi as instrumental in their success.

## Gaekwad & Jadeja star, Chennai 'hands' Kolkata first defeat in IPL

**CHENNAI, India, April 9, (AP):** Chennai Super Kings handed Kolkata Knight Riders their first defeat after captain Ruturaj Gaekwad finished what Ravindra Jadeja started in the Indian Premier League.

Jadeja strangled the batting power of Kolkata to 137-9 with 3-18 in the middle overs, and Gaekwad cruised Chennai to 141-3 in 17.4 overs for their third home win.

Gaekwad, who had only 88 runs in the previous four games, scored an unbeaten 67 off 58 balls and marshalled the chase with a 70-run second wicket stand with Daryl Mitchell, who made 25.

Mitchell was clean bowled by Sunil Narine, but impact substitute Shivam Dube clubbed three sixes and a boundary in his quickfire 28 off 18 balls.

The thumping seven-wicket win lifted Chennai among the top four with three wins in five games.

Kolkata couldn't capitalize on a blazing power play of 56-1 by Narine and Raghuvanshi after Phil Salt was out to a catch first ball off fast bowler

Tushar Deshpande.

Narine smashed two sixes and three boundaries in a 20-ball 27 and Raghuvanshi made an 18-ball 24 before Jadeja claimed their wickets among three in his first eight balls.

Gaekwad's plan to turn back to his seamers in the death overs worked well as Kolkata lost four wickets for just 28 runs in the last four overs.

### CRICKET

Mustafizur Rahman claimed both of his wickets in the last over when his cutters conceded only two runs, while Deshpande finished with 3-33.

### Also:

**LONDON:** The England and Wales Cricket Board on Tuesday announced a three-test tour to New Zealand starting at Christchurch on Nov. 28.

After the series opener at Hagley Oval, the tour will move to the North Island for tests in Wellington from Dec. 6-10 and in Hamilton from Dec. 14-18.

### Purdue outmatched

## UConn secures back-to-back NCAA title

**GLENDALE, Ariz., April 9, (AP):** A basketball beatdown. A coaching clinic. A double-digit domination.

Take one guess who finished off a romp through college basketball again. You bet, it's UConn - a team built to win now, and often, and by a lot every time it takes the court.

Coach Dan Hurley's Huskies delivered the latest of their suffocating hoops performances Monday night, smothering Purdue for a 75-60 victory to become the first team since 2007 to capture back-to-back national championships.

Tristen Newton scored 20 points for the Huskies, who won their 12th straight March Madness game - not a single one of them decided by fewer than 13 points.

UConn was efficient on offense but won this with defense. The Huskies (37-3) limited the country's second-best 3-point shooting team to a mere seven shots behind the arc and only a single make, while happily allowing 7-foot-4 AP Player of the Year Zach Edey to go for 37 points on 25 shot attempts.

### BASKETBALL

UConn won its sixth overall title and joined the 2006-07 Florida Gators and the 1991-92 Duke Blue Devils as just the third team to repeat since John Wooden's UCLA dynasty of the 1960s and '70s.

"I just think it's the best two-year run in a very, very long time, just because of everything we lost from last year's team," said Hurley, whose top two scorers from last year now play in the NBA. "To lose that much and do it again, it's got to be as impressive a two-year run since at least prior to Duke."

The 2024 Huskies are the sixth team

## UEFA set to crack down on players intimidating referees at Euro 2024

**DUESSELDORF, Germany, April 9, (AP):** UEFA's top referee has vowed to crack down on players arguing with referees and "mobbing" them on the field at the upcoming European Championship in Germany.

Roberto Rosetti, UEFA managing director of refereeing, addressed a gathering of coaches from the 24 competing teams on Monday in Germany and called on them to ensure their players show respect for game officials.

"Unacceptable players' behavior is a problem for officials. The players are following you and, if you are calm, your players are more calm," he told the coaches, according to a UEFA statement on Tuesday.

"We want to avoid unnecessary cards and protect the image of the game, so we will be strong with mobbing and clear dissent. This is about protecting the image of the game and a positive legacy for future generations. We have to do something and we need you because you are super important for us."

Rosetti is an experienced Italian referee who oversaw the European Championship final in 2008, when Spain beat Germany 1-0.

UEFA also said it will make a decision soon on whether to allow teams to

win all six tournament games by double-digit margins. They won those games by a grand total of 140 points,



In this file photo, the original FIFA World Cup trophy is displayed during the 2018 soccer World Cup draw in the Kremlin in Moscow. (AP)

pick 26 players instead of the usual 23 for the tournament.

The expanded squads were used as a temporary measure at the last Euro-

pean Championship in 2021 to allow players to be replaced quickly if they tested positive for COVID-19 while in camp.

Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman argued last month for a return to 26-player squads because "you have to deal with more injuries these days," but Germany

coach Julian Nagelsmann disagreed in comments Monday. Nagelsmann said he favored sticking with 23 because he was concerned about the atmosphere in a larger squad suffering if too many players aren't getting game time.

UEFA said there was no consensus among the coaches at Monday's meeting. "UEFA has taken note of the various opinions and points of view shared, with a final decision to be made in the coming weeks."

Meanwhile, FIFA said it will consider changes to its policy that blocks league matches from being played in other countries as part of an agreement with a soccer promoter to dismiss the world governing body from a lawsuit challenging that policy.

"Coaches made a point that we'd be really locked in if we controlled their 3-point attempts," Spencer said. "Holding them to seven shows we were locked in on making sure their guards didn't get involved in the game."

With his Xs-and-Os masterpiece, Hurley joins former Florida coach Billy Donovan in the back-to-back club, and is in company with Bill Self and Rick Pitino as only the third active coach with two championships.

### SOCCER

coach Julian Nagelsmann disagreed in comments Monday. Nagelsmann said he favored sticking with 23 because he was concerned about the atmosphere in a larger squad suffering if too many players aren't getting game time.

UEFA said there was no consensus among the coaches at Monday's meeting.

"UEFA has taken note of the various opinions and points of view shared, with a final decision to be made in the coming weeks."

Meanwhile, FIFA said it will consider changes to its policy that blocks league matches from being played in other countries as part of an agreement with a soccer promoter to dismiss the world governing body from a lawsuit challenging that policy.

blowing past the 1996 Kentucky team, which won its six by 129.

In a matchup of two top seeds, they wore down the Boilermakers (34-5), who made it this far a year after becoming just the second No. 1 in the history of March Madness to fall in the first round. But Purdue left the same way it came - still looking for the program's first NCAA title.

So much for the free-for-all this new age of the transfer portal and name, image and likeness deals was supposed to become. UConn has figured out how to dominate and replenish its roster with players who understand their roles.

Cam Spencer, a transfer from Rutgers, Stephon Castle, a blue-chip freshman, and Alex Karaban, a sophomore from last year's team, spent the night guarding the 3-point line and making life miserable for Purdue's guards.

"They just made a decision - we can defend the perimeter, and we can take this away from you, you're going to get the ball to your best player, he'll be