



IRAN LAUNCHES UNPRECEDENTED RETALIATORY ATTACK ON ISRAEL

Kuwait urges restraint amid regional tensions

Gov't vows citizens, expats safety



Amiri Diwan photo

HH the Amir in a group photo with Deputy PM and newly-appointed governors.

Amir receives minister, governors

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah at Al-Sief Palace.

His Highness the Amir also received Al-Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, Al-Assima

Governor Abdullah Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Al-Ahmedi Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Al-Jahraa Governor Hamad Jassem Mohammad Mheisen Al-Habshi for their newly appointed positions as governors. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Affairs Ministry expressed on Sunday its deep concern over military escalation in the region, and the mounting detrimental ramifications on both regional and international stability and security.

Kuwait, via Ministry issued statement, called for practicing self-restraint to avoid risks of such escalation and its ramifications.

It underlined importance of UN Security Council adherence to its responsibilities of safeguarding international peace and security, and avoiding wars via guaranteeing commitment of international community.

The ministry stressed necessity of addressing root cause of tensions, and adopting diplomacy in conflict settlement, all to ensure regional stability.

On Saturday evening, the Kuwaiti cabinet convened an extraordinary meeting at Messila Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The cabinet affirmed keenness on responding to all regional incidents and surrounding conditions in a way that protects the security and stability of Kuwait amid the accelerating developments in the region.

The meeting heard presentations by several ministers on the precautionary measures made by their respective ministries and competent state agencies to address any eventuality, particularly in the security domain, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji following the meeting.

Meanwhile, Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi was briefed on the Ministry's Crisis Management Committee regarding preparations to monitor the current developments in the region and review the procedures followed by the Ministry's departments in this regard.



Photo by Leah Qurtal

Boats moored at the Marina shoreline. The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Saturday evening reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding Kuwait's security and stability amidst escalating regional developments.



Israeli Iron Dome air defense system launched to intercept missiles fired from Iran, in central Israel, Sunday, April 14, 2024. Iran launched its first direct military attack against Israel on Saturday. (AP)

World reacts to Tehran air strikes

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (Agencies): Countries and prominent global figures around the globe reacted Sunday to the wide-scale Iranian strikes on Israeli occupation, which came in response to the occupation's attack targeting Iranian diplomats in Damascus.

Saudi Arabia expressed deep concerns regarding the developments and military escalation in the region and the seriousness of its repercussions.

Quoted by Saudi Press Agency (SPA), a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Kingdom called on all parties to exercise the utmost levels of restraint and spare the region and its people from the dangers of war.

The Ministry affirmed the Kingdom's position calling for the need for the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility towards maintaining international peace and security, especially in this region that is extremely sensitive to global peace and security.

It also called for preventing escalation of the crisis, which would have dire consequences.

Qatar expressed on Sunday its deep concern over the recent escalation in the Middle East region, urging all involved parties to de-escalate and practice self-restraint.

A statement by the Foreign Ministry said that the international community must intervene to end the tension and de-escalate the situation, reflecting Qatar's renewed support to all regional and international efforts to maintain security and stability.

Geopolitical unrest propels gold prices to record highs

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): A specialized report released by Kuwaiti company Dar Al-Sabaek highlighted on Sunday that heightened military and geopolitical tensions are the primary drivers behind the significant surge in gold prices observed since the beginning of last week, resulting in prices reaching a new peak. Despite experiencing some profit-taking activities, with gold prices temporarily settling at \$2,345 per ounce by the end of last Friday's session, they remain historically high due to ongoing military operations in the Middle East and the detention of commercial ships near the Arabian Gulf.

The report anticipates that gold prices will continue to rise throughout the week as long as military tensions persist in the region, particularly following recent attacks launched by Iran against the Israeli occupation. Geopolitical factors currently outweigh technical considerations, propelling gold prices sharply upward, as witnessed last week with a \$150 per ounce increase before a correction occurred towards the end of trading.

Gold futures contracts for delivery in June surged to \$2,374 per ounce, marking the eighth record level reached in less than a month, after peaking at \$2,448 during the previous week. The report predicts further increases when markets open the following day, emphasizing the continuous presence of factors driving gold to its highest levels. Central banks, notably the People's Bank of China, continue to bolster gold reserves, with China increasing its holdings by 12 tons in February, totaling 2,257 tons.

Gold is currently viewed as a crucial investment amid geopolitical risks, with investors closely monitoring developments in the Middle East, American and Chinese economic events. The report anticipates gold reaching new peaks throughout the week as long as military risks persist, particularly in the Middle East.

In failed societies, there are a thousand fools for every sound mind

Opinion

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

MANY countries have suffered from adversities and some among them were able to emerge from those situations with the least damage because they turned their adversities into opportunities to create ideas that would help their advancement. On the other hand, other countries are drowning in bickering and conflicts about who bears responsibility for the adversity, i.e. a crisis or a problem.

When asked about the failure of societies, a conclusion offered by the Russian writer Anton Chekhov is pertinent.

He said, "When there are a thousand fools for every sound mind, and a thousand foolish words for every conscious word, the majority will always remain fools, and will always prevail over the rational person. If you see trivial issues taking precedence in a society over conscious speech, and the trivial people taking center stage, then you are talking about a very failed society."

Many countries have fallen behind because they did not prioritize the language of reason over the nonsense that preoccupies the elite of the people. They did not realize that education is the task of collective awareness, not just memorization and obtaining grades and certificates, even if they are fake.

Singapore made education a priority when Lee Kuan Yew assumed the premiership, because he found an ignorant country rife with chaos and poverty.

He therefore worked on implementing good education first, and within years, that island became one of the developed countries of the world. It has the highest percentage of educated people and creative people with ideas. Its per capita income in 2022 reached about USD 60 thousand.

This example shows how leadership can make societies vibrant and productive.

In another example, when Elizabeth I assumed power in England in the 16th century, the United Kingdom was suffering from unrest and an economic crisis. She chose to work for her country, and dedicated herself to it to the extent that when she was asked about marriage, she said her famous phrase, "I am married to Britain". Because of that, she was called the Virgin Queen at the time.

She ruled for about 40 years, during which England developed at all levels. The basis was education, and granting freedom to people to express their creativity in all fields.

Centuries after that, the United Kingdom fell into a major crisis. As a result of the chaos that prevailed, demonstrations spread throughout the country and social division emerged. This continued until Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister, as she worked with everyone for the sake of Britain.

An English politician once said, "You can discuss any ideas with the Queen, but you will not dare discuss them with Thatcher" because she was truly the "Iron Lady" with regard to her country's interests and her lofty defense of it.

Strategic stock security 'vital'

— Details Page 2 —

War may push oil to \$200 pb

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Dr. Sadem Al-Bassam, an economic and oil expert and head of the accounting department at Kuwait University, speculates that the price of a barrel of oil will reach more than \$200 if the war between Israel and Iran continues and expands, especially since this war will involve international parties.

He indicated that the price of the oil commodity is always exposed to a rise in times of political crises in particular.

Dr. Al-Bassam stressed that the focus of the conflict this time is in the heart of the Middle East, which includes major international waterways through which oil supplies pass, especially since the Gulf countries are the largest oil producers in the world.

He explained that changing the route of Gulf oil tankers from the Red Sea to the Cape of Good Hope to avoid a political crisis in the sea route inevitably leads to two factors that will increase the price of a barrel of oil. The first is the scarcity of oil and the second is the delay in obtaining it. This is because ships taking the Cape of Good Hope route take a long time to cross from the Red Sea.

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MPs-elect honor 'postponement'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: A total of 42 MPs-elect attended the coordination meeting in the National Assembly building on Sunday.

MPs-elect Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Obaid Al-Wasmi and Ahmed Al-Fadhil did not attend the meeting because they were not invited; while MPs Ahmed Al-Saadoun, Jenan Bushehri and Essa Al-Kandari were invited but they did not attend the meeting. MPs-elect Saleh Ashour and Abdulwahab Al-Essa apologized for their absence. Ashour said he will not attend any meeting unless all the MPs-elect are invited.

According to a reliable source, the MPs-elect decided not to attend the inaugural session of the Assembly slated for Wednesday and abide by the Amiri decree on postponing the session until May 14. They took this decision due to the current regional circumstances, which require them to support the political leadership and avoid the escalation of tension, the source added.

On the other hand, newly elected MP Ahmed Al-Fadhil disclosed that he will not attend the inaugural session on Wednesday.

Al-Fadhil pointed out there is no benefit in attending this session, and it could be misunderstood as a step to instigate crises and dispute with the political leadership.

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NewsWatch

CAIRO: EgyptAir resumed on Sunday operating their flights to all airports in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon.

The airlines announced on Saturday night suspending its flights to and from airports of Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon due to regional tensions and in light of the closure of airspace in these countries. (KUNA)

MANILA: The Philippines on Sunday said four Filipino sailors were among the crew of a container ship seized by Iranian forces in the Arabian Gulf on Saturday.

In a statement, the Philippines' Department of Migrant Workers confirmed the seizure of the vessel MSC Aries "with four Filipino seafarers on board," adding that it has contacted the families of the four sailors. (Xinhua)

MUSCAT: At least 12 persons have died after their vehicles drifted away because of a severe flood in Oman's Al-Mudaybi. Search is underway for five missing people, said Omani news agency Sunday.

Civil Defense and field teams evacuated a school containing 1,200 students, in addition to the teaching staff, who were detained by the floods and high water levels.

The Omani Ministry of Education announced the suspension of schools and the switch to online classes in all public, private and foreign schools. (KUNA)

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:01 Asr 15:23
 Sunrise .. 05:24 Maghrib .. 18:14
 Zohr 11:48 Isha 19:34

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southwesterly wind changing to northeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance

for rising dust over open areas.

By Night: Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	34	23
Kuwait Airport	33	19
Abdaly	32	18
Jahra	33	21
Salmiyah	30	25
Nuwaisib	32	19
Wafra	33	17

Kuwaiti businessmen invited to invest in Tajikistan

Foreign diplomats convey Eid greetings to Kuwaiti leadership

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Diplomatic Corps Dean and Ambassador of Tajikistan to Kuwait Dr Zubaidullah Zubaidov greeted His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, the government and the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr wishing continued success for the political leadership, and progress and prosperity for Kuwait and its people, reports Al-Anba daily. He stressed that Kuwait remains a model of stability and economic growth; and an oasis of security, peace and prosperity in the region.

Dr Zubaidullah Zubaidov, has announced that Tajikistan's President, Emomali Rahmon, is scheduled to visit Kuwait in the last quarter of this year. This visit marks a significant development in bilateral relations between the two countries, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Additionally, the joint economic committee between Tajikistan and Kuwait is expected to convene this year to discuss matters related to politics, economics, and trade.

Ambassador Zubaidov highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation between Tajikistan and Kuwait across various sectors.

He mentioned plans for the Tajik Cultural Week in Kuwait as part of efforts to deepen cultural ties. One of the key objectives of President Rahmon's visit is to discuss food security, leveraging Tajikistan's abundant agricultural resources, including animal wealth, fruits, vegetables and nuts, to potentially supply Kuwait.

In terms of tourism, Ambassador Zubaidov noted the establishment of a direct flight route between Kuwait and Dushanbe, with three weekly flights aimed at promoting tourism between the two countries. He emphasized the tourism potential of Tajikistan, highlighting its historical significance and modern amenities.

The ambassador also highlighted investment opportunities in Tajikistan for Kuwaiti businessmen, particularly in infrastructure projects such as hydroelectric projects. He mentioned ongoing collaboration with the Kuwaiti Fund on infrastructure development.

Ambassador Zubaidov mentioned that Tajikistan has 20 students studying Arabic language and biology at Kuwait University's Faculty of Arts, expressing a desire to increase the number of Tajik students learning Arabic in Kuwait.

Overall, Ambassador Zubaidov emphasized the mutual benefits of strengthening

ties between Tajikistan and Kuwait, spanning economic, cultural, and educational spheres.

Meanwhile, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps of the Arab Group and Ambassador of Palestine to Kuwait Rami Tahboub said: "On behalf of the Palestinian community in the State of Kuwait and the employees of the Embassy of the State of Palestine, I am honored to express my highest and most sincere greetings and wish for blessings on the occasion of the blessed Eid Al-Fitr to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad. I pray that Allah Almighty continues to grant him good health and well-being, and to retain him as an asset, support and great leader for the beloved Kuwaiti people.

I recall the honorable positions of Kuwait and its successive rulers regarding Palestine, its people and its cause; as well as the stand of this dear country, which is proud of its authentic Arab affiliation, especially during this difficult ordeal and the genocide that our people are suffering in the beloved Gaza Strip and the entire occupied State of Palestine.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the medical and relief teams and Kuwaiti charitable societies that arrived day and night to alleviate the suffering and pain of our people, especially the two medical teams and their members who carried their lives on their paws in order to heal the wounds of their brothers in Palestine. The love, appreciation and respect from the Palestinian leadership and Palestinian people are extended to them."

Turkish Ambassador Tuba Nur Sönmez stated: "I extend my sincere greetings and blessings to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait. I wish good health and blessings for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and continued progress and prosperity for the citizens and residents on the land of Kuwait. On behalf of the Turkish Embassy staff, I greet the Turkish community in Kuwait, hoping these blessed days will bring peace and reassurance to the Islamic world and all of humanity.

I would like to express my happiness over the continuous development of relations between Türkiye and Kuwait, especially since the year 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. I pray that our unity, solidarity, and the bonds of friendship and brotherhood of the two countries will grow stronger. My thoughts are also with the people of Gaza. I hope they find peace and tranquility in these difficult times, and that the coming year will bring comfort, prosperity and lasting peace."



The flamingos take a siesta as the sun goes down on the horizon in low tide opposite the city of Doha, north Kuwait.

Proposals to protect Kuwait internally in case of escalation in Iran-Israel war

Need to stock up on food, medicine and fuel

By Najeh Bilal and Marwa Al-Bahravi
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Head of the Kuwait Consumer Protection Association Mishal Al-Mana presented ten proposals to the government for protecting the home front in the event of an escalation in the war in the region following the recent Iranian attack on Israel last night.

In a special statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Mana stressed that the first of these solutions is to secure a strategic stock of basic and necessary commodities such as food, medicine, and fuel, so that they can be accessed quickly in the event of a disruption in supply chains.

In the second proposal, he called for working to form an emergency committee with state ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Defense, and the National Guard to unify efforts and resources.

Al-Mana called for the need to establish an effective communication system between the committee and the governmental, private and public sectors to exchange information quickly and accurately, and to develop a plan to communicate with citizens for reassuring them and informing them of developments.

In his fourth proposal, the head of the Kuwait Consumer Protection Association called for the need to conduct periodic analyzes of potential risks and develop scenarios for various crises that may arise during the war in order to better prepare for them.

In his fifth proposal, Al-Mana stressed the importance of developing and creating a plan to exchange non-essential goods with basic goods between companies.

Regarding the sixth proposal, he stressed the importance of organizing awareness campaigns and training programs for companies and individuals on how to deal with crises and prepare for them, such as managing personal inventory and emergency financial planning.

Proposal

In his seventh proposal, Al-Mana called for activating the association's unified digital system, which was submitted to the Ministry of Commerce (Al-Siddiq Department) in order to effectively monitor and manage resources and basic commodities, which tracks stocks and alerts to potential risks.

In the eighth proposal, Al-Mana highlighted the importance of using artificial intelligence techniques to analyze market data and predict crises and their effects on the economy and supply chains, which enables the committee to make proactive decisions.

Through his ninth proposal, he called for developing a specialized unit in cybersecurity within the committee to confront the increasing cyber threats during wars. This unit would be responsible for monitoring the digital infrastructure of vital ministries and companies to evaluate and address security vulnerabilities and develop emergency response plans to deal with cyber incidents.

Finally, in the tenth proposal, Al-Mana called for developing plans to use alternative commercial and logistical routes in the event that main or international roads are cut off.

Meanwhile, according to informed health sources, the Ministry of Health is fully prepared to confront any potential incident, and to raise the state of alertness. It is ready to review and activate the emergency and crisis management plans to deal with any emergencies that may occur in the region as a result of the tense regional political situation and the escalation of the Iran-Israel war.

They highlighted the coordination of the Ministry of Health with various ministries and state institutions to develop an integrated plan for securing the basic commodities and providing a sufficient strategic stock of medicines and medical supplies.

The sources explained that several meetings were held yesterday in various health facilities to review and activate emergency plans in coordination with the Central Blood Bank, the Medical Emergency Department, and the emergency units in hospitals and health centers to deal with any potential accident.

The ministry intends to form an "emergency" committee specialized in studying and reviewing the plans and strategies drawn up by various sectors, and ensuring its readiness to confront and manage potential crises, in coordination with the public and private sectors to increase blood stocks and avoid shortages in medicines and medical supplies in the future.

The sources reassured that the health situation in the country is stable and that integrated health plans have been put in place to provide medicines and medical services in its various facilities, and to increase blood stocks. They affirmed that there is a clear emergency stock to meet the needs, which is renewed periodically to maintain the validity of blood of all types.

KAC introduces service to deliver home traveler's personal luggage

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwait Airways has introduced a convenient home luggage delivery service for passengers arriving from London, with plans to gradually extend the service to other flights in the near future, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Passengers can request this service 12 hours before their flight through the airline's official website or mobile application, as detailed in a statement released by the Kuwait Airways.

Abdul Mohsen Salem Al-Faqan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, emphasized the company's commitment to providing exceptional service to its customers. He highlighted Kuwait Airways' dedication to ensuring passenger comfort from the moment they enter the airport terminal until they board the aircraft.

Al-Faqan underscored the airline's focus on modernizing its fleet, enhancing onboard entertainment options, and delivering a luxurious travel experience.

Al-Faqan further noted Kuwait Air-

ways' recent advancements in launching new destinations and services, including home travel procedures for Royal and First-Class passengers, limousine services for premium classes, electronic boarding pass issuance, and onboard BLUEFI internet service.

The introduction of the home luggage delivery service represents another milestone in Kuwait Airways' commitment to passenger convenience.

The KAC CEO Captain Ahmed Mohammad Al-Karibani elaborated on the airline's summer schedule for 2024, which includes the launch of new destinations such as Antalya, Bodrum, Trabzon, Sharm El-Sheikh, Malaga, and Nice.

The summer schedule encompasses a total of 54 destinations, with increased frequencies to popular European destinations like London, Amsterdam, Munich, Vienna, Geneva, and Sarajevo. Additionally, flights to other destinations such as Dubai, Riyadh, and Manchester will see increased capacity to accommodate rising demand.

Free 'Umrah' trips organized

Fund helps 850 patients annually

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Director of the Cancer Patients Fund at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) Jamal Ahmad Al-Saleh has disclosed that the Fund receives requests for assistance from more than 850 cancer patients annually, reports Al-Anba daily.

He said these cases are referred to the concerned committee in the Fund in coordination with the social service partners at KCCC, Palliative Care Center and Helping Patients Society. He added a comprehensive report on the patient's condition is attached to the medical report and social status study, and then the committee reviews each file and approves patient assistance.

Explained

He explained the Fund provides various types of assistance like monthly financial support and X-ray and medical examination support; in addition to helping patients who wish to return to their country by giving them travel tickets and money to support them until they settle there.

He stated that one of the Fund's most important projects is organizing Umrah trips as a way of psychologically supporting cancer patients. He revealed the Fund organizes the trip for 50 patients every year, as it has been scientifically proven that stimulating the faith in the hearts of patients relieves their pain. He went on to reveal that the Fund started organizing such trips in 1999 and more than 1,500 patients have benefited over the course of 25 years.

MEW revenues

KD400m collected

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is expected to collect about KD500 million by the end of fiscal 2023/2024; considering it collected almost KD400 million in the last 10 months including KD70 million collected in January, reports Al-Rai daily quoting reliable sources.

Sources revealed the ministry's revenues are from the electricity and water payments within the fiscal year, attributing the high collection rate to the linking of its payment systems with the Ministry of Interior and linking the travel of expatriates with the payment of energy bills; in addition to more than 20 electronic services provided by the Customer Affairs Sector and the establishment or expansion of customer affairs offices in certain areas, especially the remote ones.

On the other hand, the ministry announced that the maintenance works in some secondary substations in the six governorates started on Saturday and will continue until next Saturday. It also warned about power disruptions in areas supplied by the stations undergoing maintenance from 8:00 am until 12:00 noon.



Dr. Zubaidov



Tuba Nur Sonmez



Rami Tahboub

Other Voices

Gaza changed history forever

By Ahmad alsarraf

Shlomo Ben-Ami is considered one of the strongest supporters of Palestinian rights. He is an Israeli professor, a former member of the Labor Party, and a member of the Knesset. He was Minister of Internal Security and subsequently Minister of Foreign Affairs.

He is of Moroccan origin, born in 1943, and immigrated to Palestine in 1956. He is a senior historian and diplomat. He has given many lectures in support of Palestinian rights, and is considered, along with a good group of others, a representative of the "living Jewish conscience," in an environment that Netanyahu has come to lead either to more bloodshed, or to devastation.

Shlomo Ben-Ami wrote a letter in Haaretz on April 2, 2024, addressed to all Israelis, in which he said:

"I write as a Sephardic (Israeli) Jew about the genocide I witnessed, with countless atrocities and massacres. But what happened at Al-Shifa Hospital deserves a study, a university course, and a Wikipedia page of its own. I've never seen anything like it, ever. I don't think ISIS has achieved anything like this. This sounds like the work of drug-addled death squads in a long orgy of killing, armed with 21st century weapons.

"It's so crazy that we can't even understand what it means yet, and it will take us years to understand that particular episode of genocide. I have no idea what Israel did or did to its soldiers to prepare them for this, but it does not seem possible for ordinary people, even the most hateful of others, to carry out these actions, which

continued for three weeks. I'm confused and need an explanation.

"Even in the context of the sheer depravity we have witnessed, these actions stand out as brutal and extremely evil.

"Oh my God, how did we sink to this point? (Israel) begs humanity to stop it, but no one listens!!"

On the other hand, Alon Mizrahi, a former professional football player, wrote the following text on his account on the X platform:

"What has become more clear at this unique moment is that Hamas, a small Palestinian movement, has defeated not only Israel, but the entire West, has triumphed on the battlefield, and has triumphed in the arena of public opinion. Hamas was able to make amazing use of its reading of the (Israeli) mentality, and used everything it had with great efficiency, winning the hearts of millions for the Palestinian cause all over the world.

"Even now, after more than 180 days, it has not been destroyed or dismantled. It has kept almost every prisoner it captured 6 months ago, and has not yielded to any pressure, within a small sector that is besieged and bombed daily.

"History will judge the past six months as one of the most unfathomable and brilliant achievements in all of military history. This is beyond unfathomable. 'By waging this war in this way, without thinking or feeling, Israel made Hamas a legend of resistance that will live in cultural memory throughout the ages. No one believed they could do it, but they did, and they changed history forever. The issue of Palestine will never be forgotten again, and this is Hamas' real victory.'

I hope that the Palestinians will remember these two names, and dozens like them, who stood with the right of return.

□ □ □

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'We respect our flag more than everything, our pride, support'

"WHY are they afraid of them and do not pay attention to us? Why are they terrified by their loud voices and do not pay attention to us?" columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Why do they disregard the consequences of their actions while remaining indifferent to our concerns? Why does the mere threat of intimidation paralyze them, yet they remain unmoved by our genuine worries for our nation and for their own well-being?"

"Why do they turn a blind eye to our efforts aimed at securing the future and stability of our country, showing no inclination to restore the government's integrity and respect for its officials? Can't they see the growing blaze that threatens to engulf us all?"

"Why did they fail to foresee the current situation? Why did they dismiss the early signs of dissent and accusations, allowing them to escalate unchecked day by day?"

"Why does the realm of error overshadow the realm of correctness? These incessant questions plague us, the citizens of this nation, as we rightfully fear the escalating threats and discord around us."

"While some decisive actions have been taken, the lingering anxiety remains, haunted by the specter of regression and indecision that has plagued us for too long."

"The piece of cloth, in red, white, black and green, is not a material for venting grudges. Rather, it is the flag of Kuwait, and this flag is not the flag of this one or that one, but rather the national symbol of all of us."

"The Kuwaiti flag is our pride, our support, and we place it above our heads. Burning our flag in central London was an expected result due to previous tolerance for what he described as 'just an outburst'."

"Do you know what I mean from my article?"



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

members of the Ministry of the Interior, alongside the entire Kuwaiti populace. May God bless this occasion with goodness, righteousness, and abundant blessings for all," columnist **Tarek Hamada** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"I also extend my congratulations to the esteemed representatives who have earned the trust of the people. I hope for their cooperation with the executive authority to fulfill the aspirations and hopes of the Kuwaiti people. Let us work together to prioritize the interests of Kuwait above all else and strive towards achieving a democratic society that we can all take pride in."

"During the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior **Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef**, and Lieutenant General **Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf**, paid visits to various sectors within the ministry to express appreciation and convey gratitude to our dedicated security personnel."

"Their presence among our security forces serves as a source of encouragement and motivation for them to continue safeguarding our beloved nation."

"The meticulous deployment of our security personnel in the streets, markets, complexes, and around mosques and electoral committees during the past ten days has been commendable. This coordinated effort, led by individuals committed to upholding security and safety, has ensured the smooth conduct of various festivities and prevented any disruptions."

"Traditionally, the men and women of the Ministry of Interior dedicate their Eid holidays to maintaining security and traffic management on our roads. Their diligence has notably contributed to the prevention of traffic congestion and the mitigation of potential disturbances, fostering a peaceful environment for families to celebrate."

"Furthermore, the recent joint efforts between the General Administration for Narcotics Control and the General Administration for Coast Guard resulting in the interception of drug smuggling worth one million dinars underscore the ongoing threat posed by drug traffickers targeting Kuwait. Addressing this issue necessitates collective action from individuals, organizations, and ministries, including Education, Information, and Awqaf, to support the Ministry of Interior in combating this menace that threatens our societal well-being."

"We pray to God to safeguard Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, and protect our nation from all harm."

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"The falling raft! The Ministry of Information's complaint about the series, which the Kuwaiti street unanimously agreed was a deliberate insult to Kuwait and its people, aroused the people's anger! After being pressured by the Kuwaiti street, the 'media' referred the series' team and participants to the Public Prosecution!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This measure taken by media officials is considered a matter of achieving the outcome. Its intention is to absorb the anger of the Kuwaiti street, which revolted against this action and put the blame on the ministry that stands silent while seeing the insult!"

"We and the ministry are sure that this series was not filmed in Kuwait and was not broadcasted by Kuwait TV, even if all or some of its characters were created by a Kuwaiti, or some of them are Kuwaitis or residing in Kuwait! The whole event did not happen on Kuwaiti soil, so I imagine that they will not be convicted and the media's measures will go unheeded!"

"Even if we are honest and frank, if the ministry is serious about holding them accountable or serious in disappointing Kuwait and its people, the case would be brought against the series, as well as those who produced it, broadcasted it and participated in it in the country from which the station is broadcasting or the country in which the series was filmed. Our embassies raised the issue when they felt the insult to their country."

"As for the administrative measures taken by the ministry, it stopped dealing with everyone who participated in this work and prevented their entry into the media complex. As for those who hold Kuwaiti residency -- regardless of the type of residency, they are formally summoned by the Ministry Interior for cancellation or administrative deportation. The station that broadcasted the work is boycotted. If it has an office in Kuwait, it is closed!"

"These are the correct procedures, for everyone to know that there is a 'red eye', and that Kuwait is not the 'low raft', which everyone can climb. As for referral to the prosecution and all works outside Kuwait, they are another story..."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf chairs the meeting.

Be vigilant in securing bases, strategic sites, Guards told

Deputy Chief of the National Guard, **Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf**, presided over a crucial meeting attended by Undersecretary Lieutenant General Engineer **Hashim Al-Rifai** and senior commanders. The focus of the meeting was to assess the readiness of the National Guard in safeguarding camps and strategic locations, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Al-Nawaf emphasized the paramount

importance of exercising caution and remaining vigilant in ensuring the security of camps and vital sites under the National Guard's purview. He underscored the pivotal role played by the National Guard in upholding security, stability, and the preservation of the nation's assets. This responsibility, he noted, is carried out in close collaboration with the Ministries of

Defense and Interior, as well as the General Fire Force.

Al-Nawaf reiterated the unwavering commitment of the National Guard to deploy all necessary efforts to safeguard the nation's security, recognizing the invaluable leadership of His Highness **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad**, the Amir of the country, and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Move draws opposition

CSC plans 'new rules' for public sector jobs

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) will soon set the regulations for implementing a new mechanism for the nomination of job applicants to various government agencies, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The CSC also unveiled its plan to set the deadline for nominated job applicants, who have not completed the appointment procedures, to amend their status in order to proceed with the nomination if they wish to do so.

Meanwhile, some have called for caution in setting the abovementioned regulations, as the issue necessitates further study and discussion with experts. They pointed out that the ban on appointment was lifted on Feb 18 and a new mechanism for the nomination of job applicants was announced on the Feb 28; that is, 10 days after lifting the ban. They said this period included the National Day, Liberation Day and weekend holidays; wondering when did the concerned authorities study the new mechanism that will be applied on thousands of applicants waiting for job opportunities.

On the other hand, Head of the CSC Workers Union **Fawaz Al-Anazi** argued that the new mechanism violates the Constitution, specifically the condition that "a candidate who rejects nomination for two government agencies forfeits his right to the stage he reached in the central employment system and must be returned to the system as a job applicant who registered for the first time."

He asserted that it is a violation of Article 41 of the Constitution, which states: "Every Kuwaiti shall have the right to work and to choose the nature of his occupation. Work is the duty of every citizen. Dignity requires it and the public welfare orders it. The State shall make work available to citizens and shall see to the equity of its conditions."

Stabbing probe opens

Gun-totting expat issues death threats to youths

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Ministry of Interior has opened an investigation into the case of a citizen who was allegedly stabbed by his friend, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Attempted murder case no. 15/2024 was registered under the title, 'Mutlaa Felony'.

The Jahra prosecutor ordered the arrest of the suspect for investigation and referral to the judiciary. A security source told the daily that the Jahra Operations Unit received a report that a person with stab wounds was taken to Jahra Hospital. He disclosed that patrol officers were dispatched to the site and they found out the injured, who was born in 1998, got severe and moderate injuries.

During investigation, the injured stated that he was in his vehicle plying through Barr Al-Mutlaa (kilometer 10) with his friend who is residing in the country illegally. He said the illegal resident (bedoun) stabbed him with a knife due to a dispute between them, and then the latter took him to Jahra Hospital. Upon their arrival at the hospital, the injured jumped out of the vehicle for fear that the suspect would change his mind.

The medical report showed a deep wound in the right forearm with bleeding, another deep wound in the left forearm with bleeding, a suspected cut in the right brachial artery, and abrasions and bruises on the feet.

On the other hand, the deputy public prosecutor ordered the detention of an expatriate in Saad Al-Abdullah Prison for carrying an unlicensed firearm and threatening to kill some individuals (Saad Al-Abdullah Felony Case No. 22/2024).

According to a security source, a citizen born in 1968 submitted a report to Saad Al-Abdullah Police Station, stating that an expatriate (23 years old) entered his house at around 1:00 am carrying a gun and threatened to kill his two sons. He did not explain the relationship between the accused and his two sons, whose ages are almost the same as that of the accused. The two sons will be summoned soon to verify the report.

'Rain returns on Tuesday'

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Meteorologist **Issa Ramadan** forecast light southeasterly winds will prevail during Monday, moderating and becoming more active at night, with the likelihood of increased rain on Tuesday, potentially accompanied by thunderstorms at times, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Weather conditions are expected to stabilize by Wednesday, accompanied by a rise in maximum temperatures, possibly reaching near 40 degrees Celsius by the end of the week. This increase in temperature is attributed to the influence of "Suhaili" winds, which are southwesterly winds originating from the dry desert.

Ramadan advises caution for beach and garden enthusiasts due to the sudden rise in waves during the "Sarayat" period.

"Sarayat" is a weather phenomenon that typically occurs over Kuwait and the region from mid-April, sometimes extending beyond mid-May.

During this period, cumulus thunderclouds are abundant, forming locally in the transitional phase between spring and summer. These clouds form when cold upper atmospheric layers interact with warm and humid surface layers, creating ideal conditions for the development of "climate" clouds.



Students taking their exams.

'No extra lessons eyed for student absentees'

'MoE to follow routine studies'

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: With only 14 days left until the end of the school year and a strict policy against repeating lessons for absent students, educators are gearing up to tackle the challenge of maximizing learning despite disruptions.

As schools reopen after various breaks and holidays, including Ramadan and Eid, both public and private institutions are facing the task of ensuring educational continuity, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

In response to the significant absenteeism witnessed during Ramadan, education authorities have implemented measures to address the issue. Proposals were submitted by educational districts to tackle mass absences, with one notable initiative being the enforcement of regulations for students absent without valid reasons during Ramadan.

During the previous Ramadan, schools experienced a notable surge in absenteeism, particularly towards the end of each week. Despite efforts to engage with students and their families, including administering short tests, the impact was limited. The grading

system's structure limited the effectiveness of such measures, with tests only accounting for a fraction of overall grades.

To mitigate the effects of absenteeism and ensure curriculum coverage, a proactive approach was adopted in scheduling lessons. Thirteen weeks were allocated for the second semester, with adjustments made to accommodate potential disruptions. Certain lessons from previous years were suspended, and a comprehensive curriculum distribution plan was devised to maintain progress. Teachers have the flexibility to adjust schedules and prioritize essential topics to meet academic goals.

Preparations for end-of-year exams are also well underway, with exam committees scheduled to convene from May 15 onwards. Test materials have been finalized and distributed, and correction committees are in place to ensure the smooth conduct of assessments.

As schools enter the final stretch of the academic year, educators remain committed to delivering quality education despite the challenges posed by absences and interruptions. Through strategic planning and proactive measures, they aim to maximize learning opportunities for all students, ensuring a successful conclusion to the academic year.



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LOCAL

MoSA pays bonuses to excellent employees amid grievance claims

Employees on temporary contracts need CSC approval

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Ministry of Social Affairs has disbursed approximately 1.5 million dinars in excellent work bonuses to 2,447 eligible employees who received outstanding annual evaluations, reports

Al-Jarida daily.

However, the Legal Affairs Sector of the ministry has started receiving grievances from employees who claim they did not receive their bonuses for the current fiscal year. Employees can submit their grievances through various channels, including an automated service called "Q Barcode," paper grievances, or email.

The ministry allows a 60-day period from the date of bonus disbursement for employees to submit their grievances. The Investigations Department reviews and processes these grievances, ensuring that only employees with excellent annual evaluations are eligible for the bonus.

To assist employees in filing grievances, the ministry launched the automated Q Barcode service, enabling employees to register their details and select the type of grievance.

However, due to budget constraints, there may be a deficit in the allocated budget to disburse the bonuses.

The ministry may need to make financial transfers to cover the grievances of employees who are proven to be entitled to the bonus.

The evaluation criteria for determining bonus eligibility include individual and group performance factors, personal capabilities, supervisory competence, and adherence to official working hours. The bonus amount varies based on job grade and title, with higher-ranking positions receiving larger bonuses.

Employees on temporary contracts need approval from the Civil Service Commission before receiving their bonuses. Overall, the ministry is working to address grievances and ensure fair distribution of bonuses to eligible employees.



KUNA photo
Part of the training program using artificial intelligence in producing social media content.

Program running until April 18

KUNA center launches training program on AI content creation

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): The KUNA Center for Media Capacity Development launched a training program on Sunday titled "Utilizing Artificial Intelligence for Social Media Content Creation." The program, running until April 18, includes participants from Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Qatar News Agency (QNA), Saudi News Agency (SPA), as well as individuals from public and private sectors in Kuwait.

Presented by Ahmed Al-Sheikh, a member of the New Media Council of the British Syndicate of Journalists, the program explores the role of AI al-

gorithms in social media management and digital platform planning. It covers fundamental tools for AI utilization, including creating topics, enhancing images and videos, and integrating AI elements with other applications.

The training includes practical exercises for social network planning and AI-driven content production, focusing on engaging audiences in the AI era. The KUNA Center for Media Capacity Development, established in December 1995, is renowned for providing high-quality media training programs. It aims to enhance personal and professional media capabilities.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Al-Rahma International during the distribution of food parcels in Gaza.

Kuwait's Al-Rahma International concludes Ramadan charitable projects in Gaza Strip

GAZA, April 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Al-Rahma International Society announced on Tuesday the conclusion of various charitable and humanitarian projects it implemented during the holy month of Ramadan in all Gaza Strip.

The director of Al-Rahma International in Palestine, Dr. Walid Al-Anjari, said that with the generous support of people in Kuwait, it provided essential food supplies to the most vulnerable in the beleaguered enclave.

The aid works included distributing 5,000 bags of flour before Ramadan

and over 5,000 food baskets before and at the start of the fasting month.

These efforts are particularly crucial in the besieged northern Gaza Strip, where the population is facing an unprecedented war of starvation and extermination.

Al-Anjari explained that the fasting-break meals project for Ramadan was implemented by distributing more than 26,000 hot meals, 1,000 meals per day, in various governorates in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Anjari said the association also distributed more than 8,000 parcels con-

taining food, basic materials and drinking water throughout the Gaza Strip.

He pointed to the relief work to provide bread to the displaced in shelters and hospitals in the southern Gaza Strip.

About 10,000 loaves of bread were distributed daily through bakeries supported with bags of flour to Palestinian citizens who face daily hardships. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Kuwait's government and its compassionate citizens, who responded to the call to ease off the brothers' suffering in Palestine.



Photo by Kuwait Relief Society
Second 'Gaza ship' being loaded.

2nd 'Gaza relief ship' embarks from Mersin to Arish port: KRS

By Salman Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): The Kuwait Relief Society (KRS) said on Saturday that the departure of the second "Gaza ship" is on its way from the Turkish port of Mersin towards the Egyptian port of Al-Arish, loaded with one thousand tons of aid and necessary relief supplies to Gaza.

The Society's Director General Abdul-Aziz Al-Obaid informed KUNA that Kuwait Direct Aid Association funded the vessel.

He said it carried approximately 350 tons of ready-to-eat meals, flour, cooking essentials, and canned food with a shelf life of over a year, along with about 600 tons of shelter materials including tents, blankets, mattresses, covers, and personal necessities for women, children, and the elderly.

Director General of Kuwait Direct Aid Association, Abdullah Al-Sumait confirmed to KUNA that the second "Gaza ship" would unload at Al-Arish Port within days.

Afterward, it will be reloaded for delivery to Gaza through the Rafah Southern border, Al-Sumait added.

Meanwhile, the Secretary General of the Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), Durmus Aydin, told Kuna that the foundation has honored its commitment with KRS by managing a vessel filled with vital relief supplies for Gaza.

The foundation adhered to the contract terms, which included purchasing goods with a one-year shelf life, packaging them, and dispatching them from the port of Mersin in Turkey within outlined timeframe, he said.

KRS has signed an executive contract with IHH on March 12, 2024, whereby KRS is responsible for covering 60 percent of the total cost for preparations, shipping, and dispatch.

IHH is recognized as one of the foremost relief organizations globally, capable of reaching areas affected by wars, conflicts, and natural disasters to assist victims worldwide.

Darwazat tunnel one of key projects

Kuwait Municipality announces 26 major projects for '24/'25 fiscal year

By Mohammad Al-Misleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwait Municipality announced 26 projects, within its annual project plan for the projects sector, to be launched during the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

It explained in the annual purchase plan that the most prominent of these proposed projects are the project for the implementation, supervision, development, operation and maintenance of the Darwazat Al-Abdul Razzaq tunnel, and the projects to establish the Mubarakiya markets and its affiliated parking lots, including the commercial area, the municipal park, and the Imam Abdul Rahman Al-Faisal House Museum.

The upcoming crucial projects include the Jahra Waterfront Project, which is part of the development plan, the Khuwaisat Tourism Project, which is within the scope of eco-tourism, and the Desert Adventure Area Project.

The municipality also seeks to implement a project concerning the ways to treat the Messila coast from erosion, extending from the beach of the Messila village to the shore of the Sabah Al Salem Bridge in Blocks 6 and 7.

The projects sector is also preparing

for the cultural center project on Abdullah Ahmad Street. It is conducting a study on the consulting services for feasibility studies of the new construction waste treatment projects' first phase.

It is in the process of implementing a project to construct and maintain a fence and gates for the entrances, exit, and roads leading to the Sulaibikhat and Jaafaria cemeteries, as well as for constructing a multi-storey parking building project located in Qenaai Mosque, and a multi-storey parking lot for the stock exchange located in Sharq, Block 1.

The municipality confirmed that its plans include a project to study, design and supervise the implementation of a permanent fence and gates, and any other construction works for municipal solid waste landfill sites, including the seventh southern landfill, the Jahra Landfill and Abdullah Landfill.

It affirmed that it will work according to its plan on a project to rehabilitate, treat, operate and maintain the closed waste landfill site in Qurain, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and North Seventh Ring Road, and other projects for the municipal buildings in the country's governorates, in addition to developing Othman bin Affan Street and developing the canopy works in Souk Mubarakiya.

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LOCAL

In failed

Continued from Page 1

There are many experiences that can be learned in this regard, such as in China where President Deng Xiaoping sought the help of a British expert of Iraqi origin to create the renaissance that took place in it. Today, it has become one of the strongest economies in the world. The same lessons can be learned from the experiences in Europe and America.

There is no doubt that the leadership in any country is the basis, especially if it chooses competent assistants who are capable of being an aide to the ruler, and not a pharaoh over the people, as well as who are loyal to their countries and their rulers, and not to their own interests.

As Chekhov said, if there are a thousand fools for every sound mind, the majority will always remain fools, and will always prevail over the wise.

Unfortunately, the majority of Arab countries have produced failed societies, because they introduced idiots and fought rational people and those with creative ideas. That is why wherever you look, you see chaos, lawlessness, and fraud in everything.

That is why the Abbasid Dynasty's poet Al-Mutanabbi was right when he said, "O nation whose ignorance other nations laugh at!"

Geopolitical unrest

Continued from Page 1

In the local market, the price of 24-karat gold stands at 23.5 dinars per gram (approximately \$71), while 22-karat gold is priced at 21.55 dinars per gram (around \$66). Silver closed at 328 dinars per kilogram (approximately \$1,000).

Note: The ounce is a unit of mass measurement, equivalent to 28.349 grams in some systems and 31.103 grams in the measurement of precious metals.

MPs-elect

Continued from Page 1

He believes the political leadership has a valid reason for postponing the inaugural session, such as the need for more time to form the new government. He said Wednesday's session will not push through due to lack of quorum in view of the absence of the government that has yet to be formed. He also affirmed that he understands the position of his colleagues who adopted another point of view.

Meanwhile, MP-elect Mubarak Al-Tasha has stressed the need for the people and the government to stand firmly behind the political leadership under the critical circumstances and escalating tension the region is currently going through. He called on everyone to do their part in maintaining national unity and preventing disputes.

MP-elect Muhannad Al-Sayer stated that the whole world is anxious due to the potential war that threatens regional security and peace, asserting Kuwait is not isolated from such circumstances. He emphasized the need to reassure the people about food security and borders' safety, as well as speeding up the formation of the new government and opening of the parliamentary term. He added that attending the session on Wednesday is a constitutional commitment and it does not affect loyalty to the political leadership. He affirmed full support for the political leadership and commitment to maintain national unity.

War may

Continued from Page 1

Also, the cost of transportation will increase when the alternative direction is towards the Cape of Good Hope.

This will strongly affect the price of a barrel of oil. This matter requires the state to expand in non-oil industries because oil supplies may stop during times of war.

Dr. Al-Bassam called for reducing the dependence on others in providing the country's necessary and essential needs, especially with regard to food security, which has become an urgent necessity in the difficult, harsh and dangerous circumstances sweeping the world in light of the continued exposure of waterways to danger and closure to free navigation, which has led to increase in the prices of transporting goods and commodities to huge amounts.

He explained that the solution to this food dilemma is to intensify efforts to provide long-term food security that does not depend on short-term periods of time, as is the case now. This necessitates the need to change the state's mechanisms in the way it distributes agricultural plots and livestock pens so that they are not places to spend holidays and have fun.

The condition must be implemented that it be distributed to contribute to supporting internal food security so that the country does not suffer again from a scarcity of food products, like the way it happened during the COVID-19 pandemic period when some major crops such as onions, tomatoes, and many other commodities became scarce.

Kuwait urges

Continued from Page 1

The Ministry's official spokesman, Dr. Bader Al-Enezi, said in a statement to KUNA that the remarks were made during Minister Al-Mutairi's chair of the committee meeting, Saturday, in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, and the ministry's senior leaders, where a special emergency plan has been setup and reviewed regarding monitoring developments in the region.

Al-Enezi stressed that the Ministry is fully prepared to keep pace with events, take precautionary measures, provide all information to citizens and residents, and follow up on media coverage up to date with accuracy, professionalism and transparency.

The spokesman added that media coverage is currently taking place through bulletins, news summaries, news tape, radio stations, and the ministry's accounts on social media sites.

Al-Enezi pointed out that the Ministry has taken all necessary measures and that it

will not hesitate to deliver information with complete transparency and accuracy to the Kuwaiti public, calling on everyone to acquire information from its official sources.

In related news, Kuwait Airways announced on Saturday that all airlines bound to Kuwait International Airport or departing from it would be diverted away from areas of tension, with flights scheduled according to their new routes.

In a statement, Kuwait Airways said the new measure comes in response to the security situation in the region and out of concern for the safety of its passengers.

Earlier, Kuwait Airways announced on Saturday that all airlines bound to Kuwait International Airport or departing from it would be diverted away from areas of tension, with flights scheduled according to their new routes.

In a statement, Kuwait Airways said the new measure comes in response to the security situation in the region and out of concern for the safety of its passengers.

"For inquiries, please contact the Customer Service Center (171). We are grateful to everyone for their understanding and cooperation," the statement added.

Elsewhere, Kuwait Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri said on Saturday that they have contacted universities in Jordan to review conditions of Kuwaiti students following the temporary closure of Jordanian airspace.

Al-Marri informed KUNA that the Kuwait Cultural Office in Jordan has reached out to university administrators to assist Kuwaiti students during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, and reschedule exams only upon providing proof of canceled flight tickets.

Al-Marri reassured parents of students and Kuwaiti citizens in Jordan that the embassy is in frequent communication with Jordanian authorities to stay updated on the latest developments regarding the airspace closure.

Earlier, the Jordanian Civil Aviation Regulatory Authority (CARC) announced the temporary closure of Jordan's airspace to all incoming, outgoing, and transit flights, effective from tonight for the next few hours.

World reacts

Continued from Page 1

Iran announced late Saturday that had launched a wide-scale drones and missiles attack on targets within the Israeli occupation entity in retaliation to an Israeli attack against the Iranian consulate in Damascus earlier this month.

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi underlined, Saturday, the importance of maintaining regional and global security and stability in light of the recent and accelerating developments in the Middle East.

In a press statement, the Secretary-General stressed the role of the international community in supporting peace and stability efforts to avoid any repercussions that might lead to further escalation and urged all concerned parties to commit to maintaining regional and global security and peace.

Al-Budaiwi called on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint to prevent any further escalation that threatens the stability of the region and the safety of its people, stressing the need for all parties to make joint efforts and take the approach of diplomacy as an effective way to settle disputes and ensure the security and stability of the region.

The Jordanian government urged all parties to practice self-restraint, deal responsibly with tensions and refrain from escalating the situation.

In a statement, the cabinet mentioned that Jordanian forces would counter anything undermining the safety and security of the homeland, indicating that it had dealt with parts that entered the Jordanian airspace last night.

Similarly, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry called for restraint and practicing extreme caution to evade escalating the already tense situation.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Hasan warned in a statement that Iran's vow of a more forceful response should Israeli occupation retaliate again, will create a cycle of violence, and only serve as a form of provocation and a disservice to the Palestinian case.

He urged the international community to not be sidetracked from the main objective of ensuring the rights and freedoms of Palestinian people.

The Foreign Minister repeated Malaysia's and the United Nations' call to put an immediate end to the aggressive actions, as this will have uncontrollable consequences.

As for French President, Emmanuel Macron, he condemned Iran's attack on the Israeli occupation saying that this threatens regional stability.

Macron, via Social Media platform X, affirmed France's efforts in de-escalating tensions.

Iran launched Saturday an attack against Israeli occupation with tens of drones, in response to occupation's attack on consulate in Damascus.

Israel on Sunday hailed its successful air defenses in the face of an unprecedented attack by Iran, saying it and its allies thwarted 99% of the more than 300 drones and missiles launched toward its territory. But regional tensions remain high, amid fears of further escalation in the event of a possible Israeli counter-strike.

U.S. President Joe Biden said he would convene a meeting of the Group of Seven advanced democracies on Sunday "to coordinate a united diplomatic response to Iran's brazen attack." The language indicated that the Biden administration does not want to spiral into a broader military conflict. A top U.S. official said the U.S. had informed Israel it does not plan on striking Iran itself.

Iran launched the attack in response to a strike widely blamed on Israel on an Iranian consular building in Syria earlier this month which killed two Iranian generals. Israel said Iran launched 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles.

By Sunday morning, Iran said the attack was over and Israel reopened its air space.

The two foes have for years been engaged in a shadow war marked by incidents like the Damascus strike. But Sunday's assault, which set off air raid sirens across Israel, was the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Israel has over the years established - often with the help of the United States - a multilayered air-defense network that includes systems capable of intercepting a variety of threats including long-range missiles, cruise missiles, drones and short-range rockets.

MEW revenues 'expected' to exceed KD 500m this fiscal yr

Ministry receives KD 400m during 10 months of budget

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the ministry's revenues are expected to exceed KD 500 million by the end of the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

The sources explained that the ministry received approximately KD 400 million during the ten months of the budget. It also received KD 70 million in the month of January alone.

The revenues achieved by the ministry are represented in the value of selling electricity and water services to customers during the fiscal year. The high collection rates are attributed to linking the ministry's payment systems with the Ministry of Interior and linking travel for expatriates to pay their dues to the ministry.

There are also more than 20 electronic services provided by the Customer Affairs Sector, and the expansion of establishing customer affairs offices in areas, especially remote ones.

On the other hand, the ministry announced the start of maintenance work for some secondary substations in the six governorates from April 13, 2024 to April 20, 2024, which will result in cutting off electricity to the areas fed by the stations subject to maintenance from 8:00am to 12:00 noon.

Maintenance will be carried out in various areas within Bayan, Kuwait City, Ardiya, Sabah Al-Salem, Qusour, Mahboubia, Jahra, Nuzha, Andalus, Jaber Al-Ali, Masayel and other areas.

The maintenance period could be increased or decreased according to the nature and conditions of work and the station's need and status.

Submit declaration on 'marital status'

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Acting Secretary General of Kuwait University Dr Fayeze Al-Dhafiri recently issued a circular requiring all university employees to submit a declaration of marital status through the automated self-service system every six months, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Dhafiri indicated that his circular is based on Civil Service Council Resolution No. 1/1979 about granting social allowance to employees in government agencies and Civil Service Commission Circular No. 2/1986 on tightening control over the disbursement of social allowance, which stipulates: "A declaration shall be taken from every employee who receives social allowance on behalf of his wife and children every six months, indicating his marital status at the time of writing the declaration. Employees who are negligent in reporting the change in their marital status will be referred for investigation, disciplinary action will be taken against them, and they will be required to return any amount unlawfully paid to them."

He pointed out that "employees who give incorrect or false declarations with the intention of obtaining a social allowance even if they are not entitled must be referred to the judicial authorities, in addition to being subjected to disciplinary action." He stressed that the Secretariat General calls on members of the academic body and all other employees to be aware of the necessity of submitting the declaration. He added the marital status is checked automatically by logging into the university's website.



Part of the Islamic Book Fair in its 46th edition.

KUNA photo

'Visit fair to experience and cultivate Islamic culture'

46th Islamic Book Fair kicks off with over 120 local, global publishing houses participation

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): The 46th edition of the Islamic Book Fair launched, Sunday, with the slogan (Emerging Consciousness) in participation of over 120 local and global publishing houses under the auspices of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information till next Saturday.

In a statement to KUNA, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Social Reform Society Dr. Khaled Al-Mathkour said that the Islamic Book Fair is constantly progressing in publication and technical fields.

Dr. Al-Mathkour mentioned that in the 46 years since the Islamic Book Fair's inception, publication and printing services have changed remarkably with the introduction of modern tech-

nology that observes the abilities of young readers.

The fair includes numerous cultural and educational activities for student visitors, Dr. Al-Mathkour added, extending his gratitude towards the participating parties and the Ministry of Information for their continuous support.

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary-General of the Administrative and Financial Affairs at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), and Minister of Information representative Saad Al-Enezi affirmed, in a similar statement to KUNA, the efforts in holding this fair for 46 years demonstrate the dedication of the Social Reform Society and Kuwait in spreading knowledge and

culture locally and internationally.

Al-Enezi called for people to visit the fair to experience and cultivate Islamic culture. The Union of Kuwait Charity Organizations (UKCO) Chair Saad Al-Otaibi said to KUNA that the role the Social Reform Society plays in starting the Islamic Book Fair and maintaining it for years is a reflection of Kuwait's keenness in charities.

On his part, the chair of Communication and Technology of Namaa Charity Abdulaziz Al-Kandari told KUNA that Namaa Charity's participation in the current fair with multiple scientific, historical, and humanitarian publications goes to show Namaa's eagerness in the development of people from all backgrounds.

New medical warehouse building in Adan Hospital handed over

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Minister of Health supervised the handover of the medical warehouse building for the strategic storage of medicines and medical consumables. It is one of the main components of the new Adan Hospital project implemented by the Engineering Affairs and Projects Sector of the Ministry of Health.

The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi explained in a press statement that the warehouse building for

medicines and medical consumables is one of the nine main buildings of the new Adan Hospital project. The work on establishing these warehouses came within the plan prepared to enhance the strategic stock and maintain pharmaceutical security in the country. These warehouses are being built on an area of about 12,000 square meters, and include spaces for storing medicines and storing medical consumables. They are equipped according to the best standard specifications for the quality and safety of medicines and consumables.

Among the storage systems used in these warehouses are "pallet" racks

with high-density VNA storage. It is one of the storage systems used in modern warehouses, which allows for doubling storage and utilizing space.

These warehouses also feature high-quality multi-use shelves and refrigerated warehouses for materials that require low-temperature storage.

The minister stressed that the process of handing over the remainder of the Adan Hospital project is ongoing in stages according to the timetable previously prepared in this regard, with the follow-up of the Engineering Affairs and Projects Sector of the Ministry of Health.



JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of material.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Blanket Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **15 April 2024** up to **13 May 2024** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 20 May 2024 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	CONTRACT PERIOD	FEES (IN KD)
1	BPT # 249 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender Chemical & Labora Tories Items	3 YRS	25
2	BPT # 250 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For Gaskets, Bearings, Hardware & Accessories Items	3 YRS	35
3	BPT # 251 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For Ametek Items	3 YRS	25
4	BPT # 253 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For Cables, & Accessories Items	3 YRS	25
5	BPT # 254 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For Oil, Grease & Compounds	3 YRS	50

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please send request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail CBMS@chevron.com or MYDG@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext : **3157 - 3190**

World News Roundup

Europe

Payment cards OK'd

Diplomat tapped as Latvia's foreign min

HELSINKI, April 14, (Agencies): The head of Latvia's government tapped an experienced diplomat to become the Baltic nation's new foreign minister after the incumbent stepped down earlier this week amid a criminal probe over alleged misuse of government funds.

The ruling center-right New Unity party decided to back the nomination of **Baiba Braze**, 57, who is currently the ambassador for special tasks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after Prime Minister Evika Silina's endorsement, Latvian news agency LETA reported Saturday.

Latvian Television LTV said Braze's candidacy will be officially announced on Monday and lawmakers at the Saeima, Latvia's 100-seat Parliament, are set to vote on a motion of confidence in her on Thursday.

Among other posts, Braze has previously served as Latvia's ambassador to Britain and to The Netherlands, and held the post of NATO's deputy secretary general for public diplomacy in 2020-2023.

Krišjānis Karinš, Latvia's former top diplomat and an ex-prime minister, announced his intention to resign this month on March 28. His decision

came in the wake of a criminal probe over the use of expensive private charter flights by Karinš' office during his time as prime minister between 2019-2023.

There are no indications that Karinš himself faces charges as part of the probe into the scandal that erupted last year and caused public outrage among Latvians. Silina took up Latvia's top government job in September when Karinš became foreign minister of the nation of 1.9 million, a European Union and NATO member state.



Braze

Russia expels Austrian diplomat: Russian Foreign Ministry, on Friday, declared Austrian employee at the Moscow embassy "persona non grata", expelling him from the country in a retaliatory move.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that that the expelled Austrian diplomat has to leave Russia by April 18.

The Austrian Ambassador to Russia Werner Althofer was summoned to protest the expulsion of two Russian diplomats from Vienna on account of espionage allegations, read the statement.

The Ministry also indicated that the "unfriendly and unjustified step caused serious damage to bilateral relations, which are already in crisis due to the actions of the Austrian side, and to the international authority of Vienna, which previously positioned itself as an unbiased, neutral state and a platform for international diplomacy."

'Battlefield situation in east worsening': Ukraine's military chief on Saturday warned that the battlefield situation in the industrial east has "significantly worsened in recent days," as warming weather allowed Russian forces to launch a fresh push along several stretches of the more 1,000 km-long (620-mile) front line.

In an update on the Telegram messaging app, Gen. Oleksandr Syrsky said that Moscow had "significantly" ramped up its assaults since President Vladimir Putin extended his nearly quarter-century rule in a preordained election last month that saw anti-war candidates barred from the ballot and independent voices silenced in a Kremlin-backed media blockade.

According to Syrsky, Russian forces have been "actively attacking" Ukrainian positions in three areas of the eastern Donetsk region, near the cities of Lyman, Bakhmut and Pokrovsk, and beginning to launch tank assaults as drier, warmer spring weather has made it easier for heavy vehicles to move across previously muddy terrain.

"Despite significant losses, the enemy is intensifying its efforts by using new units (equipped with armored vehicles, tanks) to which it periodically achieves tactical success," Syrsky said.

Cyprus suspends asylum applications: Cyprus said Saturday it's suspending processing all asylum applications by Syrian nationals because large numbers of refugees from the war-torn country continue to reach the island nation by boat, primarily from Lebanon.

In a written statement, the Cypriot government said the suspension is also partly because of ongoing efforts to get the European Union to redesignate some areas of the war-torn country as safe zones to enable repatriations.

The drastic step comes in the wake of Cypriot President Nicos Christodoulides' visit to Lebanon earlier week to appeal to authorities there to stop departures of migrant-laden boats from their shores. The request comes in light of a 27-fold increase in migrant arrivals to Cyprus so far this year over the same period last year.

According to Cyprus Interior Ministry statistics, some 2,140 people arrived by boat to EU-member Cyprus between Jan. 1 and April 4 of this year, the vast majority of them Syrian nationals departing from Lebanon. In contrast, only 78 people arrived by boat to the island nation in the corresponding period last year.

German parliament OK's payment cards: The German parliament on Friday approved legislation introducing payment cards for asylum-seekers, a system that is meant to limit benefits paid in cash and make the country less attractive for migrants.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Germany's 16 state governors agreed in principle to introduce the system in early November, but the governing coalition took until last week to iron out differences on whether specific legislation was needed and on its details. The resulting bill was approved by a large majority in parliament's lower house, or Bundestag.

It calls for asylum-seekers to receive their benefits on a card that can be used for payments in local shops and services. They will only be able to withdraw limited amounts of cash and will not be able to transfer money outside Germany. The aim is to prevent migrants sending money to family and friends abroad, or to smugglers.

The legislation gives local authorities latitude to decide on exemptions and on how much cash asylum-seekers can withdraw.

Attitudes toward migration have hardened in Germany as large numbers of asylum-seekers have arrived, in addition to refugees from Ukraine, and local authorities have struggled to find accommodation.



The Michigan State Capitol is photographed, May 24, 2023, in Lansing, Mich. Democrats hope to restore their slim majority in the state House of Representatives on April 16, when voters will fill two vacant seats in suburban Detroit. In District 13, Democrat Mai Xiong faces Republican Ronald Singer. In District 25, Democrat Peter Herzberg faces Republican Josh Powell. The chamber deadlocked at a 54-54 tie in November when two Democratic members won mayoral elections. (AP)

Politics

Trump goes after prosecutors in hush money case

Biden wins more delegates in Wyoming

JUNEAU, Alaska, April 14, (AP): US President Joe Biden nudged further ahead in the Democratic nomination for reelection by winning party contests in Wyoming and Alaska.

As two of the least populated states, Alaska and Wyoming play minuscule roles in both intraparty and general election voting in presidential election years.

Biden effectively clinched the Democratic nomination on March 12 with the Georgia primary and is now all but certain to face former President Donald Trump as the Republican nominee in November.

Alaska Democrats held a voice vote for their party-run preference poll at in-person and virtual district meetings. The party announced Saturday that Biden won 15 pledged delegates.

Biden was the lone candidate eligible to receive votes after the other Democrat to qualify, Dean Phillips, suspended his campaign last month. The vote was held during meetings where other party business is conducted.

The polling was delayed a week. Democrats had planned a ranked vote election by mail on April 6 but those plans changed when only Biden and Phillips qualified for the ballot and when Phillips suspended his run.

Plan

Changes to their plan were approved by the Democratic National Committee.

There were no provisions for writings or uncommitted, said Lindsay Kavanaugh, the Alaska party's executive director.

"There is no option to vote nay," she said. "You can abstain. You don't vote yes or no, you vote for a candidate."

The party proceeded with a vote, even with just one candidate, "to make sure we're as inclusive as possible," she said, and to avoid any inference that party leaders were deciding candidates themselves.

Biden won in Wyoming, where polling determined which candidate got the state's 17 national delegates.

The caucuses also decided who goes to the state Democratic convention on June 1 in Casper. There, 13 of Wyoming's national convention delegates

will be chosen.

Wyoming's other four "automatic" national delegates are the state party chairman, vice chair and two national committee people, who have not yet pledged for Biden or anyone else.

Also:

SCHNECKSVILLE, Pa.: Former US president **Donald Trump** on Saturday lit into **New York** prosecutors and the criminal hush money case they brought against him during his last rally before what he called a "communist show trial" begins Monday.

"I will be forced to sit fully gagged. I'm not allowed to talk. They want to take away my constitutional right to talk," said Trump, who has been barred from publicly discussing potential witnesses and jurors but not the judge or prosecutors.

"I'm proud to do it for you," Trump told a crowd in northeast Pennsylvania. "Have a good time watching."

He went after Judge **Juan M. Merchan**, whom he called "corrupt," and District Attorney **Alvin Bragg**, declaring himself a victim of Democrats bent on blocking his return to the White House.

Trump is navigating four separate criminal prosecutions while running to avenge his loss to President **Joe Biden**, creating an unprecedented swirl of legal and political chaos.

Jury selection starts Monday in New York in his trial where he is charged with seeking during his 2016 campaign to bury stories about extramarital affairs by arranging hush money payments.

It will be the first criminal trial ever of a former US president. And it will limit Trump's availability on the campaign trail, though he is expected to speak to the media after court often and has for months fundraised and campaigned on the felony charges he faces.

Trump spoke at the Schnecksville Fire Hall in **Lehigh County**, where a long line formed outward three hours before Trump's planned appearance. It was Trump's third visit this year to the vital swing state, one that could decide who wins this year's presidential race. He also plans to attend a fundraiser in nearby Bucks County before the event.

Pennsylvania is a critical battleground in the rematch between Trump and Biden, with both candidates expected to visit the state frequently through November. Trump flipped the state to the Republican column in 2016 but lost it four years after to Biden, who was born in the northeast city of Scranton and has long talked about his roots in the city. Biden plans to deliver a major address Tuesday in Scranton on tax fairness.

Bob Dippel, 69, retired after working as a chief financial officer for several small businesses. He said he didn't think the upcoming trial "would matter too much" to independent voters because "people are starting to see the mockery being made" of the legal system.

WASHINGTON: Former US president **Donald Trump** endorsed US Senate candidate **David McCormick** of Pennsylvania on Saturday, urging his supporters in the state to "go out and vote for him" in one of the year's most hotly contested Senate races.

Trump's endorsement came two years after he successfully helped sink McCormick in Pennsylvania's Senate GOP primary, creating an awkward dynamic between the two men who will share the ticket in a state that is critical to control of the White House and Senate.

"He's a good man. He wants to run a good ship," Trump said during a rally in the eastern Pennsylvania town of Schnecksville. "He's a smart guy. He was a very successful guy. He's given up a lot to do this."

McCormick - who splits his time in Connecticut, where he has a home - did not attend the rally. He was at a parents' weekend with his daughter, a campaign spokesperson said.

McCormick responded on social media, writing on the X platform: "Thank you, President Trump! Together we will deliver a big win for Pennsylvania and America in November."

McCormick, ex-CEO of hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, is trying to unseat Democratic Sen. **Bob Casey**, who is seeking his fourth term and is perhaps Pennsylvania's best-known politician.



Republican US Senate candidate **Dave McCormick** shares his plan for combating adverse Chinese influence on the US economy and security during a speech at the Independence Visitor Center on Dec 7, 2023, in Philadelphia. Former US president Donald Trump endorsed McCormick of Pennsylvania on April 13 urging his supporters in Pennsylvania to "go out and vote for him" in one of the year's most hotly contested Senate races. (AP)



Aguilar



Jerome

America

Chicago shooting kills girl: Eight people were shot including a young girl who was killed in what Chicago police believe was gang-related violence on the city's South Side on Saturday night.

The 7-year-old girl was shot in the head and died, while a 1-year-old boy and a 7-year-old boy were each shot multiple times and listed in critical condition, Chicago Police Department Deputy Chief **Don Jerome** said in a news briefing at the scene on a block of 52nd Street near Damen Avenue.

Police responding to a gunfire alert around 9 pm applied tourniquets and chest seals to victims, who also included adults between the ages of 19 and 40, Jerome said.

The victims, who were standing outside at a family gathering at the time of the shooting, were transported to area hospitals by the Chicago Fire Department. (AP)

Barges break loose on river: More than two dozen river barges broke loose from their moorings and floated down the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, striking one bridge that had already been preemptively closed and damaging a marina, officials said. The boats eventually were pinned to the riverbank or went over a dam downstream, officials said.

Pittsburgh police, fire and emergency medical services responded around 11:25 pm Friday to reports of the barges "floating uncontrolled" down the river, Pittsburgh Public Safety said in a statement. The area had been hit by flooding after heavy rains Thursday.

The Sewickley Bridge was struck by a barge a few minutes before 2 pm Saturday, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation said. It "was closed in advance of the strike and will remain closed until our crews complete an inspection," spokesperson Steve Cowan said. (AP)

Train-pickup collision kills 4: Four people are dead after the vehicle they were traveling in was struck by a train in rural Idaho Saturday, authorities said.

Idaho State Police said the pickup was carrying a 38-year-old man, 36-year-old woman and two children, who were all from Nampa. The vehicle was traveling



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak walks through Swan Walk shopping centre in Horsham, West Sussex, England on April 10, accompanied by local police officers as he highlights the governments plans to tackle shop lifting. (AP)

on a private road that intersected a railroad crossing, but the driver failed to yield and the pickup was struck by a train, state police said.

The incident Saturday morning happened near Notus, which is about 35 miles (56 kilometers) northwest of Boise. It remains under investigation. (AP)

Woman gets 15 years: A Southern California woman with a history of convictions for driving under the influence has been sentenced to 15 years to life in prison for a crash that killed a 23-year-old pregnant woman and left her baby in critical condition.

Courtney Pandolfi, 44, pleaded guilty to second degree murder earlier this year just as the case was headed for trial, the Orange County Register reported Friday.

Prosecutors said Pandolfi was on a "drug cocktail" that included cocaine and methamphetamine in August 2020 when she drove her Jeep SUV onto a sidewalk in Anaheim, striking **Yesenia Aguilar**, who was eight months pregnant. Aguilar's husband, James Alvarez, was walking with her but was not injured. (AP)

Lat/Am

Uribe denounces case

Venezuelans abroad want to 'vote' this yr

MEXICO CITY, April 14, (AP): Giovanni Tovar left Venezuela five years ago in search of a job after his country came undone under the watch of President Nicolás Maduro. He now sells empanadas and tequeños in the streets of Peru's capital, where he pushes around a small cart outfitted with a deep fryer.

Tovar wants nothing more than to vote Maduro out of office. He sees an opportunity for change in July's highly anticipated presidential election but he won't be able to cast a vote. Neither will millions of other Venezuelan emigrants because of costly and time-consuming government prerequisites that are nowhere to be found in Venezuela's election laws.

"I really don't understand why they put so many obstacles in the way of us exercising our vote," Tovar said before offering the main reason emigrants suspect is behind the prerequisites: "I really would like to vote but not to give the vote to Maduro."

More than half of the estimated 7.7 million Venezuelans who have left their homeland during the complex crisis that has marked Maduro's 11-year presidency are estimated to be registered to vote in Venezuela. But of all the Venezuelans fanned out around the world,



Maduro

including those who emigrated before the crisis, government figures show only about 107,000 are registered to vote outside the South American country.

Analysts and emigrants assert people who left Venezuela during the crisis would almost certainly vote against Maduro if given the chance. Maduro, who became interim president in 2013 following the death of the fiery Hugo Chávez, is seeking a third term in office.

Contemplates

Venezuelan law contemplates absentee voting, allowing citizens to vote at embassies and consulates. Interested voters must be properly registered with their foreign address and cannot be living in their host country illegally or seeking refugee or asylum status there.

The residency requirement alone reduces significantly the number of people who can register as the majority of emigrants lack legal status. During this year's registration period, which ends Tuesday, even those who have been granted temporary residency in host countries are being turned away by consular officials because the diplomatic outposts are demanding proof of permanent status.

"Permanent Residence Documents issued by the host country" must show "validity of ... at least 3 years from the current date" and "must have been issued at least 1 year in advance," according to a flyer outside the consulate in Colombia's capital, Bogotá. But Venezuela's election law only calls for interested voters to "have residency or any other status that denotes legality of stay" in a foreign country.



Fishermen spot boat with 20 corpses: A small boat full of decomposing corpses was spotted by fishermen off Brazil's northeastern coast on Saturday, according to local news reports.

Brazil's Attorney General's office said in a statement that it has dispatched a forensics team to the area to determine where the bodies and the boat came from. "Some reports say there could be up to 20 corpses" in the boat, the Attorney General's office said in a statement. The office announced it is opening a criminal and a civil investigation into the incident.

The boat was floating off the coast of the state of Para in a remote location about 300 kilometers (185 miles) from the state capital Belem.

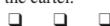
It wasn't the first time that vessels carrying dead bodies were spotted by fishermen in the western side of the Atlantic Ocean. In 2021, at least seven boats full of corpses washed up in Brazil and the Eastern Caribbean.



Police official shot to death in Mexico: The head of traffic police was shot to death Thursday in Mexico's troubled Pacific coast resort of Acapulco.

The city government said gunmen killed Eduardo Chávez, the head of municipal traffic police. The assailants opened fire on Chávez on a street relatively far away from the resort's beaches. The crime is under investigation.

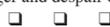
Drug cartels in Mexico often force bus and taxi drivers to work for them, and thus could have been angered by traffic stops of such vehicles. Videos posted on social media in March showed drug enforcers brutally beating bus drivers in Acapulco for failing to act as lookouts for the cartel.



Police step up response to growing demos: A confrontation between Argentine authorities and anti-government protesters angered by President Javier Milei's spending cuts escalated on Wednesday, as protesters blocking the capital's key thoroughfare were forcibly dispersed and eight of the movement's participants arrested.

In a rare move, riot police officers deployed powerful water cannons, drenching demonstrators. Argentines demanding more food for soup kitchens hurled sticks and stones, set garbage cans alight and paralyzed the main street of Buenos Aires in defiance of new legal changes banning roadblocks.

Strikes and protests have gripped the country in recent weeks as Argentines, struggling to cope with Milei's painful austerity measures amid soaring inflation, vent their anger and despair on the streets.



Ex-Colombia prez denounces case: Colombia's influential former President Álvaro Uribe denounced as "political vengeance" a move by national prosecutors to bring him to trial in a case of witness tampering that has shadowed his legacy.

Uribe insisted in a video message that there was no evidence against him, a day after prosecutors announced their intention to formally charge Uribe with bribery of witnesses in criminal proceedings and procedural fraud.

That would make Uribe the first former president to face trial in Colombia.

The case against Uribe derives from allegations made a decade ago by an opposition senator that Uribe was tied to the creation of a paramilitary group. The former president was accused of bribing former paramilitaries to change their testimonies.

Uribe accused the senator of slander, but that case was dismissed, and the Supreme Court instead opened a criminal case against Uribe on allegations of manipulating witnesses.



People fly Kongming lanterns, a kind of small hot-air paper balloon, by the Lancang River in Jinghong City, southwest China's Yunnan Province on April 13, to celebrate the New Year of the calendar of the Dai ethnic group. (Xinhua)

Asia

Beijing detains 2 over tourist boat capsizing

Chinese official meets N.Korea's leader

BEIJING, April 14, (AP): A top ranking Chinese official reaffirmed ties with North Korea during a meeting Saturday with the country's leader Kim Jong Un in the capital Pyongyang, China's state media reported, in the highest-level talks between the allies in years.

The visit by Zhao Leji, who ranks third in the ruling Communist Party hierarchy and heads the ceremonial parliament, came as North Korea has test fired missiles to intimidate South Korea and its ally, the United States.

The Xinhua News Agency reported that Zhao told Kim at the meeting concluding his three-day visit that China, the North's most important source of economic aid and diplomatic support, looked forward to further developing ties, but made no mention of the political situation on the peninsula or the region.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency also confirmed the meeting on Sunday and said Kim held unspecified discussions with Zhao on "boosting the multi-faceted exchange and cooperation" and "other important issues of mutual concern." KCNA said the Chinese delegation left the country later on Saturday.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 75 years ago, China and North Korea have been "good neighbors and struggled together to attain a common destiny and level of development," Xinhua quoted Zhao as saying.

China fought on behalf of the reclusive Communist State against the U.S. and others during the 1950-1953 Korean War, and in recent years has helped prop up its weak economy, allegedly in violation of U.N. sanctions in response to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program that Beijing had endorsed.

Zhao met his North Korean counterpart Choe Ryong Hae on Thursday and discussed how to promote exchanges and cooperation in all areas, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported.

Also:

BEIJING: Two people have been detained following the capsizing of a tourist boat on a river in northeastern China that led to the drowning deaths of 12 visitors, state media reported Sunday.

The accident occurred Saturday afternoon outside the city of Qinhuangdao near the coast of Hebei province, a few hour's drive from the capital Beijing.

Police officer & bystanders hailed for confronting Sydney stabbing attacker

SYDNEY, April 14, (AP): A police officer and several bystanders are being hailed for running "towards danger" to confront the attacker who stabbed and killed six people at a suburban Sydney shopping center.

The shopping mall, one of the country's busiest and near the world-famous Bondi Beach, was a hub of activity on Saturday afternoon when 40-year-old Joel Cauchi used a knife to kill five women and one man. He also injured at least a dozen others, including a 9-month-old baby whose mother died during the attack, before a police officer shot him dead.

New South Wales Police confirmed Sunday Cauchi had a history of mental illness and investigators weren't treating the attack as terrorism-related.

The number would have been far higher, according to NSW Premier Chris Minns who on Sunday praised "the ordinary members of the public that cornered and confronted a murderer in the Westfield Shopping Centre, showing what I would call instinctive bravery under terrible circumstances."

Talking to reporters while standing outside the shopping mall, Minns underscored the role played by Inspector Amy Scott - the first emergency responder on the scene - who shot and killed Cauchi and has since been widely lauded as a hero.

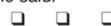
Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also praised Scott in a press conference in Canberra: "The wonderful inspector who ran into danger by herself and removed the threat that was there to others, without thinking about the risks to herself," he said.

MAE SOT, Thailand: Thailand's foreign minister on Friday said he urged Myanmar's military authorities not to violently respond to its army's loss of an important border trading town to its opponents, and that so far they seemed to be exercising restraint.

Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara

responder on the scene - who shot and killed Cauchi and has since been widely lauded as a hero.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also praised Scott in a press conference in Canberra: "The wonderful inspector who ran into danger by herself and removed the threat that was there to others, without thinking about the risks to herself," he said.



Landslides kill 14 in Indonesia: Torrential rains triggered landslides on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing at least 14 people and leaving three others missing, officials said Sunday.

Mud fell from surrounding hills onto four houses just before midnight Saturday in the Tana Toraja district of South Sulawesi province, said local police chief Gunardi Mundu. He said a family gathering was being held in one of the affected houses.

Dozens of soldiers, police and volunteers joined the search in the villages of Makale and South Makale, in a remote, hilly area, Mundu said. Rescuers early Sunday managed to pull out two injured people, including an 8-year-old girl, and rushed them to a nearby hospital.

spoke during a visit to Mae Sot, which lies directly across a river from Myanmar's Myawaddy, where army troops abandoned their last defensive position early Thursday.

Their hasty escape ceded virtual control of the busy trading town to guerrillas of the ethnic Karen National Union and its allies, including members of the pro-democracy People's Defense Forces.

Myanmar's once-mighty armed forces have suffered a series of unprecedented defeats since last October, losing swathes of territory including border posts to both ethnic fighters and guerrilla units. Civilians took up arms after the generals seized power in 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The military has frequently hit back heavily, using air power.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro waving a banner emblazoned with an image of himself is accompanied by supporters as he is driven to the electoral council headquarters to register his candidacy for a third term, in Caracas, Venezuela on March 25. More than half of the estimated 7.7 million Venezuelans who have left their homeland during the complex crisis that has marked Maduro's 11-year presidency are estimated to be registered to vote in Venezuela. (AP)



Zuma



Urgessa

Africa

Ethiopia calls for probe: Ethiopia's state-appointed rights commission called for an investigation into the killing of a prominent opposition figure recently released from prison.

Bate Urgessa was gunned down on Tuesday night in his hometown of Meki in Oromia, Ethiopia's biggest region, according to the Oromo Liberation Front, or OLF. He was a political officer with the OLF, a legally registered opposition group that boycotted elections in 2021.

The OLF said it has information indicating that Bate "was shot dead," adding that it's investigating.

Daniel Bekele, head of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, called for "a prompt, impartial and full investigation by both the Oromia regional and Ethiopian federal authorities to hold perpetrators to account."

Oromia's regional government condemned Bate's killing as "unacceptable" and denied any involvement. In a statement Wednesday, it said it was also committed to an investigation. (AP)



S.African court overrules ban: South Africa's Electoral Court ruled that former president Jacob Zuma can run for office in the upcoming general election, overturning an earlier decision that had barred him from contesting the polls.

The decision paves the way for Zuma to run for president on behalf of the uMkhonto weSizwe Party, or MK, a new political organization that he joined last year after denouncing the ruling African National Congress party that he once led.

South Africans will elect 400 members of the country's General Assembly on May 29. A month later, the lawmakers in the new parliament will choose the country's president.

The Independent Electoral Commission had earlier ruled that Zuma could not run for office due to his criminal record, after it received an objection against his candidacy.

South Africa's constitution does not allow people who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to more than 12 months in prison without the option of a fine to stand for elections as lawmakers.

Zuma was convicted and sentenced to 15 months in prison in 2021 for defying a court order to appear before a judicial commission probing corruption allegations in government and state-owned companies during his presi-

dential term from 2009 to 2018. (AP)



Togo bans protests: Togo's govern-

ment said a planned three-day protest over the arrest of opposition figures and new legislation scrapping president elections was illegal, a move that heightened



A note is left with flower tributes near a crime scene at Bondi Junction in Sydney on April 14, after several people were stabbed to death at a shopping center Saturday. Police have identified Joel Cauchi, 40, as the assailant that stabbed several people to death at a busy Sydney shopping center Saturday before he was fatally shot by a police officer. (AP)

tensions in the West African nation that has been ruled by the same family for almost 60 years.

The interior and security ministries said the protests would seriously disturb public order. In a separate notice, the government also delayed parliamentary elections until April 29, pushing the vote back by just over a week.

A spokesman for the opposition behind the planned protest said the coalition was considering whether to move forward with the rallies anyway.

"Whenever they're in a panic, they're ready to use any kind of tricks against the opposition," spokesman Eric Dupuy told The Associated Press. "It doesn't move us."

The government last week arrested nine opposition activists for engaging in political activities at a market. All nine were released on Tuesday evening. A statement from the public prosecutor's office said they were arrested for disturbing public order. A spokesman for those arrested, Thomas Kokou Nsoukpoe, called the arrests arbitrary and abusive.

The proposed constitution, which was passed by lawmakers in late March and is close to being enacted, grants parliament the power to choose the president, doing away with direct elections. It makes it likely that President Faure Gnassingbe would be reelected when his mandate expires in 2025. (AP)



Certificate - Sustainable Finance 2024.

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was named the Best Bank in the Middle East for ESG-Related Loans in 2024, as announced by Global Finance in its fourth annual Sustainable Finance Awards.

Community support, resource management, transparency & reporting, infrastructure, and emerging-markets sustainability funding.

ize on the growing trend towards sustainable financing, launching services and products geared towards the green transition process across all its locations.

Market Movements

14-04-2024

Change Closing pts SAUDI -38.52 Tadawul 12,666.90

Business

UK GDP growth slows to 0.1% in monthly reading

Traders adjust expectations for rate cuts amid hot inflation print

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States US Consumer Price Index

According to the Consumer Price Index data released in March, US consumer prices increased again. The year-over-year inflation rate reached 3.5% for the twelve months ending in March.

US Producer Price Index

The latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates a slowdown in price increases for producers. The Producer Price Index (PPI), which tracks changes in wholesale prices before goods reach consumers, rose by 0.2% last month.

Unemployment claims

Data released last Thursday by the Labor Department showed a better-than-expected picture for the US job market. The number of people filing new unemployment claims dropped significantly, reaching 211,000 for the week ending April 6th.

Rates - April 14th, 2024

Table with columns: Currencies, Previous Week Levels (Open, Low, High, Close), This Week's Expected Range (Minimum, Maximum), 3-Month Forward. Rows include EUR, GBP, JPY, CHF.

of 0.6% in February. It's important to note that the Federal Reserve has been actively working to combat inflation by raising interest rates. Since March 2022, they've increased rates by a significant amount, bringing them to the current range of 5.25% to 5.50%.

numbers can fluctuate slightly around springtime due to holidays like Easter and spring break, which fall on different weeks each year. Despite these recent interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve intended to slow inflation, the job market seems to be holding strong.

The Greenback surged the week, last trading at 105.237

Europe ECB Press Conference

The European Central Bank (ECB) decided to hold in-

United Kingdom UK GDP m/m

The UK economy showed signs of picking up steam in early 2024. While the overall growth in February was modest at 0.1%, it came on the back of a revision that showed January's growth to be slightly stronger than previously estimated.

Kuwait Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30725.

Kuwaiti banks experience mixed changes in 'deposits and assets'

M2 money supply sees 0.9% rise in Feb

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): On Sunday, the Central Bank of Kuwait revealed that the broad money supply (M2) experienced a 0.9 percent increase in February, reaching 39.2 billion Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$129.3 billion USD) on a monthly basis.

According to statistical tables provided by the bank's Economic Research Department, private sector deposits in local dinars rose by one percent to reach 35.8 billion dinars (approximately \$118 billion USD) in the same month. Conversely, private sector deposits in foreign currencies decreased by 4.2 percent to 1.7 billion dinars (approximately \$5.6 billion USD).

Furthermore, the total assets of local banks saw a 0.6 percent increase, reaching 87.6 billion dinars (approximately \$289 billion USD). Additionally,

the net foreign assets of local banks experienced a 0.5 percent increase, reaching 12.8 billion dinars (approximately \$42 billion USD). Term deposits with the Central Bank remained steady at 1.2 billion dinars (approximately \$3.9 billion USD), while cash credit facilities (loans) increased by one percent to 54.3 billion dinars (approximately \$179 billion USD).

In its report, the administration noted that the average interest rates on treasury bonds with a maturity of one year remained stable at 4.625 percent in February. However, financing for Kuwait imports decreased by 17.9 percent to 456 million dinars (approximately \$1.5 billion USD). Additionally, the average exchange rate of the US dollar against the dinar increased by 0.1 percent to 307.8 fils.

The money supply, in its narrow sense, encompasses paper and coin currencies used in daily transactions, as well as money deposited in banks in the form of current accounts or demand deposits. Conversely, the money supply in its broad sense includes term deposit accounts and savings accounts, in addition to current money.

Banks prioritize religious & charitable activities

Kuwaiti banks showcase strong social responsibility in Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwaiti banks have demonstrated a strong commitment to social responsibility through various initiatives, campaigns, and community activities, especially during the holy month of Ramadan.

Sheikha Al-Issa, Deputy Secretary General of the Kuwait Banking Association, emphasized the importance of highlighting the significant role played by Kuwaiti banks in social responsibility. The Union has been actively involved in organizing and supporting numerous social, cultural, scientific, sporting, and humanitarian activities, particularly during Ramadan, in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Religious and health-related activities have been prioritized, with initiatives such as religious advice episodes and medical tips for kidney patients being disseminated. Additionally, educational programs on Islamic banking principles have been developed to enhance understanding in this area.

Various banks have undertaken diverse charitable initiatives during Ramadan. The National Bank of Kuwait's longstanding program, "Do

Good in the Month of Good," reflects its commitment to community development. Activities include distributing Iftar meals, organizing entertainment events, and launching campaigns to protect the environment.

Similarly, other banks like the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, Gulf Bank, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait International Bank (KIB), Burgan Bank, Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Boubyan Bank, and Warba Bank have all contributed significantly to community welfare during Ramadan. These efforts encompass distributing food to needy families, organizing entertainment events, supporting healthcare initiatives, promoting sports activities, and fostering Quranic recitation competitions.

Notably, Kuwait Finance House's "Kaytak" Ramadan program stands out for its diverse community initiatives, including Quran recitation competitions, walking challenges, Iftar campaigns, and contributions to food banks.

Overall, Kuwaiti banks have demonstrated their commitment to social responsibility by actively engaging in initiatives that address various societal needs and contribute to community welfare during Ramadan and beyond.

Profits surge 22%

Bursa Kuwait companies report strong profit growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Al-Shall's weekly report reveals promising financial trends among companies listed on the Boursa Kuwait, with 137 out of approximately 146 companies reporting net profits totaling around 2.53 billion dinars. This represents a notable 22 percent increase compared to the profits reported for the same companies in 2022, which stood at about 2.07 billion dinars, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Of the total companies, 112 were profitable, while 25 reported losses. Interestingly, 81 companies demonstrated improved performance, with 68 of them increasing their profits and 13 transitioning from losses to profitability or reducing their losses. This signifies a significant improvement in performance, with 59.1 percent of companies showcasing progress compared to 2022.

The top 10 profit-earning companies amassed approximately 1.89 billion dinars, accounting for 74.6 percent of the total profits reported. Leading the pack were Kuwait Finance House, National Bank of Kuwait, and Mobile Telecommunications Company (Zain). Conversely, 10 companies incurred absolute losses totaling

approximately 160.6 million dinars, with National Real Estate Company and Al Mazaya Holding Company bearing the highest losses.

Sector-wise, the banking sector recorded the highest increase in profits, followed by the industrial sector. However, the insurance sector experienced a decline in profitability.

Regarding dividends, 84 companies expressed their intent to distribute dividends, with 52 opting for cash dividends only, 7 for bonus shares only, and 25 for a mixed distribution. Meanwhile, 53 companies opted not to distribute profits.

In terms of market liquidity, the institutional and corporate sector dominated, accounting for 57.9 percent of total share purchases and 57.6 percent of total sales. However, the individual sector saw an increase in market participation, while the customer accounts and investment funds sectors witnessed a decline.

Notably, the number of active trading accounts decreased by approximately 6.7 percent between December 2023 and March 2024, reflecting a decrease in market activity compared to the same period in previous years.

Table with columns: Description, 2023 (Feb, Dec), 2024 (Jan, Feb). Rows include Money Supply (M2), CBK Assets, Balance of Public Debt Instruments, Local Banks Assets, Net Foreign Assets, Resident Private Sector Deposits, In KD, In Foreign Currency.

Table with columns: Description, 2023 (Feb, Dec), 2024 (Jan, Feb). Rows include Balance of Utilized Cash Credit facilities, Financing of Kuwait Imports, Local Banks Claims on CBK, Time Deposits with CBK, Interest Rate (Return) On One Year Treasury Bonds, Average US\$ Exchange Rate against K.D (fil).

Al-Mabani & Kuwait Real Estate Company shares decline in mortgage rates

First quarter sees resurgence in popularity of stock mortgages

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The end of the first quarter of this year witnessed varying growth rates in the quantities of shares mortgaged with banks in exchange for banking facilities, particularly on a list of preferred shares. Some shares experienced increases in mortgage rates, indicating resurgence in the popularity of stock mortgages and the flexibility of financing provided by banks to support businesses, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This trend reflects a desire to facilitate necessary financing, especially for investors with strong solvency and assets. Notably, there were shares that saw significant declines in mortgage rates.

Among them, Al-Mabani stock experienced a decrease of 31.4 percent, while the Kuwait Real Estate Company stock declined by 60.5 percent. Conversely, shares such as "KFH" witnessed substantial growth in mortgaged shares, with a 135.3 percent increase between the first quarters of last year and the current year.

This surge is attributed to the acquisition process involving Ahli Union, leading to the replacement of more than a billion pledged shares with KFH shares post-merger.

Other shares with notable increases in mortgaged quantities include Commercial Bank and Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, reflecting positive growth in prof-

its and dividends, as well as defensive capabilities against market fluctuations and crises. These shares also boast high ownership levels among major owners of fixed shares.

The growth of mortgaged shares and associated banking facilities amid high financing costs reflects a dynamic business environment. Sources suggest that financial centers are being built around certain shares, with funds from these facilities being directed towards multiple shares to leverage their distributions.

Overall, this indicates strategic investment decisions driven by both market dynamics and investor conviction.

China eyes increased investment in rural NEVS charging facilities

The Chinese central government plans to allocate funding to support a pilot project to beef up charging facilities for new energy vehicles (NEVs) in counties. "This aims to address the shortage of charging facilities in the nation's rural regions, optimize the environment for the consumption of NEVs, and tap into NEV consumption potential in rural regions," said Fu Jinling, a finance ministry official. The pledged investment in charging facilities in rural regions is part of the nation's

ongoing efforts to promote consumption, new investment, and low-carbon transition in accordance with an action plan of the government to push forward large-scale equipment upgrades and trade-ins of consumer goods. Such upgrades and trade-ins are estimated to generate consumption demand amounting to trillions of yuan each year. Industrial data from the China Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Promotion Alliance revealed the addition of 716,000 charging piles in China during the Janu-

ary-March period in 2024, up 13.2 percent year on year, and confirmed an aggregate stock of around 9.31 million charging piles across the country by March this year. However, it noted an imbalance -- with rural regions lagging far behind urban regions in terms of the availability of electric vehicle charging facilities. At a press briefing earlier this week, Fu said the government would also offer subsidies directly to consumers who replace high-emission passenger vehicles with greener models. (Xinhua)



This photo taken on Oct. 17, 2023 shows new energy vehicles being charged at a charging station in Gujiao Township of Bouyei-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Qiannan, southwest China's Guizhou Province. (Xinhua)

Event kicked off April 13 and will end April 18

China's consumer products expo shares opportunities, mkt with world

HAIKOU, April 14, (Xinhua): China, the world's second-largest economy, is sharing its booming consumer market with companies around the world, with its heavyweight expo hitting a record high scale held in Haikou, capital city of south China's Hainan Province.

The country launched a series of global consumption events on Saturday at the fourth China International Consumer Products Expo in the island province known for its offshore duty-free shopping and free trade port policies.

Lasting from April 13 to 18, the expo themed "Share Open Opportunities, Co-create a Better Life" will host over 4,000 brands from 71 countries and regions, showcasing their novel and upmarket products for global consumers.

In addition to the main venue at the Hainan International Convention and Exhibition Center in Haikou, the provincial capital, three sub-venues regarding sailboats and yachts, duty-free shopping and international health have been set up in Haikou and Boao. The total indoor exhibition area is expected to reach 128,000 square meters, surpassing its previous editions.

More than 300 themed activities and featured activities such as new product releases will also be carried out.

Over the past three years, the scale, quality and influence of the expo have been continuously improved, Peng Qinghua, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said at the launch ceremony.

The expo has become the largest consumer products exhibition in the Asia-Pacific region, a gathering place for global consumer products and a vane for the consumer market, becoming a name card for the construction of Hainan Free Trade Port, he said.

Feng Fei, secretary of the Hainan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, said from this year, the expo will be held in Hainan from April 13 to 18 every year to better facilitate the arrangements of participants.

In addition, the quality of the exhibitions is improving. Especially, more attention has been paid to the marketization, internationalization and specialization of the exhibitions.

Ireland is the guest of honor at this year's expo, with a dedicated exhibition venue showing the country's scientific and technological innovation, education,

China-Europe freight train services see robust expansion in Q1

China-Europe freight train services recorded solid expansion in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024, data from China's railway operator showed Sunday.

A total of 4,541 China-Europe freight train trips took place in the first three months of 2024, up 9 percent year on year, according to the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. (China Railway).

About 493,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) of goods were transported via these freight train services during this period, up 10 percent from a year earlier, the railway operator said.

By the end of March, some 87,000 China-Europe freight train trips had been made in total, providing services for 222 cities across 25 European countries, according to China Railway. (Xinhua)



An aerial drone photo taken on March 25, 2024 shows a China-Europe freight train running past the Qisumu international railway logistics hub in Ulanqab, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. (Xinhua)

Manufacturing hub eyed

India's Modi 'vows' to boost social spending

NEW DELHI, April 14, (AP): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday vowed to boost social spending, develop infrastructure and make India into a global manufacturing hub as companies shift away from China, as he unveiled his Hindu nationalist party's election strategy.

Modi hopes to return to power for a third five-year term. He and other leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party unveiled their promises in the world's largest democracy days before the start of a multi-phase general election.

Modi promised to expand social programs introduced during his party's 10-year rule, including millions of free homes for the poor, along with health care, cooking gas and free grain. His government has been paying 6,000 rupees (\$73) a year to poor farmers.

He said his government's policies have pulled 250 million people out of poverty since he came to power in 2014. India is the world's most populous country with over 1.4 billion people. The BJP's president, J.P. Nadda, said less than 1% of Indian people now live in extreme poverty.

India holds its elections on different days in different parts of the country, stretching over weeks. Voting for the country's parliament will begin on April 19 and run until June 1, and results will be announced on June 4.

Most polls have predicted a victory for Modi and the BJP. But the opposition Congress Party argues that Modi has undermined India's democracy and favored the interests of the rich.

Modi has been campaigning extensively across the country, promising to expand India's economy to \$5 trillion by 2027 from around \$3.7 trillion. He also promises to put India on track to become a developed country by 2047, when the country celebrates 100 years of independence from British colonialists.

On Sunday, he said his party would develop India as a hub for the pharmaceutical, energy, semiconductor and tourism industries. He also said India will modernize its infrastructure, including its railways, airways, and waterways. And he said he will seek to increase jobs for young people and access to cheap loans for young entrepreneurs.

Modi is broadly popular in India, where he's considered a champion of the country's Hindu majority and has overseen rapid economic growth.

But critics say another term for the BJP could undermine India's status as a secular, democratic nation, saying its 10 years in power have brought attacks by Hindu nationalists against the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, and a shrinking space for dissent and free media.

Argentina's populist leader meets Elon Musk in Texas

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, April 14, (AP): One is an erratic billionaire entrepreneur and self-declared free-speech absolutist, prone to profanity-laden rants against "wokeness" and obsessed with making humanity a multi-planetary species.

The other is an iconoclastic Latin American leader and self-declared anarcho-capitalist, prone to cloning his dead dogs and obsessed with destroying state controls.

Tech executive Elon Musk and Argentine President Javier Milei finally sealed their budding bromance Friday at a Tesla electric car factory in Texas - their first meeting after months of mutual admiration on social media.

It was a match made in free-market heaven.

In social media posts that thrilled their right-wing fans, the pair played up their real-life friendship.

"To an exciting & inspiring future!" Musk wrote on X, or Twitter as it was known before he bought it in 2022, along with a photo of him and Milei both grinning widely and giving the camera two thumbs up, the libertarian president's trademark gesture.

"Long live freedom, dammit!" Milei wrote in his own X post, which included a selfie of the pair, with the president sporting his signature leather bomber and Musk in his Air Force Academy navy sports jacket.

The meeting was closed to the press and a statement from Milei's office produced little news, saying the free-market enthusiasts discussed issues, ranging from the expected (how to promote entrepreneurship by slashing red-tape) to the random (the existential danger posed by declining birth rates).

Milei's office said that the president offered to help Musk in the clash between social media company X and Brazilian authorities, which have ac-

cused Musk of obstruction for defying a judge's order to block some accounts.

The two also agreed to host "a big event soon in Argentina to promote the ideas of freedom," the Argentine presidency said, but provided no further details.

But behind the smiley photo-op - and video of Milei's joy ride in a futuristic Cybertruck pickup - much was at stake for Argentina.

Support from the U.S. - particularly at the International Monetary Fund, to which Argentina owes over \$42 billion - is critical to boosting investor confidence in the South American country, as Milei seeks to overhaul a broken economy with market-oriented policies.

With the revival of socialist governments across Latin America, from Chile to Brazil, experts say Argentina is now poised to emerge as a key strategic partner for Washington.

"There's a chance that Argentina can fill this vacuum and eventually be a strategic partner for the U.S.," said Sergio Berensztein, who runs a political consultancy in Buenos Aires. "Musk can serve to speed this process of Argentina becoming part of the (U.S.) new network of friends."

Last month, Musk's company delivered Starlink satellite internet service to Argentina, a move cheered by farmers struggling to keep up with high-tech agriculture in remote parts of the country.

Gerardo Werthein, Argentina's ambassador to the U.S., attended Friday's meeting and told La Nacion newspaper that Milei and Musk discussed Argentina's vast reserves of strategic minerals, including lithium, an indispensable ingredient in batteries for electric cars.

"He expressed wanting to help Argentina, and had a very good view of everything we have, mainly lithium," Werthein said of Musk.

US oil and gas 'cos' must pay more to drill on federal lands

Biden admin issues new rule

WASHINGTON, April 14, (AP): Oil and gas companies will have to pay more to drill on federal lands and satisfy stronger requirements to clean up old or abandoned wells under a final rule issued Friday by the Biden administration.

The Interior Department's rule raises royalty rates for oil drilling by more than one-third, to 16.67%, in accordance with the sweeping 2022 climate law approved by Congress.

The previous rate of 12.5% paid by oil and gas companies for federal drilling rights had remained unchanged for a century. The federal rate was significantly lower than what many states and private landowners charge for drilling leases on state or private lands.

The new rule does not go so far as to prohibit new oil and gas leasing on federal lands, as many environmental groups have urged and President Joe Biden promised during the 2020 campaign. But officials said the proposal will lead to a more responsible leasing process that provides a better return to U.S. taxpayers and focuses oil and gas drilling in areas most likely to be developed, especially those with existing infrastructure and a high potential for oil and gas reserves.

The rule also will increase the minimum leasing bond paid by energy companies to \$150,000, compared with the previous \$10,000 established more than 60 years ago. The higher bonding requirement is intended to ensure that energy companies meet their obligations to clean up drilling sites after they are finished drilling or cap wells that are abandoned.

The plan codifies some provisions - including royalty hikes for at least 15 competitive lease sales - that have been enforced on an interim basis since passage of the climate law, known as the Inflation Reduction Act, in August 2022. The rule also incorporates provisions in the 2021 infrastructure law and recommendations from an Interior Department report on oil and gas leasing issued in 2021. That report recommended an overhaul of the oil and gas program to limit areas available for energy development and raise costs for oil and gas companies to drill on public lands and waters.

"These are the most significant reforms to the federal oil and gas leasing program in decades, and they will cut wasteful speculation, increase returns for the public and protect taxpayers from being saddled with the costs of environmental cleanups," Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said Friday.

Along with efforts to clean up so-called orphaned, or abandoned, wells,



A flare to burn methane from oil production is seen on a well pad near Watford City, N.D., on Aug. 26, 2021. Oil and gas companies will have to pay more to drill on public lands and satisfy stronger requirements to clean up old or abandoned wells under a final rule issued Friday, April 12, 2024, by the Biden administration. The Interior Department's rule does not go so far as to prohibit new oil and gas leasing on federal lands, as many environmental groups have urged and as President Joe Biden promised during the 2020 campaign. (AP)

US and UK restrict trade of Russian-origin metals

WASHINGTON, April 14, (AP): The U.S. and U.K. will begin restricting the trade of new Russian-origin metals - including aluminum, copper and nickel - on global metal exchanges and in derivatives trading.

The announcement is meant to follow up on the Group of Seven nations' commitment in February "to reduce Russia's revenues from metals" as its invasion into Ukraine has dragged on for more than two years.

Russia is a key exporter of metals like aluminum, steel and titanium - but British and American officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the announcement, said the economic impact from the ban would be negligible for consumers and producers.

The intent is to limit Russia's revenues from metals, they say, as metals have earned the nation \$40 billion in the past two years, according to British officials.

"Our new prohibitions on key metals, in coordination with our partners in the United Kingdom, will continue to target the revenue Russia can earn to continue its brutal war against Ukraine," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in a news release.

"By taking this action in a targeted and responsible manner, we will reduce Russia's earnings while protecting our partners and allies from unwanted spillover effects," she said.

"these reforms will help safeguard the health of our public lands and nearby communities for generations to come," Haaland said. The rule also will ease pressure to develop areas that contain sensitive wildlife habitat, cultural resources or recreation sites, she said.

The new royalty rate codified by the climate law is expected to remain in place until August 2032, after which it can be increased. The higher rate would increase costs for oil and gas companies by an estimated \$1.8 billion in that period, according to the Interior Department.

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry's top lobbying group, said it was reviewing the rule to ensure

Biden's Democratic administration was encouraging "fair and consistent access to federal resources" used by oil and gas companies.

"As energy demand continues to grow, oil and natural gas development on federal lands will be foundational for maintaining energy security, powering our economy and supporting state and local conservation efforts," API vice president Holly Hopkins said in a statement. "Overly burdensome land management regulations will put this critical energy supply at risk."

Environmental groups hailed the rule change as a way to ensure accountability from energy companies that have long had cheap access to federal lands.

"For far too long, oil and gas companies have been profiting off of giveaways to drill on our public lands. This rule will finally curtail some of these wasteful handouts to the fossil fuel industry," said Josh Axelrod, senior policy advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Communities, conservationists and taxpayer advocates have been demanding many of these changes for decades, and it's great news that the Biden administration is acting on this today."

The Center for Biological Diversity, another environmental group, faulted the administration for failing to address the climate crisis directly by phasing out drilling on public lands.

US Steel shareholders OK takeover by Japan's Nippon Steel

PITTSBURGH, April 14, (AP): U.S. Steel shareholders have overwhelmingly approved the company's sale to Nippon Steel of Japan for \$14.1 billion in cash, voicing unequivocal support for a combination that has drawn opposition from the Biden administration on economic and national security grounds.

More than 98% of the shares voted at a special investor meeting Friday approved the takeover, according to a preliminary count of ballots announced by Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel.

The transaction has raised concerns about what the sale could mean for unionized workers, supply chains and

U.S. national security.

President Joe Biden has come out in opposition to the deal, saying in March that the U.S. needs to "maintain strong American steel companies powered by American steelworkers." Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Wednesday during a White House news

conference that he hopes discussions on Nippon "will unfold in directions that would be positive for both sides."

The United Steelworkers, which represents the U.S. Steel labor force, did not respond to requests by The Associated Press for comment on the shareholder vote.

What's On



Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally with Zain Alshuhoor volunteers.



Zain's competition encouraged young people to pursue Holy Quran recitation.

Company's biggest social campaign reached out to entire community

Zain Ramadan campaign embodied Holy Month's values

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Every Ramadan, the Zain Alshuhoor campaign strives to embody the values of giving, compassion, and generosity. It's the company's major yearly effort to engage the entire community, reflecting cherished Kuwaiti traditions and promoting love, peace, and togetherness.

To create a bigger impact, Zain partnered this year with six strategic partners from the public and private sectors: the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Grand Mosque of Kuwait, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), the Kuwait Food Bank, the Public Authority for Disability Affairs, and Suffix Events. Through these partnerships, the company presented a plethora of volunteer, humanitarian, charitable, social, religious, and sports programs that continued throughout the Holy Month.

Ramadan 'Machla' initiative

Zain kicked-off its Ramadan campaign with the food supplies (Machla) initiative, delivering nearly 1000 boxes of essential food supplies to underprivileged communities through three strategic partners: the Social Care Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), and the Kuwait Food Bank - all official, recognized organizations.

In a step that showed the Zain family's commitment to bring about positive social impact in the community, members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team - that consisted of Zain employees from across the company's divisions and departments - gathered at Zain's headquarters in Shuwaikh to prepare the food supplies. Foodstuffs were categorized and distributed into boxes ahead of their delivery to the three organizations.

The food supplies were delivered to the Social Care Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, where they were presented to residents of the centers, including foster care children, elderly individuals, and people with special needs. The supply boxes were also delivered to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the Kuwait Food Bank, presented to underprivileged families and individuals across the nation. The initiative continued throughout the month.

Iftar meals initiative

This year, Zain's annual Iftar initiative to serve fasting individuals came back in its 17th year, this time in strategic partnership with the Grand Mosque of Kuwait and the Kuwait Food Bank. A total of 42,000 meals were served throughout the entire month.

The Iftar initiative is a main pillar of Zain's annual social program during the Holy Month. Meals were served daily at the Grand Mosque's main tent, along with meals distributed through trucks across Kuwait in strategic partnership with the Kuwait Food Bank.

The initiative was directly supervised and organized by Zain's team to ensure the quality of all the meals delivered. In addition, members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team supported the initiative.

Humanitarian and social visits

As it does every year, Zain was keen on organizing hu-



Food supplies initiative covered the needs of underprivileged families.

manitarian and social visits to share the blessings and joys of the Holy Month with the entire community. The company hosted a special Ramadan Iftar banquet at Abdali Border Port for Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Customs personnel. The step came to recognize the unwavering commitment demonstrated by the port's staff year-round, particularly during the Holy Month, to protect Kuwait and its people.

In addition, the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team has visited pediatric wards at the Zain Otolaryngology Specialized Hospital and Jaber Al Ahmad Hospital to celebrate the local Ramadan tradition of Gargeean (candy distribution) with children, their families, and medical staff. The initiative reflected the deeply rooted spirit of giving during the Holy Month.

The visits came in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, where members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team distributed Gargeean candy, gifts, and toys to the children, greatly uplifting not only the spirits of the young patients but also those of their families and the medical staff present.

Health and sports programs

For the third year running, the Zain Alshaheed Park Ramadan Challenge kicked-off in strategic partnership with Suffix Events. The health & sports program was highly successful, drawing over 800 participants who competed and collected kilometers to top the leaderboard.

The competition's third season was a great success, with over 800 participants joining in four different age groups each for males and females: 20 years and below, 20-34 years, 35-49 years, and 50+ years. In addition, the Zain Kids Race was joined by over 280 children, and over 50 participants with special needs joined the Down Syndrome Day race.

The challenge ran for 9 consecutive days at Alshaheed Park and offered people of all ages a great opportunity to join by speed-walking or running at their own time and



Zain's Iftar Hall at the Great Mosque welcomed fasting individuals daily.

pace. Participants collected distance points based on how many kilometers they covered and competed to top the leaderboard. Those who wanted extra points joined the special workouts held at the park.

In addition, Zain hosted a thrilling Ramadan football tournament for its employees, with 16 teams competing for the championship title at Nazwa Football Fields in Bnaid Al-Gar. The competition encouraged the teamwork spirit between members of the Zain family and promoted a healthy and active lifestyle during the Holy Month.

Sports competitions are a key part of Zain's internal communications strategy, which closely focuses on bringing engaging health and sports programs to employees. The company remains committed to the wellbeing of its staff by organizing competitions in various sports all year round, especially during Ramadan to promote an active and healthy lifestyle during the month of fasting.

Gargeean celebrations

Gargeean, the much cherished local tradition of distributing candy and sweets to children during Ramadan, is an integral part of Zain's campaign every year, where it shares the joys of this special time with the everyone in the community. The company hosted its special Gargeean celebration in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs' Social Care Centers and the Public Authority for Disability Affairs, bringing joy to foster care children, people with special needs, and elderly individuals.

Furthermore, Zain has brought back its highly anticipated drive-thru Gargeean celebration in collaboration with Wainkoom for the second year running, where hundreds of vehicles drove towards Zain's headquarters in Shuwaikh to join the one-of-a-kind celebration.

This event came under the umbrella of Zain's annual Ramadan social campaign, Zain Alshuhoor, which aimed at sharing the joys and blessings of the Holy Month with the entire community, especially with children and young people who shape its most vibrant segment. Ramadan

brought a wonderful opportunity to experience local traditions like Gargeean, which the company celebrated every year with a fresh and distinctive approach.

In addition, Zain continued to support the annual Gargeean celebration organized by Al Kharaifi Center for Special Needs Activities. The event featured fun and interactive programs that brought joy to children with special needs and their families. The joyful event featured many entertaining segments, like on-stage traditional acts performed by the center's children, engaging competitions and interactive programs designed to nurture their creative talents, and more. At the end of the event, Zain's team joined in giving out Gargeean candy to the children and their families, bringing joy to everyone.

Holy Quran Recitation Competition

Zain hosted its first Holy Quran Recitation Competition in strategic partnership with the Grand Mosque of Kuwait. The contest, which aimed to encourage the community to pursue recitation of the Holy Quran and embody its values, offered prizes for the first three winners in each of the six categories.

The competition ran for two consecutive days at the Grand Mosque's Western Hall and featured three age groups each for males and females: 7-12, 13-18, and 19-25 years. The contest was supervised by a certified judges panel from the Ministry of Waqaf and Islamic Affairs in collaboration with the Grand Mosque, and Zain presented incentive cash prizes to the first three winners in each category.

In a step to engage its employees in its community programs and initiatives, Zain also held the fourth Holy Quran Recitation Competition for employees and their children. The competition was also held at the Grand Mosque, and the first three winners in each of the six categories were awarded with cash prizes as well.

Media partnerships

Every Ramadan, Zain diversifies the content of its campaign to include cultural and recreational programs on the biggest media channels to bring itself closer to customers and audiences alike. This year, Zain partnered with Kuwait TV for the highly popular 'Iftar Canon' daily program that received wide interaction and participation. The company also partnered with Al Rai TV to sponsor the popular talk show with Kuwaiti star Nabeel Shuaib for the third consecutive season, as well as the documentary program presented by media personality Omar Al Othman that shed light on Kuwait's humanitarian efforts.

In addition, Zain partnered with 360 FM to sponsor 'Mukhalat' program for the second consecutive year. The popular daily radio show, presented by radio host Khalid Al Ansari, offered prizes to listeners throughout the Holy Month. Zain also sponsored a special cooking show in partnership with Raha, the e-commerce grocery platform, which hosted social media influencers and professional chefs every day.

Winner of KD 1 mln prize will be announced on July 18

Gulf Bank announces 10 winners of AlDanah draw

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: As part of its ongoing commitment to reward its customers, Gulf Bank has announced the 10 monthly winners of the AlDanah account draw for March 2024. The lucky winners who will be taking home a prize of KD 1,000 each, are: Hasan Mahmoud Sayed Qasem Sayed Mostafa; Hamad Ahmed Ayed Al-Rasheedi (Minor); Heyad Saud Abdulaziz Al-Zamel; Basma Abdulla Mohammed Sarkhouh; Ahmad Ali Ibrahim Al-Bahrani (Minor); Yousef Abdullateef Hussain Ali; Moahmmed Ali Mejbil Al-Ajeel; Enad Ali Ghuloum Askar Hasan; Waleed Mohamed Radaiah; Ali Mohammad Jawad Al-Saraf (Minor).

The deadline for depositing and participating in the semi-annual AlDanah Millionaire's draw is March 31, 2024. The draw is scheduled for July 18, 2024, with representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ernst & Young in attendance. Gulf Bank announced the grand prize winner of the annual draw for the Al Danah Millionaire account on February 1, 2024, for the first time, following the increase in the prize's value to KD 2 million in 2023. This is part of the bank's continuous endeavors to reward its customers and foster a culture of savings within the community.

Renowned as one of the top savings accounts in Kuwait, the AlDanah account offers numerous benefits, including periodic draws with substantial prizes. Gulf Bank's AlDanah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million.

Gulf Bank's AlDanah account is the only account in Kuwait, that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances, and transfers their chances of winning from the previous year to the next year.



In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning. AlDanah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's upcoming monthly, quarterly, and annual AlDanah draws.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.



Lucky winners receive incredible prizes including Nissan Patrol SUV and iPhone 15 Pro

Top LuLu management presents prizes at Al Rai outlet ceremony

Hala Fiesta winners drive off with their dreams

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, hosted a prize distribution ceremony on 13 April at its Al Rai outlet for winners of its 'Hala Shop and Win' promotion, which was held from 1 February to 16 March at all outlets of the hypermarket.

The lucky winners of the raffle draw, a highlight of the Hala Shop and Win promotion, were presented with incredible prizes by top LuLu management.

Top LuLu management personally handed over the keys to a gleaming Nissan Patrol SUV to one winner and two stylish Nissan X-Trail crossover SUVs to two lucky winners. In addition, 30 lucky winners also received the latest iPhone 15 Pro.

Every winner walked away beaming at having won such magnificent prizes, and expressed their

heartfelt thanks to LuLu for making their dreams a reality.

The exciting raffle draw was not limited to just high rollers, every KD5 worth of purchase entitled any shopper to participate in the raffle draw and win one of the 33 grand prizes. The official raffle draw was held on 31 March at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in front of ministry officials and top LuLu management.

The 'Shop & Win' promotion is a shining example of LuLu Hypermarket's dedication to customers, and a reminder that shopping at the hypermarket is more than just purchasing products, it is an experience filled with exciting rewards and a chance for everyone to win. With its commitment to creating enriching experiences, LuLu Hypermarket continues to reign supreme as the shopping destination of choice for all in Kuwait.

AUK faculty's KFAS grant promises change in policymaking landscape

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Dr. Ahmad Alsaber, assistant professor of management at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), and his team successfully secured a grant from KFAS for their research project titled "Assessing the relationship between air pollutants on rheumatoid arthritis activity score." This project aims to delve into the connections between air pollution exposure and the disease activity score (DAS28) among rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients in Kuwait.



Dr. Alsaber

Dr. Alsaber's expertise in machine learning, particularly the Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) approach, will be instrumental in analyzing the data spanning from 2013 to 2023. The project also utilizes advanced statistical methods such as the vector error correction model (VECM) and multiple imputation (MI) techniques to ensure robustness in the analysis. The research project focuses on key air pollutants includ-

ing SO₂, NO₂, PM₁₀, CO, and O₃, studying their impact on RA patients' disease activity scores. By employing Granger causality tests, Impulse Response Functions (IRFs) analysis, cointegration tests, unit root tests, and panel VECM, Dr. Alsaber aims to establish both static and dynamic causality between air pollutant emissions and RA disease activity scores.

This research not only contributes to advancing scientific knowledge but also holds practical implications for policymakers. The results obtained from this study will be pivotal in informing health and environmental policies in Kuwait, aiding policymakers from the Ministry of Health and the Environmental Public Authority in formulating strategies to manage RA disease activity scores effectively through interventions based on air quality indices (AQI).

Dr. Alsaber's project represents a significant step towards bridging the gap between environmental factors and public health outcomes in Kuwait. His research epitomizes the ethos of AUK's faculty, who not only excel in their academic pursuits but also actively contribute to the betterment of society.

Faith Ringgold, pioneering quilt artist and author, dies at 93

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP) — **Faith Ringgold**, an award-winning author and artist who broke down barriers for Black female artists and became famous for her richly colored and detailed quilts combining painting, textiles and storytelling, has died. She was 93.

The artist's assistant, Grace Matthews, told The Associated Press that Ringgold died Friday night at her home in Englewood, New Jersey. Matthews said Ringgold had been in failing health.

Ringgold's highly personal works of art can be found in private and public collections around the country and beyond, from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art to New York's Museum of Modern Art and Atlanta's High Museum of Fine Art. But her rise to prominence as a Black artist wasn't easy in an art world dominated by white males and in a political cultural where Black men were the leading voices for civil rights. A founder in 1971 of the Where We At artists collective for Black women, Ringgold became a social activist, frequently protesting the lack of representation of Black and female artists in American museums.

"I became a feminist out of disgust for the manner in which women were marginalized in the art world," she told The New York Times in 2019. "I began to incorporate this perspective into my work, with a particular focus on Black women as slaves and their sexual exploitation."

In her first illustrated children's book, "Tar Beach," the spirited heroine takes flight over the George Washington Bridge. The story symbolized women's self-realization and freedom to confront "this huge masculine icon - the bridge," she explained.

The story is based on her narrative quilt of the same name now in the permanent collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in

New York.

While her works often deal with issues of race and gender, their folk-like style is vibrant, optimistic and lighthearted and often reminiscent of her warm memories of her life in Harlem.

Narrative

Ringgold introduced quilting into her work in the 1970s after seeing brocade Tibetan paintings called thangkhas. They inspired her to create patchwork fabric borders, or frames, with handwritten narrative around her canvas acrylic paintings. For her 1982 story quilt, "Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima," Ringgold confronted the struggles of women by undermining the Black "mammy" stereotype and telling the story of a successful African American businesswoman called Jemima Blakey.

"Aunt Jemima conveys the same negative connotation as Uncle Tom, simply because of her looks," she told The New York Times in a 1990 interview.

Soon after, Ringgold produced a series of 12 quilt paintings titled "The French Collection," again weaving narrative, biographical and African American cultural references and Western art.

One of the works in the series, "Dancing at the Louvre," depicts Ringgold's daughters dancing in the Paris museum, seemingly oblivious to the "Mona Lisa" and other European masterpieces on the walls.



Ringgold

In other works in the series Ringgold depicts giants of Black culture like poet Langston Hughes alongside Pablo Picasso and other European masters.

Among her socially conscious works is a three-panel "9/11 Peace Story Quilt" that Ringgold designed and constructed in collaboration with New York City students for the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. Each of the panels contains 12 squares with pictures and words that address the question "what will you do for peace?" It was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

In 2014, her "Groovin' High," a depiction of a crowded energetic dance hall evocative of Harlem's famous Savoy Ballroom, was featured on a billboard along New York City's High Line park.

Ringgold also created a number of public works. "People Portraits," comprised of 52 individual glass mosaics representing figures in sports, performance and music, adorns the Los Angeles Civic Center subway station. "Flying Home: Harlem Heroes and Heroines" are two mosaic murals in a Harlem subway station that feature figures like Dinah Washington, Sugar Ray Robinson and Malcolm X.

In one of her recent books, "Harlem Renaissance Party," Ringgold introduces young readers to Hughes and other Black artists of the 1920s. Other children's books have featured Rosa Parks, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Underground Railroad.

Born in Harlem in 1930, Ringgold was the daughter of a seamstress and dress designer with whom she collaborated often. She attended City College of New York where she earned bachelor and master's degrees in art. She was a professor of art at the University of California in San Diego from 1987 until 2002.

Obituary

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ARABIC TIMES

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This image released by Bleeker Street shows Jesse Eisenberg in a scene from the film 'Sasquatch Sunset.' (AP)

Film

Paramount unveils star-studded lineup

'Sasquatch Sunset' dives into bigfoot's world

By Mark Kennedy

Do you reckon Sasquatches snore? C'mon, you know the answer, deep down. Of course, they do. They snore and eat noisily and pick bugs out of each other's fur and then eat those bugs, noisily.

What else do Sasquatches do, you wonder? One of the wildest movies of the year - or the century, for that matter - suggests they mourn, cuddle, bury their dead, enjoy throwing rocks in rivers, make art and wonder if they're alone in the world.

Even so, "Sasquatch Sunset" from filmmaking brothers David and Nathan Zellner, is a bewildering 90-minute, narrator-less and wordless experiment that's as audacious as it is infuriating. It's not clear if everyone was high making it or we should be while watching it.

Nathan Zellner, Jesse Eisenberg, Riley Keough and Christophe Zajac-Denek play a makeshift family of four Sasquatches, lost in hair suits and prosthetics and communicating only in grunts, snorts and howls. They also pee a lot.

Why the filmmakers hired such starry actors instead of paying scale to some unknowns is puzzling. None of the Sasquatches do more than what could be called Method Chimpanzee - jumping up and down, whooping and growling. A group of real chimps would ding the quartet for overacting.

As an exercise in creating empathy for monsters, "Sasquatch Sunset" does an admirable job. In the first frames, when we see a loping Bigfoot in the middle distance - and then three more - it's clear that they are telling this story, not the folks who usually capture them in shaky camera frames.

There are plenty of Sasquatches-are-just-like-us moments, like when one brings flowers to seduce another or two Bigfoots comfort each other after a death. Perhaps the most poignant moments are when they pound trees with sticks in unison, a rhythmic question that echoes through the valley. It's a call, waiting for a response - anyone out there like us?

But then there's a lot of gross-out stuff. We've mentioned the peeing, but it turns out that Sasquatches sneeze, procreate loudly and like to touch their genitals

and then smell their fingers. They can also poo on demand and throw that poo to scare off predators.

One juvenile Bigfoot makes his hand into a makeshift puppet and talks to it - like a nod to the kid in "The Shining" - and another considers inserting his manhood into a small tree hole, like a prehistoric riff off that famous scene in "American Pie."

Both things can be true, of course: Bigfoot can be disgusting and deep at the same time. But it's not always clear what the filmmakers are going for here - satire, metaphor, sympathy, naturalism or gross-out comedy?

The Sasquatches reveal deeply human characteristics and may be stand-ins for our innocent pasts, a lost link in our evolution, showing the unrelenting violence of natural life or just the voiceless among us now. Or the filmmakers might just like the image of tossing poo.

Gorgeous vistas of pristine forests and misty valleys don't help us figuring out when this all takes place but gradual clues emerge, including evidence of logging and a truly surreal bit at a human camping site, scored by the Erasur song "Love to Hate You." But if the Zellners had an environmental lesson here, they shanked it.

There's great music from The Octopus Project, veering from bright electric guitar noodles to sci-fi electronic dread reminiscent of "2001: A Space Odyssey." Stick through the roll of end credits and see one of the best credits ever in film: Sasquatch Wrangler. You don't see that every day. You don't see Sasquatch movies every day, either, but this is one you should probably let loose past you.

"Sasquatch Sunset," a Bleeker Street release that lands in some theaters on April 12 and goes wider April 19, is rated R for "for some sexual content, full nudity and bloody images." Running time: 89 minutes. One star out of four.

Also:

LAS VEGAS: With reports and rumors swirling about possible mergers and bids to acquire Paramount, the film studio put its best foot forward for theater owners at CinemaCon on Thursday.

The historic studio announced a new film with Oscar-winning "La La Land" director **Damien Chazelle**, a

"G.I. Joe/Transformers" crossover and that **Glen Powell** will star in **Edgar Wright's** "Running Man" reboot.

Paramount CEO and President **Brian Robbins** also teased some more that are in development, including a Bee Gees film from **Ridley Scott**, a new comedy from **Trey Parker** and **Matt Stone**, a "Star Trek" origin story, a new "Scary Movie" and an R-rated live action "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Last Ronin" as well as an animated "Mutant Mayhem" sequel.

They also brought out stars like **Chris Hemsworth** and **Lupita Nyong'o** to talk about their upcoming films, with video messages from **Scott**, **Denzel Washington** and **Paul Mescal**, who helped introduce new footage from "Gladiator II."

Washington promised, "Emotion, action and spectacle unlike anything else you're going to see in theaters this year."

Paramount had a positive start to 2024 with successful releases like "Mean Girls" and "Bob Marley: One Love," and some major films to come this year including "A Quiet Place: Day One" (June 28), the animated "Transformers One" (Sept. 13), a "Smile" sequel (Oct. 18) and the "Gladiator" sequel (Nov. 22). They will also re-release **Christopher Nolan's** "Interstellar" in September for its 10th anniversary, and, in 2025, "Mission: Impossible 8." But hovering over it all are the reports of the company's sale.

The private-equity firm Apollo Global reportedly offered \$11 billion to acquire the studio, which has filmed entertainment, television and streaming components like Paramount+. There have also been reports of a possible merger with Skydance, **David Ellison's** media company that has helped produce such Paramount releases as "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning."

Without directly addressing them, Paramount leaned into the chatter with Robbins joking that the studio's distribution head **Chris Aronson** has started a Kick-starter to throw his hat into the ring.

While the tone at CinemaCon, a weeklong gathering of theater owners, exhibitors and all the various companies involved in movie theater operations and experiences, is usually overwhelmingly positive, Aronson took a more sober approach. (AP)

LAS VEGAS: The executor of **O.J. Simpson's** estate says he will work to prevent a payout of a \$33.5 million judgment awarded by a California civil jury nearly three decades ago in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the families of Simpson's ex-wife **Nicole Brown Simpson** and her friend **Ron Goldman**.

Simpson's will was filed Friday in a **Clark County** court in **Nevada**, naming his longtime lawyer, **Malcolm LaVergne**, as the executor. The document shows Simpson's property was placed into a trust that was created this year.

LaVergne told the Las Vegas Review-Journal that the entirety of Simpson's estate has not been tallied. Under Nevada law, an estate must go through the courts if its assets exceed \$20,000.

Simpson died Wednesday without having paid the lion's share of the civil judgment that was awarded in 1997 after jurors found him liable. With his assets set to go through the court probate process, the Goldman and Brown families could be in line to get paid a piece of whatever Simpson left behind.

LaVergne, who had represented Simpson since 2009, said he specifically didn't want the Goldman family seeing any money from Simpson's estate.

"It's my hope that the Goldmans get zero, nothing," he told the Review-Journal. "Them specifically. And I will do everything in my capacity as the executor or personal representative to try and ensure that they get nothing."

LaVergne did not immediately return phone and email messages left by The Associated Press on Saturday.

Although the Brown and Goldman families have pushed for payment, LaVergne said there was never a court order forcing Simpson to pay the civil judgment. The attorney told the Review-Journal that his particular ire at the Goldman family stemmed in part from the events surrounding Simpson's planned book, titled "If I Did It." Goldman's family won control of the manuscript and retitled the book "If I Did It: Confessions of the Killer." (AP)

WELLINGTON, Fla.: Prince **Harry** and his wife, **Meghan**, may have given up their royal duties, but not the celebrity life.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex drew a crowd of media and the wealthy on Friday as he played in a celebrity pro-am polo match to benefit Sentebale, the charity he founded in 2006 for children and young adults who live in the southern **Africa** countries of **Lesotho** and **Botswana**.

Harry, Meghan and their friend,



Simpson



Harry

Argentine polo player and model **Nacho Figueras**, were tailed by a camera crew from the same production company that makes the soccer reality show "Welcome to Wrexham" for an upcoming Netflix miniseries that will focus on polo.

Harry did not speak to reporters. But Figueras said he hopes the

show will have the same impact for polo that "Formula 1: Drive to Survive" had for the worldwide auto racing circuit. Harry and Meghan will serve as executive producers.

"We have been working on this for a long time. It was always Harry's dream and passion to share with the world it takes to be

a really competitive polo player at the highest level," Figueras said.

Figueras, who captained one of the two teams that played the prince's squad, said before the abbreviated matches he and Harry gave each other a lot of ribbing in recent days over Friday's competition. They have worked together on Sentebale since 2007. (AP)

People & Places

Books

Silverman tackles activism

Hampton Sides revisits Captain Cook's legacy

By Jeff Rowe

Captain James Cook's voyages in the South Pacific in the late 1700s exemplify the law of unintended consequences. He set out to find a westward ocean passage from Europe to Asia but instead, with the maps he created and his reports, Cook revealed the Pacific islands and their people to the world.

In recent decades, Cook has been vilified by some scholars and cultural revisionists for bringing European diseases, guns and colonization. But **Hampton Sides'** new book, "The Wide Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact and the Fateful Final Voyage of Captain James Cook," details that Polynesian island life and cultures were not always idyllic.

Priests sometimes made human sacrifices. Warriors mutilated enemy corpses. People defeated in battle sometimes were enslaved. King Kamehameha, a revered figure in Hawaii, unified the Hawaiian Islands in 1810 at a cost of thousands of warriors' lives.

Sides' book is sure to rile some Indigenous groups in Hawaii and elsewhere in the Pacific Islands, who contend Cook ushered in the destruction of Pacific Island cultures.

An obelisk in Hawaii marking where Cook was killed in 1779 had been doused with red paint when Sides visited as part of his research for this book. Over Cook's name was written "You are on native land."

Sides draws deeply from Cook's and other crew members' diaries and supplements that with his own reporting in the South Pacific.

Cook emerges from the book as an excellent mariner and decent human being, inspiring the crew to want to sail with him. However, on the voyage of the late 1770s, crew members noted that Cook seemed agitated, not his usual self.

What may have ailed Cook on that final voyage we probably never will know, but we do know that his voyages opened the Pacific islands to the world, and as new arrivals always do, life is changed forever.

Was Cook a villain for his explorations? Sides make a persuasive case in 387 pages of diligent, riveting reporting that Cook came as a navigator and mapmaker and in dramatically opening what was known about our world, made us all richer in knowledge.

When his journals and maps reached England after his death, it was electrifying news. No, an ocean passage across North America to the Pacific did not exist, but Europeans now knew that islands in the Pacific were populated by myriad cultures; Sides' reporting is clear that Cook treated them all with respect.

He and his fellow British mariners, though, did lack one skill that would seem vital for sailors and would have better connected the British sailors to the peoples of the Pacific, whose cultures and livelihoods were closely connected to the ocean: Neither Cook nor any of his fellow officers could swim.

Earlier this year a former member of the far-left Baader-Meinhof gang who spent decades in hiding was arrested by German police in connection with a string of crimes. It was just another example of the long afterlife of the anti-war movement of the late 1960s, which **Jen Silverman** explores in a brilliant, beautifully written new novel, "There's Going to Be Trouble."

Titling it after a line from an **Allen Ginsberg** — "My mind is made up there's going to be trouble" — Silverman constructs an intricate, clever plot that braids together two separate stories connected by the main characters.

One takes place in 1968 when **Keen**, an apolitical grad student at Harvard, gets drawn into the takeover of a campus building because of his desperate love for **Olya**, one of the organizers. When the demonstration goes awry, he must live with the disastrous results for the rest of his lonely life as a chemistry professor and single dad. His one consolation is the daughter Olya bore him before going on the run. Everyone calls her Minnow, though she will grow up to embody the fierceness of her namesake Minerva, the Roman goddess of war.

The second storyline unfolds in 2018 during the yellow vest protests in France, where **Minnow**, now a 38-year-old teacher, has fled after being engulfed in a scandal in the U.S. whipped up by the religious right for helping an underage girl at her school obtain an abortion. In Paris, she gets caught up with a group of activists who, like their counterparts a half century earlier, are willing to go to virtually any length to challenge what they see as the inequities of French society.

Once again, love plays a decisive role. Just as her father fell head over heels for Olya, Minnow becomes enamored with Charles, the 23-year-old scion of a powerful French family whose father is a confidant of French President Emmanuel Macron. Though she has serious qualms about the 15-year age difference, she can't keep her hands off him — and the feeling is mutual. Meanwhile, another brazen action is being planned that will also have deadly consequences.

Though the novel is a little slow to get off the ground and might have benefited from being 50 pages shorter, eventually it gathers unstoppable force as it moves toward a dramatic denouement that offers no easy conclusions. The questions Silverman poses about the ends and means of political violence are as relevant today as they were in the '60s — or, for that matter, any era.

Also:

NEW YORK: Journalism is often referred to as the first draft of history, especially when covering war and international conflicts.

"Newshawks in Berlin: The Associated Press and Nazi Germany" explores the challenges the world's largest news organization faced in trying to balance journalistic ethics with ability to cover World War II within the confines of a dictatorship. The book is a fair but blunt assessment of AP's work during that time.

The book is written by two veteran AP journalists — **Randy Herschaft** and the late **Larry Heinzerling** — along with Columbia Journalism School professor emerita **Ann Cooper**.

It follows up on a 2017 in-depth review Herschaft and Heinzerling authored for the AP looking at the news organization's operations in Nazi Germany. That review was prompted by an academic paper a year earlier that asserted the AP ceded influence to Nazi propagandists over the production of its German photo service.

"Newshawks," however, goes beyond looking at the photos operations that were the focus of the 2017 review. It richly mines AP's vast archives and other sources to provide a fascinating inside account of a journalistic era that's completely different from now but poses many of the same questions. (AP)



Sides



Maggie Rogers performs on Day 3 of the Lollapalooza Music Festival on Saturday, Aug. 5, 2023, at Grant Park in Chicago. (AP)



Zendaya attends a photo call for the film 'Challengers' at the Monte Carlo Tennis Masters final match in Monaco, Saturday, April 13. (AP)



MacNeil



Bennett

Variety

NEW YORK: Robert MacNeil, who created the even-handed, no-frills PBS newscast "The MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour" in the 1970s and co-anchored the show with his late partner, **Jim Lehrer**, for two decades, died on Friday. He was 93.

MacNeil died of natural causes at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, according to his daughter, **Alison MacNeil**.

MacNeil first gained prominence for his coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings for the public broadcasting service and began his half-hour "Robert MacNeil Report" on PBS in 1975 with his friend Lehrer as Washington correspondent.

The broadcast became the "MacNeil-Lehrer Report" and then, in 1983, was expanded to an hour and renamed the "MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour." The nation's first one-hour evening news broadcast, and recipient of several Emmy and Peabody awards, it remains on the air today with **Geoff Bennett** and **Anna Noway** as anchors.

It was MacNeil's and Lehrer's disenchantment with the style and content of rival news programs on ABC, CBS and NBC that led to the program's creation.

"We don't need to SELL the news," MacNeil told the Chicago Tribune in 1983. "The networks hype the news to make it seem vital, important. What's missing (in 22 minutes) is context, sometimes balance, and a consideration of questions that are raised by certain events."

MacNeil left anchoring duties at "NewsHour" after two decades in 1995 to write full time. Lehrer took over the newscast alone, and he remained there until 2009. Lehrer died in 2020.

When MacNeil visited the show in October 2005 to commemorate its 30th anniversary, he reminisced about how their newscast started in the days before cable television.

"It was a way to do something that seemed to be needed journalistically and yet was different from what the commercial network news (programs) were doing," he said.

MacNeil wrote several books, including two memoirs "The Right Place at the Right Time" and the best seller "Wordstruck," and the novels "Burden of Desire" and "The Voyage."

"Writing is much more personal. It is not collaborative in the way that television must be," MacNeil told The Associated Press in 1995. "But when you're sitting down writing a novel, it's just you: Here's what I think, here's what I want to do. And it's me." (AP)

BERLIN: Berlin's zoo is celebrating the

Music

'Don't Forget Me,' a Sunday driving record

Rogers crafts an ode to community

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): Maggie Rogers wrote and recorded her new album, "Don't Forget Me," over five days last winter. The songs came quickly and chronologically, as if she was writing "different scenes in a movie."

"I've been writing songs now for 15 years, and so I think I've just come into this place where I really trust my process and my craft. I think because of that, I was in a place where I was willing to just play," Rogers said in a Zoom interview ahead of the album's release.

The result is a record that Rogers calls "relaxed," one that finds her "un-guarded and present."

The mood is lighter than Rogers' electric 2022 album "Surrender," which was in many ways a release of pent-up pandemic energy — a collection of songs that begged to be experienced live and with a crowd. And it leans more heavily on acoustic sounds than 2019's "Heard it in a Past Life," the first album Rogers released after a video of Pharrell Williams reacting to her song, "Alaska," in a New York University class went viral.

As Rogers explains it: If "Heard it in a Past Life" is air and "Surrender" is fire, "Don't Forget Me" is earth.

Like her past projects — and her studies at Harvard's Divinity School — community is a through-line of "Don't Forget Me." Rogers name-drops friends and tells their stories alongside hers. She has welcomed the way the new songs have united crowds, and looks forward to continuing to foster that joyous, present, environment on tour.

"I'm excited to be able to meet people in it," she said, referencing the album's Friday release.

That community-first quality of her music is something that fans, too, embrace: New York's Gaia Music Collective, for example, organized a "one-day choir" of Rogers' song "Light On." Four hundred people gathered to learn and perform an arrangement of the song, a cappella.

"She also is thinking about music as a connective force, as a thing that can bring us and our stories together," said

Matt Goldstein, the group's founder and co-director. "It's no accident that her music feels good to sing together."

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: "Surrender" felt like an album that had to be moved through and experienced with a crowd. How do you see this album being embodied?

Rogers: This record was always made for the car. I really wanted to make a record that felt like a Sunday driving record, because to me, those are some of the most intimate moments that I've had with music or with an album — when I'm singing along to a song in the car and it feels like that artist or that song is like a friend in my passenger seat. Those are some of my favorite records, and they're the records I turn to for comfort over and over again. And you know, in this big, crazy, completely insane, existential, world, if that's something that I could offer to the world through my music, I think that that is really special.

AP: Could you say more about how you see your three studio albums in relation to each other? I liked how you described each of them as elements — air, fire, earth.

Rogers: I think categorizing them in that way is just a way to help give context to them. To me, they're all really important reflections on different periods in my life. And my songwriting is pretty consistent at the center of all these things. It's mostly the way that like my producer brain has chosen to dress up the songs at their core, and that has more to do with creative expression or curiosity more than anything.

In each record, I'm just trying to be as present and authentic as I can. "Don't Forget Me," what I love about it, is that it's this really, like kind of woven tapestry. Like in so many ways I created a character that sort of led me through this album, rather than trying to make a snapshot of my life in the exact moment. But there are real truths woven into that character and into those stories.

And you know, it comes out two weeks before I turn 30 and in a way

it feels like this big ode to my 20s and everything I've experienced. Even if the narrative plot line isn't exactly 1:1 with my life, the essence of all of the feelings within all of the songs feels really, really truthful.

AP: Looking ahead, what do you think you learned about putting what you had studied at Harvard into practice while touring last year?

Rogers: It's funny because I spend all this time thinking about live music and the way people come together around it, and I had this thought that when I got on stage that it would be like, you know, that meme of the woman with the math problem above her head? I was like, that's going to be me. And then I got on stage. And what I love about being on stage is that I'm not thinking, I'm just moving. I'm just feeling. It's like deeply instinctual.

When I think about the tour that I'll be on for the next year, I think I'm mostly just really excited to have fun. Like, I've worked for so many years and been in so many bands, whether it was like at some underground club in New York City or being 18 and playing in bars or being on the road in a van at the beginning of my career, that now I feel really comfortable on stage and I love playing live. I'm so happy that live music is back in this way.

AP: You posted a video around the holidays about a journal entry you found from the end of your time at NYU.

Rogers: So trippy.

AP: How does that kind of reflective writing fit into your daily practice and songwriting now?

Rogers: It's such a massive part of my life. I mean, I write every day. I kind of can't sleep without it. It's usually the last thing I do at the end of the day. And it, like, really is a meditation.

I wrote a ton through grad school and have continued working on essays and I'm turning my master's thesis into a book. My long form writing practice feels as much a part of my life as my short form songwriting practice, and it helps me to stay really present in my life because I'm paying attention to detail all the time.

67th birthday of Fatou the gorilla, its oldest resident, who it believes is also the oldest gorilla in the world.

Fatou was born in 1957 and came to the zoo in what was then West Berlin in 1959. Ahead of her official birthday on Saturday, keepers on Friday served up a treat of fruit and vegetables.

Vet **Andre Schüle** said there is no gorilla older than Fatou in any other zoo, "and we have to assume that there is no animal older than her in the wild," where animals do not live so long.

Fatou lives in an enclosure of her own and prefers to keep her distance from the zoo's other gorillas in her old age.

Fatou became the zoo's oldest resident only recently, following the death earlier this year of Ingo the flamingo. The bird was believed to be at least 75 and had lived at the zoo since 1955. (AP)

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.: Harvard University announced Thursday that it is reinstating standardized tests as a requirement for admission beginning with the class of 2029, joining other colleges that are again mandating tests for those hoping to enter the schools.

In June 2020, Harvard began a temporary test-optional policy under which students could apply to the college without submitting scores. The change was adopted as access to standardized testing during the pandemic became limited.

Other schools like Yale, Dartmouth, Brown and MIT are also again requiring standardized tests for those seeking admission.

Harvard had initially said it was going to maintain its test-optional policy through the entering class of the fall of 2026.

Under the change announced Thursday, students applying to Harvard for fall 2025 admission will be required to submit standardized test scores from the SAT or ACT exams to satisfy the testing component of the application.

In what the school called "exceptional cases" when applicants are unable to access SAT or ACT testing, other eligible tests will be accepted, including Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams. (AP)



Jon Batiste performs during the first weekend of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club on Saturday, April 13, in Indio, Calif. (AP)

Challenges persist for Leqembi despite FDA approval

Alzheimer's drug faces slow rollout despite promising results

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): The first drug shown to slow Alzheimer's disease hit the US market over a year ago, but sales have lagged, major hospital systems have taken months to start using it and some insurers have rejected coverage.

Doctors also expect some patients will hesitate to take Leqembi due to its limited impact and potential side effects. They say it will take years to learn how best to deploy the drug and that work must be done to improve diagnosis.

"This is the start of a very exciting journey," said Dr. Ambar Kulshreshtha, a suburban Atlanta family physician focused on dementia patients.

More than 6 million Americans, and millions more worldwide, have Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia. There's no cure, but Leqembi clears a sticky brain protein called amyloid that's a key indicator of Alzheimer's.

Progression

Studies showed that it can delay the progression of the disease by a few months when given to people with mild symptoms. Some experts say the delay may be too subtle for patients to notice.

The drug also can cause brain swelling and bleeding. Patients need regular brain scans to monitor for that.

The Food and Drug Administration gave Leqembi full approval last summer for patients with early stages of the disease. The federal Medicare program for people ages 65 and over covers Leqembi and the cost of scans needed to diagnose patients.

The drug's maker, Japan's Eisai, initially expected to have 10,000 patients taking the IV drug by the end of March. Company executives have since backed off that projection, though they say sales are growing.

Hospitals and health systems have needed more time than expected to set up their systems for delivering Leqembi, said Alexander Scott, an Eisai executive vice president.

"It's not like we are adding a drug to an existing system," he said. "They are building the system for the drug."

The Cedars-Sinai health system in Los Angeles started administering the drug in early March. Getting there required months of meetings to iron out a plan to coordinate diagnosis, treatment and then monitoring for problems.

"We were very careful about it," said Dr. Sarah Kremen, a behavioral neurologist.

Banner Health in Arizona also recently started using Leqembi at a couple specialty clinics in Phoenix, a spokeswoman said.

"This is a very phased and staged approach," said Dr. Alireza Atri, a neurologist who has worked as a paid consultant for Eisai. "As we learn more, we'll expand and extend it."

The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, started using Leqembi in October but only for patients who live within a 100-mile radius so it can reach them quickly if they develop side effect symptoms. Doctors evaluate three to five patients every week for potential treatment, said Alzheimer's expert Dr. Ron Petersen.

Health systems are still trying to understand how coverage for the drug, its infusions and the needed scans works so patients don't get stuck with bills. That's a significant variable for a drug that can cost more than \$26,000 a year.

An Eisai spokeswoman said nearly three-quarters of commercial plans in the U.S. cover the drug outside Medicare.

But doctors are concerned that coverage still may be tough for some patients, especially those too young to qualify for Medicare.

Insurance denials delayed Scott Berkheiser's first Leqembi infusion a few months until last December. The 57-year-old Venice, Florida, resident said the drugmaker eventually agreed to give it to him for free while he makes co-payments for the infusions.

"It was a little crazy," he said. "It seemed like it was kind of a game that must make sense for some monetary reason."

Getting treatments started on time remains another challenge.

Texas Neurology had 60 patients screened as possible candidates for Leqembi and on a waitlist when the drug launched last year. Only eight eventually started treatment. The rest either declined to take it or had advanced beyond the mild phase of the disease when they were rescreened, CEO David Evans said.

"That window gets very short very quick," he said.

Doctors say more must be done to quickly identify patients and get treatment started before the disease advances. But that's a murky process.

If people mention memory trouble, doctors must rule out reversible causes like thyroid problems, vitamin deficiencies, medication issues or depression, Kulshreshtha said. Then memory tests for dementia can take a few visits.

Some patients may be ineligible for Leqembi because it would conflict with medication they already take to prevent strokes.

And then getting in to see a neurologist who prescribes the drug can take months. Those who make it to the first infusion say the treatment process is manageable.

Infusions

Berkheiser says infusions have gone "like clockwork" since his delayed start. He fits them in between his work as an engineer and training six days a week to compete in an Ironman triathlon.

Charles "Bum" Clegg recently finished his 13th Leqembi infusion. The Salem, Alabama, resident visits a treatment center only 15 minutes from his home.

Clegg and his wife, Carol, say he has had no side effects, and his short-term memory has improved.

"This drug gives you hope," Carol said.

Treatment access may improve over time. The FDA is reviewing another potential treatment that targets amyloid protein, Eli Lilly and Co.'s donanemab. Eisai is planning to seek approval for an injectable version of Leqembi that would be easier to use. Blood tests may eventually speed up amyloid detection.

Early detection crucial for arterial health: Dr. Yahya Al-Ansari

Arterial & vascular unit at Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center offers cutting-edge services

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (Agencies): Dr. Yahya Al-Ansari, a senior specialist in cardiology and cardiovascular catheterization at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center and the Amiri Hospital, provided insights into the services offered by the new arterial and vascular unit at the center since its inauguration last June, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He noted that the unit has catered to approximately 250 patients to date, offering services both in outpatient clinics and through medical consultations.

Dr. Al-Ansari highlighted the significant role of the arterial catheterization laboratory at the center in performing peripheral arterial catheterizations and therapeutic catheterizations for drug-resistant high blood pressure.

Notably, he mentioned that this laboratory stands as the first of its kind in the GCC countries to conduct therapeutic catheterization for drug-resistant high blood pressure, utilizing cutting-edge capabilities that are scientifically proven.

The Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center features specialized clinics for patients dealing with arterial problems, particularly issues concerning the arteries of the feet. Dr. Al-Ansari emphasized that the center also welcomes referrals from diabetic patients with ischemic wounds, providing treatment by restoring blood flow through arterial opening procedures.

In addressing arterial problems, Dr. Al-Ansari underscored the importance of managing contributing factors such as irregular blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking, lack of physical activity, non-compliance with medication, and failure to follow medical advice.

He urged patients with arterial issues to adhere strictly to prescribed medications, follow their physician's guidance, and quit smoking to mitigate risks.

Dr. Al-Ansari elaborated on the symptoms of peripheral arterial stenosis, including pain in the foot or leg during walking and foot wounds in diabetic individuals. He emphasized the significance of early detection and proactive management in preventing complications associated with arterial diseases.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Alawadi said on Monday the strategic medical supplies warehouses at Al-Adan Hospital bolster the national medical reserves and security.

Minister al-Awadi, who was speaking after inauguration of the new building, said the warehouses' space is 12,000 square meters and are equipped with state of art safety and cooling equipment.



Dr. Yahya Al-Ansari (inset) senior specialist in cardiology and cardiovascular catheterization at Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center and Amiri Hospital.

Are milk and eggs safe?

Concerns rise as bird flu spreads in US

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): A bird flu outbreak in US dairy cows has grown to affect more than two dozen herds in eight states, just weeks after the nation's largest egg producer found the virus in its chickens.

Health officials stress that the risk to the public is low and that the US food supply remains safe and stable.

"At this time, there continues to be no concern that this circumstance poses a risk to consumer health, or that it affects the safety of the interstate commercial milk supply," the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said in a statement.

Here's what you need to know about bird flu and food:

As of Friday, the strain of bird flu that has killed millions of wild birds in recent years has been found in at least 26 dairy herds in eight US states: Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and South Dakota.

The virus, known as Type A H5N1, has been detected in a range of mammals over the last few years, but this is the first time it has been found in cattle, according to federal health and animal agencies. Genetic analysis of the virus does not show that it has changed to spread more easily in people, the US Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention said.

Agriculture officials in at least 17 states have restricted imports of dairy cattle from states where the virus has been detected, but, so far, government agencies say it's had little effect on commercial milk production. Officials believe cows likely have been infected by exposure to wild birds, but said cow-to-cow spread "cannot be ruled out."

Farmers are testing cows that show symptoms of infection, including sharply reduced milk supply and lethargy. Animals that show signs or test positive for illness are being separated from other animals on the farms. The animals appear to recover within two weeks.

Contract

US egg producers are watching the situation closely after bird flu was detected in chickens in Texas and Michigan. Millions of birds have been killed, but the FDA said the risk of affected eggs getting into the retail market or causing infections in humans is low because of federal inspections and other safeguards.

Scientists say there's no evidence to suggest that people can contract the virus by consuming food that's been pasteurized, or heat-treated - or properly cooked.

"It's not a food safety concern," said Lee-Ann Jaykus, an emeritus food microbiologist and virologist at North Carolina State University.

Two people in U.S. have been infected with bird flu to date. A Texas dairy worker who was in close contact with an infected cow recently developed a mild eye infection and has recovered. In 2022, a prison inmate in a work program caught it while killing infected birds at a Colorado poultry farm. His only symptom was fatigue, and he recovered.

Yes, according to food safety experts and government officials.

U.S. producers are barred from selling milk from sick cows and must divert and destroy it. In addition, milk sold across state lines is required to be pasteurized, or heat-treated using a process that kills bacteria and viruses, including influenza.

"We firmly believe that pasteurization provides a safe milk supply," Tracey Forfa, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine told a webinar audience this week.

The FDA and the CDC are less certain about unpasteurized, or raw, milk sold in many states, saying there's limited information about the possible transmission of the H5N1 virus in such products.



This aerial panoramic photo taken on Feb. 13, 2023 shows China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) in southwest China's Guizhou Province. (Xinhua)

Research reveals randomness

Chinese study sheds new light on origin of fast radio bursts

BEIJING, April 14, (Xinhua): A Chinese research team has introduced a novel method for a comprehensive analysis of the behaviors of active fast radio bursts (FRBs) in the time-energy domain and revealed the randomness of the behaviors.

FRBs are intense pulses of radio emission that last just a few milliseconds. The origin of these brightest cosmic explosions in radio bands remains unknown.

Based on the rich data of China's Five-hun-

dred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST), a research team at the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NAOC) proposed a new analysis framework that is able to quantify the randomness and chaotic nature of the bursting events.

The study reveals that the FRBs' behaviors in the time-energy domain are fundamentally different from those of common transient physical phenomena such as earthquakes and solar flares, and exhibit

a high degree of randomness like a Brownian motion, shedding new light on the origin of FRBs.

The excellent observation capabilities of FAST, combined with innovative analytical methods, will enable in-depth study of mysterious burst signals in the universe, which is expected to eventually reveal their origin, said Li Di, from NAO, who led the study.

The study was published Friday as a cover paper in the journal Science Bulletin.

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Sieg falls short by .002 seconds

Mayer makes last-lap pass and wins Xfinity race in Texas

FORT WORTH, Texas, April 14, (AP): Sam Mayer made a last-lap pass and held on to win by a matter of inches and less than a second ahead of Ryan Sieg at Texas Motor Speedway in one of the closest finishes in NASCAR Xfinity Series history on Saturday.

Mayer was high against the outside wall after the two cars banged side-by-side on the way to the checkered flag. The final margin of .002 seconds matched the second-closest finish in series history.

"That's unreal. I mean I was like a second and a half back probably at one point. So to make up that much time in that little amount of time is certainly unreal," Mayer said. "We led the most important lap. ... We didn't dominate by any means, but we certainly worked

our tails off to get to that point to win like that."

Justin Allgaier finished third after leading 117 of the race's 200 laps.

Sieg went from 10th place to first in a span of four laps just before the race's final caution and led 17 consecutive laps. After the restart with 11 to go, he stayed in front until the final lap when Mayer was able to get the No. 1 JR Motorsports Chevrolet under and by him on the backstretch.

Off the final turn, Sieg got back to the inside of Mayer but came up just short in the No. 39 Ford of getting his first win in 342 career starts since 2013 for the RSS Racing team owned by his family.

"The first emotion is definitely disappointment. We had it. We were leading at the end," Sieg said.

"We got up front but we just got too tight. I was doing all I could do. I was changing lines, changing brakes, changing everything. It was just that close. I saw him coming. I was doing all I could do. In

CAR RACING

the end I was just trying to run him into the wall to win the race. We were just so close."

It was the fifth career win for Mayer, and his first this season. He led four different times for a total of only five laps.

AJ Allmendinger was fourth, followed by Cole Custer, Austin Hill, Ryan Truex, Sammy Smith, Jess Love and Anthony Alfredo.

The closest finish in NASCAR

history was the 2018 Xfinity Series opener at Daytona when in the fifth overtime Tyler Reddick beat JR Motorsports teammate Elliott Sadler in a photo finish when the margin of victory was 0.0004 seconds - that's an extra zero.

There have been two other finishes of .002 seconds in the Xfinity Series, the previous one coming in 1999 when Terry Labonte beat Joe Nemechek at Talladega.

While Allgaier dominated the race without getting the win, he still finished in the top 10 for the 266th time in his career. That matched Kyle Busch's record for the most in Xfinity Series history.

Allgaier made his 446th career start, and has won 23 times.

The series moves next week to Talladega Superspeedway.



Sam Mayer, rear, edges out Ryan Sieg (39) at the finish line to win the NASCAR Xfinity Series auto race in Fort Worth, Texas, Saturday, April 13, 2024. (AP)

Emma 'leads' Britain into Billie Jean King Cup Finals



Laura Siegemund of Germany celebrates after defeating Carolina Alves of Brazil during their Billie Jean King Cup tennis match in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Saturday, April 13, 2024. (AP)

US, Germany also advance

LE PORTEL, France, April 14, (AP): Emma Raducanu wrapped up Britain's berth in the Billie Jean King Cup Finals by taking the last six points of a 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (1) victory over Diane Parry of France for an insurmountable 3-1 lead in the best-of-five-match qualifying round.

Poland - led by No. 1-ranked Iga Swiatek - and the United States, Japan, Australia, Slovakia, Roma-

nia and Germany also advanced to the Finals, which will be held in Seville, Spain, in November. The eight nations from qualifying join defending champion Canada, 2023

TENNIS

runner-up Italy, host Spain and wild-card selection Czech Republic in the 12-team Finals field.

Raducanu, the 2021 U.S. Open champion who missed most of last

season because of injuries, also put together a comeback from a set down in her opening singles match Friday against Caroline Garcia on an indoor clay court in Le Portel, France.

This was a rematch from last year in qualifying, when France won; this time, the countries were tied 1-all after Friday. Katie Boulter beat Clara Burel 7-5, 6-0 to put Britain ahead 2-1 on Saturday, before Raducanu came through in a contest that lasted nearly 3 hours. She led Parry 5-2 in the third set, held two match points while serving for the win at 5-3 but needed the tiebreaker to close things out.

Raducanu had surgery on each wrist and one ankle in 2023. When Saturday's win ended, she dropped her racket on the court, leaned over to place her hands on her knees, then stood with a wide smile.

"To be able to put two matches like that back to back - three sets and on clay, against really tough opponents - it's just a testament to the work we've been doing," said Raducanu, who has been as high as No. 10 in the WTA rankings and is No. 302 this week, more than 250 places below both Garcia (No. 23) and Parry (No. 49). "And I knew it would pay off, eventually. So I'm very pleased that, this weekend, it was able to show."

Britain has never won the international team competition for women.

The U.S. ahead when Jessica Pegula put the hosts ahead 3-0 against Belgium by beating Hanne Vandewinkel 6-2, 6-0 on an outdoor hard court in Orlando, Florida. The Americans have won a record 18 titles in the event that used to be known as the Fed Cup, but their last came in 2017.

Swiatek clinched a berth for Poland by defeating Switzerland's Celine Naef 6-4, 6-3 on Saturday for a 3-0 lead. Swiatek - who has claimed Grand Slam titles at the French Open and one at the U.S. Open - also won her opening singles match on an indoor hard court at Biel, Switzerland.

Japan went ahead 3-0 against Kazakhstan without needing four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka to play a second match on an indoor hard court in Tokyo. That's because Nao Hibino beat Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7) on Saturday, after Osaka's win against Putintseva on Friday helped the hosts go up 2-0.

Romania, after losing the first two matches, rallied to beat Ukraine 3-2 in Amelia Island, Florida. Ana Bogdan and Jaqueline Cristian won singles matches to tie it, then teamed to beat Ukrainian twins Lyudmyla and Nadia Kichenok 6-2, 7-6 (7).

It was the ninth time in a team has overcome an 0-2 deficit to win since the best-of-five format was adopted in 1995. Bogdan got the comeback started by beating Elina Svitolina 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, and Cristian topped Lesia Tsurenko 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to tie it.

"We're going to party hard tonight, and then we're going to prepare for Seville," captain Horia Tecau said during the on-court celebrations.

Slovakia moved into the Finals when 16-year-old Renata Jamrichova defeated Veronika Erjavec 6-2, 6-0 on an indoor hard court in Bratislava to give the hosts a 3-0 edge over visiting Slovenia.

Pereira retains light heavyweight title

Max's last-second KO of Gaethje likely will be the lasting memory of UFC 300

LAS VEGAS, April 14, (AP): Alex Pereira left no doubt he was the true light heavyweight champion in the main event, knocking out Jamahal Hill 3:14 of the first round Saturday night.

But the lasting image of UFC 300, one that likely will resonate for years to come, was Max Holloway's last-second knockout of Justin Gaethje for the ceremonial BMF title belt.

Holloway-Gaethje was arguably the most anticipated fight on the loaded card, and it not only lived up to expectations, but surpassed them before a sellout crowd of 20,067 that roared over the final seconds and its stunning conclusion.

"That fight sucked the life out of everybody tonight," UFC President Dana White said. "People ask me what I do. I sell holy (stuff) moments. That was the ultimate holy (stuff) moment. Let's just talk about his fight for the rest of the press conference."

The UFC - which had its third-highest gate at \$16.5 million - awarded Holloway a \$600,000 bonus for his performance.

Even though Holloway (26-7) was well on his way to a victory by decision - two judges had him ahead 39-37 - the former featherweight champion could have run out the clock.

He instead pointed to the floor in the final seconds and then traded blows with Gaethje (25-5). It was a tremendous combination of punches from both fighters before the one that sent the now ex-BMF champ to the mat with just one second remaining in the five-round fight.

"This is the moment," Holloway said about going for the KO. "This is what the BMF is known for. If that's not a BMF moment, I don't know what is. If Justin was up, he would've given me those 10 seconds."

"That's why Max Holloway is beloved," White said. "He's got the fight won and in there with one of the most dangerous fighters in the business. That's like movie (stuff). It's the fight of the year. If something beats that as fight of the year, holy (stuff)."

Holloway, who also used a spinning kick at the end of the first round to bloody Gaethje's nose, was in control throughout most of the fight.

"I think it broke his nose. ... Any less of a man couldn't do what Justin Gaethje does," Holloway said.

In the evening's final fight, Pereira dropped Hill to the canvas with a straight left hand and then pounded him. Referee Herb Dean stepped in to stop the fight, giving the Brazilian the victory.

Pereira, 36, was a minus-132 favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"I see myself as the champion. I didn't want to let the belt go to my head," Pereira said through an interpreter. "I had to step in and win the championship."

Hill, 32, was the previous title holder, but a torn Achilles tendon forced him to vacate the championship last

July. That put the belt in Pereira's hands, eventually setting up this matchup and his fourth pay-per-view event in 16 months.

As would be expected from a milestone card number, this was a strong lineup that included 12 current or former champions, and 11 who have headlined UFC pay-per-view events.

Zhang Weili (25-3) retained her women's strawweight championship in the co-main event, beating No. 1 challenger Yan Xiaonan (18-4) by unanimous decision. Each judge scored the fight 49-45.

Zhang nearly choked out Yan to end the first round. Yan, however, found a way to take the fight the five-round distance.

"She bounced back very quickly," Zhang said through an interpreter.

No. 4 lightweight challenger Arman Tsarukyan (22-3) won by split decision over top-ranked challenger and former champion Charles Oliveira (34-10). Each scorecard was 29-28, two in favor of Tsarukyan.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

"I thought all (the) judges were going to give me the decision," Tsarukyan said.

Three-time NCAA wrestling champion Bo Nickal (6-0) led off the five-fight main card by submitting Cody Brundage (10-6) by rear-naked choke hold at 3:38 of the second round.

"I'm a little bit embarrassed with that performance because I expected to go in there and completely dominate," Nickal said.

One of the more notable matchups on the undercard was between two-time U.S. Olympic judo gold medalist Kayla Harrison and International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee Holly Holm.

Harrison (17-1), who made her UFC debut, dominated Holm (15-7). She won the bantamweight bout by submission with a rear-naked choke at 1:47 of the second round.

Retired champion Amanda Nunes posted a video of herself on social media listening to Harrison in the cage and wondering why she didn't mention her by name.

"I didn't call Amanda's name because Amanda's not the UFC champion," Harrison said. "I thought she was happily retired. I would love to win the UFC title, and if Amanda wants to come back, I would welcome her with open arms."

White said he hopes to see Nunes return.

"I think she retired too soon," White said.

Also on the undercard, second-ranked challenger Jiri Prochazka (30-4) put himself on track to reclaim the light heavyweight championship with a technical knockout at 3:17 of the second round of fifth-ranked Aleksandar Rakic (14-4). Prochazka lost his belt to Pereira in November on a second-round TKO.

Hetmyer seals IPL thriller for Rajasthan over Punjab Kings

CHANDIGARH, India, April 14, (AP): Shimron Hetmyer provided the finishing touches to Rajasthan Royals' last-over win against Punjab Kings in an Indian Premier League thriller on Saturday.

Punjab needed 10 runs from the last over, and Hetmyer (27 not out off 10 balls) held his nerve against death-bowling specialist Arshdeep Singh. After two dot deliveries,

CRICKET

Hetmyer hit 6-2-6 to help Rajasthan cross the finish line with a ball left.

Rajasthan finished with 152-7 in reply to Punjab's 147-8.

The Royals cemented top spot in the league with a third straight win, while the slumping Kings were handed a fourth loss in six games.

Put in to bat, Punjab missed Shikhar Dhawan and English all-rounder Sam Curran stepped in as skipper.

The hosts were pegged back regularly by losing wickets.

Rajasthan's spinners squeezed the scoring rate. Yuzvendra Chahal took

1-31 in four overs and Keshav Maharaj picked 2-23. Maharaj dismissed Jonny Bairstow (15) and Curran (6) and helped to reduce Punjab to 52-4 in 9.3 overs.

Jitesh Sharma anchored Punjab with 29 off 24 balls, including two sixes, but it was impact player Ashutosh Sharma who gave Punjab 147 to defend by scoring 31 off 16 until he was dismissed by Trent Boult (1-22) off the final ball.

Tanush Kotian replaced Rajasthan opener Jos Buttler and combined for 56 runs with Yashasvi Jaiswal. Jaiswal, in a slump, scored 39 off 28 balls with four fours.

As opposed to Rajasthan's spin, Punjab's pace did the heavy lifting and got the vital breakthroughs. Kagiso Rabada dismissed Jaiswal, and in-form skipper Sanju Samson for 18.

Liam Livingstone bowled Kotian as Rajasthan's chase was struggling at 89-3 in the 14th over.

At 115-5, Hetmyer and fellow West Indian batter Rovman Powell took charge. Powell 11-off-five cameo gave Rajasthan the impetus that Hetmyer used to finish with a flourish of three sixes.

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Messi scores 'amazing' goal in Inter Miami's win over Sporting

KANSAS CITY, Mo., April 14, (AP): Lionel Messi scored his fifth goal and added an assist and Luis Suárez tapped in the winner in the 71st minute as Inter Miami CF defeated Sporting Kansas City 3-2 on Saturday night in front of the third-largest crowd in MLS regular-season history.

Many of the 72,610 who filled Arrowhead Stadium to see Messi weren't disappointed as he delivered deft passes to create scoring chances - and had a highlight-reel goal.

Messi's left-footed blast from the top of the penalty arc pushed Miami CF (4-2-3) in front 2-1 in the 51st minute. It was his fourth straight MLS game with a goal.

"It was an amazing goal," Miami midfielder Benjamin Cremaschi said. "He does this all the time, so it doesn't surprise me at all. It's normal from a guy like him."

With Inter Miami CF trailing 1-0 in the 18th minute, Messi assisted on Diego Gómez's first-touch right-footer in the middle of the box to tie it.

"The pass that Messi makes and the second goal, the ball that he hits where he hits it from, you don't see that much in the MLS," Sporting KC coach Peter Vermes said. "They can punish you."

After a defensive mistake by Sporting KC, Suárez converted Gómez's crossing pass inside the 6-yard box for the lead. It was Suárez's team-leading sixth of the season and tied him for the league lead.

"We lost the ball three times," Vermes said. "And they have the quality that when you do, they can punish you."

Inter Miami CF leads the MLS in goals, with 19, and in assists, with 29.

Messi had an excellent chance in the 27th minute on a left-footer from 12 yards, but it was smothered by Kansas City's Tim Melia.

Messi's free kick in the 41st minute from 25 yards barely missed wide right.

"Unbelievable player and he can create something out of thin air," Sporting KC forward Daniel Salloi said. "It was a great experience to play against these guys."

Erik Thommy opened the scoring for Sporting KC (2-2-4) in the sixth minute on a 16-yard strike. He scored again in the 58th minute on a rebound off Salloi's corner kick to tie it at 2.

Thommy's goals were his second and third of the season - and first since opening day.



Players hold training session.

Kuwait handball teams primed for international tournaments

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwait youth handball teams have wrapped up their preparations for upcoming international tournaments. The junior team, born in 2006, is gearing up for the inaugural Gulf Youth Games in the Emirates from the 16th of this month to the 2nd of May. Meanwhile, the Azraq youth team is getting ready for the Arabic Youth tournament in Morocco scheduled from April 21 to 30.

The Training and National Teams Authority of the National Handball Federation, in collaboration with



Nasser Al Shatti, Al Arabi coach.

Al-Arabi hit training grounds

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Al-Arabi plunged back into training with both morning and evening sessions, gearing up for the imminent return of the Zain

SOCCER

Premier League championship group fixtures. Under the guidance of Nasser

Best of the Rest

Wrexham gain promotion: The sequel turned out to be just as good for Wrexham.

The Welsh team co-owned by actor Ryan Reynolds clinched promotion to the third tier of English soccer thanks to a 6-0 home win over Forest Green on Saturday.

That's back-to-back promotions for the team since it was thrust into the spotlight following the investment by its Hollywood owners. It is two tiers away from the Premier League.

"This is the ride of our lives," Reynolds wrote on X, formerly Twitter, after the game.

Wrexham needed to both beat Forest Green and see MK Dons and Barrow drop points in order to secure automatic promotion to League One with two rounds to go.

Wrexham's win was never in doubt as the team was 4-0 up at half-time. MK Dons wasted an early lead in losing at home against Mansfield 4-1, while Barrow lost to Gillingham 3-0. That sparked mass celebrations at Wrexham as fans ran onto the field after the final whistle, despite pre-game warnings from the club urging them to stay in the stands. (AP)

Olsson making progress: Sweden midfielder Kristoffer Olsson has made "significant" physical progress as he continues his rehabilitation from an acute brain condition, his Danish team FC Midtjylland said Sunday.

The 28-year-old Olsson lost consciousness at his home on Feb. 20 and was diagnosed with several small blood clots in the brain as a result of an extremely rare blood-vessel inflammation.

He was transferred to a neurological rehabilitation center last month and Midtjylland said Olsson has "regained both motor function and his verbal abilities."

"His physical progress is significant," the club said, "and he is now actively training his gait function and is able to eat independently."

"Although cognitive challenges remain and the prognosis for his full recovery remains uncertain, the specialists at the treatment center are encouraged by the positive steps Kristoffer has taken." (AP)

Government interference alleged

Al-Nasr Club Chairman criticizes heavy security presence

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: During a press conference at Al-Nasr Club's headquarters, Khaled Al-Shraida, Chairman of the Board of Directors, criticized the heavy security presence resembling a military barracks deployed by the Interior Ministry. The heightened security measures were ostensibly to ensure the presence of an individual who had been stripped of their official status.

Al-Shraida expressed gratitude to the Acting Minister of the Interior for understanding the club's situation, particularly in light of the Court of Arbitration for Sport's ruling af-

firming the validity of the current board of directors' mandate for the 2024-2028 terms.

He lamented the unfortunate situation of having a sports club encumbered by such a significant security presence, attributing the ordeal to Youssef Al-Baidan, the Director of the General Sports Authority, whom he accused of overstepping his financial oversight authority.

Al-Shraida underscored that the rulings in favor of the club's board of directors were not arbitrary decisions but rather legally binding outcomes, emphasizing that Al-Baidan's actions have impeded the progress of



Khaled Al Sharida, Al-Nasr Club Chairman of the Board of Directors.

sports, citing the current situation at Al-Nasr Club as evidence.

Supporting Al-Shraida's stance, Abdulaziz Al-Nami, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, called for the impartial application of the law and full adherence to court rulings.

Secretary of Al-Nasr Club, Ali Al-Dasam, criticized Al-Baidan's perceived hypocrisy, noting his previous advocacy against government interference in sports affairs during the suspension of Kuwaiti sports. He highlighted the irony of Al-Baidan's current involvement in the club's affairs.



The winners celebrate with officials.

Shabab Al-Ahly wins Emirati-Qatari Super Shield

Shabab Al-Ahly from the Emirates secured victory over Al-Duhail of Qatar with a score of 2-1, clinching the "Emirati-Qatari" Super Shield at

Rashid Stadium in Dubai. Goals from Luca and Igor Jesus propelled Al-Ahly youth to victory, while Brazilian Coutinho netted one for Al-Duhail.

In another match, the Qatari team Al Arabi emerged victorious in the inaugural edition of the Qatari-Emirati Super Cup. They triumphed over Al

Sharjah with a solitary goal, scored by Tunisian player Youssef Al Msakni, in a match held at Al Thumama Stadium in the Qatari capital, Doha.

Real, Barcelona grind out road wins ahead of clashes with Man City, PSG

Madrid maintain 8-point lead

BARCELONA, Spain, April 14, (AP): Real Madrid and Barcelona ground out road wins in the Spanish league while resting starters for their respective Champions League clashes against Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain.

League leader Madrid won at Mallorca 1-0 to remain eight points clear of Barcelona after its 1-0 victory at Cadiz. The Spanish powerhouses will meet next weekend after their games in Europe's elite competition.

Madrid midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni scored the game's only goal at Mallorca three minutes after halftime.

Madrid visits City on Wednesday with their quarterfinal poised after a 3-3 draw in Spain's capital this week.

"We played a very difficult game against City and we are tired, but we know that when we play for Madrid we have to give it our all until the end," Tchouaméni said.

Vinicius Júnior and Eduardo Camavinga played the final half hour as substitutes. Dani Carvajal went on for the final minutes, while Rodrygo and Toni Kroos never left the bench. Jude Bellingham started and was replaced by Camavinga.

João Félix scored to lead Barcelona at relegation-threatened Cadiz, while Xavi Hernández rested several starters ahead of their home match against PSG on Tuesday.

Raphinha, who scored twice in Barcelona's 3-2 win in Paris, played only the final 10 minutes at Cadiz. Lamine Yamal, Jules Koundé, and potential starter Pedri González went on for the final half hour. Ilkay Gundogan, Frenkie de Jong, Ronald Araújo, and João Cancelo stayed on



A Kuwaiti dribbles past an Iraqi player during the friendly match.

Kuwait U-18 basketball team secures impressive win

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Kuwaiti under-18 basketball team clinched an exhilarating victory against their Iraqi counterparts with a score of 82-77 in a friendly match held at the Al-Ittihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. This match served as a vital step in their preparations for the Gulf Championship, a gateway to the Asian Cup finals, set to be hosted by Kuwait from July 29 to August 4.

The Azraq team displayed an im-

pressive performance, demonstrating the progress of our national youth squad. They took an early lead in the first quarter, finishing ahead 16-11, and maintained their edge in the second quarter with a score of 38-35. Despite a tie in the third quarter (56-56), Shabab Al-Azraq secured the win in the final quarter.

Conversely, the Kuwaiti under-15 team faced a setback, succumbing to a defeat against their Iraqi counterparts with a score of 43-89 in another friendly match held on the same day at the Al-Ittihad Hall. This match was also part of their preparations for

the upcoming Gulf Championship in Doha, Qatar, scheduled from August 17 to 22.

The Iraqi team dominated the match from the outset, leading 28-7 in the first quarter and extending their advantage to 39-21 by halftime. They further solidified their lead in the third quarter, ultimately securing a convincing victory with a final score of 89-43.

Today, the action continues as the under-15 national team faces off against Iraq at 5:00 pm in the Al-Ittihad Hall, followed by the under-18 national team's clash with their Iraqi counterparts in the same venue.

the bench at Cadiz. Robert Lewandowski was unavailable while serving a suspension.

A long strike by Tchouaméni that deflected off a defender before finding the net was the only way Madrid got past the defense of Javier Aguirre's Mallorca.

Tchouaméni will miss the game in England to serve a suspension. A holding midfielder, he was used as a central defender by manager Carlo Ancelotti in the first leg against City while Madrid dealt with injuries.

Ancelotti equalized Zinedine Zidane with 183 league games coached for Madrid, second only to Miguel Muñoz's record 424 league games.

Mallorca was playing its first game since losing the Copa del Rey final on penalties to Athletic Bilbao last weekend. It remained in 15th place.

Félix did his best to convince Xavi he should get minutes against PSG by scoring the game's only goal in an overall strong performance.

He took the 36th-minute winner with a bicycle kick from the edge of the six-yard box to whip in a corner kick that was knocked on by a Cadiz defender.

"We all work to be starters," Félix said. "I am just like any other player who wants to play since I know I have what it takes to help the team."

Barcelona goalie Marc-André ter Stegen protected the three points by stretching to get one hand on Diadié Samassékou's powerful strike in the 80th, the hosts' only real threat.

Antoine Griezmann scored twice as Atletico Madrid beat Girona 3-1 to boost its chances of finishing in the top four.

Griezmann got his first league goal since December by converting a penalty after a handball by Girona. His leveler in the 34th canceled Artem Doybyk's early opener.

Alvaro Morata's hustle proved key to putting the hosts ahead in first-half stoppage time when he chased down

a ball before it could cross the end-line and whipped it into the area for Ángel Correo to head into the top corner.

Griezmann, Atletico's all-time top scorer, then blasted in a loose ball in the 50th for his 13th league goal of the campaign.

Doybyk moved ahead of Bellingham as the leading league scorer with his 17th to give Girona the fourth-minute lead.

Girona remained in third place at four points clear of Atletico in fourth. Atletico moved five points ahead of Athletic Bilbao in fifth. The top four finishers in Spain earn Champions League berths for next season.

"We want to be in the Champions League next season," Griezmann said. "We didn't start well but when we took it to them we could turn it around."

Atletico visits Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday leading their Champions League quarterfinal after a 2-1 first-leg win in Spain.



Real Madrid's Ferland Mendy (right), is challenged by Mallorca's Dani Rodriguez during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Mallorca and Real Madrid at the Son Moix stadium in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. (AP)



Barcelona's Fermin López (right), is challenged by Cadiz's Javi Hernandez during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Cadiz and Barcelona in Cadiz, Spain. (AP)



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece returns to Casper Ruud of Norway during their Monte Carlo Tennis Masters final match in Monaco. Tsitsipas defeated Ruud 6-1, 6-4. (AP)

Sports

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210 male and female athletes ready for action

Kuwait's contingent departs for Gulf Youth Games with high hopes



Kuwait athletes pose for a group photo before their departure for the youth games.

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwait's sports delegation embarked for the Emirates to partake in the inaugural Gulf Youth Games, scheduled from the 16th of this month until the 2nd of May.

This departing group comprised the football and taekwondo teams, alongside members of the technical, administrative, and media committees from the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee. Subsequent trips are slated for the remaining Kuwaiti teams, aligning with the tournament's

GULF YOUTH GAMES

competition schedule. Kuwait's representation encompasses 210 male and female athletes across 19 sports disciplines, ranging from football, handball, and volleyball to boxing, jiu-jitsu, and e-sports.

The Kuwait national football team, will commence their campaign in the football competition against Bahrain on Tuesday.

Concurrently, the UAE national team will square off against Oman on the same day.

These matches follow a league

format among the four participating teams, hosted at the Al Nahyan Stadium in Al Wahda Club, Abu Dhabi.

Abdullah Al-Manea, director of the Kuwaiti junior football team, expressed enthusiasm for their participation, aiming to deliver commendable performances in the Gulf tournament.

He emphasized the tournament's significance as a platform for young players to gain invaluable experience and pave the way for future success.

Meanwhile, the Al-Azraq delegation, led by Dr. Mansour Pasha of the Kuwait Football Association's Board of Directors, embarked for Abu Dhabi.

Walid Al-Marshad, coach of the Kuwaiti Taekwondo national team, underscored Kuwait's participation in the youth and junior categories, comprising 28 male and female players across different weight classes.

He highlighted the Kuwaiti Taekwondo Federation's commitment to nurturing a new generation of athletes, equipped to support the national team's progression in the years ahead.

Fawaz Al-Subaie claims victory in the Kuwait Equestrian League 6th round

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Subhan Club's rider, Fawaz Al-Subaie, emerged victorious as the champion of the sixth round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League, following a fierce competition with other riders during the tournament held over Friday and Saturday at the Al-Masila Club track in Subhan. Sponsored by Zain, KGL, and Kuwait International Bank, this league showcased exceptional equestrian talent.

EQUESTRIAN

Al-Subaie demonstrated remarkable skill by navigating the 145 cm Grand Prix race flawlessly, completing it in 35.45 seconds, earning him the top spot after a stellar performance. He outshone competitors such as Anaz Al-Anaz, Ghazi Al-Jariwi, Ali Al-Kharafi, and Fahad Al-Faleh.

Expressing his joy at clinching the Grand Prix victory amidst stiff competition, Al-Subaie acknowledged the significant growth of Kuwaiti equestrianism season after season, attributing it to the unwavering support from the Kuwaiti Equestrian Federation and the pivotal role played by both the private and govern-

ment sectors.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club's jockey, Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi, secured the title in the small prize race at a height of 135 cm, additionally; female jockey Nadia Al-Mutawa showcased her prowess by claiming victory in the sixth race at a height of 125 cm during the tournament's second day of competitions.



Fawaz Al-Subaie on the podium with other winners.

Liverpool lose to Palace in 'damaging' blow to Premier League title challenge

West Ham's European hopes hit again

LIVERPOOL, England, April 14, (AP): Liverpool's season is starting to unravel.

A 1-0 loss at home to Crystal Palace damaged Liverpool's Premier League title challenge on Sunday, three days after a 3-0 defeat to Atlanta at Anfield in the first leg of the Europa League quarterfinals.

SOCCER

Eberechi Eze's 14th-minute goal for Palace consigned Liverpool to its first loss in the league at Anfield in 28 matches - stretching back to October 2022.

It was the 21st time the Reds have gone behind in 32 league games this season and they couldn't recover, despite Wataru Endo hitting the crossbar midway through the first half and Darwin Nunez and Curtis Jones squandering golden chances in front of the Kop after the break.

Liverpool lost last month to Manchester United in the FA Cup quarterfinals, ending Jurgen Klopp's team's unlikely quadruple hopes with the



Liverpool's Curtis Jones (left), challenges for the ball with Crystal Palace's Michael Olise during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Crystal Palace at Anfield Stadium in Liverpool, England. (AP)

League Cup already secured.

In the past week, Liverpool has drawn at United, this time in the league, and now sustained back-to-back home losses in different competitions.

West Ham's European hopes received a second blow in the space of

four days after a meek 2-0 home loss to Fulham.

The Hammers were beaten by the same score by Bayer Leverkusen in the first leg of the Europa League quarterfinals on Thursday, leaving them a huge task in the return match on Thurs-

day.

They then blew the chance to climb to sixth place in the Premier League - and right back into the shake-up for the European qualification spots - after two goals by Andreas Pereira secured a first win in four matches for Fulham.

The Brazil midfielder scored in the ninth and 72nd minutes at the Olympic Stadium.

It was the first time Fulham won away to West Ham since 2001 and, having dominated the reverse fixture 5-0 in December, the team completed a league double over its London rival for the first time since 1966.

Leverkusen - unbeaten in all competitions this season - will not be scared on the evidence of this timid display by West Ham, which should have gone ahead in the opening moments when Lucas Paqueta's ball over the top saw right back Vladimir Coufal burst into the area.

His initial effort was repelled by goalkeeper Bernd Leno and when the ball rebounded to the feet of Michail Antonio, the striker blazed over.

Mohammed Kudus then curled narrowly wide before the lively Paqueta, who is suspended against Leverkusen on Thursday, hit the side-netting.

All to play for in Champions League quarterfinals

LONDON, April 14, (AP): Eighteen goals. Talking points aplenty. And, crucially, all four matchups still very

much alive.

The Champions League quarterfinals are certainly living up to their bill-

ing heading into the second legs.

If the drama wasn't enough on Tuesday when Real Madrid drew 3-3 at home to defending champion Manchester City and Bayern Munich was held 2-2 at Arsenal, there was even more on Wednesday as Barcelona won 3-2 at Paris Saint-Germain and Atletico Madrid conceded late in its 2-1 home win over Borussia Dortmund.

It sets up some intriguing plotlines.

Is this the end of Kylian Mbappe's hopes of finally winning a Champions League title in his last season at PSG, or can he rediscover his best form to spark a turnaround at Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys? After all, he scored a hat trick in his last visit to Barcelona, in 2021.

SOCCER

Can Madrid, the record 14-time European champion, lean on its mythical status in this competition to end City's title defense? Remember, City thrashed Madrid 4-0 in the second leg of the semifinals last season after a first-leg draw in Spain.

Will Bayern keep going in Europe in a season when Germany's top club has abjectly surrendered its Bundesliga title?

And can Atletico hold out in front of Dortmund's storied "Yellow Wall" and get back to the semifinals for the first time since 2017?

When Xavi Hernández stunned Barcelona in January by saying he'd had enough of his team's inexplicable losses, he added he hoped his players would respond to his shock therapy by playing better before his summer exit. That play appears to have worked - Barcelona has yet to lose in 13 games since Xavi said he was renouncing the final year of his contract. Reaching the Champions League semifinals would be a step forward for a team that hasn't reached that stage since 2018-19. It would also boost the debt-ridden club's finances with an additional 12.5 million euros (\$13.3 million) in prize money. While Xavi has rejuvenated his team by giving bigger roles to teenagers Lamine Yamal and, especially, defender Pau Cubarsi in recent weeks, he will again turn to the established players Barca signed at considerable expense two seasons ago after they led the team in Paris.

Like Raphinha, who scored twice in the first leg, and Robert Lewandowski, who will be well rested after serving a suspension over the weekend, PSG will need an improved performance from Mbappe, who failed to hit the target from three shots, lost the ball 13 times and was caught offside three times.

Adversity seems to be bringing the best out of Dortmund this season, so a one-goal deficit to Atletico Madrid from the first leg might be just the challenge needed to motivate Edin Terzic's team.