



25% QUOTA FOR OVERSEAS HIRES REMOVED IN RECRUITMENT REJIG

Kuwait introduces fee for work permit change effective June 1

PAM warns employers of penalties for contract breach

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: To address the high labor wages and the labor shortage in the country, a meeting held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) approved to amend the mechanism for granting work permits, transferring expatriates brought from abroad with work permits, and imposing an additional fee on them, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM's Board of Directors unanimously decided to amend the mechanism that was previously in place for granting work permits. Employers can now bring in migrant workers from abroad as estimated for their license, instead of the previously-set quota of 25 percent for overseas recruitment and 75 percent for local recruitment. This is aimed to reduce the high wages as a result of the labor shortage as well as to develop the business environment. The decision will come into effect as of June 1, 2024.

The previous decision obliged business owners, according to their activity categories, to obtain specific permits from abroad and complete recruitment through local hiring. This led to an increase in labor wages and imposed a higher burden on the citizens.

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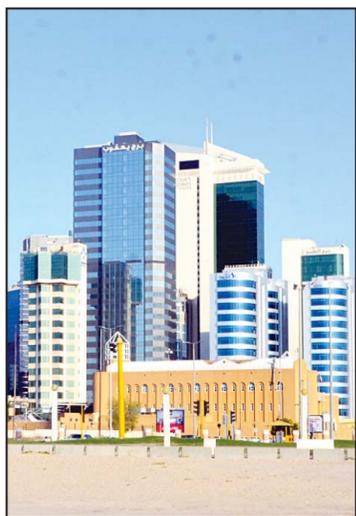


Photo by Samer Shiker
In Kuwait City, the Holy Family Co-Cathedral stands against a backdrop of towering buildings that punctuate the city's skyline.

Kuwait braces for heat swings, rain

KUWAIT CITY, April 18, (KUNA): The Meteorological Center on Thursday forecast the weekend weather would fluctuate between warmness and hotness, amid moderate humidity and upcoming rain expected by Sunday.

The center director, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, said in remarks to KUNA the country is under the effect of a high altitude, coupled with warm and relatively wet winds, along with unsteady southeasterly blows.

Heat will range between 34 to 26 degrees and the weather at night will be moderate amid some humidity.

On Friday, the forecast heat is at the level of 35-37 degrees and the night conditions will be largely identical to those of the night before.

The weather on Saturday will be hot amid unsteady winds and the temperature will jump to 39 degrees, one degree below the high heat threshold (40 degrees). But the night brings with it lower heat, forecast at 22-24 degrees.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday chaired a meeting of the council of the diplomatic and consular corps.

The meeting was held at the ministry headquarters, with the participation of assistant foreign ministers and members of the council.

They addressed issues put on the session agenda. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: Belgium is sending a new batch of emergency aid to the Middle East, addressed to people of war-beleaguered Gaza.

The foreign ministry said in a statement, released on Thursday, that the relief supplies would be dispatched in response "to requests for assistance received." It indicated that they would be sent via the government-affiliated agency, B-FAST, to the Egyptian ministry of health for ultimate handover to the people of Gaza. (KUNA)

BERLIN: Lufthansa has decided to extend the suspension of its flights to Tehran and Beirut until late April.

The decision is due to security concerns in the Middle East region as a result of tensions between Iran and the Israeli occupation, the German airline said in a press release.

The suspension also includes the non-flight of the company's planes over the Iranian airspace, according to the statement. (KUNA)

DOHA: Qatar's General Electricity and Water Corporation "Kahramaa" in collaboration with Water Science and Technology Association and Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, will hold the 15th Gulf Water Conference in Doha on April 28.

Qatar News Agency (QNA) stated that the conference will explore topics including ways of reducing carbon emissions in the water sector of the GCC Countries and the effective management of the municipal water sector in collaboration with Arab Countries Water Utilities Association. (KUNA)

TUNIS: A judge in Tunisia sentenced a journalist and political commentator to six months in prison in the country's latest assault on members of the media who criticize the government.

Mohamed Boughalleb, who had been charged with insulting a public official, was sentenced Wednesday and will remain behind bars, where he has been since his arrest last month after an official lodged a complaint against him. (AP)

PESHAWAR: Pakistani security forces killed seven militants in a remote northwestern border area on Wednesday when they tried to sneak into the country from Afghanistan, the military said.

The military's statement said the insurgents had been detected near Ghulam Khan, a border town in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. (KUNA)

ANKARA: A moderately-strong earthquake struck central Turkey on Thursday, the country's disaster management agency said. It was not immediately clear if it caused any casualties or damage.

The magnitude 5.6 earthquake occurred in the town of Sulusaray, in Tokat province, some 450 kilometers (280 miles) east of the capital, Ankara, according to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, or AFAD. (AP)



Ministry of Defense photo
Jassem Al-Budaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), delivering a lecture at the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College.

GCC chief underlines Gulf response to challenges

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi said on Thursday it is essential to keep pushing joint Arab action forward and harness political, economic and military capabilities to address various challenges.

Al-Budaiwi made the remark while giving a lecture at Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Com-

mand and Staff College in the presence of several high-ranking army officers, according to a Kuwaiti Army statement.

He reviewed the crucial role of the GCC member countries amid global changes and polarizations that have contributed to cementing and solidifying the Gulf bloc, stressing that the GCC has always been keen on

servicing the interests of its countries and people, and promoting its strategic partnerships in all fields.

For his part, Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College Maj. Gen. Fahad Fahiman said the GCC chief's lecture is part of the college's program for students from sisterly countries. (KUNA)

Arab League praises journalists' sacrifices in ongoing war in Gaza

US and UK issue new sanctions on Iran

WASHINGTON, April 18, (Agencies): The U.S. and U.K. on Thursday imposed a new round of sanctions on Iran as concern grows that Tehran's unprecedented attack on Israel could fuel a wider war in the Middle East.

Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control targeted 16 people and two entities in Iran that produce engines that power the drones used in the April 13 attack on Israel. Additionally, the U.K. is targeting several Iranian military organizations, individuals and entities involved in Iran's drone and ballistic missile industries.

"We will continue to deploy our sanctions authority to counter Iran with further actions in the days and weeks ahead," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

The action comes after U.S. officials earlier this week warned that they were readying new sanctions in response to Iran's activity in the region and to prevent future attacks. Lawmakers on Capitol Hill also have been quickly pushing forward legislation that would financially punish the Islamic Republic and its leaders.

Iran's attack on Israel early Sunday came in response to what it says was an Israeli strike on Iran's consulate in Syria earlier this month. Israel's military chief said Monday that his country will respond to the Iranian attack, while world leaders caution against retaliation, trying to avoid a spiral of violence.

European Union leaders also vowed on Wednesday to ramp up sanctions on Iran, targeting its drone and missile deliveries to proxies in Gaza, Yemen and Lebanon.

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Kuwait boosts renewable energy strategies for zero-carbon future

ABU DHABI, April 18, (KUNA): Kuwait declared updating its renewable energy goals and enhancing strategies of energy efficiency, affirming its outstanding role for a zero-carbon future in line with continued commitments to sustainability and renewable energy.

This came in a speech delivered by Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Dr. Mashan Al-Otaibi who is leading Kuwait's delegation to the 14th international forum of renewable energy legislators organized by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi titled "Infrastructure, Policies and Skills for Tripling Renewables and Accelerating the Energy Transition".

Al-Otaibi reviewed efforts made by Kuwait to double renewable energy production from 15 to 30 percent by 2030 to 50 percent by 2050.

These goals are part of the strategy of the Ministry of Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy announced by Minister Salem Al-Hajraf in March, he said, adding that the step is also in line with Kuwait's policy aiming to enhance sustainable energy economy.

Kuwait is working to carry out some policies and providing advantages to curb growing demand for energy, and reducing it by 10 percent by 2030 compared to 2020, he stated.

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KUNA photo
Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Dr. Mashan Al-Otaibi leads Kuwait's delegation to the 14th international forum of renewable energy legislators organized by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi.

UAE grapples with recovery efforts after record rainfall

DUBAI, April 18, (AP): The United Arab Emirates struggled Thursday to recover from the heaviest recorded rainfall ever to hit the desert nation, as its main airport worked to restore normal operations even as floodwater still covered portions of major highways and roads.

Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, allowed global carriers on Thursday morning to again fly into Terminal 1 at the airfield.

"Flights continue to be delayed and disrupted, so we urge you to only come to Terminal 1 if you have a confirmed booking," the airport said on the social platform X.

The long-haul carrier Emirates, whose operations had been struggling since the

storm Tuesday, had stopped travelers flying out of the UAE from checking into their flights as they tried to move out connecting passengers. Pilots and flight crews had been struggling to reach the airport given the water on roadways. But on Thursday, they lifted that order to allow customers into the airport.

Others who arrived at the airport described hourslong waits to get their baggage, with some just giving up to head home or to whatever hotel would have them.

The UAE, a hereditarily ruled, autocratic nation on the Arabian Peninsula, typically sees little rainfall in its arid desert climate. However, a massive storm forecasters had been warning about for days blew through the country's seven sheikhdoms.



A man carries a child through floodwater caused by heavy rains while waiting for transportation on Sheikh Zayed Road highway in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday, April 18, 2024. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:56 Asr 15:22
 Sunrise .. 05:19 Maghrib .. 18:16
 Zohr 11:47 Isha 19:37

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.
By Night: Mild and relatively

Weather

humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southerly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	34	23

Kuwait Airport	34	20
Abdaly	35	19
Jahra	36	22
Salmiyah	33	23
Nuwaisib	34	20
Wafra	35	18

Project value estimated at \$150 million: report

Contractors submit bids for development of KOC's EPF-18

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Contractors have recently submitted bids for the development of the Early Production Facility 18 (EPF-18) in Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to MEED Projects, the project is spearheaded by the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and carries an estimated value of \$150 million. Its scope encompasses various aspects, including the installation of a gas compression unit, the laying of a pipeline for crude export, construction of storage facilities and production units, along with associated infrastructure.

Initially announced by the KPC Supreme Procurement Committee in April 2023, the project attracted interest from 13 pre-qualified contractors. Subsequently, Kuwait Oil Company awarded the contract for flow lines to the Heavy Engineering and Shipbuilding Industries Company (Hesco).

Valued at \$84.3 million, this project entails the development of flow lines and associated infrastructure for exploration and Jurassic wells in Kuwait.

The scope of work for the flow lines project includes laying a crude oil pipeline, installation of flow lines for liquid water disposal using reinforced thermoplastic pipes, construction of injection and production wells, extension of existing headers/manifolds, and pipeline connection works. Notably, the main contract was tendered in the first quarter of 2023, with a submission deadline of

Market awaits stability

Dip seen in foreign investment

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: According to the latest report, the value of foreign investments experienced a decrease of over 300 million dinars, closing at 5,096 billion dinars, reports Al-Jarida daily.

A financial source estimated that approximately \$200 million exited one of the major companies. It's anticipated that changes in shareholders' rights of another company may lead to a reclassification of its weights on the MSCI and FTSE Russell index.

Regarding the reported dissolution of shares due to dividend distributions, sources clarified that what occurred was actually a price re-valuation. This involves market-based buying and selling mechanisms and a re-valuation based on diminished shareholders' rights after in-kind distributions. This differs from the previous

method used by the stock exchange, where share prices were adjusted before trading commenced.

Currently, share dissolution has been canceled except for capital increases and grants. The market absorbed the sales from foreign accounts and portfolios, benefiting from ample liquidity and cash in investors' accounts.

Cash flow continued due to distributions from companies holding their annual general meetings for the previous year.

Local liquidity focused on blue-chip stocks, particularly those facing intense selling pressure. These stocks are expected to report good growth in the first quarter, especially in the banking sector.

The market is awaiting positive driving factors to adjust its direction amid geopolitical tensions and variable conditions.

July 9, 2023.

Flow lines, pivotal components in oil and gas fields, connect individual wellheads to manifolds or processing equipment. They facilitate the transportation of flow from the manifold to pre-treatment stages or transportation facilities.

Since 2020, Kuwait Oil Company

has proposed various flow line projects, ranging in value, with many below \$100 million, while some larger-scale contracts approach approximately \$250 million. These initiatives underscore Kuwait's ongoing efforts to enhance its oil and gas infrastructure and optimize production capabilities.



Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani and his team at the conference.

KUNA photo

Kuwait vital NATO partner in region: envoy

ROME, April 18: Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani underscored Wednesday importance of strategic cooperation between Kuwait and NATO, as Kuwait is an essential partner in boosting regional stability and security in the Arabian Gulf region.

Ambassador Al-Qahtani spoke to KUNA on sidelines of an international conference marking 75 years since establishment of alliance. The confer-

ence, held in Rome, was inaugurated by Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

Inviting former Interior Minister and chief of national security Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah as a keynote speaker on security and peace at a time of global changes, reflects the significance of Kuwait's regional role, stated Al-Qahtani.

Al-Qahtani also called it an opportunity for the exchange of perspec-

tives on preserving global stability especially during these tumultuous times. Sheikh Thamer called for intensifying cooperation between the military alliance and states of the Istanbul initiative to arrive at sought after results. Kuwait joined the Istanbul cooperation initiative back in 2004, and since then has adopted an active role in facing regional and international challenges.



A charity worker collecting donations at a mosque.

Media exploited to raise cash

68 under probe for illegal charity, funds collection

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Ministry of Social Affairs has taken decisive action against violations of donation laws during Ramadan, referring 68 cases to the Attorney General for necessary legal measures. Among these violations are instances of unauthorized fundraising through social media advertisements, breaching the regulations stipulated by Law No. 59 of 1959 governing fundraising licenses and charitable activities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In its latest report, the Ministry disclosed that its field inspection teams conducted 171 visits to mosques and 13 visits to main association headquarters in the final week of Ramadan. These visits aimed to assess compliance with donation collection regulations within religious institutions. Notably, 14 kiosks collecting clothes illegally were identified, with 12 of them subsequently removed. Since the beginning of Ramadan, a total of 248 such kiosks have been monitored, with 122 removed.

The Ministry further detailed four new violations involving individuals and entities soliciting funds via social media without authorization, prompting referral to the Public Prosecutor. This brings the total number of cases referred during Ramadan to 68, underscoring the seriousness of the issue.

Additionally, three restaurants were found soliciting donations for iftar meals, leading to intervention by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Ministry of Interior was also alerted to individuals and entities advertising donation collections on the streets, ensuring appropriate action is taken.

Nineteen instances of non-compliance with donation collection regulations within mosques were identified, with the Ministry of Endowments notified for corrective action. Moreover, ten unauthorized advertisements by charities and foundations were detected, prompting their removal upon contact.

The Ministry's efforts extended to monitoring donations solicited through various social media platforms, with relevant authorities notified for necessary action.

Looking ahead, the Department of Charities and Foundations within the Ministry is engaging with the boards of charitable societies participating in Ramadan donation drives. Detailed financial

By-election soon

2 MC seats vacant

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Municipal Council is set to declare vacancies for the seats of Municipal Council members Fahad Al-Muwaizri for the sixth district (Abraq Khaitan) and Nasser Al-Kafeef for the ninth district (Ahmadi) during its upcoming regular session, to be chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting Municipal sources.

This announcement marks the preparation for conducting by-elections in the two respective districts.

Article 13 of Municipal Law No. 33 of 2016 stipulates the procedure for filling vacant seats on the Council. It mandates that vacancies be announced during the first session following the vacancy, with the seat to be filled in accordance with the prescribed method.

Elections or appointments must take place within thirty days from the date of announcing the vacancy. The newly elected or appointed member will serve the remainder of the predecessor's term, except when the remaining term is less than six months, unless the number of vacant seats exceeds five.

It is worth noting that Al-Muwaizri lost his membership due to his participation in the recent parliamentary elections, while the other member lost his membership as a result of a court ruling against him. Additionally, a municipal council member is considered to have resigned if they submit a request to run for parliamentary elections.

reports outlining donation proceeds, expenditures, and project implementations are being requested, in compliance with Ministerial Resolution 128/A of 2016 and its amendments.

Charitable entities are mandated to submit financial reports and bank statements within two weeks of the expiration of their collection licenses, ensuring transparency and accountability in fundraising activities.

13,000 in hunt for jobs

Highly educated among those registered: CSC

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) witnessed a notable surge in registrations, with over 13,000 citizens currently enlisted, compared to a mere 3,000 two years prior. This substantial increase underscores the growing demand for job opportunities among the populace. Recent data, as reported by Al-Rai, reveals a significant disparity between the present enrollment figures and those from the past, signaling a pressing need for action.

The Commission's strategy of appointing citizens according to job requirements had previously yielded promising results, reducing registrations to around 3,000. However, the current situation reflects a stark contrast, with registrations soaring beyond 13,000. The CSC faces the challenge of addressing this surge while ensuring efficient nomination and placement processes for ministries and governmental entities.

Among the registered candidates are 6,168 university graduates, including 111 with master's degrees and 3 with doctorates. Additionally, there are 2,389 diploma holders, 863 with secondary certificates, 1,341 with intermediate certificates, and 1,133 with primary school certificates. This diverse pool underscores the breadth of qualifications among those seeking employment opportunities.

It's imperative to identify and address the root causes behind this surge in registrations. Collaboration among relevant authorities is essential to mitigate this issue before it escalates further. With the annual influx of graduates awaiting employment, proactive measures are necessary to streamline the nomination and appointment process and effectively address the growing demand for job placements.

Fake 'sheikh' gets 2-yr jail as court overturns verdict

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by a lower court which acquitted an imposter. The court instead sentenced him to two-year imprisonment with hard labor for assuming the status of a ruling family member, deceiving a Kuwaiti woman, taking her money, and tricking her into buying a chalet in Mina Abdullah.

The Public Prosecution charged the accused with seizing money from the victim after deceiving her by claiming he is a member of the ruling family, taking the name of a "sheikh", and claiming that he could allocate lands owned by the state. Based on that illusion, he was able to seize her money.

He was also charged with deliberately misusing a means of communications (smart phone) for committing the crime subject to the first charge, as shown in the investigations.

During the court session, the victim's defense counsel Lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan argued a civil claim for the amount of KD 5,001 as temporary civil compensation, stressing that the accused had committed crimes similar to the accusations leveled against him in the present incident.

Referring to the case papers that are the subject of the present accusation, Lawyer Al-Qattan said, "We find that the crime of fraud, with all its legal elements and aspects, was committed against the accused, namely that the accused deceived the victim. It is legally stipulated that in order to create fraudulent methods, methods and measures must be used in the form of external appearances or actions that the offender intends to tailor to support his statements and to make his fraud and deception appear true.

The lying committed by deception reaches the category of fraudulent methods if it is accompanied by material actions or external facts that lead to belief in its authenticity. Among these are the fraudulent methods stipulated by the law, in which the act of fraud is carried out by the illusion of the existence of a false project to create hope of an imaginary profit or to create a document that has no truth or other methods specified by law."

Ex-MP files appeal, contesting results of Assembly 'Poll 2024'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Former MP and Second Constituency candidate Ahmad Al-Hamad filed an appeal about the results of the recent National Assembly election at the Constitutional Court on Thursday - the last day of filing such appeal.

Al-Hamad ranked 11th in his constituency with 2,666 votes; preceded by MP-elect Fahd Al-Masoud who got 2,706 votes.

According to Al-Hamad, he has documents supporting his claim and this could change the election results. He stressed that his goal is to defend the rights of citizens who voted for him rather than occupying the parliamentary seat.

Previously, Attorney Hani Husain filed two appeals - one is on the unconstitutionality of Election Decree No. 4/2024 and the other is on the victory of MP-elect Ahmad Al-Fadhli.

First Constituency candidate Nasser Al-Nasrallah had also filed an appeal regarding the results, claiming he is among the winners.



Participants of the course.

KUNA photo

KUNA AI content creation course ends

The KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills concluded on Thursday the (AI social media content creation course). The course saw the participation of KUNA employees and counterparts from the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Qatar News Agency (QNA) and some members of the Kuwaiti public and private sectors.

Member of the Media council at the British Association of Journalists Ahmad Al-Sheikh told KUNA that the course, launched in April 14, would serve the

interest of most media outlets eager to implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) in its news operations.

The latest developments of AI in news was discussed during the course, he affirmed, adding that AI was important in running algorithms of social media networks and digital platforms. KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills was established in 1995 to train media personnel and elevate their skills. (KUNA)

Ruling in 'Malaysian Fund' case June 6

Court frees 2 vote-buyers on bail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Public Prosecution has decided to release two citizens on bail of KD 500 and 1,000 respectively after they were caught buying votes during election day for a candidate in the Third Constituency and a current MP in the Fifth Constituency.

The Public Prosecution investigated the vote-buying case and confronted the defendants with evidence of their involvement in these crimes.

According to informed sources, the prosecution, along with the two defendants, were charged with those stipulated in article 44 of law No. 35/1962 regarding elections for members of the National Assembly and its amendments. Those who received money in exchange for voting for a specific candidate are being summoned. All the accused were confronted with the seized items relat-

ed to the facts under investigation. These include money, citizenship documents, phone messages obtained from the seized phones, electoral statements, and bank transaction documents for financial transfers between the parties to the incident.

Ruling on June 6: The Court of Cassation has adjourned to the session of June 6 the ruling in the case of the Malaysian Fund involving a ruling family member, his partner, two expatriates and a lawyer.

The defendants had appealed the ruling issued by the lower court, which sentenced the ruling family member, his partner, and two expatriates to ten-year imprisonment, and the lawyer to seven-year imprisonment. They have been obligated to return one billion dollars, and were jointly fined an amount of KD 145 million (the equivalent to half a billion dollars), in the largest money laundering case known as the "Malaysian Fund."

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Historical Failaka island ... fallen victim to ravages of war, neglect

"THE 'Abu Al-Khair' ship took us on a trip to the island of forgotten ghosts, the historical island of Failaka, where civilizations succeeded each other, and it became a world-famous island called 'Icarus.' I wish we had not reached it and witnessed what was heartbreaking and makes us confused about what happened to this island," columnist **Dr. Saud Mohammad Al-Asfour** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

The island, with its rich historical significance and potential for tourism, should have been a thriving destination for visitors and educational institutions alike. However, it has fallen victim to the ravages of war and indifference, with its once-majestic houses and tourist chalets now lying in ruins.



Dr. Saud Al-Asfour

"The forced deportation of Failaka Island's residents, coupled with the lack of proper management and care for its historical sites, has resulted in a profound sense of loss and grief. Even the island's museum, meant to showcase its rich heritage, has been neglected, with antiquities gathering dust and inadequate displays.

"Failaka's pristine beaches, once a symbol of natural beauty, now serve as a stark reminder of the island's tragic decline. Despite their potential to attract tourists, they have been overshadowed by the presence of neglected state-owned chalets.

"The neglect of Failaka's historical sites and treasures reflects a broader disregard for heritage and antiquities in the region. Without proper preservation efforts and a clear understanding of the importance of tourism, such valuable assets risk being lost to future generations.

"In the face of this absurdity, it's imperative that steps are taken to preserve Failaka Island's heritage and restore its historical sites to their former glory. Only then can the island reclaim its rightful place as a beacon of history and culture in the region."

Also:

"Minds, eyes and hearts are directed towards following the inflammatory events on the ground in Gaza. To witness the ferocity and greed of the Zionists in crushing the Palestinian existence, few people realize and follow the magnitude and ferocity of the battle in its educational aspect," columnist **Dr. Latifa Hussein Al-Kandari** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This invisible educational aspect related to reading the blackmailing Zionist mentality is no less violent, deadly, and absurd than the military aspect. The educational and media narrative of the Zionists proceeds with methodological steps that are misleading and so cunning that many intellectuals neglect to follow its chapters.

"It is very nice, and indeed it is inevitable, to review and revise school curricula from time to time, and it is necessary to benefit from international experiences away from the pressures and dictates of external powers.

"The Impact-se organization exerts political and media pressure on countries around the world to amend school curricula (textbooks and training books, teachers' guides, maps, illustrations, and aid tools) in line with the normalization of relations with 'Israel' and its expansionist colonial policies, and taming Muslims, Palestinians, and fair people to accept peace 'in the Zionist sense.' Under this authoritarian vision, there is no escape from imposing Western capitalist concepts on the content of textbooks in all fields, especially in civic, community, religious, geography, and history education.

"Impact-se was founded in 1998. It is an international educational research and policy organization based in London that monitors and analyzes educational curricula around the world with the aim of confronting extremism, establishing mutual respect among young people, and accepting those who may differ from them.

"This organization claims to be a non-governmental organization working on education free of violence, and it is not about Jews, Christians, Palestinians, or Muslims, but rather about spreading education and establishing a culture of peace. One of the goals of this organization is to spread the concept of comprehensive education and acceptance of gay people within the 'Life Skills' program.

"If we go to look at the biographies of the members of the 'Impact-se' board of directors, we will find that most or all of them have close contact with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, are active in supporting Jewish activities, and are friends with the Israel Defense Forces and the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"Since the Oslo Accords of 1993 AD, and then the events of September 11, 2001 AD, the intensity of tendentious academic studies has escalated to push towards the formation of a civil, democratic Islam that is submissive and subject to Western policies economically and morally.

"The blatant interventions in shaping school culture in all countries of the world stem from abhorrent Western centralism, its superior racist outlook, and its opportunistic motives.

"Impact-se" writes a set of detailed reports on our school curricula, especially with regard to Israel and Zionism. It strongly criticizes all forms of Palestinian resistance, and completely ignores the Zionists' massacres against the Palestinians. This suspicious organization stands against anyone who sympathizes with Palestine, even if he

is Jewish or not.

"In this context, this organization ultimately serves absurd Zionist purposes, and works to empower the West to impose its values and interests on school curricula in the Islamic world to protect the Israeli occupier. Peaceful coexistence, in the perspective of this institution, means accepting the Israeli occupation, but it also clearly means accepting homosexuality and disrupting the foundations of the family structure.

"Impact-se distorts the national identity of peoples, obscures the facts of history and topography, and robs the essence of religious values under the pretext of scientific research and fighting extremism to achieve peaceful coexistence, exploiting the principles and standards of UNESCO.

"In this imperialist system that emerges from domination and expansion, the pillars of the family are destroyed in the interest of individual benefit, in compliance with the rule of 'survival of the fittest,' that is, the survival of the rich elites, not pure values. Thus, Zionist intellectual origins converge with capitalism and imperialism in exhausting developing countries and not allowing equality between nations.

"This opportunistic, self-interested system does not oppose genocide as long as it serves its own interests. The West's sympathy for Ukraine and its failure to deal with the Palestinians is a clear indication of the double standards of Western justice.

"The Arab intellectual must dismantle the Zionist discourse and monitor the fallacies of the Zionist research and media institutions with a systematic critical vision that exposes the contradictions and falsity of the selective Zionist discourse. According to Noam Chomsky, Ilan Pappé, Edward Said, Norman Finkelstein, and other great thinkers, Zionist education and its textbooks are based on corrupting the minds of young people in 'Israel' through indoctrination that strips Palestinians of their humanity.

"When an Israeli soldier sees a Palestinian child, he does not see a helpless infant, but rather a powerful enemy. Even in the West, it is difficult for university students there to understand the reality of the Zionist entity in Palestine as it is blatant colonialism.

"The tendency to push Jews to immigrate to Palestine and settle there is precisely supported by the West, Islamophobia, and material ambitions. The Zionists maliciously examine our curricula and accuse us of every shortcoming they suffer from. The false racist Israeli school curricula, and behind them the media discourse and statements of Zionist leaders over more than 100 years, have no connection to the values of peaceful coexistence, but rather stem from a bloody colonial culture confirmed by the ugliness of the Gazan events.

"It is clear that the aim of this absurd research organization is to mislead public opinion, distort the culture of resistance, promote moral decadence, and exert political and media pressure on countries and organizations such as UNRWA and intimidate them into cutting off financial support for the Palestinians and covering up Israeli crimes based on oppression and murder, apartheid, and colonial expansion, and considering all Criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism. God Almighty said: 'Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, but what their breasts conceal is greater (118)' (Al Imran)."

"Salmi desert... The truest thing said about the notorious Salmi Route is that it is the 'Route of Death' in the middle of a barren desert that does not resemble Kuwait at all!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Every Kuwaiti citizen or guest of Kuwait, who passed through that region, had a bitter experience with the Salmi Desert and everything in it! Everyone is complaining about the bad road and deterioration of Salmi center or port. This has affected the psychology of the workers in the center like those at the customs, passports, police and even insurance employees!

"A general state of extreme unhappiness prevails at this miserable port, and its miserable road is now called 'the road of death. Everyone complains and grumbles, whether the guests of Kuwait or its citizens. The government is the last to know, and if it knows, it is the last to respond!

"Salmi port, like Salmi road, is dilapidated, and there is no intention to develop or renew it, or rather build a new port with full services.

"As for the services of this building, they are two degrees below zero, which affected the psychology of its workers to the extent that it was reflected in the general performance, which aroused the discontent and anger of travelers. How long will this situation continue, which is getting worse each passing day?

"In the past, people were complaining about material losses as a result of potholes and flying gravel that led to the destruction of cars. Then, the complaint turned into human losses. A large number of people died on this unfortunate route, as a result of cars falling into potholes and overturning. The saddest part is that there are no warning signs. The matter is left to fate, while the inside is missing and the outside is born. You and your luck!

"The worse aspect is the absence of a clear action plan with fixed dates for its implementation. It is absolutely impossible to rebuild this road and that dilapidated building. For your information, there is no water, no pasture, and no rest stop on this miserable road, except for those miserable mobile grocery stores, which specialize in selling everything that is expired at a high price. Is this Kuwait?

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



The cable thieves, stolen goods in police custody.

Gang of expats, posing as MEW staff, caught stealing heavy power cables

Surra police lift curtains on major racket

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Security forces in Surra made a significant breakthrough by apprehending a group of four expatriates involved in the theft of copper cables from the Ministry of Electricity.

The operation uncovered stolen goods and equipment utilized for theft and cutting purposes. Thanks to seamless coordination between Surra Police Station and Rawda police officers, further quantities of stolen items were unearthed.

A substantial portion of these pilfered goods was en route to a processing facility in the Khaitan area, where they would be refined and then sold off as raw copper. A fifth individual, implicated as a receiver of stolen goods, was also apprehended, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The quartet's modus operandi involved masquerading as Ministry of Electricity personnel, donning workers' uniforms to carry out their illicit activities. Their scheme was uncovered when Surra Police Station officers noticed a suspicious bus parked adjacent to a Ministry of Electricity site. Upon

investigation, they encountered one individual by a tent resembling a manhole, who claimed to be accompanied by three others conducting official duties underground. However, upon closer scrutiny, their residency permits categorized them as Article 20 holders, raising suspicions.

A subsequent search of the bus revealed 13 sizable cables, each three meters in length, sliced in half by the perpetrators. Interrogations exposed the gang's elaborate ruse, admitting to months-long thievery under the guise of legitimate employment. The stolen cables, fetching approximately 1,000 dinars each, were sold to a complicit fifth party, responsible for melting the copper down for resale.

Upon notification, Capital Security Director Brigadier General Suleiman Al-Jarrah, along with his deputy Brigadier General Talal Obaid, swiftly initiated measures in tandem with Criminal Security and the Ministry of Electricity. A raid on the illicit processing den yielded a cache of stolen goods valued at approximately 60 thousand dinars.

Although the Ministry of Electricity sought to reclaim the stolen items promptly, legal protocol dictates that the seized goods remain under the jurisdiction of the Public Prosecution until investigations with the accused conclude.

Workers beat official, demand pay

3 dead, 5 injured in two accidents

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Tragedy struck on Thursday, April 18, 2024, as two separate incidents on the roads of Abdali and Al-Mutla'a claimed three lives and left five others injured, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

On Al-Mutla'a Road, interior personnel responded to a collision that resulted in the fatalities of two individuals, with a third person rushed to the hospital for treatment. A statement from the General Fire Force revealed that firefighters were summoned yesterday afternoon to address a collision involving two vehicles on Abdali Road. The collision ignited a blaze, engulfing one of the vehicles. Regrettably, the accident caused the loss of two lives and left another individual injured. The scene was subsequently handed over to the appropriate authorities for further investigation.

In another unfortunate incident, a bus overturned on Al-Mutlaa Road, resulting in the death of one expatriate and injuring four others of the same nationality.

Workers demand pay:

Fourteen workers were apprehended after an altercation with their financial officer in the heart of the Capital city on Thursday. According to reports from **Al-Anba**, the incident unfolded when a group of expatriate workers forcibly entered their workplace and assaulted the financial officer, resulting in injuries.

Security personnel swiftly intervened, bringing the situation under control and escorting the workers to the Salhiya police station.

Fire tackled:

In the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, firefighting teams swiftly contained a fire on an industrial plot. Though the flames were successfully subdued without causing significant injuries, the property sustained considerable damage.

Soldier insulted:

A soldier assigned at a land port has accused a young man of insulting him, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The soldier revealed that on his way to work, he noticed a Japanese-made vehicle heading to the opposite direction of the road near the gate of the port. He then signaled for the driver, a young man, to stop. He asked the young man why he was driving towards the opposite direction and the latter responded: "It is none of your business, you are not a patrol officer." When he told the young man that he is a soldier and he should not be treated in such manner, the young man insulted him, shouted expletives, told him to file a complaint at the police station and then headed towards Jahra.

Case No. 8/2024 was filed and investigations are ongoing to arrest the young man. The soldier provided the investigators with the plate number of the young man's vehicle.

MoJ new service on Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Ministry of Justice has introduced a new service called "Partial or Full Payment to the General Administration of Execution" through the Sahel application, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

This service enables users to access information regarding the amounts owed to them by the General Administration of Execution and allows them to make partial or full payments towards these amounts.

By utilizing this service, individuals can settle their debts partially or in full. Upon complete payment, all administrative procedures initiated by the administration, such as travel bans, vehicle seizures, or freezing of the debtor's assets, will be lifted. Additionally, users will receive notifications confirming the lifting of these seizure and prevention procedures.

This new feature aims to streamline the process of debt settlement and enhance accessibility to services related to debt repayment, ultimately providing individuals with greater control over their financial obligations.



Scene of the accident where two people perished and many sustained injuries.

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Ministry sets condition for public hospitals and health centers

MoF okays 'Afiya 4' tender for health insurance

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Ministry of Finance has approved the 'Afiya 4' tender for the health insurance of citizens at a cost of KD 273,600,000 for a period of two years from the date of signing the contract; provided the value of the tender is reduced by 50 percent without af-

fecting the medical services offered to beneficiaries, reports Al-Anba daily.

Sources said the Ministry of Finance also set the condition for public hospitals and health centers to provide certain medical services to those covered by the insurance in accordance

with the regulations. Sources added the Finance Ministry explained that the resulting financial coverage will be allocated as a discount in the Ministry of Health's budget for fiscal 2024/2025 and the subsequent fiscal years.

Kuwait subsidy issue in spotlight as MPs and gov't clash over fuel prices

'Economic reform requires protecting public finances'

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The public debate between MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri and the government spokesman, Amer Al-Ajmi, regarding the Ministry of Finance's study on increasing fuel prices by 25 percent, has brought attention to the imbalance in handling the subsidy issue in Kuwait, reports Al-Jarida daily.

While raising fuel prices may seem theoretically sound, it reflects a lack of understanding of economic and financial reform priorities and their sensitivity to market and consumer impacts.

At a time when Kuwait's oil price exceeds \$90 per barrel, the priority should be curbing expenses rather than re-pricing government goods

or services. Economic reform requires protecting public finances amidst populist pressures to improve citizens' living standards. However, this cannot be achieved by simply distributing money without achieving the desired outcomes.

Increasing gasoline prices may yield financial savings, but it pales in comparison to the potential savings from rationalizing budget expenditures. Reviewing recent expenditure accounts reveals significant spending on items like office supplies, consultations, and excessive benefits for leaders, which warrant scrutiny without compromising public services.

The government's silence on populist demands highlights political uncertainty, affecting administration and economic quality. Budget review

amid rising oil prices takes precedence over adjusting gasoline prices. It necessitates setting strict spending ceilings and reactivating oil revenue transfers to reserve funds.

Any financial or economic treatment should be part of an integrated, multi-stage project reviewed and evaluated by society and state institutions. Addressing subsidies requires re-directing support to deserving individuals and companies while considering potential inflationary effects.

Gasoline price increases alone won't address Kuwait's economic challenges. Previous reforms in 2016 did not prevent increased government spending. With oil prices rising due to various factors, spending without economic returns persists, hindering true reform efforts.

In the face of real challenges, focusing efforts on minor issues like gasoline prices is counterproductive. Kuwait must prioritize comprehensive economic reform to ensure sustainable development and address citizens' needs effectively.



Al-Muwaizri

KU approves bonus policy for College of Law trainers

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kuwait University has approved the proposal to regulate the disbursement of bonus for trainers and external supervisors at the College of Law, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources clarified that Article 13 of the university's financial regulations is not applied on the abovementioned categories in light of the Ministry of Finance's approval of the annual budget of the ministry and the decision of regulatory authorities.

On the other hand, sources revealed the university has instructed the heads of departments and sectors to limit the summer vacation for non-faculty members and academic support staff to 60 days annually within the period from May 1 to Sept 15.

Sources said the employees required to work during summer vacation are granted periodic leaves as per the regulations in lieu of the summer vacation.

Sources pointed out all those who do not apply

for summer vacation or request for periodic leaves in lieu of the summer leave are considered to be on summer vacation for a period not exceeding 60 days within the period specified above.

Sources added those authorized or applied for leave to accompany a patient abroad within this period will be allocated regular leave days in accordance with the rules and they are not entitled to the 60-day summer leave for academic year 2023/2024.

HH the Amir congratulates Zimbabwe on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, April 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad has wished President Mnangagwa

lasting good health, the friendly people of the nation optimal progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Caretaker Prime Minister, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, has sent a cable of congratulations to the President Mnangagwa on his country's National Day.

Congratulatory messages to HH the PM

The Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait HE Miguel Moro Aguilar sends congratulations to H.H. Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on his designation as Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

"My best wishes for his mandate, to the benefit of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti People, as well as the continuous progress in the bilateral relations between both friendly nations, Spain and Kuwait," said the Spanish envoy.

"On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Korea, I have the great honor to convey our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on his appointment to the post of the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

We recall, with great pride, his official visit to Korea in September 2004 while then serving as the Minister of Communications, Minister of Planning, and Minister of State for Administrative Developments Affairs, which greatly contributed to deepening the partnership between our two friendly countries.

I am confident that His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah would be a great contributor to steering Kuwait's march towards the fulfillment of the Kuwaiti peoples' expectations for greater prosperity and progress.

I wish His Excellency the Prime Minister all the success in his future endeavors".

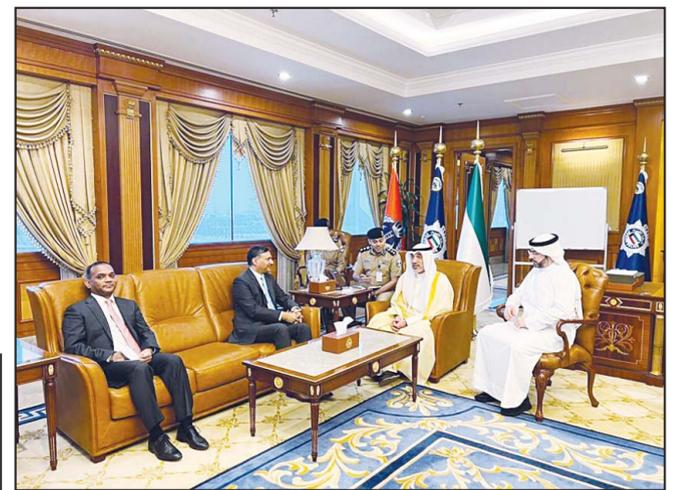
-- Chung Byung-ha
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea



Aguilar



Byung-ha



Dr Swaika with Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef.

Indian envoy calls on Sheikh Fahad Yousef

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Acting Minister of Interior HE Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. The In-

dian envoy thanked the minister for the expatriate-friendly measures instituted during his tenure and apprised him of developments related to Indian community.



KUNA photos
The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 4th Gulf Cinema Festival in Riyadh.

6 short and long documentaries to be shown

NCCAL participates in 4th session of Gulf Cinema Festival in Riyadh

RIYADH, April 18, (KUNA): Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) is participating in the Gulf Cinema Festival in its fourth session, held in Riyadh, with six short and long documentaries.

The Kuwaiti participation comes within the framework of the efforts exerted for supporting the Kuwaiti talents in this field, said head of Kuwaiti delegation to the festival Musaed Al-Zamel.

In a statement to (KUNA), Assistant Undersecretary for art sector in the NCCAL, Al-Zamel, said that the Kuwaiti participation aims to enhance the artistic level of cinema makers in Kuwait and to increase

their experience through dialogue, and art seminars held during the festival.

The NCCAL also affords both moral and material support for Kuwaiti works in such forums, Al-Zamel explained.

The festival began on Sunday and lasts for five days, amid the participation of 29 short and long narrative, documentary films competing on nine awards that cover categories related to film making such as directing, photo shooting, music, and acting.

It will also honor five significant cinema characters from the GCC countries that brought the regional cinema to international levels.

The delegation included numbers of Director Manager of Communication and Media Management Yousef Al-Jamaan, Mohammad Al-Khaldi for Foreign Culture, Areej Al-Hamdan from Communication and Media Sector, in addition to a number of famous Kuwaiti actors and directors.



Al-Zamel

MoE okays committees for conducting end-of-year high school examinations

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education at the Ministry of Education Hessa Al-Mutawa has approved the committees for conducting the end-of-year examinations for high school students, which will begin on May 29, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed a total of 168 committees will handle 40,000 students during the exams period; indicating Ahmadi Educational District has 37 committees, the Capital has 36, Farwaniya has 33, Jahra has 22, Mubarak Al-Kabeer has 15, and Religious Education has five -- three for girls and two

for boys.

On the other hand, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Enezi confirmed that the organizing committee for honoring teachers is exerting tremendous efforts to prepare for the awarding ceremony on April 29 at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Theater in Kuwait University. She disclosed that 331 teachers will be honored, in addition to 50 distinguished schools.

She confirmed that the ministry will hold rehearsals for the ceremony on April 21 and 24 in the same theatre, calling on all awardees to attend the rehearsals.

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Vietnamese oud renowned for its superior quality and fragrance: Phuang

'Kuwait among top consumers of incense, oud oil worldwide'

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kit Phuang, the Secretary-General of the Vietnamese Incense Association, said Kuwait is one of the leading consumers of incense and oud oil globally, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He noted Kuwaitis' preference for high-quality agarwood, which has led him to visit Kuwait multiple

times to market and introduce Vietnamese products.

Phuang emphasized that while Kuwaitis often import incense and oud oil from countries like the Philippines, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, or Cambodia due to lower prices, Vietnamese oud is renowned for its superior quality and fragrance.

Vietnamese oud is exported not only to the Middle East but also to countries like China and Japan.

Phuang explained that oud prices range from \$100 to \$1 million per kilogram, with the highest-priced oud being bought by the Chinese for medicinal purposes and decoration, rather than burning.

He attributed the variation in prices to the age of the agarwood tree, noting that older trees, around 100 years old, produce the most expensive and rare incense.

Despite the rarity of high-quality oud, Phuang praised Kuwaitis for their expertise in incense and oud oil, as they prioritize quality over price

and have extensive experience in daily usage. He described dealing with Kuwaitis as a unique and enjoyable experience due to their professionalism and openness to sharing their knowledge.

He added, after 10 years, an agarwood tree reaches between 8 and 14 meters in height. The agarwood tree

forest spanning about 3-million square meters and employing around 100 farmers is owned by the Phuang family.

He went on to say, the Vietnamese Incense Association comprises approximately 250 members, with a board of directors consisting of 20 people.



Al-Jarida photo

Kit Phuang and colleague Rabih Kallas.

PAMA rewards employees with excellent work bonuses for '23

Authority deposits amounts in bank accounts of 752 members

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) on Wednesday, announced the disbursement of excellent work bonuses to a number of its employees for the year 2023.

In a press statement, the Director General of the authority Engineer Hamad Al-Barjas explained that the authority deposited the amounts in the bank accounts of 752 staff members who were eligible for the bonus. This was done in appreciation of their efforts during the past year in serving those under care of all categories.

He expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by all employees of the authority to develop the work mechanisms and services provided, in accordance with regulations and directives, and in a way that enhances the efficiency and speed of completing work.

Eng. Al-Barjas stressed the keenness of the authority and its employees to increase customer satisfaction rates with its performance and services, through effective communication with auditors via various means, identifying their requests and suggestions, and dealing with them with all care and seriousness.

He said the authority will continue introducing programs to develop work mechanisms and services in the coming period within the framework of its ambitious plan, based on digital transformation programs and applications, including the authority's website and the government's Sahel application.

Jahra MC refers land reallocation request to executive branch

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Jahra Committee of the Municipal Council, during its fifth meeting of the second term yesterday headed by Abdullah Awaid Al-Hathal, referred to the executive branch (the municipality) the request to reallocate the land of the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

The committee retained on its agenda the proposal submitted by members Abdullatif Al-Daei, Abdullah Owaid Al-Hathal, Alia Al-Farsi, and Sharifa Al-Shalfan, regarding the establishment of a camping area in northern Kuwait.

It also retained the question presented by member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the non-completion of the implementation stages in the project of the Technical Inspection Department of the Ministry of Interior in Jahra Governorate.

In addition, the committee referred to the executive branch the letter sent by the Governor of Jahra with the request to allocate the land located between block 5 of Saad Al-Abdullah City and Block 3 and 4 of Naseem in order to establish public parks, a walkway, and sports fields for the people of Jahra.



Alia Al-Farsi



KUNA photos

Winners of the Aerial Photography Competition with jury members.



Honoring the first place winner in the nature and wildlife category.

Top 10 photographers qualify out of 1,000 photos

DJI-Kuwait names aerial photography contest winners

KUWAIT CITY, April 18, (KUNA): The DJI-Kuwait company announced Wednesday the aerial photography competition's winners in a ceremony held at Salwa Al-Sabah hall in Salmiya and attended by Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Saad Al-Azmi.

This edition, held under the patronage of Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, included participation of all Gulf Cooperation Council member states, and photos were taken only in these states to highlight their seas, lands and skies' beauty.

Top ten photographers qualified in the competition, which involves more than 1,000 photos in three categories.

In the black and white category, Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Al-Aidy won excellence award, Oman's Ahmad Al-Tawqi won the first place prize followed by UAE's Salem Al-Awadhi and Saudi Arabia's Abdulrahman Said respectively.

In the wildlife category, Qatar's Azzam Al-Manaie has excellence award, while Oman's Humoud bin Hamel won the first place prize,



Honoring the first place winner in the city landmarks category.

Oman's Al-Tawqi came second and Kuwait's Mahdi Gholoum ranked third.

In the cities section, Kuwait's Mohammad Al-Qattan had excellence award, and Qatar's Ali Said el-Din came first, Oman's Qassem al-Farsi won the second place, while Kuwait's Mohammad al-Sultan ob-

tained the third position. The company is pioneering across the globe in manufacturing and developing commercial drones for aerial photography and videography. It is one of the largest competitions in the Gulf and Arab world in terms of the value of awards and the number of participants.

Dr Khoursheed granted honorary fellowship by ASA

CSC allegedly updates employment rules for resigned citizens

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Citizens, who resigned from government institutions, can register in the central employment system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) only if one year has passed since their resignation by July 5, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained this condition applies to four categories: those who hold a high school diploma or less without training, those employed in State-owned companies, those employed in companies in which the government owns not less than 51 shares, and those employed in the three military institutions - ministries of Interior and Defense, and the National Guard.

Sources said the one-year condition will be implemented automatically in government agencies associated with the CSC without requesting any document, and those who resigned from other entities must submit a document proving that

one year has passed since the resignation when checking the registration procedures in the CSC.

Sources added the university graduates and technicians are exempted, indicating they are allowed to register immediately after the resignation.

Honorary fellowship granted: The American Embassy congratulated Dr Musa Khoursheed, a Kuwaiti surgeon, on receiving an honorary fellowship from the American Surgical Association (ASA), reports Al-Qabas daily.

On its official Instagram account, the embassy disclosed that Khoursheed is the first surgeon in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to receive the honorary fellowship.

The embassy explained: "An honorary fellowship is the highest honor that ASA can grant to a surgeon from

a foreign country." It added that the American College of Surgeons granted Khoursheed with an honorary fellowship in 2021.

The embassy affirmed: "Kuwaiti doctors, researchers and medical students are making invaluable contributions to the field of healthcare in the United States and around the world."

It is worth mentioning that Khoursheed is a professor at the College of Medicine - Department of Surgery, specialized in laparoscopic and obesity surgery. He is a fellow of the British and American College of Surgeons.

ASA, which consists of an elite group of American surgeons, was founded in 1841. Around 500 American surgeons are registered in the association.

Only 99 surgeons with various specializations all over the world were given the ASA honorary fellowship.

Kuwait boosts

Continued from Page 1

In this context, Kuwait announced the start of the second and third phases of Shagaya renewable energy project, which aims to add 5,000 megawatts to the national network of energy, in addition to 2,500 megawatts of energy systems, he said.

He reiterated that Kuwait is committed to achieving neutral carbon by 2060 that was announced by Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh COP 27.

The Kuwaiti delegation includes some officials and researchers of the ministry and the KISR.

Kuwait introduces

Continued from Page 1

The new decision imposes an additional fee of KD 150 for issuing a work permit for the first time. This is aimed to achieve greater employment stability for employers.

It also imposes a fee of KD 300 for the transfer of migrant workers from one company to another if they have not been in the country for more than three years. In both cases, the employer's approval is required for the transfer.

The decision aims to limit visa-trade and make it easier for employers to carry out their commercial activities and develop the business environment. It is also aimed to reduce the cost and wages of labor, which will contribute to lower costs in the construction and contracting sector and other activities in the country.

In other news, The Public Authority for Manpower has developed a comprehensive program for regular and ongoing inspections of institutions and facilities to ensure compliance with labor laws and specific regulations, reports Al-Anba daily quoting reliable PAM sources.

As part of its ongoing awareness campaigns conducted throughout the year via its websites, the Authority has initiated a "Flash" campaign urging employers to adhere to all provisions of the Labor Law and regulations governing the labor market.

This includes ensuring that employment contracts are honored and that workers are assigned tasks specified in their work permits by the Authority. The Authority emphasized that failure to assign tasks as per the work permit could lead to penalties, including imprisonment for up to 3 years and fines ranging between 2,000 and 10,000 dinars per worker, or both.

Moreover, the Authority has cautioned business owners against employing workers registered under another employer's files. Violation of this regulation could result in similar penalties as mentioned above.

In another development, the Public Authority for Manpower, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Public Authority for Youth (Work Makers Team), facilitated 137 job opportunities for citizens seeking employment in the private sector.

These opportunities arose from government contracts with the Ministry of Health.

During the event, the Authority provided details about the available positions, the nature of work, and addressed queries from applicants.

Personal interviews were conducted with 137 job seekers, followed by a training program spanning five weeks for successful applicants.

The training program, focused on Ministry of Health contracts, concluded with the hiring of supervisors and first supervisors to oversee cleaning, internal transportation, and waste disposal services.

This initiative aligns with PAM's commitment to promoting employment opportunities for Kuwaiti citizens in the private sector and ensuring job security in government contracts, as outlined in Kuwait's regulations for the nationalization of government contracts.

US and

Continued from Page 1

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the existing EU sanctions regime would be strengthened and expanded to punish Tehran and help prevent future attacks on Israel. At the same time, he said, Israel needed to exercise restraint.

"I don't want to exaggerate, but we are on the edge of a war, a regional war in the Middle East, which will be sending shockwaves to the rest of the world, and in particular to Europe," he warned. "So stop it."

Meanwhile, the Arab League praised on Wednesday journalists' great sacrifices in

the ongoing Israeli occupation war against the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, Assistant Secretary General and League's Head of the Media and Communication Sector Ambassador Ahmad Khattabi said, on the Arab Media Day April 21st, that commemorating this occasion comes in an exceptional context with the continued aggression against Gaza, catastrophic humanitarian crisis of Gaza residents, and Palestinians' persistence in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, against settlement practices and repeated incursions.

Khattabi added that the Israeli occupation aggression caused destruction due to targeting residential areas, civil, educational and hospital facilities, public facilities and places of worship, a situation that worsened with the occupation's obstruction of the entry of humanitarian aid and relief teams.

Investment boost

Continued from Page 1

for the owner of the investment or commercial property in the event of selling the property. Consequently, we notice a stagnation in trading due to the lack of supply, and the lack of real investment opportunities for the buyers as well as for the sellers.

Opening visits and joining families will contribute significantly to the recovery of the investment sector, and will encourage greater investment.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we noticed that many families, due to the pressures imposed by the government to modify the demographic composition and the pressure that expatriates faced, returned to their country, and the head of the family continued to work in Kuwait. Hence, the investment sector became crowded with bachelors who earn low and high salaries."

Charge fees
Regarding the trend to impose fees on water and electricity services and its impact on the decline in residential trading, Al-Awadhi explained that he does not believe it will have an impact on residential trading when compared to the increase in bank interest rates and the new laws that will actually encourage a decline in trading.

Solutions to the housing issue are always divided into two parts - basic solutions and secondary solutions.

Imposing fees on electricity and water, applying tax on those who own more than one residence, and applying tax on vacant lands are all secondary factors that help in solving the housing crisis. However, the main factors include offering the largest possible number of land and increasing offers, thus putting pressure on prices and making them inaccessible to people.

Market saturation
Meanwhile, a real estate expert Qais Al-Ghanim elaborated the multiple reasons for the decline in real estate trading in the country.

He explained that the reasons include market saturation, low supply with a lack of investment tools in the country, the Land Control Law, the instability of the political situation and other reasons that have led to a significant decline in real estate trading.

It was expected that there would be a decline in real estate trading from 2014 due to the market being saturated with prices. The investment tools in the country are insufficient in light of the fluctuation of investor trends between investment, commercial and residential trading.

Investment trading
Al-Ghanim went on to explain that the market is currently witnessing a noticeable decline in demand for residential trading, compared to continued demand for investment trading, which reflects the lack of balance in real estate trading in general between supply and demand.

Although family and tourist visas have been opened to expatriates, the strong requirements imposed by the government on tourists and on those wanting to bring their families will limit circulation and reduce the number of expatriates coming to the country, restricting them to a specific category of those with higher degrees.

This means a decrease in the number of new residences compared to previous years, because it will reduce the number of families and men coming to the country, which is the category most in demand for investment properties.

The Kuwaiti market is not attractive to the distinguished category of expatriates, especially with the recovery of competitive Gulf markets and the rise in the standard of living and housing for its residents, which led to the exodus of expatriate talents to neighboring countries.

World News Roundup

Europe

Croatia's ruling conservatives win vote: Croatia's governing conservatives convincingly won a highly contested parliamentary election Wednesday, but will still need support from far-right groups to stay in power, according to the official vote count.



Milanović

The election followed a campaign that centered on a bitter rivalry between the country's president and prime minister.

The ballot pitted the ruling conservative Croatian Democratic Union, or HDZ, led by Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, against an alliance of centrist and left-wing parties informally led by populist President Zoran Milanović and his Social Democratic Party, or SDP.

With over 90% of the ballots counted, the state electoral commission said that the HDZ won 60 seats in the 151-seat parliament. The SDP got 42 seats. The far-right Statehood Movement was third, with 14 seats, making it a kingmaker in future talks for the next government.

Turnout was more than 50% - a record - hours before the polls closed. (AP)



UK Conservatives suspend lawmaker: Britain's governing Conservative Party said Thursday it has suspended a lawmaker who is alleged to have used campaign funds for personal medical expenses and to pay off someone who was threatening him.

The Times of London reported Mark Menzies took thousands of pounds (dollars) given to the party by donors for medical costs and other personal expenses.

It said that in December he called a 78-year-old aide at 3 a.m. asking for help because he had been locked in an apartment by "bad people" who were demanding money for his release. A sum of 6,500 pounds (\$8,100) was paid personally by Menzies' office manager, who was reimbursed from donors' cash, the newspaper said. (AP)



Prince William returns to public duties: On Thursday for the first time William returns to public duties since his wife's cancer diagnosis, bolstering the royal family's ranks as health problems continue to sideline the princess and King Charles III.

William visits a surplus food redistribution center and a youth club it serves, highlighting efforts to reduce food waste as a way to cut greenhouse gas emissions and feed people in need. The prince stepped away from public duties after Kate, the Princess of Wales, announced on March 22 that she was undergoing treatment for an unspecified type of cancer.

In a video message released that day, Kate asked for "time, space and privacy" as she and her family adjusted to her diagnosis.

Both Charles and Kate have been largely absent from the public stage since January due to health problems, leaving Queen Camilla, Princess Anne and other members of the royal family to pick up the slack on the whirl of events and awards ceremonies that dominate the work of Britain's monarchy. (AP)



Prominent figure in AfD stands trial: One of the most prominent figures in the far-right Alternative for Germany party went on trial Thursday on charges of using a Nazi slogan, months before a regional election in which he is running to become his state's governor.

Björn Höcke, 52, is the leader of the regional branch of Alternative for Germany, or AfD, in the eastern state of Thuringia and a powerful figure on the party's hard right.

While never formally a national leader of AfD, the former history teacher has been consistently influential as the 11-year-old party has steadily headed further right and ousted several comparatively moderate leaders. Using symbols of unconstitutional organizations can carry a fine or a prison sentence of up to three years. Four court sessions have been scheduled through May 14. (AP)



Germany arrests 2 for 'spying' for Russia: Two German-Russian men have been arrested in Germany on suspicion of espionage, one of them accused of agreeing to carry out attacks on potential targets including US military facilities in hopes of sabotaging aid for Ukraine, prosecutors said Thursday.

The two, identified only as Dieter S. and Alexander J. in line with German privacy rules, were arrested Wednesday in the Bavarian city of Bayreuth, federal prosecutors said.

They said Dieter S. had been discussing possible acts of sabotage in Germany with a person linked to Russian intelligence since October, and that the main aim was to undermine military support given by Germany to Ukraine. The suspect declared himself willing to carry out bombing and arson attacks on infrastructure used by the military and industrial sites in Germany, prosecutors said in a statement. (AP)



Russia reports downing 5 Ukraine army balloons: Russian air defenses downed what authorities described as five Ukrainian balloons overnight, the defense ministry in Moscow said Thursday, as the sides kept up long-range strikes that have featured heavily in what has largely become a war of attrition.

Neither Russian nor Ukrainian officials have provided details about the secretive balloons, which Moscow authorities and media have reported on the battlefield in recent weeks. Ukraine's military has been driving innovation since the war began in February 2022, notably adapting drones for wide use against the bigger Kremlin forces.

According to Russian news reports, the Ukrainian balloons are equipped with a GPS module and carry explosives. They reportedly are harder to detect and could carry a bigger payload than more common small drones. (AP)



Russia withdraws peacekeeping forces: Russian forces are being withdrawn from Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, where they have been stationed as peacekeepers since the end of a war in 2020, officials of both countries said Wednesday.

In a conference call with journalists, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed reports of the withdrawal but did not give further details. Hikmet Hajiyev, the head of foreign policy in Azerbaijan's presidential administration, also confirmed the withdrawal, saying it was agreed to by both countries.

Hajiyev did not say why the forces were being withdrawn, but their presence appeared superfluous after Azerbaijan regained full control of the region last year. (AP)



Belarus' parliament votes to leave treaty: The Belarusian parliament on Wednesday voted to suspend the country's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty that once was a key security doctrine for the continent, a 1990 agreement that was abandoned last year by Russia.

The bill, introduced by authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko earlier this month, could pave the way for Belarus - Russia's ally in the war in Ukraine - to expand its military. Belarus lawmakers unanimously approved the bill calling for the treaty's suspension; Lukashenko now needs to sign the bill for it to become law.

The treaty, signed in 1990, places limits on tanks, combat vehicles, warplanes and heavy artillery that can be deployed in Europe. (AP)



Italy's leader keeps focus on migration: The head of Italy's right-wing government acknowledged Wednesday that Tunisia cannot serve as a dumping ground for migrants, days after Tunisia's president reaffirmed his unwillingness to let Europe outsource migration problems by sending those not welcome there to his country.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni said during a visit to Tunisia - her fourth in the past year - that the North African nation "cannot become the arrival point for migrants coming from the rest of Europe." (AP)



US President Joe Biden speaks at the United Steelworkers headquarters in Pittsburgh on April 17. Biden will accept endorsements from at least 15 members of the Kennedy political family during a campaign stop in Philadelphia on Thursday as he aims to undermine former president Donald Trump and marginalize the candidacy of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (AP)

US president scores endorsements from Kennedy family

US President Joe Biden will accept endorsements from at least 15 members of the Kennedy political family during a campaign stop in Philadelphia on Thursday as he aims to undermine former President Donald Trump and marginalize the candidacy of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Kerry Kennedy, a daughter of former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, niece of former Presi-

dent John F. Kennedy and sister of the current presidential contender, will deliver the endorsements of Biden, his campaign announced.

The decision to highlight the Kennedy family endorsement more than six months from Election Day is an indication of how seriously Biden's team is taking the threat of the long shot bid potentially using his last name's lingering Democratic magic to

siphon off support from the president.

Both Democrats and Republicans worry that Kennedy's candidacy could spoil their respective presumptive nominee's campaigns. Biden was using the event, which caps a three-day campaign swing in a battleground state critical to his reelection effort, to also sustain the pressure on Trump. (AP)

Politics

Senate rejects impeachment articles against Mayorkas

House's Ukraine package gains Biden support

WASHINGTON, April 18, (AP) - US President Joe Biden said Wednesday he strongly supports a proposal from Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to provide aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, sending crucial bipartisan support to the precarious effort to approve \$95 billion in funding for the U.S. allies this week.

Before potential weekend voting, Johnson was facing a choice between potentially losing his job and aiding Ukraine. He notified lawmakers earlier Wednesday that he would forge ahead despite growing anger from his right flank. Shortly after Johnson released the aid proposals, the Democratic president offered his emphatic support for the package.

Pass

"The House must pass the package this week, and the Senate should quickly follow," Biden said. "I will sign this into law immediately to send a message to the world: We stand with our friends, and we won't let Iran or Russia succeed."

After agonizing for days over how to proceed on the package, Johnson pushed ahead on a plan to hold votes on three funding packages - to provide about \$61 billion for Ukraine, \$26 billion for Israel and \$8 billion to allies in the Indo-Pacific - as well as several other foreign policy proposals in a fourth bill. The plan roughly matches the amounts that the Senate has already approved.

The bulk of the money for Ukraine would go to purchasing weapons and munitions from US defense manufacturers. Johnson is also proposing that \$9 billion of economic assistance for Kyiv be structured as forgivable loans, along with greater oversight on military aid,

Poland's prez becomes latest leader to visit Trump as allies eye possible return

NEW YORK, April 18, (AP) - Former US president Donald Trump met Wednesday in New York with Polish President Andrzej Duda, the latest in a series of meetings with foreign leaders as Europe braces for the possibility of a second Trump term.

The presumptive Republican nominee hosted Duda at Trump Tower, where the two discussed the war in Ukraine and Duda's push to boost NATO members' defense spending, according to a readout from Trump's campaign. Duda, who has long expressed admiration for Trump, is also a staunch supporter of Ukraine and has encouraged Washington to provide more aid to Kyiv amid Russian's ongoing invasion. That funding has been held

up by Trump allies in Congress. As he arrived, Trump praised the Polish president, saying, "He's done a fantastic job and he's my friend."

"We had four great years together," Trump added. "We're behind Poland all the way."

Duda is the latest foreign leader to meet with Trump in the weeks since he locked up the Republican nomination. U.S. allies across the world were caught off guard by Trump's surprise 2016 win, forcing them to scramble to build relationships with a president who often attacked longstanding treaties and alliances they valued. Setting up meetings with him during the 2024 campaign suggests they don't want to be behind again.

but the decision to support Ukraine in all has angered populist conservatives in the House and given new energy to a threat to remove him from the speaker's office.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The Senate dismissed all impeachment charges against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Wednesday, ending the House Republican push to remove the Cabinet secretary from office over his handling of the US-Mexico border and shutting down his trial before arguments even began. Senators voted to dismiss both arti-

cles of impeachment and end the proceedings, with Democrats arguing that the articles were unconstitutional. The first article charged Mayorkas with "willful and systemic refusal to comply" with immigration law and second article charged him with a "breach of trust" for saying the border was secure. The votes were 51-48 and 51-49, both along party lines.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the House Republicans' charges failed to meet "the high standard of high crimes and misdemeanors" and could set a dangerous precedent.



In this photo released by Voronezh News telegram channel on April 18, local citizens stand near damaged by a Ukrainian drone attack house in Voronezh, Russia. Russian air defenses downed what authorities described as five Ukrainian balloons overnight, the defense ministry in Moscow said on Thursday, as the sides kept up long-range strikes that have featured heavily in what has largely become a war of attrition. (AP)



Cramer



Clemens

America

'Daniels refused subpoena': Donald Trump's legal team says it tried serving Stormy Daniels a subpoena as she arrived for an event at a bar in Brooklyn last month, but the actor, who is expected to be a witness at the former president's criminal trial, refused to take it and walked away.

A process server working for Trump's lawyers said he approached Daniels with papers demanding information related to a documentary recently released about her life and involvement with Trump, but was forced to "leave them at her feet," according to a court filing made public Wednesday.

"I stated she was served as I identified her and explained to her what the documents were," process server Dominic DellaPorte wrote. "She did not acknowledge me and kept walking inside the venue, and she had no expression on her face." (AP)

Toddler dies after fall: A Minnesota toddler who fell from a South Dakota hotel's third-floor window has died.

Kathryn and Alex Hein of Lakefield, Minnesota, wrote in a Facebook post that their year-old son, Madden, died Monday, two days after falling at Club House Hotel & Suites in Sioux Falls.

Police are investigating the boy's death, but a Sioux Falls Police Department spokesman, Officer Sam Clemens, told the Minneapolis Star Tribune that there is "nothing to lead us to believe it was anything other than a tragic acci-

dent." (AP)



Man sentenced to 47 yrs: A man was

sentenced Wednesday to 47 years to life in prison for kidnapping and sexually assaulting a 9-year-old girl who went missing from a state park in upstate New York last year.



Britain's Prince William helps sort out food items for distribution during a visit to Surplus to Supper, in Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey, England on April 18. The Prince visited Surplus to Supper, a surplus food redistribution charity, to learn about its work bridging the gap between food waste and food poverty across Surrey and West London. William returns to public duties since his wife's cancer diagnosis, bolstering the royal family's ranks as health problems continue to sideline the princess and King Charles III. (AP)

Craig N. Ross Jr. pleaded guilty in February to taking the girl in September from a campground at Moreau Lake State Park, a rural area about 35 miles (60 kilometers) north of Albany. The disappearance sparked a 48-hour search that ended when she was found alive at a camper Ross was staying in.

"Because of you, I can't sleep at night," the girl, who was not present, said in a statement read in court by Saratoga County Assistant District Attorney Jennifer L. Buckley. "I was imprisoned for two and a half days, and now you will be imprisoned for 47 years." (AP)



Senator's son pleads not guilty: The adult son of US Sen Kevin Cramer pleaded not guilty Wednesday to homicide and other charges in connection with a Dec. 6 crash that killed a North Dakota sheriff's deputy.

Ian Cramer, 43, waived his preliminary hearing and entered his not guilty plea to felony charges of homicide while fleeing a peace officer, preventing arrest, reckless endangerment and fleeing an officer, as well as three misdemeanor drug charges and other low-level offenses of driving under suspension and marijuana possession.

A jury trial is scheduled for July. Cramer was initially charged with manslaughter, which was subsequently upgraded to the homicide count. (AP)

Asia

'No exception for US'

America will stand with Japan: envoy

TOKYO, April 18, (Agencies): The United States ambassador to the United Nations said Thursday that America will stand with Japan until all the Japanese abducted by North Korea decades ago return home to end their painful separation.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield made the comments on Thursday as she began her visit to Tokyo by meeting with the families of those kidnapped.

Japan says North Korea abducted at least 17 Japanese citizens, possibly many more, to train them as agents during the 1970s and 1980s. After admitting in 2002 it had abducted 13 Japanese, North Korea apologized and allowed five to return home for a visit.



Greenfield

They have since stayed in Japan. Pyongyang said eight others had died and denied that the other four entered its territory and never provided a reinvestigation it has promised.

The twelve who are still missing include teenage students and others living along Japan's coasts. Many were bundled into small boats and taken across the sea to North Korea.

"The United States stands with all the families, with all of Japan and with the international community in pressing for a resolution that will allow all families separated by the regime's policies to be reunited," Thomas-Greenfield said at the outset of her meeting with five relatives of the abductees and a representative from their support group at the Prime Minister's Office.

Suffering

"I'm all too familiar with the pain and the loss and the suffering that you family members here are experiencing," she said. "I know how painful it is for you, and then how long you have had to endure this pain."

Thomas-Greenfield said she has worked on North Korea-related issues throughout her career.

US President Joe Biden's administration is committed to raising the abduction issue "at every opportunity and calling for the return of abducted Japanese citizens to their family," the ambassador said, adding that America sticks to that policy regardless of the leadership.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has repeatedly stated his determination to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to achieve the return of the abductees.



'No exception for US': Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Thursday that there is no exception nor any privilege for the US in complying with international law, including UN Security Council resolutions, state-run Xinhua News Agency reported.

"The UN Security Council, in response to the calls of the international community, has been continuously deliberating on draft resolutions regarding a ceasefire in Gaza, only to be repeatedly vetoed by the US," Wang said at a joint press conference after meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Jakarta, according to the report.

Wang criticized the US for employing international law as merely a tool that can be utilized at will or discarded when deemed unnecessary.



Japan strong quake injures 9: A strong earthquake that struck southwestern Japan left nine people with minor injuries and caused damage such as burst water pipes and small landslides, authorities said Thursday. But there was no danger of a tsunami.

The magnitude 6.6 temblor late Wednesday was centered just off the western coast of the southwestern main island of Shikoku, in an area called the Bungo Channel, a strait separating Shikoku and the southern main island of Kyushu.

The quake occurred about 50 kilometers (30 miles) below the sea's surface and posed no danger of a tsunami, the Japanese Meteorological Agency said.



French hero gains Australian residency: French construction worker Damien Guerot was made an Australian permanent resident on Thursday as a reward for his heroism during a knife attack in a Sydney shopping mall that left six victims dead and a dozen wounded.

Guerot was nicknamed "Bollard Man" on social media after security camera footage showed the 31-year-old standing at the top of an escalator at the Westfield Bondi Junction mall on Saturday and warding off knife-wielding Joel Cauchi with a plastic barrier post. Cauchi fled down the escalator and people on Guerot's floor were safe.

Guerot's temporary Australian work visa was due to expire in July until Prime Minister Anthony Albanese intervened with an invitation to settle in Australia.



Sydney shopping mall reopens: A Sydney shopping mall opened to the public on Thursday for the first time since a mass stabbing in which six people died, while the Australian prime minister raised giving citizenship to an immigrant security guard who was wounded while confronting the knife-wielding attacker.

The deadly rampage through Westfield Bondi Junction on Saturday was the earlier of two knife attacks by lone assailants over three days that have traumatized Sydney.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has praised those who intervened in Saturday's attack to prevent more deaths, including security guard Muhammad Taha, who was stabbed in the stomach. Taha is from Pakistan and working in Australia on a temporary visa that is due to expire within weeks.



'No signs of radicalization': A 16-year-old boy accused of stabbing two Christian clerics during a Sydney church service might have "anger management and behavioral issues" and a "short fuse" but had shown no signs of being radicalized, a community leader said on Thursday, after authorities declared the stabbing a terrorist attack.

The teen stabbed Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and the Rev. Isaac Royel during Monday night's Assyrian Orthodox service, which was being streamed online.

The bishop released an audio statement on Thursday saying he was "doing fine, recovering very quickly" and that he forgave his attacker.

Jamal Rifi, a Sydney doctor and Muslim community leader, said the boy had apologized when his family visited him in the hospital on Tuesday and Wednesday.



In this photo released by Sitara Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD Sitara), hot molten lava glows at the crater of Mount Ruang as it erupts in Sanguine Islands, Indonesia on April 17. (AP)

Indonesians leave homes near erupting volcano, airport closes due to ash danger

Indonesian authorities closed an airport and residents left homes near an erupting volcano Thursday due to the dangers of spreading ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and the possibility of a tsunami.

Mount Ruang on the northern side of Sulawesi Island had at least five large eruptions Wednesday, causing the Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation to issue its highest-level alert, indicating an active eruption.

The crater emitted white-gray smoke continuously

during the day Thursday, reaching more than 500 meters (1,600 feet) above the peak.

People have been ordered to stay at least 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the 725-meter (2,378 foot) mountain. More than 11,000 people live in the affected area and were told to leave. At least 800 have done so.

An international airport in Manado city was temporarily closed Thursday as volcanic ash was spewed into the air.

"We have to close flight operations at Sam Ratu-langi Airport due to the spread of volcanic ash, which could endanger flight safety," said Ambar Suryoko, head of the regional airport authority.

Eruptions Wednesday evening spewed volcanic ash approximately 70,000 feet into the atmosphere, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre. The bureau said in a statement Thursday it was tracking and forecasting the ash dispersion. (AP)

Africa

'Congo escalating violence being forgotten by world'

S.Africa's ex-leader Zuma turned on his allies

JOHANNESBURG, April 18, (AP): South Africa faces an unusual national election this year, its seventh vote since transitioning from white minority rule to a democracy 30 years ago. Polls and analysts warn that for the first time, the ruling African National Congress party that has comfortably held power since Nelson Mandela became the country's first Black president in 1994 might receive less than 50% of votes.

One big reason is Jacob Zuma, the former president and ANC leader who stepped down in disgrace in 2018 amid a swirl of corruption allegations but has emerged in recent months with a new political party. It intends to be a major election player as the former president seeks revenge against former longtime allies.

Recognizable

Zuma has long been one of South Africa's most recognizable politicians. He was a senior leader in the ANC during the liberation struggle against apartheid. A former ANC intelligence chief, he has repeatedly threatened to reveal some of the party's secrets. While Zuma was not one of Mandela's preferred choices to succeed him, Mandela trusted Zuma to play an influential role in ending deadly political violence that engulfed KwaZulu-Natal province before the historic 1994 elections. The province has remained a vocal base of support for Zuma ever since, and members of Zuma's Zulu ethnic group make up its majority. Zuma became deputy leader of the ANC in 1997 and was appointed South Africa's deputy president in 1999.

Zuma's path to power included legal challenges. In 2006, he was found not guilty of raping the daughter of a comrade at Zuma's home in Johannesburg.

A year earlier, he was fired as South Africa's deputy president after his financial advisor was convicted for corruption for soliciting bribes for

Zuma during an infamous arms deal. Alleging a political witch hunt, Zuma launched an aggressive political campaign that saw him elected ANC president in 2007. His campaign appealed to widespread discontent with then-President Thabo Mbeki, who was often described as autocratic and aloof. The corruption charges against Zuma were later dropped, amid controversy, and he was elected South Africa's president in 2009.

Exchange

Zuma's presidency was often under fire. His close friends and allies, the Gupta family, were accused of influencing appointments to key cabinet positions in exchange for lucrative business deals. The allegations of corruption in government and state-owned companies eventually led the ANC force Zuma to resign in 2018. A judicial commission of inquiry uncovered wide-ranging evidence, and Zuma in 2021 was convicted and sentenced to 15 months in jail for refusing to testify. Zuma remains aggrieved with the ANC and his successor, President Cyril Ramaphosa. But few South Africans expected the break to go so far.

Zuma shocked the country in December by denouncing the ANC and campaigning against a party that had been at the heart of his political career. His new political party, UMKhonto WeSizwe, was named after the ANC's military wing, which was disbanded at the end of the struggle against white minority rule. The ANC has launched a legal case seeking to stop the new party from using a name and logo that are similar to those of the military wing. The charismatic Zuma continues to crisscross the country, delivering lively speeches, and an image of his face will represent the party on ballots.

The ANC already had been facing pressure from other opposition parties. But Zuma's new party threatens

to draw support from within the often divided ANC. South Africa's electoral body has cleared him to run for a parliament seat, despite his past conviction. Polls suggest the new party may emerge as one of the country's biggest opposition parties and could play a significant role if the weakening ANC must form coalitions to run the country. Addressing his supporters at a recent rally, Zuma declared that "I need to return so that I can fix things."

Also:

GOMA, Congo: The world is forgetting the escalating violence in eastern Congo as conflicts continue in places like Ukraine and Gaza, the U.N. human rights chief said Wednesday while visiting the region and calling for peace and support for millions repeatedly displaced.

Eastern Congo has long been overrun by more than 120 armed groups seeking to control the region's rich resources as they carry out mass killings. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced in recent months, worsening one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. About 7 million people are displaced, many beyond the reach of aid.

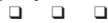
The humanitarian crisis must be taken "very seriously" to avoid further escalation, U.N. rights chief Volker Türk said after meeting with displaced people in Bulengo near Goma, the region's largest city. It hosts most of the displaced people but is increasingly threatened by fighting in surrounding villages.

"There are a lot of conflicts in the world, and sometimes I have the impression that the situation here is being forgotten," Türk said.

Fighting has intensified between security forces and the M23 rebel group, the most dominant in the region with alleged links to neighboring Rwanda.

sentenced to more than 10 years in prison.

Panama's constitution bars anyone sentenced to five or more years for a crime from running for president. (AP)



Bukele releases soccer player's dad:

El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele released the father of a Salvadoran soccer player from prison after the athlete published a plea for his release on social me-

dia, authorities confirmed on Wednesday.

Marcelo "El Chiky" Diaz, who plays for El Salvador's national team, on Tuesday published a letter on X, formerly Twitter, saying his father was wrongfully arrested by police as a suspected gang member on the way to see him play on March 30. Diaz pleaded directly to Bukele, who has a firm clench on power after being reelected in February despite a constitutional ban on reelection.

"On behalf of him, myself and our entire family, we ask you from the bottom of our hearts to amend this mistake and that my father can return home, to his routine, to his work and with his family," wrote the player, who assured that his father is a man who has never had problems with the law.

The arrest of Diaz's father is part of a larger gang crackdown in the Central American nation that has gained Bukele a soaring popularity but has also fueled accusations of mass human rights abuses.

Following a wave of gang violence two years ago, Bukele in March 2022 announced a "state of emergency," suspending many key constitutional rights and locking up nearly 80,000 people - more than 1% of the El Salvador's population - the government said were suspected as being part of a gang.

People are often arrested with little evidence of gang ties and locked up in prisons likened to torture chambers with little access to due process. (AP)



Panama's presidential candidate Jose Raul Mulino, (center), campaigns in the San Miguelito neighborhood of Panama City on April 10. The former foreign minister is one of eight candidates competing in the upcoming May 5th presidential election. Mulino skipped the final presidential debate as he did the two previous debates. (AP)



Martinelli



Bukele

Lat/Am

Panama's candidate skips debate:

Six of the eight candidates vying to be Panama's next president laid out their plans to generate jobs and to manage the country's water crisis in their final debate Wednesday night before the country's May 5 election.

Former government minister José Raúl Mulino, who has led in opinion polls since taking over the top place on his ticket when former President Ricardo Martinelli was sentenced to prison, skipped the event as he did the two previous debates.

Another candidate, José Gabriel Carrizo, was also absent after saying he would not participate if organizers could not get Mulino there.

The remaining field featured a couple of also-rans from previous elections - Ricardo Lombana and Rómulo Roux - as well as former President Martín Torrijos. Those three are in a virtual tie for second behind Mulino, according to recent polls.

The candidates promised job creation - some at far-fetched levels - and they concurred on the need to build a new reservoir, in large part to ensure sufficient water to run the Panama Canal. The critical passage has been forced to cut the number of ships transiting between the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea each day due to reduced availability of the water needed to operate its huge locks.

The debate occurred as Panama awaited a ruling from the Supreme Court on a challenge to electoral authorities' decision to let Mulino run without a vice presidential candidate on his ticket.

Martinelli, a 71-year-old businessman and supermarket magnate who governed Panama from 2009 to 2014, was convicted last July of money laundering in a case dating back to 2017 and related to his 2010 purchase of a publishing company that owns national newspapers. He was



A tourist feeds birds at Laohutan scenic area in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province on April 16. (Xinhua)



CEO of KPC
Sheikh Nawaf
Saud Al-Nasser
Al-Sabah.

KPC launches unified e-commerce platform

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) launched a unified electronic commerce platform for the oil sector to facilitate and develop relations between the corporation and its subsidiaries on one hand and its partners inside and outside on the other. Speaking in a festival by the corporation in Ahmedi City, CEO of KPC Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said the platform is the first phase of the "smart purchasing" initiative. He added that it is a digital transformation initiative aimed at embodying the corporation's vision to benefit from innovation and the optimal use of technology, and maximizing profitability. The corporation has worked for years to set a technological and innovative plan, as he said, noting that the initiative established a unified system through which digitalization and

import operations are provided. He elaborated that the initiative also seeks to reduce risks, and ensures information and data in purchase. The success of digital transformation projects depend on three factors; the ability to manage changes, team works and excellence, Sheikh Nawaf said. He stressed that such factors ensure supporting and developing national economy through innovation and technology in gas and oil industry. He lauded action system, which made this progress, mainly the supreme purchase committee which played a great role in developing the commercial sector and Kuwait National Petroleum Company. (KUNA)

oil plunges

Kuwait crude oil lost six cents during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 90.83 per barrel compared with USD 90.89 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Benchmark Brent futures dropped USD 2.73 to USD 87.29 pb and West Texas Intermediate lost USD 2.67 to USD 82.69 pb. (KUNA)

Market Movements

18-04-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+36.37	12,502.35	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-1,335.06	28,332.65
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+35.24	4,208.17				
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+117.90	38,079.70				
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+73.15	6,523.19				
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+131.45	70,486.75				

Business

Divergence between large and small insurers to continue in GCC markets

GCC insurers plow ahead as geopolitical tensions intensify

By S&P Global Ratings

Economic conditions in the GCC region remain favorable. S&P Global Ratings forecasts an average Brent oil price of \$85 per barrel for 2024 that will support robust economic growth in GCC oil and non-oil sectors. We project real GDP growth in the GCC region will range between 2% and 4% this year (see chart 1). In our view, insurance demand will benefit from ongoing investments in infrastructure projects, population growth, and regulatory initiatives, such as the extension of compulsory insurance covers.

At the same time, average inflation in the region will likely decline further to 1.5%-2.5% in 2024, from over 4% in 2022 (see chart 2). We therefore expect a moderation in claims inflation for motor and other property/casualty lines that will help insurers preserve margins.

Insurance markets in the GCC region are set to expand

We expect GCC insurers' top-line growth will range between 5% and 15% in 2024, with Saudi insurers likely to expand at the fastest pace again. Favorable economic conditions and rate adjustments for motor and medical lines will remain key growth drivers.

The international financial reporting standard 17 (IFRS 17), which was introduced on Jan. 1, 2023, led to a change in the quantification of insurers' top-line growth. Instead of gross premiums written, insurers now report insurance revenues, which mirror gross earned premiums minus expected credit losses. Although most insurers have already adopted IFRS 17, smaller and midsize companies in Qatar and Kuwait that provide Shariah-compliant insurance products (takaful) still need to implement the new standards.

Despite the change in accounting standards, we note that GCC insurers' top-line growth was substantial in 2023, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However, we anticipate a more moderate top-line growth in 2024 as we do not expect that rate increases--particularly in the motor business--will be similar to those in 2023. Instead, we anticipate motor and medical rates in Saudi Arabia and the UAE could start to decline in the second half of the year as policyholders and authorities could demand lower rates and competition intensifies.

Markets are becoming increasingly concentrated

As insurance markets continue to grow, the gap between larger and smaller insurers will likely widen. The largest companies will expand at a faster pace than smaller companies, while generating a significant share of overall profits. In contrast, some smaller companies could struggle to remain profitable and solvent due to high competition and operating costs.

The five largest of the 25 listed insurers in Saudi Arabia--the largest insurance market in the GCC region, based on insurance revenues--generated about 73% of total insurance revenues in 2023, up from 69% in 2022. Saudi Arabia's largest insurers, the Company for Cooperative Insurance (Tawuniya; A/Stable/--) and Bupa (not rated), had a combined market share of about 55% in 2023.

In the UAE, the five largest of the 26 listed insurers generated about 63% of total insurance revenues in 2023, compared with 61% in 2022.

Earnings are similarly concentrated, with the five largest insurers generating about 81% of total profits in Saudi Arabia and 72% in the UAE in 2023. We also see concentration in other markets in the GCC region. In our view, these market concentrations will persist as the largest insurers increasingly benefit from economies of scale and tend to have better access to resources and expertise than smaller ones.

Rate adjustments and investment returns will support earnings

We expect 2024 will be another profitable year for GCC insurers, thanks to rate corrections in motor and medical lines that started in 2023 and relatively high interest rates that support investment incomes. That said, we believe rates in certain lines could resume to decline, particularly in Saudi Arabia,

Key Takeaways

■ The top-line growth of insurers in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries will likely result from higher insurance demand in 2024 that will result from the ongoing economic expansion in the region and rate increases. The latter reflect an increase in claim costs and frequencies.

■ Although competition remains strong, we expect 2024 will be another profitable year for the industry because insurers maintain underwriting discipline, while relatively high interest rates support investment incomes.

■ That said, the diverging trend between larger and smaller insurers will likely continue in most GCC markets as the largest companies grow at a faster pace than smaller companies and generate a significant share of overall profits.

■ We expect our ratings on GCC-based insurers and reinsurers will remain broadly stable in 2024, mainly supported by robust capitalization levels and satisfactory earnings prospects. Although competition remains strong, we expect 2024 will be another profitable year for the industry because insurers maintain underwriting discipline, while relatively high interest rates support investment incomes.

where insurers' earnings improved significantly in 2023. Additionally, if the Fed starts cutting interest rates in 2024--which would be followed by rate cuts by central banks in the GCC region--investment incomes on fixed and cash deposits could decline slightly.

This could result in a more moderate earnings growth, compared with 2023.

Saudi Arabia

2023 was an exceptional year for Saudi insurers. The Saudi insurance market expanded by about 27% and, for the first time, all 25 insurers reported a net profit. This followed a tough 2022 when more than half of Saudi insurers reported a net loss. Saudi insurers reported a net profit of about Saudi riyal (SAR) 3.2 billion in 2023, compared with only about SAR0.3 billion in 2022.

Qatar

Qatari insurers' net profits also increased significantly to Qatari riyal (QAR) 1.1 billion in 2023, compared with a net deficit of about QAR800 million in 2022. The latter mainly resulted from a Qatari insurer's loss of about QAR1.2 million. 2023 net profits exclude data from Qatar General Insurance (not rated), which reported significant losses in recent years mainly due to property price revaluations.

UAE

In 2023, listed insurers in the UAE reported a 19% year-on-year increase in net profits to UAE dirham (AED) 1.8 billion, from about AED1.5 billion in 2022. The increase mainly resulted from higher investment returns. We forecast the sector will remain profitable in 2024, thanks to adjustments in motor insurance rates. Although the UAE have seen some very heavy rainfalls in early 2024, we do not think that insured losses will materially affect local insurers. This is because many losses are either not insured or ceded to global reinsurers. We also expect insurers will continue to benefit from higher interest rates, which will increase their investment returns. That said, we note that the 9% corporate tax on net profits, which was introduced on June 1, 2023, will weigh on insurers' earnings.

Other GCC countries

Insurers in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman also reported stronger earnings in 2023, compared with 2022. We expect 2024 will be another profitable year in these markets.

Ratings will remain stable

We expect credit conditions for rated insurers in GCC countries will remain broadly stable in 2024, supported by robust capital buffers and adequate

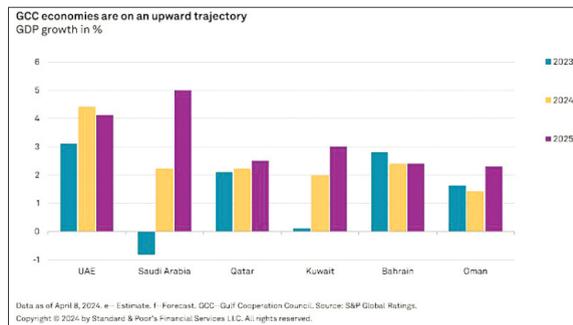


Chart 1

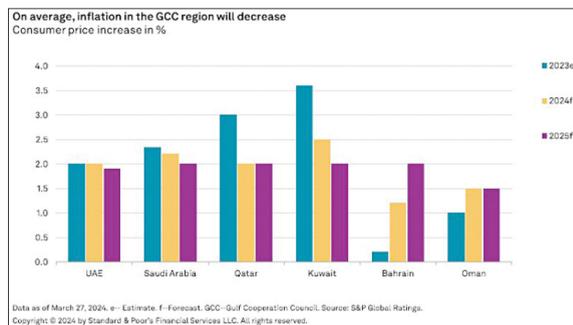


Chart 2

growth and earnings prospects. Most rated GCC insurers, many of whom are among the largest entities in the market, remain very well capitalized, which is reflected in strong financial strength ratings.

A key risk to GCC insurers' credit conditions consists of worsening geopolitical tensions in the region. A full-scale conflict between states would be economically, socially, and politically destabilizing for the entire region and its banking systems. Combined with slow global economic growth, this could impair GCC insurers' revenue growth and increase investment volatility. The most significant effect of a prolonged conflict, which is not our base case, could be on insurers' investment portfolios, in our view. In such a scenario, we expect our ratings on weaker capitalized insurers or those with material exposure to high-risk assets could come under pressure.

More Mergers Ahead

Insurers' size, capitalization, and profitability differ significantly across the GCC region, with several companies--mainly in the UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia--still failing to meet the required solvency capital requirements. A stricter enforcement of regulations could increase the pressure on less capitalized and underperforming insurers, in our view. Stricter regulations and strong competition have already led to several mergers and capital increases, which we expect will continue in 2024.

Kuwaiti banking sector surges to historic profitability despite economic challenges

Central bank oversight supports Kuwait's banking sector strength

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The Kuwaiti banking sector continues to demonstrate remarkable performance and robust profitability, achieving an unprecedented historical milestone last year despite facing turbulent economic conditions and escalating geopolitical risks both locally and globally, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Kuwaiti banks have successfully amplified their profitability from approximately 488.1 million dinars in 2013 to over 1.5 billion dinars by the end of last year, marking a remarkable growth of 214.5%.

The financial results for 2023 underscore the sustained strength of the banking sector's performance, underpinned by a stable operating environment and prudent oversight by the Central Bank of Kuwait. Bankers and experts, speaking to Al-Qabas, have noted an oversupply of liquidity within the banking sector while the country grapples with a dearth of new projects and a downturn in investment spending.

Issam Al-Saqr, the CEO of National Bank of Kuwait Group, emphasized the banks' heavy reliance on significant projects across all economic sectors. He expressed concern over the scarcity of such projects, attributing the surplus liquidity to the absence of a forward-looking vision.

Historically, Kuwaiti banks played a pivotal role in financing major projects when a clear vision was in place, and the lack thereof is now a cause for concern.

Abdul Wahab Al-Rashoud, acting CEO of KFH Group, highlighted the

Commercial sector trades up by 687.1% in March

Several factors collectively contribute to substantial increase in trade activity

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: In March, trades within the commercial sector surged by an impressive 687.1%, totaling 61.4 million dinars across 9 deals, a significant rise from February's 7.8 million dinars compared to March 2023, which recorded approximately 42.4 million dinars across 3 deals, trading in March 2024 increased by 44.8%, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Similarly, trades within the craft sector saw a substantial monthly increase of 266.6%, reaching 2.2 million dinars with two deals. Overall, the real estate sector experienced a robust monthly growth of 58.7% in March, reaching a total value of 278 million dinars, despite a slight decrease of 10.1% compared to the previous year.

Sulaiman Al-Dulajjan, real estate expert and director of the Al-Dulajjan Real Estate Office, attributed the remarkable increase in trades within the commercial sector to several factors:

Exit of funds from the residential sector -- Following a recession in the residential sector over the past 9 months, there was a notable shift of funds towards the commercial and investment sectors.

banks' capacity to compete in financing development projects regionally, citing their substantial surpluses, robust capital standards, solid credit strength, and diversified portfolios. He noted their active involvement in cross-border financing and their ability to spearhead substantial funding initiatives.

Economic expert Jassim Al-Saadoun attributed the liquidity surplus in the banking sector to the sluggish local economy and the tendency to direct investments abroad due to perceived risks.

He noted a virtual standstill in

local development projects and elevated prices of real estate and financial assets, limiting investment opportunities. Despite these challenges, he suggested that the financial statements of banks still indicate potential for continued performance growth.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Duajj, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Banking Association and Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, highlighted the substantial liquidity reserves held by Kuwaiti banks, resulting from high deposit volumes amidst limited investment

avenues.

He emphasized their robust position to finance major strategic projects in the region, leveraging their solid financial foundation and extensive experience in project financing.

Economic expert Ali Rashid Al-Badr commended Kuwait's resilient banking sector amidst challenging operating conditions and geopolitical uncertainties. He attributed its strength to the rise in total operating revenues, reduced provisions, improved asset quality, and lowered non-performing financing ratios, which now rank among the best globally.

Kuwait presents vision, vital projects for British investors

LONDON, April 18, (KUNA): Kuwait presented in a panel discussion in London on Wednesday its vision, vital projects, and the opportunities it offers to foreign investors, in an effort to attract British private sector's investors.

In remarks to KUNA, Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK, Bader Al-Awadhi, noted that he presented, during a roundtable discussion panel hosted by the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, a brief of Kuwait's vision and its vital projects.

The ambassador called on British companies to contribute, participate and invest in the projects available in Kuwait, he added.

He pointed to the interest of the at-

tendees and their satisfaction with the information he presented and their keenness to learn about the investment opportunities available in Kuwait.

For his part, Secretary-General and CEO of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, Bandar Redha, praised the opening of the discussion with Ambassador Al-Awadhi in a transparent manner clarifying the basic points of investment opportunities in Kuwait, as he referred to 26 projects for the period 2024-2025.

Chief Strategy Officer at the Gulf Energy Company in Kuwait, Paul McKay, said that the discussion panel reviewed the investment opportunities available in several sectors, especially infrastructure, energy, oil and gas.

YPA & Boeing partnership praised

Kuwait launches technical complex entrepreneurship

KUWAIT CITY, April 18, (KUNA): Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Dawod Marafi said Wednesday that Kuwait technical complex for entrepreneurship will build the capacity of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs in the technological and technical areas.

The minister praised the partnership between the state ministry of youth affairs and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), on one hand, and Boeing on the other.

He made the press remarks while attending the signing ceremony of a partnership agreement between the Youth Public Authority and Boeing to launch the complex in Mubarak Al-Abdullah neighborhood on Wednesday.

YPA was represented by its acting director general Mosaed Al-Keribani

and managing director of Boeing Kuwait Mosaed Al-Hauli.

The complex will provide Kuwaiti youth with digital systems, labs, programs and innovative solutions that will create suitable environment for the projects of entrepreneurs, Marafi pointed out.

The planned specialized programs, including the Aerospace Xelerated (AX), will help transfer technology and experience to the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, he said, noting that the programs focus on fostering the skills of entrepreneurs and the emerging companies.

The programs also include a package of workshops to improve the technical skills of entrepreneurs.

Today's agreement will be followed by another one on building of the headquarters of the complex which is scheduled to go operational later this year, the minister added.

China's major industrial cos upbeat about business prospects

China's major industrial companies are optimistic about their business prospects with a continuous increase in their profits, Shan Zhongde, vice minister of industry and information technology, said on Thursday.

Private investment in the manufacturing sector grew 11.9 percent year on year during the first quarter of this year, Shan told

a press conference.

According to a survey of 36,000 key manufacturing enterprises, 76 percent expect their industrial output to grow or remain flat in the second quarter of this year compared with one year earlier, he said.

At the end of February, the number of major industrial enterprises rose to 501,000, up 19,000

from the end of 2023, Shan added.

From January to February this year, major industrial enterprises nationwide realized total profits of 914.1 billion yuan (about 128.7 billion U.S. dollars), up 10.2 percent year on year, the National Bureau of Statistics said earlier this week. (Xinhua)



A staff member operates a forklift to load a tractor onto a truck at a tractor manufacturing company in Jiamusi, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, March 12, 2024. (Xinhua)

Biden eyes blocking Japanese merger, seeking new Chinese tariffs

US President vows to shield US steel industry

PITTSBURGH, April 18, (AP): President Joe Biden suggested to cheering, unionized steelworkers on Wednesday that his administration would thwart the acquisition of U.S. Steel by a Japanese company, and he called for a tripling of tariffs on Chinese steel, seeking to use trade policy to win over working-class votes in the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

The Democratic president's pitch comes as Donald Trump, his likely Republican opponent, tries to chart a path back to the White House with tough-on-China rhetoric and steep tariff proposals of his own.

During a visit to the Pittsburgh headquarters of United Steelworkers, Biden said U.S. Steel "has been an iconic American company for more than a century and it should remain totally American."

Administration officials are reviewing the proposed acquisition of U.S. Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel, and Biden said last month he would oppose the deal, saying it was "vital for it to remain an American steel company that is domestically owned and operated."

But in front of a union audience, he went much further in pledging he may block it.

"American-owned, American-operated by American union steelworkers - the best in the world - and that's going to happen, I promise you," he said.

In another step that his administration argues can protect domestic steelworkers, Biden also announced that he will push for higher tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum, aiming to insulate American producers from a flood of cheap imports.

Biden's push on steel reflects the intersection of international trade policy with his reelection effort, although the White House insisted they were more about shielding American manufacturing from unfair trade practices overseas than firing up a union audience.

The current tariff rate is 7.5% for both steel and aluminum but could climb to 25% under Biden's proposal. The president said he was asking his trade representative to seek the increase, and separate tariffs of 10% on aluminum and 25% on steel would also remain in place.

The U.S. imported roughly \$6.1 billion in steel products in the 12 months ending in February 2023, but just 3% of those imports came from China, according to Census Bureau figures. Citing existing trade barriers, the American Iron and Steel Institute said China last year accounted for even less - just 2.1% of U.S. steel imports - making it America's seventh-biggest source of foreign steel.

However, a senior administration official said there are concerns about China ramping up exports, making the higher tariff levels necessary as a preventative measure.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said the "U.S. is making the same mistake again and again" by seeking increased tariffs. In a statement, he also dismissed levies already in place as "the embodiment of unilateralism and protectionism of the U.S."

Biden insisted that getting tougher on China was sound policy, including when it comes to preventing the exportation of advanced technologies that could "undermine our national security."

He said he delivered a similar message to Chinese President Xi Jinping during previous conversations, telling him, "You'll use them for all the wrong reasons, so you're not going to get those advanced computer chips."

Biden criticized Trump for failing to take such steps, saying that "for all his tough talk on China, it never occurred to my predecessor to do any of that."

The administration also promised to pursue investigations against countries and importers that try to saturate existing markets with Chinese steel, and said it was working with Mexico to ensure that Chinese companies cannot circumvent the tariffs by shipping steel there for subsequent export to the United States.

"The president understands we must invest in American manufacturing. But we also have to protect those investments and those workers from unfair exports associated with China's industrial overcapacity," said White House national economic adviser Lael Brainard.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai also announced Wednesday that her office, acting on a petition from five national labor unions, was investigating China for "targeting the maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors for dominance."

China's Commerce Ministry responded hours later that the "U.S. petition is full of false accusations."

It "misinterprets normal trade and investment activities as damaging to U.S. national security and corporate interests," the ministry said in a statement. "And blames China for the U.S.'s own industrial issues, lacking factual basis and running counter to common sense in economics."

Climate change's economic bite will hit about \$38 trillion a year by 2049

New study's calculation shows

WASHINGTON, April 18, (AP): Climate change will reduce future global income by about 19% in the next 25 years compared to a fictional world that's not warming, with the poorest areas and those least responsible for heating the atmosphere taking the biggest monetary hit, a new study said.

Climate change's economic bite in how much people make is already locked in at about \$38 trillion a year by 2049, according to Wednesday's study in the journal Nature by researchers at Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. By 2100 the financial cost could hit twice what previous studies estimate.

"Our analysis shows that climate change will cause massive economic damages within the next 25 years in almost all countries around the world, also in highly-developed ones such as Germany and the U.S., with a projected median income reduction of 11% each and France with 13%," said study co-author Leonie Wenz, a climate scientist and economist.

These damages are compared to a baseline of no climate change and are then applied against overall expected global growth in gross domestic product, said study lead author Max Kotz, a climate scientist. So while it's 19% globally less than it could have been with no climate change, in most places, income will still grow, just not as much because of warmer temperatures.

For the past dozen years, scientists and others have been focusing on extreme weather such as heat waves, floods, droughts, storms as the having the biggest climate impact. But when it comes to financial hit the researchers found "the overall impacts are still mainly driven by average warming, overall temperature increases," Kotz said. It harms crops and hinders labor production, he said.

"Those temperature increases drive the most damages in the future because they're really the most unprecedented compared to what we've experienced historically," Kotz said. Last year, a record-hot year, the global average temperature was 1.35 degrees Celsius (2.43 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than pre-industrial times, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The globe has not had a month cooler than 20th century average since February 1979.

In the United States, the southwestern and southwestern states get economically pinched more than the northern ones with parts of Arizona and New Mexico taking the biggest monetary hit, according to the study. In Europe, southern regions, including parts of Spain and Italy, get hit harder than places like Denmark or northern Germany.

Only Arctic adjacent areas - Canada, Russia, Norway, Finland and Sweden - benefit, Kotz said. It also means countries which have historically produced fewer greenhouse gas emissions per person and are least able to financially adapt to warming weather are getting the biggest financial harms too, Kotz said.

The world's poorest countries will suffer 61% bigger income loss than the richest ones, the study calculated.

"It underlies some of the injustice elements of climate," Kotz said.

This new study looked deeper than past research, examining 1,600 global areas that are smaller than countries, took several climate factors into account and examined how long climate economic shocks last, Kotz said.



People watch the sunset at a park on an unseasonably warm day, Feb. 25, 2024, in Kansas City, Mo. A new study says climate change will reduce future global income by about 19% in the next 25 years compared to a fictional world that's not warming. (AP)

Fed's Powell cautions

Elevated inflation will likely delay rate cuts this year

WASHINGTON, April 18, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell cautioned that persistently elevated inflation will likely delay any Fed interest rate cuts until later this year, opening the door to a period of higher-for-longer rates.

"Recent data have clearly not given us greater confidence" that inflation is coming fully under control and "instead indicate that it's likely to take longer than expected to achieve that confidence," Powell said during a panel discussion at the Wilson Center.

"If higher inflation does persist," he said, "we can maintain the current level of (interest rates) for as long as needed."

The Fed chair's comments suggested that without further evidence that inflation is falling, the central bank may carry out fewer than the three quarter-point reductions its officials had forecast during their most recent meeting in March.

His remarks Tuesday represented a shift for Powell, who on March 7 had told a Senate committee that the Fed was "not far" from gaining the confidence it needed to cut rates. At a news conference on March 20, Powell appeared to downplay that assertion. But his comments Tuesday went further in dimming the likelihood of any rate cuts in the coming months.

"Powell's comments make it clear the Fed is now looking past June," when many economists had previously expected rate cuts to begin, Krishna Guha, an analyst at Evercore ISI, said in a research note.

In the past several weeks, government data has shown that inflation remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target and that the economy is still growing robustly. Year-over-year inflation rose to 3.5% in March, from 3.2% in February. And a closely watched gauge of "core" prices, which exclude volatile food and energy, rose sharply for a third straight month.

As recently as December, Wall Street traders had priced in as many

US, Japan, South Korea agree on deepening economic partnership

WASHINGTON, April 18, (KUNA): The United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea agreed on Wednesday on expanding their partnership for achieving sustainable economic growth and financial stability for their economies and promote prosperity for the global economy.

"We will continue cooperation to strengthen our economies and promote global economic prosperity," the finance ministers of the countries vowed in a joint statement after their meeting in Washington D.C. today.

They welcomed the progress in the trilateral collaboration among their development finance institutions, promising to continue staff level engagement to take these forward.

"These goals demonstrate the ongoing importance and unprecedented strength of this trilateral economic relationship between Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States," they said.

They noted that their discussion today builds on Trilateral Leaders' Summit last August in Camp David, and affirms the importance of three countries' relationship to own economies

and to the global economy.

"As leading global economies, we seek continued opportunity and prosperity for our peoples, the Indo-Pacific region, and the globe through open and fair economic practices," they indicated.

"We will continue to cooperate to promote sustainable economic growth, financial stability, as well as orderly and well-functioning financial markets."

They stressed that they will also continue to consult closely on foreign exchange market developments in line with our existing G20 commitments, while acknowledging serious concerns of Japan and the Republic of Korea about the recent sharp depreciation of the Japanese yen and the Korean won.

"Together, we affirm our commitment to utilize and coordinate our respective sanctions tools to impose costs on Russia for its war against Ukraine and target the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK's) weapons program," they said.

"We strongly condemn the DPRK's exports to Russia, as well as Russia's procurement of the DPRK's ballistic

missiles, in direct violation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and call upon them to immediately cease such activities."

They emphasized the importance of collaboration to overcome supply chain vulnerabilities and the possible harm to their economies from non-market economic practices of other countries, including economic coercion and overcapacity in key sectors.

"We have reaffirmed Leaders' commitment to mobilize financing for resilient supply chains and will work together to that end, including through the Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE)," added the ministers.

They pointed out that they will continue to work together to evolve the multilateral development banks and strengthen other international financial institutions to better respond to key global challenges.

"Reaffirming the importance of ASEAN and Pacific Island countries, we will combine efforts to strengthen their macroeconomic and financial resilience as well as financial integrity," they vowed.

Jefferson said he expected inflation to continue to slow this year with the Fed's key rate "held steady at its current level." But he omitted a reference to the likelihood of future rate cuts that he had included in a speech in February.

Last month, Jefferson had said that should inflation keep slowing, "it will likely be appropriate" for the Fed to cut rates "at some point this year" - language that Powell has

also used. Yet neither Powell or Jefferson made any similar reference Tuesday.

Instead, Powell said only that the Fed could reduce rates "should the labor market unexpectedly weaken."

Fed officials have responded to recent reports that the economy remains strong and inflation is undesirably high by underscoring that they see little urgency to reduce their benchmark rate anytime soon.

World Bank, ADB to provide power to 300 mln people in Africa

WASHINGTON, April 18, (KUNA): The World Bank Group and African Development Bank Group are partnering on an ambitious effort to provide at least 300 million people in Africa with electricity access by 2030.

The World Bank Group will work to connect 250 million people to electricity through distributed renewable energy systems or the distribution grid

while the African Development Bank Group will support an additional 50 million people, the bank said in a statement.

Access to electricity is a fundamental human right and is foundational to any successful development effort.

Currently, 600 million Africans lack access to electricity, creating significant barriers to health care, education,

productivity, digital inclusivity, and ultimately job creation, it added.

"Electricity access is the bedrock of all development. It is a critical ingredient for economic growth and essential for job creation at scale," said Ajay Banga, World Bank Group President.

"Our aspiration will only be realized with partnership and ambition. We will need policy action from gov-

ernments, financing from multilateral development banks, and private sector investment to see this through," Banga added.

This partnership is a demonstration of the determination of the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank Group to be bolder, bigger, and better in tackling one of the most pressing challenges in Africa.

The initiative is the most recent manifestation of the World Bank Group's commitment to become more impact-oriented and is the byproduct of a concerted work plan to build a better bank.

It is aided by a constellation of regional energy programs that will now be aligned toward this common goal.

Bank ranks first in promoting fraud prevention during Ramadan

NBK complements its Ramadan calendar with engaging content on social media

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) social media platforms have succeeded in playing a powerful role in increasing interaction of a wide segment of the public in Kuwait with the bank's distinguished Ramadan calendar aiming to strengthen its relationship with society.

The bank utilized its social media accounts to showcase its various activities and volunteering initiatives during Ramadan, as part of its annual philanthropic program, "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan", embodying its CSR commitment and dedication to deliver its deeply rooted mission of serving the society.

Throughout Ramadan, NBK provided active coverage of the different events, activities and initiatives implemented through the month on all its social media platforms.

Iftar meals, dates and water

These initiatives included providing Iftar meals, dates and water, as volunteers from NBK employees made extensive field trips to distribute thousands of breakfast meals in many areas of Kuwait during Ramadan, in addition to visiting many entities to share breakfast meals with their employees. Like every year, volunteers from different NBK branches distributed dates and water before Iftar time at different areas in Kuwait, to reduce traffic accidents that may occur due to overspeeding to get to their destination by the Iftar time.

Promoting sustainability

Following its annual practice, NBK organized a campaign to promote sustainable practices in collaboration with "Omniya" initiative to collect plastic water bottles from 280 mosques in Kuwait for recycling, thus saving space in landfills. This helps reduce the negative effects of this waste on the environment and health, as the biodegradation of plastic is a slow, long process that may take hundreds of years.

Unique content and dua videos

During Ramadan, NBK also generated unique content with celebrities and influencers to leverage TikTok and Instagram to reach a larger audience. The bank also shared dua videos in a fast-paced, visually captivating manner designed by Kuwaiti photographer Faisal Al-Karam that resonated well on social media.

Competitions and prizes

During Ramadan, NBK utilized social media engagement to host competitions aimed at boosting follower participation, ultimately increasing engagement and potential customer loyalty during the holy month.

The total engagement in these competitions exceeded half a million, with cash prizes ranging from KD 50 to KD 250.

Ranking first in promoting banking awareness

Throughout Ramadan, NBK implemented various fraud prevention measures to keep customers' accounts and money safe, such as raising awareness about common scams and providing tips for online and offline security.

NBK covered various topics in terms of fraud protection for customers, including secure online banking practices, how to detect phishing emails and scams, the importance of safeguarding personal information, and how to report any suspicious activity. The bank also provided tips on how to keep account information and financial details safe to prevent fraud and identity theft. It also hosted Q&A initiatives to test customer/non-customer knowledge on fraud related situations.

Additionally, recognizing its efforts to promote the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness Campaign launched by Central Bank of Kuwait in KBA and local banks, NBK ranked first among all banks in Kuwait, further demonstrating its commitment to ensuring the safety and security of customers' financial transactions.

Overall, NBK is committed to educating and equipping customers with the necessary tools to stay protected against potential fraud threats, especially in a busy time such as Ramadan.

Innovative interactive presentations

Commenting on the activities and initiatives covered on social media platforms during Ramadan, Abdul-Mohsen Al-Rushaid, AGM, Head of Digital Communications at National Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK always seeks to strengthen its presence on social media during different occasions and seasons all year round by introducing innovative interactive presentations, and covering all events organized by the bank to reach the largest audience."

"Our social media provide a large platform to interact with customers, including updating them with the latest offers, responding to their inquiries, and fulfilling their needs, while providing them with the latest news and developments related to the bank and its business on a regular basis," he noted.

It is worth mentioning that by the end of 2023, NBK continued to lead the social media scene among all banks in Kuwait, whether in terms of the number of followers, interaction and engagement across all platforms.

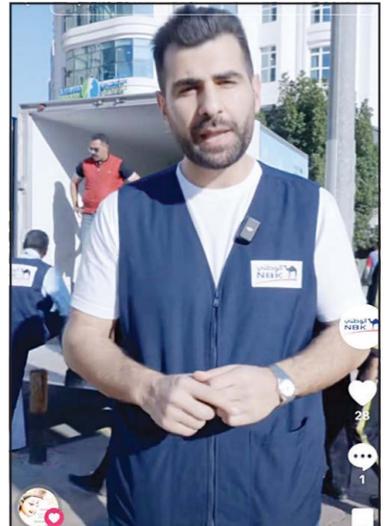
By the end of last year, the total number of followers of NBK's social media accounts exceeded 2.2 million, whereas it received 3.2 million interactions and increased the number of followers by 160,000 on all platforms including Instagram, X, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube.



Ramadan Dua



NBK Eid Competition



Ramadan Giveaways

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait and GIG distribute toys for Bayt Abdullah

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: In a heartwarming collaboration, ABCK-AmCham Kuwait, in conjunction with Gulf Insurance Group (GIG), a pioneer in the insurance sector, continues its legacy of corporate social responsibility by extending a generous donation to Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital & Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (KACCH/BACCH). The donation ceremony was graciously represented by Mrs. Dana Numan, Specialist, Corporate Communications, and Investor Relations Department.

Organized by the American Business Council Kuwait (AmCham Kuwait), a nonprofit organization dedicated to community welfare, the event marked another milestone in GIG's commitment to supporting essential healthcare services for children in need. AmCham Kuwait orchestrates semi-annual toy and stationary drives for KACCH and BACCH with its members, essential in enhancing the quality of life for young patients.

Dr. Tala Al Dabbous, the esteemed CEO of KACCH/BACCH, expressed gratitude to Gulf Insurance Group, presenting them with an appreciation plaque to commemorate their invaluable contribution. The Chairman of AmCham Kuwait, Mr. Pete Swift, also graced the occasion, reaffirming the organization's unwavering support for the hospital's noble initiatives.

Gulf Insurance Group remains committed to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, recognizing the importance of sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical governance in our operations. ESG encapsulates a holistic approach to business practices that consider environmental impact, social welfare, and corporate governance standards. As part of our ongoing ESG initiatives, we are proud to announce our recent donation to Bayt Abdullah, which aligns with our commitment to social responsibility. This contribution underscores our dedication to supporting initiatives that positively impact the community, particularly in assisting sick children in need.

Established in 2003 and registered as a nonprofit Charitable Organization by the Ministry of Social Affairs, KACCH and BACCH play a vital role in Kuwait's healthcare ecosystem. Their child life and play programs have become integral components of pediatric services, offering invaluable



psychosocial and emotional support to hospitalized children and their families across government hospitals in Kuwait.

Scientific evidence underscores the significance of therapeutic play and child life opportunities in hospitals, facilitating the healing process and nurturing coping mechanisms in children.

By supporting KACCH and BACCH, Gulf Insurance Group underscores its unwavering commitment to the well-being of the community and its youngest members.

ABCK-AmCham Kuwait: Is a nonprofit organization operating since 1985 and is composed of Fortune 500 corporations, small and medium-sized

companies, and prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs, both American and Kuwaiti. ABCK-AmCham Kuwait has functioned as an advocate for American interests in the state of Kuwait. For More Information, please visit our website at www.amchamkuwait.org or follow us on the social media channel @abck1985

'An indelible expedition to the land of Franks'

FAIPS-DPS organizes educational tour to France and Belgium for 'students'

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: FAIPS-DPS has always strived to provide its students with exciting and meaningful educational experiences. To this end, the school arranged a 6-day tour in March 2024 for students in classes VII to XII, IGCSE, and BC, which allowed them to explore the vibrant cultures of France and Belgium. A group of 25 enthusiastic students and 2 teachers were able to engage in a variety of cultural activities and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. This experience not only broadened the students' perspectives but also encouraged them to learn and grow beyond the classroom setting.

The captivating tour that commenced on March 23rd was an incredibly enriching experience. The team's arrival in Paris, the fashion capital of the world, set the tone for an unforgettable adventure. The first stop was the fabled Disneyland where the group enjoyed thrilling rides and witnessed the spectacular Disney carnival. The tour then continued with visits to some of Paris's most iconic landmarks, including the Arc de Triomphe and a stroll down the Champs-Élysées, where they admired the splendid architecture and indulged in some shopping for loved ones. The group also had the opportunity to visit the famous Basilica of Sacré Coeur de Montmartre, the historic Versailles Palace, and, of course,



the iconic Eiffel Tower with its stunning panoramic views.

The vibrant energy of Paris gave way to a serene and picturesque drive to Belgium, revealing a completely different yet equally captivating ambiance. Exploring the Royal Gallery of Saint Hubert in Brussels and taking a charming detour to the quaint canal town of Bruges left a lasting impression on both the senses and the soul. The iconic Atomium in Brussels and the awe-inspiring Mini Europe, featuring miniature renditions of European landmarks, were also highlights of the trip.

Each destination the students visited provided them with the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in rich history and breathtaking scenery, free from the distractions of mobile phones and social

media. Additionally, the trip offered a chance for the children to indulge in a wide variety of cuisines, ranging from Indian to French, Italian to Lebanese, and even Greek. Every meal was a cherished memory and a unique experience. As the trip drew to a close on March 29th, with a heavy heart the team bid farewell to the beautiful countries of France and Belgium, having gained invaluable experiences such as shopping, staying away from family, sharing hotel rooms with friends and teachers, and forming lasting bonds that will remain with them for a lifetime. Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, the Head of the institution, expresses gratitude on behalf of the management to the parents of the students for their support in providing this wonderful experience to the students.

دار الآباء الإسلامية
Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah | The al-Sabah Collection

DAI'S CHILDREN'S BOOK CLUBS

are back from holiday

BOOK BUDDY (AGES 4-7) AT 10 AM	BOOK BUDDIES (AGES 8-11) AT 11 AM
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Saturday, 20 April
DAI Children's Library
Amricani Cultural Centre

For more information or to register,
please email: amricanieducation@gmail.com

DAI poster

'Best account of its kind in Kuwait in terms of number of winners'

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's draw

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the Third Weekly Draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The weekly draw, based on customers' March deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Saleh Rashed Saleh Ghunaim, Mohammad Jassim Ali Alsaif, Marshad Obaid Mohammad Alazmi, Jaafar Yousef Abdullah Alhaddad, Abdullah Omar Abdulrahman Alqanaei, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Mumtaz Ahmad Ghulam Hussain, Ebrahim Jassim Mohammad Alharbi, Muhammet Alavis, Waleed Fayed AbdalRazeq, Ali Husain Abbas Qurban Husain, Fazaa Hamad Khalaf Alshammari, Norhata Tahir Musa.

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

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

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a



Dirwaza

wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

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

Dartmouth Fellowship granted to AUK Faculty

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Research and Grants (CRG) at Dartmouth College, the Dartmouth Fellowship has been granted to Dr. Belal Gharaibeh, associate professor of systems engineering, at the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) at the American University of Kuwait (AUK).

Dr. Gharaibeh will be working with Dr. Douglas W. Van Citters on a project entitled "A Comprehensive Study of Radiation Effects on 3D Printed Polymers," which explores the mechanical and chemical alterations of materials following radiation exposure. Such research is critical for understanding how these materials, widely used in high-stakes environments such as nuclear energy, medical technology, and aerospace, behave under extreme conditions.

AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awad, reflected on the Dartmouth Fellowship and what it entails, "In the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, the Dartmouth Fellowship serves as a beacon of collaboration and excel-

lence. Through Dr. Belal Gharaibeh's groundbreaking research on radiation effects in 3D printed polymers, we witness the transformative power of interdisciplinary partnerships.

This research is anticipated to significantly advance the understanding of 3D printed materials in high-radiation environments. By filling existing knowledge gaps, the findings could lead to innovative applications across various sectors, potentially revolutionizing manufacturing methods in the nuclear industry, enhancing component design in synchrotrons, and improving the safety and efficacy of medical implants.

The Dartmouth Fellowship empowers AUK recipients to produce impactful research, offering a distinctive avenue for professional growth within the University's scholarly network. Dartmouth and AUK have leveraged their partnership over twenty years, engaging in collaborative research, joint initiatives, and resource sharing, fostering strong connections among students and faculty from diverse backgrounds.

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Dr B. Gharaibeh

Sundance mulls venue change after 40 years in Park City

PARK CITY, Utah, April 18, (AP): The Sundance Film Festival may not always call Park City, Utah, home. The Sundance Institute has started to explore the possibility of other US locations to host the independent film festival starting in 2027, the organization said Wednesday.

The 2025 and 2026 festivals will still take place in Park City and Salt Lake City. But with the current contract up for renewal in 2027, the institute is taking steps to look at all options through a request for information and request for proposal process, beginning immediately. The final selection, which could still be Park City, is expected to be announced by early 2025.

"We are in a unique moment for our Festival and our global film community, and with the contract up for renewal, this exploration allows us to responsibly consider how we best continue sustainably serving our community while maintaining the essence of the Festival experience," said Eugene Hernandez, the festival's director.

Hernandez said they want to "ensure that the Festival continues to thrive culturally, operationally, and financially as it has for four decades."

Park City has been home to the Robert Redford-founded festival for 40 years. The festival and its sponsors take over many venues in the small city every January to transform it into a film festival hub with theaters in places like the library and a recreation center. Store fronts along the city's charming Main Street become exclusive lounges for actors and filmmakers, and restaurants host cast parties after global

film premieres.

Mayor Nann Worel said she does not want the festival to leave Park City, which has grown into a world-renowned mountain town since Sundance first put it on the map decades ago.

"We appreciate our partnership with Sundance, and we want the Festival to remain here for another 40 years," Worel said.

She committed Wednesday to working with state leaders and local partners to discuss the festival's future. Last year's hybrid festival generated just over \$118 million for the state of Utah, according to Sundance's 2023 economic impact report.

Filmmakers

Sundance has also been a launching pad for many top filmmakers over the years and has hosted premieres for eventual Oscar nominees and winners, including "CODA," their first best picture winner, and the past three documentary winners "20 Days in Mariupol," "Navalny" and "Summer of Soul." The Utah festival received a record number of submissions last year.

The festival has long sparred with local ski resorts - Park City's other major money maker - as more than 86,000 festivalgoers fill the hotels and leave the slopes virtually empty for two weeks during peak ski season.

The festival has made concessions over the years, such as moving more screenings to neighboring Salt Lake City and shifting its dates

slightly so ski areas could cash in on a holiday weekend. But, like the resorts, it cannot afford to miss the early weeks of winter. Sundance has positioned itself as the first major film festival of each calendar year, meaning it's the first stop for many of the best new projects from around the globe.

Deer Valley Resort, home to Park City's skiers-only slopes, said Wednesday that it views its relationship with Sundance as mutually beneficial and strongly supports keeping the festival in town.

"Like Deer Valley, Sundance Film Festival is an integral part of Park City and greater Utah," spokesperson Emily Summers said in a statement. "We support the festival and its long history within the community."

"Park City Mountain values all that the Sundance Film Festival brings to our community each year, and we hope it will continue to call Park City and Utah home," said Sara Huey, a Park City Mountain Resort spokesperson.

Redford, who stepped back from the Sundance spotlight years ago, expressed concern in 2016 that the festival as it existed might have outgrown Park City and was thinking about ways to evolve. He and his daughter, Amy Redford, who is on the board, have been involved in the process announced Wednesday.

Last month, the Institute's CEO Joana Vicente stepped down after two and a half years in the position. Amanda Kelso, a member of the board, was appointed acting CEO, but no permanent replacement has been announced.

Film

Variety



This image released by Lionsgate shows Alex Pettyfer, Alan Ritchson, Henry Cavill, Hero Fiennes Tiffin, and Henry Golding in a scene from the film 'The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare.' (AP)

Film

Ritchie's latest thriller is jauntily entertaining

'Warfare' amps up a true-tale WWII heist

By Jake Coyle

The latest Guy Ritchie flick "The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare" has a spine of true story to it, even if it does all it can to amplify a long-declassified World War II tale with enough dead Nazis to make "Inglourious Basterds" blush.

The result is a jauntily entertaining film but also an awkward fusion. Ritchie's film, which opens in theaters Friday, takes the increasingly prolific director's fondness for swaggering, exploitation-style ultraviolence and applies it to a real-life stealth mission that would have been thrilling enough if it had been told with a little historical accuracy.

In 2016, documents were declassified that detailed Operation Postmaster, during which a small group of British special operatives sailed to the West African island of Fernando Po, then a Spanish colony, in the Gulf of Guinea. Spain was then neutral in the war, which made the Churchill-approved gambit audacious. In January 1942, they snuck into the port and sailed off with several ships - including the Italian merchant vessel Duchessa d'Aosta - that were potentially being used in Atlantic warfare.

Sounds like a pretty good movie, right? The story even features James Bond author Ian Fleming, giving it more than enough grist for a WWII whopper. "Operation Postmaster" makes for a better title, too, than the ungainly "The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare." Ritchie, however, already has an operation - last year's "Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre" - in his filmography.

Ritchie, who turned Sherlock Holmes into a bulked-up action star, has always preferred to beef up his movies. It's a less-noted side effect of the superhero era that regular ol' heroes have been supersized, too, as if human-sized endeavors aren't quite enough anymore. And "The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare," in which a handful of operatives kill approximately a thousand Nazis, has a fine, brawny duo in Henry Cavill and Alan Ritchson. In the movie's opening scene, they're relaxing on a small ship in the Atlantic when Germans rush aboard. After a few laughs and a Nazi monologue that plays like a poor man's version of Christoph Waltz's masterful oration in "Inglourious Basterds," the duo makes quick mincemeat of them, leaving blood splattered across the henley shirt of Anders Lassen (Ritchson, a charming standout).

Not much has changed in Ritchie-land, though he's swapped tweed for skintight tees and cable-knit sweaters in a rollicking high-seas adventure. As in the director's previous movies, everyone - and, as before, nearly all male - seems to be having a good time. Likewise, Ritchie revels in his characters' debonair nonchalance while meting out all manner of savagery.

The assembled group of operatives are said to be delinquents and misfits, though they steadfastly adhere to the polite manners of past Ritchie protagonists. They may kill with bloodthirsty impunity but what really matters is upholding an old-school sense of style.

When the undercover agents Marjorie Stewart (Eiza Gonzalez, who silkily cuts like a knife through the film) and Mr. Heron (Babs Olusanmokin, excellent) ride a Nazi-controlled train on their way to Fernando Po, they look in disgust at the German sausages they're served. Later, someone will say, "I hate Nazis not because they're Nazis but because they're so gauche."

And in proficiently staged set pieces, Ritchie makes his own case for a bit of class. As a journeyman filmmaker now pumping out a movie a year, he's in many ways grown to be a more complete director. He's adept at giving the many members of his large ensemble moments to shine - including Henry Golding, Alex Pettyfer, Cary Elwes, Freddie Fox as Fleming, Til Schweiger as a barbaric Nazi and Rory Kinnear as Churchill.

And once the film - based on the nonfiction book by Damien Lewis - settles into a seedy, sunny West African setting and the nighttime heist finale, "The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare" proves a spirited, if grossly exaggerated diversion.

"The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare," a Lionsgate release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong violence throughout and some language. Running time: 92 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

NEW YORK: Jerry Seinfeld's upcoming Netflix comedy will be featured during this weekend's IndyCar race at Long Beach as rookie **Linus Lundqvist** will drive a car painted to look like a Pop-Tart in recognition of the movie "Unfrosted."

Chip Ganassi Racing's No. 8 will be painted in the

texture of an unfrosted Pop-Tart along with images of Seinfeld and some of the movie cast members. The partnership, which is in collaboration with Ganassi sponsor American Legion, is promoting the May 3 film release.

The movie marks the directorial debut for the comedian.

Seinfeld claimed all the way back in 2018 that he had been "thinking about an invention of the Pop-Tart movie. Imagine the drunk on sugar-power Kellogg's cereal culture of the mid-60s in Battle Creek, (Michigan) That's a vibe I could work with."

The movie, co-written by Seinfeld, stars Seinfeld along with **Jim Gaffigan, Melissa McCarthy, Amy Schumer, Hugh Grant, James Marsden, Bill Burr, Fred Armisen, Dan Levy** and others. "Unfrosted" tells the story of 1963 Michigan, the year before Pop-Tarts hit grocery store shelves.

"Making a movie about Pop-Tarts has led to so many wonderful, unexpected surprises, and as a car guy, I honestly cannot believe our film's logo will be on an IndyCar entry this weekend," Seinfeld said. "I am grateful to Chip Ganassi Racing for making this happen, and honored to be affiliated with The American Legion and the work they do to support American Veterans."

The American Legion signed off on the promotion as part of its "Be the One" mission that aims to save the lives of veterans by raising awareness, destigmatizing mental-health treatment and educating veterans, service members and their loved ones about what to do when a person appears at risk of suicide. Comedy is often used as a way to alleviate the symptoms that can lead to thoughts of suicide.

"The ability for the American Legion to partner with Jerry Seinfeld, 'Unfrosted' and Netflix is an incredible opportunity to expose our organization and the work we do for veterans to an entirely new audience within the entertainment community - and - the general public that are fans of Jerry Seinfeld and his comedy," said **Dean Kessel**, chief marketing officer of The American Legion.

"We know that humor can be therapeutic for those battling mental health issues. Partnering with the 'Unfrosted' project fits nicely into our 'Be The One' platform and our efforts to destigmatize veterans who are seeking help and our prevention of veteran suicide." (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, APRIL 19-20, 2024

SHANGHAI, China: Formula 1 returns to China this weekend after a five-year absence. And no matter who wins on Sunday, the star locally will be China-born driver **Zhou Guanyu**.

Despite his so-so results, Zhou is a being promoted as a celebrity in China. He's the subject of a new film as the first Chinese driver to compete in F1. And he's, of course, a favorite of sponsors who want a Chinese connection.

"It isn't just a race for me," Zhou said ahead of the Grand Prix weekend in Shanghai. "And with a Chinese driver on the grid, we will write history."

Zhou has never won a Formula 1 race. In 48 races beginning in 2022, he's yet to even reach the podium - meaning a finish in the first three places. In the last F1 race almost two weeks ago in **Japan**, his Sauber retired with a gearbox failure and he placed 18th out of 20.

In the season standings in 2023, he was also 18th with only six points from 22 races. But the numbers don't matter much in the search for a hometown hero in F1. Zhou was born in Shanghai and, though he's spent many of his formative years in **England**, Sunday's Chinese GP is a homecoming for him - and for the race. The last F1 in China was run in 2019, and the next four were canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A film about Zhou's life will be released Friday by the Shanghai Media Group, a state-owned company and one of China's largest media conglomerates.

Seven-time world champion **Lewis Hamilton** of Mercedes - he's moving next season to Ferrari - won the 2019 race in China in the midst of his era of dominance when he won four straight season titles between 2017 and 2020.

However, the race two weeks ago in Japan was the 49th straight that Hamilton has failed to win. His last victory was in 2021. (AP)

MIAMI: The 2024 Latin Grammys will return home to Miami after a controversial move to **Spain**.

The 2024 Latin Grammys will return to Miami - where the Latin Recording Academy is headquartered.

The 25th annual event will air live from the Kaseya Center on Nov. 14. Nominations will be announced on Sept. 17.

Last year's ceremony was held in **Sevilla, Spain** - the first time the show was held internationally - the result of a nearly 19 million-euro deal between the government of Andalusia and the Latin Recording Academy, and efforts to further the award show's global reach. "International growth is consistent with our mission," Latin Record-



Rosalia



Zhou

ing Academy CEO **Manuel Abud** said at the time. "We have members from more than 40 countries, and we've always celebrated music in the Spanish language and the Portuguese language. Now, the only thing that is changing is that we're taking the celebration to another place, which will ultimately expand our global reach even further."

The decision was met with some controversy, with some criticizing the Latin Grammys decision to move the show to the European country that colonized much of **Latin America**.

However, the decision to move the awards show to Spain perfectly aligned with the country's attempt to further grow music tourism -

now home to some of the biggest destination music festivals.

The award show regularly celebrates artists who are not Latin but perform in Spanish or Portuguese. An easy example is Spanish singer **Rosalia**, who is Hispanic but not Latina, and who in 2022 became the first woman to win album of the year at the award show twice. (AP)

People & Places

Stage

Musical strikes chord

Clinton, Yousafzai back timely 'Suffs'

NEW YORK, April 18, (AP): Shaina Taub was in the audience at "Suffs," her buzzy and timely new musical about women's suffrage, when she spied something that delighted her.

It was intermission, and Taub, both creator and star, had been watching her understudy perform at a matinee preview last week. Suddenly, she saw audience members searching the Wikipedia pages of key figures portrayed in the show: women like Ida B. Wells, Inez Milholland and Alice Paul, who not only spearheaded the suffrage fight but also wrote the Equal Rights Amendment (still not law, but that's a whole other story).

"I was like, that's my goal, exactly that!" Taub, who plays Paul, said from her dressing room later. "Do everything I can to make you fall in love with these women, root for them, care about them. So that was a really satisfying moment to witness."

Satisfying but sobering, too. Fact is, few audience members know much about the American suffrage movement. So the all-female creative team behind "Suffs," which had a high-profile off-Broadway run and opens Thursday on Broadway with extensive revisions, knows they're starting from zero.

It's an opportunity, says Taub, who studied social movements - but not suffrage - at New York University. But it's also a huge challenge: How do you educate but also entertain?

One member of the "Suffs" team has an especially poignant connection to the material. That would be producer **Hillary Clinton**.

She was, of course, the first woman to win the US presidential nomination of a major party, and the first to win the popular vote. But Clinton says she never studied the suffrage movement in school, even at Wellesley. Only later in life did she fill in the gap, including a visit as first lady to Seneca Falls, home to the first American women's rights convention some 70 years before the 19th Amendment gave women the vote.

History

"I became very interested in women's history through my own work, and writing and reading," Clinton told The Associated Press. And so, seeing "Suffs" off-Broadway, "I was thrilled because it just helps to fill a big gap in our awareness of the long, many-decades struggle for suffrage."

It was Taub who wrote Clinton, asking her to come on board. "I thought about it for a nanosecond," Clinton says, "and decided absolutely, I wanted to help lift up this production." A known theater lover, Clinton describes traveling often to New York as a college student and angling for discounts, often seeing only the second act, when she could get in for free. "For years, I'd only seen the second act of 'Hair,'" she quips.

Clinton then reached out to Malala Yousafzai, whom Taub had also written about becoming a producer. As secretary of state, Clinton had gotten to know the Pakistani education activist who was shot by a Taliban gunman at age 15. Clinton wanted Yousafzai to know she was involved and hoped the Nobel Peace Prize winner would be, too.

"I'm thrilled," Clinton says of Yousafzai's involvement, "because yes, this is an American story, but the pushback against women's rights going on at this moment in history is global."

Yousafzai had also seen the show, directed by Leigh Silverman, and loved it. She, too, has been a longtime fan of musicals, though she notes her acting career both began and ended with a school skit in Pakistan, playing a not-very-nice male boss. Her own education about suffrage was limited to "one or two pages in a history book that talked about the suffrage movement in the UK," where she'd moved for medical treatment.

"I still had no idea about the US side of the story," Yousafzai told the AP. It was a struggle among conflicting personalities, and a clash over priorities between older and younger activists but also between white suffragists and those of color - something the show addresses with the searing "Wait My Turn," sung by Nikki M. James as Wells, the Black activist and journalist.

Activism

"This musical has really helped me see activism from a different lens," says Yousafzai. "I was able to take a deep breath and realize that yes, we're all humans and it requires resilience and determination, conversation, open-mindedness ... and along the way you need to show you're listening to the right perspectives and including everyone in your activism."

When asked for feedback by the "Suffs" team, Yousafzai says she replied that she loved the show just as it was. Clinton, who has attended rehearsals, quips: "I sent notes, because I was told that's what producers do."

Clinton adds: "I love the changes. It takes a lot of work to get the storytelling right - to decide what should be sung versus spoken, how to make sure it's not just telling a piece of history, but is entertaining."

Indeed, the off-Broadway version was criticized by some as feeling too much like a history lesson. The new version feels faster and lighter, with a greater emphasis on humor - even in a show that details hunger strikes and forced feedings.

One moment where the humor shines through: a new song titled "Great American Bitch" that begins with a suffragist noting a man had called her, well, a bitch. The song reclaims the word with joy and laughter. Taub says this moment - and another where an effigy of President Woodrow Wilson is burned - has been a hit with audiences.

"As much as the show has changed," she says, "the spine of it is the same. A lot of what I got rid of was just like clearing brush."

Most of the original cast has returned. Jenn Colella plays Carrie Chapman Catt, an old-guard suffragist who clashed with the younger Paul over tactics and timing. James returns as Wells, while Milholland, played by Phillipa Soo off-Broadway, is now played by Hannah Cruz.

Given its parallels to a certain Lin-Manuel Miranda blockbuster about the Founding Fathers, it's perhaps not a surprise that the show has been dubbed "Hamilton" by some.

"I have to say," Clinton says of Taub, "I think she's doing for this part of American history what Lin did for our founders - making it alive, approachable, understandable. I'm hoping 'Suffs' has the same impact 'Hamilton' had."



Clinton



This image provided by World Press Photo and taken by Mohammed Salem of the Reuters news agency won the World Press Photo Award of the Year and shows Palestinian woman Inas Abu Maamar, 36, embracing the body of her 5-year-old niece Saly, who was killed in an Israeli strike, at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, October 17, 2023. (AP)



Melissa Barrera, a cast member in 'Abigail,' poses at the premiere of the film at the Regency Village Theatre, Wednesday, April 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Media

Reuters photographer tops

Poignant shot of Gaza wins World Press Photo of the Year

PARIS, April 18, (AP): Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem captured this year's prestigious World Press Photo of the Year award Thursday with a depiction of loss and sorrow in Gaza, a heartrending photo of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her young niece. The photograph, taken in Khan Younis just days after Salem's own child was born, shows 36-year-old Inas Abu Maamar holding five-year-old Saly, who was killed along with her mother and sister when an Israeli missile struck their home.

Salem, who is Palestinian, described this photo filed Nov. 2 last year, as a "powerful and sad moment that sums up the broader sense of what was happening in the Gaza Strip."

Impact

The image "truly encapsulates this sense of impact," said global jury chair Fiona Shields, The Guardian newspaper's head of photography. "It is incredibly moving to view and at the same time an argument for peace, which is extremely powerful when peace can sometimes feel like an unlikely fantasy," she added.

The World Press Photo jury praised the shot's sense of care and respect and its offering of a "metaphorical and literal glimpse into unimaginable loss."

This is not the first time Salem has been recognized for his work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; he received a World Press Photo award more than a decade ago for another depiction of the human toll of conflict in the Gaza strip.

while Ortombina will act as the director-designate until fully taking over.

Ortombina's appointment comes as Italy's



Ortombina



Meyer

far-right government of Premier **Giorgia Meloni** is trying to promote Italian nationals for leadership positions, favoring them over foreigners for major cultural posts.

Ortombina, 63, had already served as coordinator of La Scala's artistic direction from 2003-2007, before becoming the artistic director at La Fenice.

Italy's Culture Minister **Gennaro Sangiuliano** - who has made bringing Italians back to the helm of the country's main institutions one of his top priorities - hailed the new appointment.

"After three foreign general directors, **Stéphane Lissner, Alexander Pereira** and **Dominique Meyer**, an Italian returns to La Scala," he said Tuesday. (AP)

Music

Ode to life

Hudson crafts a 'Glorious' album

NEW YORK, April 18, (AP): More than two decades ago, **Kate Hudson** took on the role of one of the most celebrated music fans to ever hit the silver screen: Penny Lane in "Almost Famous." It is required viewing for record obsessives - and for Hudson, an extension of a lifelong adoration of music.

"I would die without music," she told The Associated Press from Los Angeles. "I know what it feels like to sit in your room, put on an album, and dream. It can completely change the trajectory of your life."

On May 17, Hudson will get the opportunity to do that for other listeners when she releases her debut album, "Glorious." It is an ambitious record, written by Hudson with her close collaborators Linda Perry, Johan Carlsson, and her fiancé Danny Fujikawa, spanning folk, rock and synth, soulful ballads and big pop songs. "My influences move," she says. "I didn't want to be pigeonholed into a genre."

Album

Hudson has been writing songs since she was a teenager, but the coronavirus pandemic brought up big questions and eventually, the desire to pursue an album professionally. "What is the next half of my life going to look like in terms of my connection to the arts? One thing that kept circulating for me was that if I didn't make an album, it would be a great regret," she says.

And so, she gave into the process. "I wanted to be an open channel," she says. "I didn't want to overthink anything."

She wrote 26 songs, 12 of which made the final track list. All the songs are new - self-reflections on her life, like "Live Forever," which considers motherhood and watching your adult children leave home, or "Never Made a Moment," about the end of a relationship and learning to survive without that person. "Glorious" is the title track, which she says "embodies the album. It's about a life well loved - even in its challenges, it is glorious."

She aims to uplift listeners with the record, in whatever way they find it resonates. "If there's just like one person out there that takes the album, and then turns it on, closes their eyes and like, feels something shift in them, then I feel like I've achieved success," she says.

"Or they get in their car, put their windows down and turn up a song really loud and just, like, feel great for a moment. That to me is why I want to make music. If we can get a guitar solo that, like, makes somebody feel explosive in their body, then I feel like I've achieved success," she says, smiling. "It's really that simple for me."

Security will be tight during next month's Eurovision Song Contest in the southern Sweden city of Malmö, police said Wednesday, citing demonstrations that could lead to unrests and a heightened threat of terrorism in the Scandinavian country.

"The security is going to be rigorous," **Petra Stenkula**, head of police area in Malmö, said according to Swedish broadcaster TV4.

Pro-Palestinian activists who want Israel out of the Eurovision Song Contest have announced large rallies in downtown Malmö, several kilometers (miles) from the Malmö Arena contest venue.

"Freedom of expression is strong in Sweden," Stenkula said, according to the Malmö newspaper, Sydsvenska. "Now we first have to assess the application that has been received, then we have to see if it gets permission."

She told a press conference that Swedish police will get reinforcements from across the country as well as from Norway and Denmark. She didn't provide details.

"We have terror threat level four, so we cannot empty the whole of Sweden of police officers" during the song contest, Stenkula said. The live televised final is scheduled for May 11, with semi-finals on May 7 and May 9.

Pro-Palestinian activists have planned two large demonstrations to protest Israel's participation, as conflict in the Middle East threatens to overshadow the feel-good pop music festival. Activists and some musicians have urged the European Broadcasting Union, the event organizer, to drop Israel from the event over its conduct of the war against Hamas in Gaza, triggered by the militant group's Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

World IBS Day helps raise awareness on GI disease

Expert shares IBS prevention and management strategies

CLEVELAND, April 18: There are several lifestyle choices that can greatly reduce an individual's risk of developing irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and these healthy habits can also form part of a holistic approach to managing existing cases of IBS, according to an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic, speaking ahead of World IBS Awareness Day on 19 April.

IBS is a common but uncomfortable gastrointestinal disease, characterized by abdominal pain, bloating, and abnormal bowel habits. The International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders estimates that 5-10% of the world's population has IBS. According to the foundation, women have the condition more often than men, most sufferers are under the age of 50, and many people are diagnosed only years after their symptoms began.



Lembo

"The causes of IBS are not clear and risk factors identified by researchers include altered gut bacteria, severe infections of the GI tract, food intolerances, childhood stress, and problems with how the mind and gut coordinate," says Dr. Anthony Lembo, Director of Research at Cleveland Clinic's Digestive Disease Institute. "Recent research, however, indicates that certain lifestyle modifications can significantly reduce an individual's risk of developing IBS."

Dr. Lembo cites a study, in which he was not involved, published earlier this year in the British gastroenterology journal, Gut. The study followed a group of 64,268 U.K.-based adults for an average of 12.6 years. Participants' ages ranged from 37 to 73 (average age of 55), and none had a previous IBS diagnosis.

"The study in Gut found five lifestyle habits that could significantly reduce an individual's risk of developing IBS, suggesting that lifestyle modifications can be used as a primary prevention strategy. These habits are beneficial to health in general, and individuals who follow three to five of the lifestyle recommendations reduced their risk of developing IBS by 42%."

The five lifestyle factors identified are: getting optimal sleep (seven to nine hours); participating in regular

vigorous physical activity; following a high-quality, balanced diet; never smoking; and limiting alcohol intake.

Commenting on how these lifestyle habits can be implemented in practice, Dr. Lembo suggests individuals improve their quality of sleep by following sleep hygiene principles such as limiting screen time before bed, creating a nighttime routine and avoiding caffeinated beverages in the evening. To ensure a quality diet, an eating plan such as the Mediterranean Diet is beneficial as it includes plenty of fiber and focuses on unprocessed foods. As for exercise, depending on individuals' health and with a doctor's approval, doing 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise three to five times a week should be helpful.

Managing IBS

For individuals who have already developed IBS, the same lifestyle factors have been shown to help manage the condition, and the recommendations are included in many international guidelines as a first-line treatment, Dr. Lembo says.

In addition, individuals can work with their healthcare team to identify and address individual triggers for IBS attacks, which could be anything from stress to a particular medication or food types. In the case of food, elimination diets, undertaken in consultation with a doctor, can help ease discomfort and identify which foods trigger an IBS attack. Foods typically eliminated include gluten, dairy, sugar and packaged and processed foods.

However, lifestyle changes and avoiding triggers are not enough for many patients, Dr. Lembo says. "At centers such as Cleveland Clinic the focus is on comprehensive multidisciplinary care. There are many medication options available to treat specific IBS symptoms and underlying conditions, and behavioral therapies could also be useful."

Dr. Lembo concludes, "World IBS Day provides an excellent opportunity to encourage people not to suffer gastrointestinal symptoms in silence. It is not a good idea to self-diagnose and self-medicate as many IBS symptoms are also common in other digestive diseases, some of which are serious. An IBS diagnosis and treatment plan can greatly improve a person's quality of life, and in the unlikely event that a more serious illness is diagnosed, this can be treated sooner, thereby improving outcomes."



This photo taken on April 17, 2024 shows the combination of the Shenzhou-18 crewed spaceship and a Long March-2F carrier rocket being transferred to the launching area of the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China. The combination of the Shenzhou-18 crewed spaceship and a Long March-2F carrier rocket has been transferred to the launching area, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said on Wednesday. According to the CMSA, the facilities and equipment at the launch site in Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China are in good condition, and various pre-launch function checks and joint tests will be carried out as planned. (Xinhua)

Call for action on childhood obesity prevention

Dr Reda urges prescription-only thyroid medication sales

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Dr. Adel Reda, a consultant in internal medicine, endocrinology, and diabetes at Al-Sabah Hospital, underscored the necessity of selling thyroid medications exclusively with an official prescription, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He highlighted the incorrect usage of these medications by some individuals and advocated for this practice, which is implemented in developed Western nations like Britain and several others. Dr Reda emphasized the urgency of implementing a comprehensive preven-

due diligence. He noted that these alternatives lack the rigorous scientific scrutiny typical of modern medicine, which relies on empirical evidence.

Reda highlighted instances where such treatments were found to contain undisclosed prescription

medications or harmful ingredients, underscoring the potential risks associated with their consumption. He warned against the promotion of products touted as "miracle pills" and cautioned against individuals claiming to cure serious diseases like cancer through such means.

Additionally, Reda criticized individuals who engage in medical practices without proper certification or specialization, contrary to globally accepted treatment protocols backed by statistical evidence.



Dr Reda

The Conversation

How culture shapes our microbial world

Fermented foods help boost gut health

By Andrew Flachs, Purdue University and Joseph Orkin, Université de Montréal

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

Many people around the world make and eat fermented foods. Millions in Korea alone make kimchi. The cultural heritage of these pickles shape not only what they eat every time they crack open a jar but also something much, much smaller: their microbiomes.

On the microbial scale, we are what we eat in very real ways. Your body is teeming with trillions of microbes. These complex ecosystems exist on your skin, inside your mouth and in your gut. They are particularly influenced by your surrounding environment, especially the food you eat. Just like any other ecosystem, your gut microbiome requires diversity to be healthy.

People boil, fry, bake and season meals, transforming them through cultural ideas of "good food." When people ferment food, they affect the microbiome of their meals directly. Fermentation offers a chance to learn how taste and heritage shape microbiomes: not only of culturally significant foods such as German sauerkraut, kosher pickles, Korean kimchi or Bulgarian yogurt, but of our own guts.

Our work as anthropologists focuses on how culture transforms food. In fact, we first sketched out our plan to link cultural values and microbiology while writing our Ph.D. dissertations at our local deli in St. Louis, Missouri.

Staring down at our pickles and lox, we wondered how the salty, crispy zing of these foods represented the marriage of culture and microbiology.

Equipped with the tools of microbial genetics and cultural anthropology, we were determined to find out.

Fermentation is the creation of an extreme microbiological environment through salt, acid and lack of oxygen deprivation. It is both an ancient food preservation technique and a way to create distinctive tastes, smells and textures.

Variable

Taste is highly variable and something you experience through the layers of your social experience. What may be nauseating in one context is a delicacy in another. Fermented foods are notoriously subtle: they bubble, they smell and they zing. Whether and how these pungent foods taste good can be a moment of group pride or a chance to heal social divides.

In each case, cultural notions of good food and heritage recipes combine to create a microbiome in a jar. From this perspective, sauerkraut is a particular ecosystem shaped by German food traditions, kosher dill pickles by Ashkenazi Jewish traditions, and pao cai by southwestern Chinese traditions.

To begin to understand the effects of culinary traditions and individual creativity on microbiomes, we partnered with Sandor Katz, a fermentation practitioner based in Tennessee. Over the course of four days during one of Katz's workshops, we made, ate and shared fermented foods with nine fellow participants. Through conversations and interviews, we learned about the unique tastes and meanings we

each brought to our love of fermented foods.

Those stories provided context to the 46 food samples we collected and froze to capture a snapshot of the life swimming through kimchi or miso. Participants also collected stool samples each day and mailed in a sample a week after the workshop, preserving a record of the gut microbial communities they created with each bite.

The fermented foods we all made were rich, complex and microbially diverse. Where many store-bought fermented foods are pasteurized to clear out all living microbes and then re-inoculated with two to six specific bacterial species, our research showed that homemade ferments contain dozens of strains.

On the microbiome level, different kinds of fermented foods will have distinct profiles. Just as forests and deserts share ecological features, sauerkrauts and kimchis look more similar to each other than yogurt to cheese.

Ingredients

But just as different habitats have unique combinations of plants and animals, so too did every crock and jar have its own distinct microbial world because of minor differences in preparation or ingredients. The cultural values of taste, creativity and style that create a kimchi or a sauerkraut go on to support distinct microbiomes on those foods and inside the people who eat them.

Through variations in recipes and cultural preferences toward an extra pinch of salt or a disdain for dill, fermentation traditions result in distinctive microbial and taste profiles that your culture trains you to identify as

good or bad to eat. That is, our sauerkraut is not your sauerkraut, even if they both might be good for us.

Microbially rich fermented foods can influence the composition of your gut microbiome.

Because your tastes and recipes are culturally informed, those preferences can have a meaningful effect on your gut microbiome. You can eat these foods in ways that introduce microbial diversity, including potentially probiotic microbes that offer benefits to human health such as killing off bacteria that make you ill, improving your cardiovascular health or restoring a healthy gut microbiome after you take antibiotics.

Fermentation is an ancient craft, and like all crafts it requires patience, creativity and practice. Cloudy brine is a signal of tasty pickled cucumbers, but it can be a problem for lox. When fermented foods smell rotten, taste too soft or turn red, that can be a sign of contamination by harmful bacteria or molds.

Fermenting foods at home might seem daunting when food is something that comes from the store with a regulatory guarantee. People hoping to take a more active role in creating their food or embracing their own culture's traditional foods need only time, water and salt to make simple fermented foods. As friends share sourdough starters, yogurt cultures and kombucha mothers, they forge social connections.

Through a unique combination of culture and microbiology, heritage food traditions can support microbial diversity in your gut. These cultural practices provide environments for the yeasts, bacteria and local fruits and grains that in turn sustain heritage foods and flavors. (AP)

Findings to shed light on human biological clock

Chinese study reveals how mammal neurons encode time

BEIJING, April 18, (Xinhua): A group of Chinese scientists identified how a specific region of neuron clusters in a mammal's brain encodes the time of the day, a finding that lend to new clues to decipher human being's biological clock design at a systematic level.

The suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is known as the mammalian central circadian pacemaker with different types

of neurons acting in concert while each neuron harbors a self-sustained molecular clockwork. But how system-level SCN signals record time was mysterious.

The researchers from Peking University used a high-speed dual-view two-photon microscope they developed to realize calcium ion imaging of up to 9,000 neurons in adult SCN slices,

and then they leveraged artificial intelligence (AI) methods to understand meanings of those signals as a whole.

The population-level calcium ion signals can predict hourly time via a group decision-making mechanism, according to the study published recently in the journal Cell Research.

They achieved hourly time prediction by polling random cohorts of SCN

neurons, reaching 99 percent accuracy at a cohort size of 900, according to the study.

"The SCN is the mammal's central biological clock, which receives and processes external light information, calculates time and outputs signals to guide the behaviors of organisms," said Wang Zichen from Peking University, the first author of the paper.

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SPORTS

The new slow pitch at home didn't work well for the Titans

Gujarat crashes to 89 all out vs Delhi, loses IPL game by 6 wkts

AHMEDABAD, India, April 18, (AP): Gujarat Titans crashed to their lowest-ever score of 89 as Delhi Capitals notched a six-wicket win in the Indian Premier League.

Delhi cashed in on a small target in a bid to improve its net run-rate and romped to 92-4 in only 8.5 overs that lifted it to No. 6 on the table after three wins from seven league games.

Gujarat's previous low IPL total was 125, also made against Delhi at Ahmedabad last year as the 2022 champion and last year's finalist dropped to No. 7 on net run-rate with three wins from seven games.

CRICKET

The new slow pitch at home didn't work well for Gujarat after captain Shubman Gill lost the toss and was put in to bat. Gill fell into the trap early when he chipped an easy catch into the cover off Ishant Sharma's (2-8) full pitched delivery.

David Miller was brilliantly caught left-handedly by Delhi skipper Rishabh Pant behind the wickets off Sharma as Gujarat slumped to 30-4 in the first five overs.

With the ball gripping on a slow surface, Pant's experimentation with the offspin of Tristan Stubbs paid off when the South African chipped in with two wickets off his one over. Pant did two sharp stumpings of



Delhi Capitals' Sumit Kumar bats during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

Abhinav Manohar (8) and Shahrux Khan (0) off Stubbs successive deliveries.

Rashid Khan top-scored with 31 and was one of the three batters to reach double figures along with Sai Sudharsan (12) and Rahul Tewatia (10) before fast bowler Mukesh Kumar (3-14) wrapped up the tail and got Gujarat bowled out in 17.3 overs.

Australia's young batting sensation Jake Fraser-McGurk, who made a half-century in his impactful IPL debut game against Lucknow Super Giants in the last match, thumped two sixes and two boundaries in his 10-ball knock of 20 as Delhi looked

for a quick finish.

Surprisingly, Gill didn't use his ace leg-spinner Rashid until the last over of batting power play as Delhi raced to 65-3 inside the first five overs.

Fast bowler Sandeep Warrier, in his first IPL game for Gujarat, was smacked for 40 runs off his three overs in the batting powerplay, for the wickets of Prithvi Shaw (7) off a steep bouncer and impact substitute batter Abhishek Porel (15) was bowled while going for a big shot.

Rashid had Shai Hope caught (19) off a reverse sweep in his first over before Delhi cruised to victory.

Fijians host the Hurricanes

Blues and Brumbies to lock horns in a pivotal Super Rugby Pacific showdown

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, April 18, (AP): The Blues and the Brumbies will attempt to show off their playoff credentials in a pivotal contest Saturday in Super Rugby Pacific.

The Auckland-based Blues and Canberra-based Brumbies share second place on the championship standings, three points behind the unbeaten Hurricanes with matching 6-1 records.

If one team has a built-in advantage on Saturday, it is the Blues who are unbeaten in their last nine matches at home. The Blues have scored 110 points in three home matches so far in 2024, conceding only 19 points. Their only away loss so far has been to the Hurricanes.

The Blues also have the best defensive record in the tournament with only 95 points conceded in seven games. The Brumbies are third on defensive standings behind the Blues and Hurricanes but having conceded 50 points more than the Blues.

At the same time, the Brumbies' successful start to the season is qualified by the fact that only one of their

six wins has come against a New Zealand opponent - a 27-21 over the Dunedin-based Highlanders in Round 4. Their only other match against a New Zealand team resulted in a 46-12 loss to the Hamilton-based Chiefs.

But the Brumbies are a hard nut to crack when they play their own game based on a solid set piece and the ball-running abilities of players such as Rob Valetini. The Brumbies also will be strengthened by the return after a short absence of captain Ryan Lonergan.

RUGBY

"Clearly the Brumbies are tracking really well this season," Blues coach Vern Cotter said. "They've been impressive both offensively and defensively and will be a handful."

"We're locked together on points, we've won the same number of games and whoever wins on Saturday will claim outright second on the points table. It's a big match."

The Blues also have a returning

captain - Patrick Tuipulotu will start at lock - while Mark Telea also returns, having scored five tries this season.

The Wellington-based Hurricanes will put their unbeaten record on the line in Suva against the Fijian Drua who are unbeaten at home.

The Drua have beaten the Crusaders, the Western Force and the New South Wales Waratahs in Lautoka so far this season and beat the Hurricanes in Round 11 last year. But Friday's match will be played in Suva, where the Drua's record last season was not quite as strong.

"We understand the challenge. We know the atmosphere we're going to get in Suva," Hurricanes coach Clark Laidlaw said. "They love their rugby and I think it might be the Drua's only game across in Suva this season."

"We're well aware of what we're walking into but can we deal with it? No other team has yet this year and there's only one team that's won there in eight or nine attempts in Fiji. It's a big challenge, it's probably as big as it gets."

Plans to open Paris Oly on R. Seine remain unchanged and are on track

Security risks no deterrent

PARIS, April 18, (AP): As the countdown clock to the Paris Olympics passed the 100-day mark, the question of holding the opening ceremony on the Seine River loomed large over the milestone celebrations.

Organizers have planned a parade of about 10,500 athletes through the heart of the French capital on boats on the Seine along a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) route in the opening ceremony at sunset on July 26.

But French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that the exceptional open-air event in central Paris could be shifted to a more conventional opening ceremony at the Stade de France if the security threat is deemed too high.

"If we think there are risks, depending on our analysis of the context, we have fallback scenarios. There are plan Bs and plan Cs," Macron said.

OLYMPICS



The Paris 2024 Olympic medals are displayed, Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at the Grand Palais Ephemere venue in Paris. (AP)

France is on high security alert ahead of the Paris Olympics and Paralympics, which are expected to draw millions of visitors to the country. Organizers, French government officials and French athletes at the J-100 ("100 Days To Go" Olympic event) on Wednesday all acknowledged security concerns over the opening ceremony, which will bring huge crowds and over 100 world leaders to the embankments.

They insisted that preparations for the parade on the Seine are still in full swing and should go ahead as planned.

"We are heavily working on Plan A which remains the central scenario and the very, very dominant scenario," France's Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra said.

She added, enthusiastically and with a large smile: "We keep working on that fantastic ceremony on the River Seine."

The sports minister emphasized that visitors to Paris will be safe during the Olympics.

"We know that risks exist," Oudéa-Castéra said. "We know the world is complex, sometimes unstable, sometimes unpredictable, sometimes dangerous," she said, before insisting, "We really want to say to the whole world that, in any case, France will be a safe place."

Tony Estanguet, the head of the Paris Games' organizing committee, said the plan to open the Games with the sunset parade on the Seine remains unchanged and "it's our duty, our role to make sure it will happen."

However, there are as yet unspecified contingency plans in place whereby organizers will adapt to any circumstances that might arise, Estanguet added.

David Lappartient, the president of the French National Olympic and Sports Committee, accepted there are challenges in preparing an event like the Olympics in a city like Paris at the time of heightened tensions and raging wars.

"The situation worldwide is quite complicated," said Lappartient, who is also an International Olympic Committee member. There are chal-

PSG dreaming of club treble as another Ligue 1 crown beckons

PARIS, April 18, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain remains on course for a historic club treble after reaching the Champions League semifinals this week.

Kylian Mbappé and his teammates can dream of playing the final at Wembley Stadium on June 1. Mbappé can imagine himself climbing the long stairs before raising aloft Europe's premier club trophy for the first time since PSG's foundation in 1970, in what would effectively be his last game before leaving the club.

"Of course I want to win the Champions League with PSG,"

SOCCER

Mbappé said after PSG knocked out Barcelona in the quarterfinals on Tuesday. "We have a great side and we'll do all we can to get to Wembley."

But before scaling such heights, there are domestic matters to take care of.

Starting with clinching a record-extending 12th French title.

PSG has a 10-point lead and can take a step closer to the title on Sunday with a home win against Lyon

at Parc des Princes. But it will face a Lyon team full of confidence under coach Pierre Sage, one of the success stories of the season along with Brest.

Sage took charge only on an interim basis in December, but the club hierarchy liked what they saw and soon appointed him full-time. Sage, which translates as "Wise" in English, has led a remarkable charge

up the league table with 11 wins in 17 games.

Instead of fretting over relegation as it did in bleak late autumn, Lyon sits in a sunnier seventh place and within three points of Nice in fifth spot.

The softly spoken Sage has relied on veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette, who is third in the league scoring charts with 15, while former Manchester United and Chelsea midfielder Nemanja Matic has proved an excellent midseason signing from Rennes. Matic's arrival has helped former France midfielder Corentin Tolisso regain his form, and Tolisso scored a well-taken goal in last Sunday's 4-3 win against Brest.



PSG's Marquinhos runs with the ball during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain at the Olympic Lluís Companys stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

opening ceremony - wherever it may take place - and in fan zones, Olympic venues and the city of Paris itself.

"It's part of life today, unfortunately," Guigou said. "We have enough intelligent and competent people in place to look after that, so I'm not doubting things."

Dany Dann, a French breaker who will take part in his first Olympics

as breaking makes its debut, has no concerns.

He is only anxious to get started, on the Seine, at the Stade de France or anywhere else in Paris.

"I just want to live the Games," Dann said. "We know that if it's moved left or right, things will be organized so that everything's fine. I am concentrating on my preparation for the Games."

When Inter won Serie A three years ago, the team was denied an open-air bus celebration due to the coronavirus pandemic. And the team would have to wait an extra

Milan derby, Serie A title

Inter can capture it all in a single night

ROME, April 18, (AP): A derby win. A Serie A title. A second star.

Inter Milan has an unprecedented chance to secure all three achievements at once with a win over AC Milan on Monday.

And city bragging rights might mean more than anything.

"It's an incredible opportunity," Inter midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan said.

Entering with a 14-point advantage over second-place Milan, Inter can stretch its lead to an insurmountable 17 points with five rounds remaining. That would secure Inter's 20th Italian league title and earn the Nerazzurri a second star on their shirts.

A star is awarded for every 10 Serie A titles. Inter and Milan have each won the Italian league 19 times. Only Juventus, which has a record 36 titles and thus three stars, has won more.

SOCCER

"We're almost at the top of the mountain and we can't wait to see the view. But we're not quite there yet," said Inter coach Simone Inzaghi, who is poised to win the league for the first time as a coach. "We still need some points and we want to get them as soon as possible."

With Milan being the home club, most of the San Siro will be decked out in red and black, with only one end of the stadium reserved for Inter's supporters.

Milan will be motivated after Inter routed the Rossoneri 5-1 in this season's first derby in September.

It's not the first Derby della Madonnina with added significance.

Inter beat Milan in both legs of the Champions League semifinals last season and also won the Italian Super Cup played in Saudi Arabia against Milan last year - with the two rivals meeting a record five times last season.

When Inter won Serie A three years ago, the team was denied an open-air bus celebration due to the coronavirus pandemic. And the team would have to wait an extra



Cagliari's Eldor Shomurodov (left), and Inter Milan's Alessandro Bastoni vie for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Cagliari at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

day this time due to public safety concerns.

Milan officials are concerned that a victory parade Monday night would run into potential conflict with Milan fans returning home from the derby combined with more Inter supporters streaming out of their homes to join in on the celebration. Plus, local police are scheduled to go on strike Monday.

So the bus parade would not happen until Tuesday if Inter wins.

If Inter doesn't win, the next chance to clinch will come against Torino at the San Siro the following weekend.

Whenever it happens - a trophy for Inter seems a certainty - the title will crown a season in which Inter was not the preseason favorite.

Napoli was favored to repeat after its dominant performance last season but lies only eighth in the current standings, a whopping 34 points behind Inter.

Despite losing Romelu Lukaku to Roma, Inter has exceeded all expectations with Marcus Thuram more than making up for the Belgian's departure with 11 goals and seven assists.

Inter captain Lautaro Martinez, who has a league-high 23 goals, is poised to be presented with the Serie A trophy after Inter's last home game against Lazio on May 19.

FIFA plans to add slew of new

GENEVA, April 18, (AP): FIFA is set to create dozens of new committees and expert panels, reversing a governance reform passed in 2016 when the world soccer body was in turmoil during corruption scandals.

FIFA's plan to increase its number of standing committees from seven to 35 - with the option to let its president Gianni Infantino create and appoint extra panels of experts - was detailed in a draft update of its legal statutes released late Wednesday.

Creating the new bodies could let FIFA award hundreds of expenses-paid committee seats to soccer officials worldwide who will vote on the new rules at a May 17 meeting in Thailand. A similar system widely seen as patronage to encourage loyalty thrived in the presidency of Sepp Blatter who was ousted from office in 2015.

The American and Swiss federal investigations of international soccer, revealed in May 2015 by hotel and office raids in Zurich, led to a wide-ranging review of FIFA's management structure and principles.

A 15-member review panel chaired by veteran Olympic lawyer François Carrard advised terminating most of

FIFA's 26 committees "to improve efficiency." It also wanted to involve FIFA's 200-plus member federations "in a more meaningful gender-balanced and efficient way in the decision-making processes of FIFA."

The panel included Infantino, then general secretary of European soccer body UEFA, and its slate of reforms was passed at a FIFA congress in February 2016. On the same day Infantino was elected to lead FIFA.

The new slate of committees under article 39 of FIFA's statutes being proposed to the next congress on May 17 in Bangkok, Thailand, includes a dedicated "Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Committee."

FIFA had a racism task force under Blatter which was shut down within months of Infantino taking over, saying its work was complete. A new anti-racism body has been worked on with Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior.

FIFA has just one committee overseeing organization of its soccer tournaments, and this should increase to nine. They would include separate bodies for each of the national team, club and youth competitions for women.

SPORTS



Players pose for a group photo after their final training session.

Kuwait eyes victory in showdown with Indonesia

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kuwait hockey team aims to clinch the title of the Men's Ice Hockey World Cup (2024) fourth-level championship when it faces off against the Indonesian national team.

The tournament culminates this evening, with Malaysia and Mongolia squaring off at 5:00 pm followed by Kuwait and Indonesia at 6:00 pm.

Initiated last Tuesday under the patronage of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Daoud Marafi, and

with the comprehensive technical, arbitration, and organizational oversight of the International Federation of the Game, the tournament holds significant importance as it grants the winner national team.

ICE HOCKEY

qualification to ascend to the third level in this global event.

The Kuwaiti national team showcased impressive performance in its

debut match, overpowering the Malaysian national team 15-1 amidst stiff competition from Mongolia.

Today, Al-Azraq eagerly anticipates a tough encounter with Indonesia, aiming to secure qualification for the third round and to progress towards an unprecedented achievement by reaching the first level, as per the Winter Games Club's strategic plan.

Under the technical guidance of Serbian coach Marko Zdravec, the Kuwaiti team boasts numerous standout

players, signaling promising prospects for advancement to the third round.

Winter Games Club Treasurer Ahmed Al-Omran affirmed Kuwait's success and commendable performance, highlighting the meticulous preparations and equipment preceding the tournament's commencement. He emphasized Kuwait's hosting of this prestigious event as a testament to the International Federation of the Game's confidence in Kuwaiti talent and the nation's strides in ice hockey development.

Bulls roll past Hawks

Sixers earn No. 7 seed

PHILADELPHIA, April 18, (AP): The 76ers needed all the improbable tricks they could summon to even have a chance at winning their first play-in game in team history.

Nicolas Batum hit game-shifting 3-pointers. Buddy Hield was in the mix. Even the promise of free chicken nuggets was enough to revive an offense and smother the boos from Philly fans that rained inside the arena.

But in crunch time, the game came down to Joel Embiid. Always Joel Embiid.

With the NBA MVP on the court, the 76ers proved they have a shot at a long postseason run as long as he's in the lineup.

Embiid had 23 points, 15 rebounds and one huge assist to Kelly Oubre Jr. on a go-ahead three-point play that led the 76ers to a 105-104 win over the Miami Heat in the Eastern Conference play-in tournament on Wednesday night.

The 76ers earned the No. 7 seed and advanced to play the second-seeded New York Knicks in the opening round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. Game 1 is Saturday at Madison Square Garden.

BASKETBALL

The Heat - who went from the play-in tourney to the NBA Finals a year ago - host the winner of the night's late play-in game between Chicago and Atlanta on Friday night, with the winner getting the No. 8 seed.

Embiid exploded out of a quiet game late in the fourth and carried the Sixers back from 14 down in the second half. Embiid, who missed 43 games this season and finished out on a surgically repaired left knee, was a non-factor as Batum and Hield sparked the 76ers in the second half. Batum had 20 points.

Embiid buried a go-ahead 3-pointer from the top of the arc with 2:33 left in the game for a 93-91 lead that sent a crowd - that had booed the Sixers out of the building at the half - into a frenzy. After the Sixers blew that lead, Embiid again was clutch with a three-point play for a 96-94 lead.

With the game tied 96-all, Miami's Tyler Herro was whistled for a back-court violation. Embiid slipped the ball to Oubre under the basket for the bucket, the free throw and a 99-96 lead they would not give up.

The 76ers played this one like it was Game 7 - and with good reason. They like their chances against the upstart Knicks rather than playing for the No. 8 seed and a date with the NBA's best, the Boston Celtics.

That's what Miami faces if it can get out of Friday's game and make the playoffs under this format for the sec-



Chicago Bulls guard Ayo Dosunmu, (left), blocks a shot by Atlanta Hawks guard Dejounte Murray during the first half of an NBA basketball play-in tournament game in Chicago. (AP)

ond straight season. Herro - who hit a 3 in the final second before the 76ers lost the ball out of bounds as time expired - finished with 25 points. Jimmy Butler, perhaps slowed by a first-half knee injury, had 19.

Coby White scored a career-high 42 points, and the Chicago Bulls advanced in the play-in tournament, knocking out the Atlanta Hawks with a 131-116 victory.

White, whose previous high was 37, went hard at the rim throughout the game and had fans chanting his name down the stretch as the Bulls rolled past the Hawks. Chicago visits Miami on Friday for a shot at the No. 8 seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs and a first-round matchup with Boston. The Heat lost 105-104 to Philadelphia on Wednesday.

Dejounte Murray led Atlanta with 30 points. But the Hawks came up short again after dropping their final six regular-season games.

Nikola Vucevic had 24 points and 12 rebounds for Chicago. DeMar DeRozan finished with 22 points and nine assists.

Ayo Dosunmu added 19 points after missing the final four regular-season games because of a bruised right quadriceps, and the Bulls shot 56.8% from the field.

Atlanta's Trae Young and Clint Capela each scored 22. Young, who missed 23 games late in the regular season because of a torn ligament in his left pinkie, had 10 assists but committed six turnovers. Capela grabbed 17 rebounds. Bogdan Bogdanovic added 21 points.

The Bulls were up 88-85 when Vucevic nailed a 3-pointer with 4:59 left in the third quarter to kick off a 17-2 run.



Kazma player controls the ball as Al-Qadisiya defends during the Kuwait Basketball League Championship game.

Kazma force decider against Al-Qadisiya as Kuwait Club advance to Championship final

Arab withdraw from competition

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kazma's basketball team secured a playoff match against Al-Qadisiya in the semi-finals of the Basketball League Championship by defeating them 83-79 in a tense match held at the Al-Ittihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. Meanwhile, Kuwait Club advanced to the final round after their Arab counterpart withdrew from the competition, citing dissatisfaction with the referee assignment.

In the first playoff match, Al-Qadisiya emerged victorious with a score of 85-81, necessitating a decisive playoff match scheduled for next week.

BASKETBALL

This victory marks Kazma's first win over Al-Qadisiya this season, breaking a streak of five consecutive defeats.

The match between the "Orange" and "Yellow" teams was characterized by intense competition from the outset, with both teams exchanging leads throughout the first quarter, which ended in favor of Al-Qadisiya 17-16.

The second quarter saw both teams jostling for dominance until the final minutes when Kazma's American professional player excelled in scoring, giving his team a 39-33 lead at halftime.

Al-Qadisiya staged a comeback in the third quarter, led by their American players, Lowry and Tiran, who contributed both inside and outside scoring, ending the quarter with a narrow 64-61 lead for the Yellow team.

The fourth quarter witnessed a seesaw battle, but Kazma ultimately clinched the match with a final score of 83-79. Al-Arabi chose to withdraw from their playoff match against Kuwait Club in protest against the refereeing decisions made in the previous

Kuwait handball youth team heads to Morocco for Arab Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: Kuwait youth handball team is set to embark on a journey to Morocco to partake in the Sixth Arab Youth Championship, slated to take place from April 21 to 30. Led by Handball Federation Secretary General Qayed Al-Adwani, the delegation includes various officials and 18 players.

Five teams will compete in the Arab Youth Handball Championship: Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Algeria, and Kuwait. The Kuwaiti team will commence its matches against host Morocco on Sunday, followed by Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria.

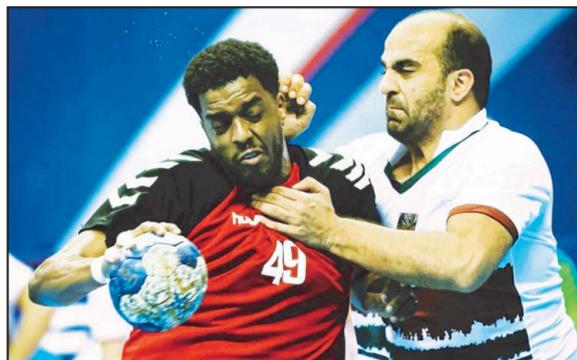
In other news, Kazma secured a victory over Al-Tadamon with a score of

37-24 in the 11th round of the Handball League. Additional matches within the round saw Al-Nasr triumph over Al-Fahaheel and Al-Arabi defeating Sulabikhat.

HANDBALL

Kazma currently holds the third position with 16 points, while Al-Tadamon trails at the bottom of the standings. Al-Nasr ranks seventh with 11 points, Al-Fahaheel ninth with eight points, Al-Arabi fourth with 16 points, and Al-Sulabikhat sixth with 11 points.

The round concludes today with two matches: Al-Salmiya, leading with 17 points, will face Khaitan, while Kuwait Club, second with 16 points, will compete against Yarmouk.



Al-Nasr and Al-Fahaheel players battle for the ball.

match and the Federation's inaction regarding these issues.

Al-Arabi demanded that foreign referees officiate the second match, but the appointment of only one foreign referee, along with two local referees, was unacceptable to the club's management.

Adnan Abel, Al-Arabi's basketball director, viewed the withdrawal as a

victory for the club's rights, expressing dissatisfaction with the refereeing errors in the previous match and the lack of action taken by the officials.

Al-Arabi plans to submit a comprehensive report of the incidents, including video evidence of the refereeing errors, to the Asian and International Federations of Basketball, striving to uphold fairness and justice in the sport.

Best of the Rest

'Pay Ronaldo salary': Juventus has been ordered to pay Cristiano Ronaldo more than \$10 million by an arbitration board following a salary dispute.

The dispute regarded a move by Juventus players to defer part of their salaries during the coronavirus pandemic.

The 9.8 million euros (\$10.5 million) that Juventus was ordered to pay Ronaldo is half the amount that the five-time Ballon d'Or winner had been seeking from the Turin club in back wages.

Juventus said in a statement late Wednesday that "with the support of its legal counsel" it's "reviewing the decision made by the arbitration board, reserving all assessments and initiatives to preserve its rights."

Ronaldo played for Juventus from 2018-21, helping the club to two Serie A titles.

Former Juventus president Andrea Agnelli and the entire club board resigned in 2023 amid an investigation into false accounting - which then resulted in a 10-point penalty for Juventus in Serie A and a ban by UEFA from Europe for this season.

Ronaldo now plays for Al-Nasr in Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Rossi's contract extended: Daniele De Rossi's contract at Roma has been extended after just three months on the job, club owners Dan and Ryan Friedkin announced Thursday.

"After meeting yesterday afternoon with Daniele De Rossi, we are delighted to announce he will continue as head coach of AS Roma after this season and for the foreseeable future," the Friedkins said in a statement. "In his short tenure as head coach, the positive impact that his leadership has brought to the entire club has told its own story."

When De Rossi, a former Roma captain, took over for the fired Jose Mourinho in January with a contract through the end of the season, Roma was languishing in ninth place and at risk of missing out on qualifying for Europe. Under De Rossi, Roma has surged to fifth place and is in contention for a Champions League spot. (AP)

Kuwait fall to Vietnam in U-23 Asia Cup Group D opener

DOHA, April 18, (KUNA): Kuwait Olympic team suffered a 1-3 defeat against Vietnam in the AFC U-23 Asia Cup Group D opener held at Al Janoub Stadium in Doha.

Van Tung Nguyen secured the opener for Vietnam while Kuwait's Solaiman Al-Awadhi netted the equalizer later, leaving the half at 1-1.

However, in the second half, Vietnam's Vi Hao Bui scored two more goals in the 47th and 76th minutes, securing the victory.

SOCCER

Meanwhile, in the same group, Uzbekistan emerged victorious with a 2-0 win over Malaysia, courtesy of Jasurbek Jaloliddinov in the 11th minute and Ulugbek Khoshimov in the 83rd minute. As a result, Vietnam leads the group with three points, followed by Uzbekistan, Kuwait, and Malaysia.

Looking ahead, Indonesia will



Players wait for proceedings to start.

face Australia, while Jordan will take on Qatar in Group A competition on Thursday. The championship, which

began on Monday in Qatar with 16 participating teams, is scheduled to continue until May 3rd.



Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne kicks the ball with Real Madrid's Toni Kroos during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Manchester City and Real Madrid at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Sports

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Real shatter Man City treble dreams, advance to Champions League semis

Kimmich heads Bayern past Arsenal

MANCHESTER, England, April 18, (AP): Real Madrid weathered the storm, silenced the crowd and ultimately ended Manchester City's brief hold on the Champions League.

The all-time kings of Europe moved a step closer to a record-extending 15th title in the competition they have dominated after a 4-3 win on penalties at Etihad Stadium.

But not before being pushed to the limit by defending champion City.

"I was pretty much dead on my feet at the end," Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham said. "It's so difficult. They are continuously probing with the ball and move you around. Most teams would fall apart when City get on top of you, but we stood up really well."

The game had gone to the uncertainty of a shootout after ending 1-1 on the night and 4-4 on aggregate.

City dominated the chances after going behind to Rodrygo's goal in the 12th minute, but only had Kevin de Bruyne's leveler in the 76th to show for its superiority, which included 64% of possession and 18 corners to Madrid's one through extra time.

That counted for little as Antonio Rudiger struck the decisive spot kick after Bernardo Silva and Mateo Kovacic both saw their penalties saved.

"In this competition, that's the way football happens," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "In other sports, for (these) statistics, we would have won."

SOCCER

Guardiola had few complaints. He accepted his team had failed to capitalize against a Madrid team that was forced to defend deep against wave after wave of attack.

Erling Haaland hit the bar with one header in the first half De Bruyne sent an effort sailing over from inside the box in the second.

Madrid dug deep, held on and now faces Bayern Munich in the semifinals after the Germans beat Arsenal 1-0 and 3-2 on aggregate.

"Today it came down to mentality," Bellingham said.

The defeat ended City's bid to become the first English team to win back-to-back Champions League titles and its pursuit of successive trebles. It is still challenging for the Premier League title and FA Cup.

Victory for Madrid saw the Spanish giant advance to the semifinals for the fourth year in row - denying City the chance to emulate that feat.

"This was about survival," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "Madrid is a club based on always fighting to stay in situations where there seems to be no way out - but we always find a way. By the time the penalty shoot-out came, we were totally convinced we'd go through."

Ancelotti has already won the Champions League a record four times as a coach - one more than Guardiola - and could extend that record by lifting the trophy for a third time with Madrid.

For Guardiola it is back to the drawing board after watching his team to relinquish the trophy it won for the first time last year and ending his own 12-year wait to triumph again in European club soccer's most demanding competition.

"I have to say thank you to these players from deep in my heart because the way they played. But football is about winning and we didn't do enough, yet we were exceptional," he said.

This was the third straight season Madrid and City have clashed in the Champions League in what is becoming a classic rivalry. The winner of their meetings going on to win the competition in each of the past two years.

Madrid avenged last year's loss when its defense of the trophy was ended by a 4-0 rout at the hands of City in the semifinals.

England midfielder Bellingham was pivotal to Madrid's opener with a moment of brilliance to open City up. Collecting a high ball just past the halfway line, he shook off the attention of Rodri with a deft touch to wrong-foot his opponent.

The ball was worked to Vinicius Junior on the right who crossed to Rodrygo, who beat Ederson at the second attempt after his first shot was saved.

That pressure eventually paid off when De Bruyne leveled the game, lifting the ball high into the net after Rudiger could only partially clear a

Replays in the FA Cup scrapped from next season

LONDON, April 18, (AP): Replays in the FA Cup - for so long a big money-maker for lower-division teams in English soccer - have been scrapped from next season, with organizers citing "expanded UEFA competitions" as the reason.

Earning gate receipts and broadcast revenue from an extra game, especially against a top Premier League team, can be a game-changer for smaller clubs.

However, the FA Cup recently got rid of replays from the last 16 onward, and on Thursday said there won't be any from the first round, removing a quirk of the competition.

Space on domestic soccer calendars is increasingly tight, even more so from next season when there will be an extra 64 games in an expanded Champions League and four extra midweeks during the season for European games. Eng-

SOCCER

land is unusual in still having a second cup competition - the League Cup - too. Chris Wilder, who manages Premier League club Sheffield United but has spent much of his coaching career in the

lower leagues, would have preferred replays to have stayed.

The move comes as part of an agreement between the Football Association and the Premier League that will see up to an extra 33 million pounds (\$41 million) go to the grassroots game from the top flight each season. The Premier League will be contributing more money to a stadium fund, which can be accessed by clubs from the lower leagues for infrastructure improvements.

Also as part of the agreement, the fourth round, last 16 and quarterfinals of the FA Cup will be played exclusive of Premier League games for the first time.



Athletes battling for glory.

Medal count reaches 27

Taekwondo stars shine as Kuwait claims 11 more medals at First Youth GCC Games



A Kuwaiti celebrates after winning a medal during the first GCC Youth Games in Abu Dhabi.

KUNA photos

ABUDHABI, April 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's male and female taekwondo athletes extended their winning streak at the First Youth GCC Games, securing 11 additional medals on Wednesday. With this achievement, Kuwait's medal count reached 27, comprising eight gold, eight silver, and 11 bronze medals by the end of the second day of the competition.

Among the newly acquired medals, Abdulaziz Emad clinched a gold medal, while Othman Al-Enzi, Khaled Talal,

TAEKWONDO

Abdul-Rahman Al-Oseimi, Hoda Al-Amar, Fatema Hani, Shahd Al-Ajmi, and Hawra Al-Damkhi each secured silver medals. Youssef Al-Shemmeri, Rakan Al-Ajmi, and Othman Talal contributed bronze medals to Kuwait's tally.

Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah, vice-president of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and head of the country's delegation to the games, expressed satisfaction with the taekwondo team's accomplishments, extending best wishes to the other national teams.

In a press statement, Sheikh Mubarak conveyed gratitude to the UAE for hosting and efficiently organizing the games. Hani Al-Mershad, President of the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation, lauded the national team's performance in the initial days of the competition, highlighting the potential of taekwondo as a popular sport among Kuwaiti youth.

The First Youth GCC Games commenced yesterday and will run until May 2, featuring 210 participants from GCC member states competing across 19 disciplines.



Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer (left), Arsenal's Ben White (centre), Bayern's Noussair Mazraoui in action during the Champions League quarter final second leg soccer match between Bayern Munich and Arsenal at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

cross from substitute Jeremy Doku.

With no further goals in extra time, the game went to a shootout and City immediately seized the advantage after Julian Alvarez converted his opening penalty and Luka Modric's effort was saved.

But Madrid goalkeeper Andriy Lunin then saved successive spot kicks from Silva and Kovacic to swing the balance in the visitors' favor. Silva's attempt was right down the middle and easily caught chest-high by Lunin.

It came down to Rudiger to take the winning kick that sent Madrid fans wild and City supporters home.

"We suffered a lot tonight because City really put you under the cosh (pressure)," Madrid captain Nacho said. "But we are Real Madrid. We always, always fight until the very end."

Joshua Kimmich's header powered Bayern Munich to a 1-0 win over Arsenal to reach the Champions League semifinals with a 3-2 victory on aggregate.

With the score at 2-2 from the first

Kuwait disabled table tennis team departs for Jordan

KUWAIT CITY, April 18: The delegation of our national table tennis team for athletes with disabilities has arrived in the Jordanian capital, Amman, to compete in the 15th edition of the "National" International Table Tennis Championship, scheduled from April 18 to 23. The tournament will feature over 90 male and female players from 16 countries.

Led by Duaij Al-Hajri, the delegation includes Ahmed Al-Khalidi as an administrator, Abdul Rahim Ali as a coach, and players Awad Al-Harbi, Muhammad bin Jabal, Hassan Ibrahim, Ali Al-Sanea, Muhammad Al-Rashidi, Anfal Al-Dhafiri, and Badr Al-Nama.

Duaij Al-Hajri emphasized the team's determination to secure multiple medals despite the antici-

ated tough competition. He stated, "This international participation marks the team's debut this season, and we have meticulously prepared the players by organizing a local tournament during Ramadan, as well as

TABLE TENNIS

conducting an internal training camp before departing for Jordan." Additionally, he mentioned that the Kuwaiti table tennis team for athletes with disabilities will compete in an international tournament in Saudi Arabia next September.

leg in London, Kimmich's header off Raphael Guerreiro's pinpoint cross put Bayern ahead in the 63rd minute as Bayern largely neutralized the English team's attack.

Bayern kept alive its hopes of finishing the season with a trophy three days after Bayer Leverkusen ended Bayern's 11-year reign as German champion. Striker Harry Kane - who spoke Tuesday of being motivated by his release from Arsenal as a youth player - takes a step closer to what would be the first trophy of his career.

Tuchel said it meant "really a lot" to beat Arsenal. "The semifinals are an important step, the last four, that was fun," he told broadcaster DAZN.

Bayern and Arsenal have been drawn together five times in the knockout stages of the Champions League since 2005 and the German team has eliminated Arsenal on each occasion.

Arsenal's Champions League exit follows a heavy blow to its Premier League title ambitions in a 2-0 loss to Aston Villa on Sunday. Defeat also rules Arsenal out of next year's Club World Cup in the United States.

Arsenal was left to rue the defensive errors that cost the team in the first leg, when manager Mikel Arteta said his team had "given them (Bayern) two goals."



Kuwait disabled table tennis team poses for a group photo.