



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

KUWAITI-JORDANIAN TIES PILLAR OF JOINT ARAB ACTION Amir heads to Jordan on state visit

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and an official delegation accompanying him leaves on Tuesday to Jordan on a state visit.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri said Monday that Kuwaiti-Jordanian relations are a "distinguished" role model at the level of pan-Arab relations and contribute to enhancing joint Arab action.

This came in a statement to KUNA on the occasion of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's State visit to Jordan, due on Tuesday, the first since assuming office as the top leader of the State of Kuwait.

He added that the deep-rooted relationship and the shared visions on Arab issues between the two countries will continue in the reign of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and Jordanian King Abdullah II.

Al-Marri stressed the consistency of positions by Kuwait and Jordan on the Palestinian cause, supporting the Palestinians in regional and international forums until the end of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

On the economic and commercial ties, Al-Marri pointed out that Kuwait ranked first among Arab countries in the field of investments in Jordan, indicating that the volume of Kuwaiti investments in the Hashemite Kingdom amounts to USD 20 billion.

He lauded the Jordanian Government and people for warmly welcoming His Highness the Amir, whose important visit reflects the distinguished relation between both the two countries.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is scheduled to depart to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Tuesday on a State visit during which he will hold talks with King Abdullah II aimed at beefing up further the robust and historic relations between the two brotherly countries.

Leaders of the two brotherly countries have been seeking to add more strength to these bonds, based on one faith, language, history and common destiny, elevating them higher for serving joint higher interests.

Bonded with the strategic relationship, the State of Kuwait and the Hashemite Kingdom coordinate at regional and inter-

national quarters to the extent that it has become an example to be followed at the level of pan-Arab joint action.

Kuwait and Jordan have worked out bilateral agreements designed to bolster the cooperation and progress in each of the two countries in the political, parliamentary, cultural, educational, health, information and military sectors.

The Kuwait-Jordan relations, established in 1961, have been evolving due to continuing coordination, stances' harmony toward various issues, partnership and cooperation agreements amounting to 73 accords in diverse fields.

At the political level, Kuwaiti and Jordanian officials have paid an unaccountable number of visits to the two countries, with agendas notably aimed at promoting coordination in various sectors, namely joint Arab action.

The two countries have been taking unified stands toward the Palestinian cause, supporting the Palestinian people in their struggle to end the Israeli occupation of their territories and jointly backing the efforts for establishing just peace.

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Few months ahead with lots of changes

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

IT is no secret that the current leadership is exerting every effort to restore Kuwait's pioneering, and is working on mending the damage caused by practices that fell short of the desired standards and have persisted over the past three decades.

This happened when the governments turned a blind eye to corruption, and made accountability selective according to personal mood to settle scores, or allowed the corrupt to flee abroad, or removed them from their positions without issuing any punishment.

There is no doubt that anyone who follows the speeches of His Highness the Amir, hears his words during his private meetings, and studies his decisions, will realize that his first goal is to restore Kuwait's renaissance and make it a leader in the region as it was in the past.

There was a time when Kuwait was a factory of successful ideas, initiatives and plans. At that time, it had benefited from everything new in the world, and distributed wealth according to justice. It was considered an example in the region, and was up to the ranks of the vanguard countries in the renaissance, especially the Gulf ones that took Kuwait's ideas and implemented them.

There is no doubt that this requires the presence of officials in all positions, including ministers and administrators, to serve the mission for which they were chosen without considering it as an honor or prestige, and without abusing it, but instead performing their duty towards their country with full dedication and responsibility.

From this standpoint, the leadership has committed itself to putting the right man in the right place, and not deviating from what is required of him, as well as not fearing the critics as long as he is on the right path. However, if he violates that, he reprimands himself before anyone else.

There is also a conviction that many of the bodies and institutions existed for benefits and nothing more, and some of them for personal influence and control over the interests of the country. For this reason, they have become hotbeds of corruption. In fact, they were established for this goal, because of which systematic plundering has spread in them.

It has even reached sites that were considered the guardians of the state's supreme interests, but eventually transformed into open arenas for all forms of irresponsible practices.

Therefore, it was not surprising that ministers and officials fled abroad with hundreds of millions of dinars. It was also not surprising that the rule of "finders-keepers" became prevalent in all institutions.

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:

Facebook and X social media links

ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Day by Day

WE need ministers who prioritize effective administration over personal prestige. When leaders become ensnared in the trappings of office, detached from the realities of governance, it spells disaster for the state.

In other countries, prime ministers lead by example, demonstrating humility and accessibility. They may even forego extravagant modes of transportation, opting instead to travel alongside the general public. Moreover, they actively engage with citizens, opening the doors of their offices to address grievances and shoulder responsibility for their decisions. This approach fosters a sense of accountability and connection between government officials and the people they serve.

Glory be to Him who changes conditions. ... Yet tomorrow is another day. Zahed Matar

Over 1,800 expats leave Kuwait in amnesty rush



Coast Guard chief tackles combating drug smuggling, piracy with Iranian Border Guards chief.

4,565 adjust status

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Following the Ministry of Interior's recent announcement regarding the rectification of residency law violations, significant progress has been reported in compliance efforts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Since the announcement of a three-month amnesty period, commencing from March 17, 2024, to June 17, 2024, a total of 1,807 violators have left Kuwait, while 4,565 expatriates holding Articles 20 and 18 visas, along with those on family or business visit visas, have adjusted their status.

Collaborating with various embassies, including those of Egypt, Syria, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia, the Ministry of Interior received information on violators among their nationals. This collaboration facilitated the issuance of travel documents for 2,801 individuals who either lost their passports or were in possession of their sponsors.

Continued on Page 5

'Bidding' awaits resolution

Committee delay stalls Kuwait railway project

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: For years, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations have prioritized projects aimed at enhancing the transportation infrastructure in the region, including railway systems, to bolster connectivity and trade among member states, reports Al-Jarida daily.

One such project is the study, detailed design, and document preparation for the railway tender's first phase. However, Ministry of Public Works sources revealed that this project has been stalled for nearly seven months due to the absence of the Central Tenders Committee.

The delay in forming the Central Tenders Committee, following the expiration of the term of its members, has led to significant setbacks in vital state projects, including the aforementioned railway initiative.

Despite the acceptance of nine companies and the exclusion of one from the bidding process, the closure of the detailed study and design project's bidding phase, initially set for September 3, remains pending.

The project, initially slated for completion by the end of 2028, is crucial for Kuwait's transportation sector and railway network development. It aims to integrate seamlessly with other modes of transportation, facilitating economic growth and supporting the movement of goods and passengers. Additionally, it will connect Kuwait City with Kuwait International Airport and seaports, serving as a key artery for economic and industrial development.

Another noteworthy project under consideration is the railway linking Kuwait to Riyadh, currently undergoing feasibility studies and route establishment. These initiatives align with the government's efforts to boost the local and Gulf economies, fostering investment opportunities and regional integration.

While Kuwait grapples with delays, other Gulf countries are making strides in their railway projects. Bahrain's Gulf Railway Project aims to establish a railway system linking Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman via a sea bridge. Similarly, the Saudi-Gulf Railway network and various railway projects in the UAE and Qatar underscore the region's commitment to advancing transportation infrastructure and connectivity.

Kuwait and Iran pledge to enhance maritime security efforts

Director General of Kuwait's Directorate General of the Coast Guard Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah discussed Sunday with the visiting Iranian Border Guards Commander Major General Ahmad Goudarzi boosting commercial, fishing vessels search and rescue efforts and combating drug smuggling and maritime piracy.

In a press statement, the Interior Ministry said that the meeting was held at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Coast Guard Base in Kuwait.

Commodore Sheikh Mubarak and Maj. Gen. Ahmad also mulled beefing

up security of maritime borders.

Both sides underlined the importance of cementing security cooperation, mainly related to securing maritime borders, streamlining commercial maritime routes and maintaining security and stability of maritime navigation. (KUNA)



Press conference underway discussing upcoming UAE Companies Investment Meet scheduled for April 28-29.

Kuwait hosts inaugural UAE Companies Investment Meet

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will organize the UAE Companies Investment Meet on April 28-29 at the Regency Hotel under the sponsorship of HH the interim Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

In view of the above, the Union of Investment Companies (UIC) on Monday held a press conference chaired by Chairman of the Board of Directors of UIC Saleh Al-Sulami. Secretary General of UIC Fadwa Adel Darwesh, Ambassador of the UAE to Kuwait Dr Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi and Consultant at the UAE Embassy Hamad Al-Mansouri.

Al-Sulami highlighted the deep rooted ties between Kuwait and the UAE, as well as all the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. He pointed out these countries are in different rooms in the same house. He said the UAE Companies Investment Meet will be held in Kuwait for the first time, adding that it contributes to strengthening sisterly bonds between Kuwait and the UAE by developing investments and tapping the potentials of the Kuwaiti market.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed on Monday the agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the demarcation of land borders in some areas.

The ministry affirmed the importance of settling conflicts diplomatically, to help foster stability and security in the region, hailing the efforts played by Armenia and Azerbaijan, which reflect the wisdom of the two leaderships. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan embarked on a visit to neighboring Iraq on Monday in a bid to push bilateral relations, with a focus on matters running the gamut from counter-terrorism cooperation to energy and trade.

Erdogan's visit to Baghdad, the first by a Turkish head of

state in more than a decade, comes at a time of existential challenges ranging from climate change to water scarcity, Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid's office said in a statement. (KUNA)

ABU DHABI: Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq arrived in the UAE on a state visit, said the Emirates news agency.

The visit will last for two days, where Sultan Haitham will meet UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

The Oman News Agency said the day before yesterday, Saturday, that the visit is of great importance in pushing bilateral relations to greater progress and prosperity for the Omani and Emirati peoples in all fields and achieving common and mutual interests between them. (KUNA)

ARAB TIMES Special Supplement Celebrating 50 Years of Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship With this issue don't miss your copy

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:51 Asr 15:22
 Sunrise .. 05:15 Maghrib .. 18:18
 Zohr 11:47 Isha 19:40

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.
By Night: Mild with light to

Weather		Station	
moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.	Kuwait Airport	33	24
	Abdaly	33	22
	Jahra	34	24
	Salmiyah	29	25
	Nuwaisib	31	23
	Wafra	35	20
Max Exp	Min Rec		
32	25		

Plan to raise media awareness among Arab audience

Kuwait keen on honoring distinguished media works

CAIRO, April 22, (KUNA): Chairman of the Arab Media Excellence Award Committee, representative of the State of Kuwait, Hamad Al-Badri affirmed on Monday the committee's keenness to encourage media materials and items that would enhance and support the joint Arab media work system.

While chairing a meeting of the committee at the Arab League's HQ, Al-Badri stated to KUNA that Kuwait's presidency of the committee highlights the extent of its interest in raising media awareness among Arab audience, recipients, considering that the award was established to encourage workers in media to present constructive materials.

He noted that the State of Kuwait, with its financial sponsorship of the award, confirms the necessity of honoring and supporting meaningful media production, whether read-

able, audible or visual, especially directed at serving Arab issues and promoting joint Arab action.



Al-Badri

Arab territories.

He explained that the number of works pre-

Al-Badri pointed out the categories for which the award is given, which are divided into ten categories, and expanded its scope this year to include "crisis, disaster, and risk media," in line with the crises witnessed by the Arab region with the continued Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the occupied

presented to the committee reached 100 works in the various categories of the award, submitted by member states, and that the committee's meeting Monday and Tuesday will focus on examining these works and their compliance with the conditions of the award.

The winners' names would be announced during the 54th session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, he noted, expressing his expectations that the award would contribute to presenting distinguished media pieces.

In addition to Kuwait, the committee includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt and Morocco.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Information Ministers launched the Arab Media Excellence Award in 2015 as part of celebrating Arab Media Day, which falls on April 21 of each year and is awarded annually.



PM Diwan photo
 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the US Ambassador exchange pleasantries during the meeting.

PM receives US Ambassador

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received on Monday US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara at Seif Palace. (KUNA)



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
 Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received in his office the South African Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Manelisi Genge and his team.

Editor-in-Chief receives South African envoy

Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the Dean of Kuwait Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, received in his office the Ambassador of South Africa to Ku-

wait Dr. Manelisi Genge, who was accompanied by the Deputy Head of the mission Counsellor Busisiwe Mpungose, and the Trade and Information Assistant in the embassy Aiman

Al-Akhras. Present in the meeting was Meshal Al-Jarallah.

During the meeting, they discussed various issues of mutual concern.

MC declares two seats are vacant

By-elections end of May

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: During its 17th regular session of the second term yesterday headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri, the Municipal Council (MC) officially announced that the seats of two of its members - Nasser Al-Kafif and Fahid Al-Muwaizri - were vacant in the sixth and ninth districts.

The declaration of the vacancies was approved, after letters were sent by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs to confirm the judicial ruling issued regarding Al-Kafif and the registration of member Al-Muwaizri among the candidates for the 2024 National Assembly elections.

The announcement of the vacancies also comes in accordance with article 13 of municipal law No. 33/2016, which stipulates that, if a member's seat becomes vacant, the council must announce it in its first session after the seat becomes vacant. This seat must be filled in the manner prescribed for its filling, through elections or appointment, as the case may be. It must happen within 30 days from the date of declaration of vacancy.

Declaration

This declaration will be calculated after the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs approves the minutes of the session in which the two seats were declared vacant. Accordingly, it is expected that the by-elections for the Municipal Council will be held at the end of May.

Meanwhile, the council also approved the "Red Palace Village" project to be established on the site of the National Park land in Jahra with a to-

tal area of 470 thousand square meters permanently for the municipality. This followed the issuance of the decision to transfer the dependency of the park land from the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to the Kuwait Municipality.

Decision

This is pursuant to a decision issued by the Council of Ministers, after changing the use of the land to a park and a heritage market, specifying the percentage of building surface allowed to be used for developing the project to 15 percent of the total site area, and determining the permitted commercial percentage to 12 percent of the total site area.

The Municipal Council also used article 25 four times against the objections of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, first to the municipal council's decision to transfer the use and ownership of some residential plots in blocks 12,66,80,227 of Salmiya into investment housing, and the acquisition of residential plots with an area of less than 500 square meters, with the complete reorganization of the plots and the development of infrastructure services.

Second was the municipality's decision to approve the Ministry of Finance's request to reallocate the designated site in Salmiya to the Ministry of Finance with an area of 750 square meters permanently instead of temporarily, and to cancel any previous decisions regarding the site.

Third was the Minister of Municipality's objection to the Municipal Council for not approving the request submitted by the Public Authority for Industry to allocate a site for establishing a station for treating liquid industrial waste in Subhan Industrial Area.

And fourth was its objection to the proposal of the Vice President of the Municipal Council Khaled Muffeh Al-Mutairi that if the previously jointly-owned property is transferred to a single owner, the dam will be added to the current property owner for free.

Bid to promote global peace

AL kicks off media, info confab

CAIRO, April 22, (KUNA): The "Media and Information Literacy and Global Understanding: Peace for all" conference commenced Monday at the headquarters of the Arab League, with the attendance of the Secretary General of the League Ahmad Aboul Gheit, and Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church Pope Tawadros II.

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, in collaboration with the Social Affairs Sector and Culture and Dialogue of Civilizations Department at the League, and in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Media and Information Literacy Alliance and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, organized the conference.

This three-day conference aims to emphasize the crucial role of media and information culture in promoting global understanding and peace, shaping public awareness and directing views towards peaceful coexistence issues, alongside exploring the role of technology and information in achieving these goals.

The conference explored how to use media as a tool to bring people together and enhance dialogue and cultural understanding.

The focus lies on the vital role of media literacy for fostering critical analysis skills and discerning between real and fake news, crucial for building peaceful and cohesive societies.

The conference is expected to come up with practical recommendations for developing effective media strategies that support global peace and understanding.

Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League, Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi represented Kuwait at the conference.



Al-Mutairi

Court Cases

'Love, care, mercy must in married life'

Neglected Kuwaiti wives claim unfair treatment, seek divorce

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: More than 100 polygamy-related cases were filed by Kuwaiti women against their husbands, claiming bias and unfair treatment towards the wives, and demanding separation and compensation.

The plaintiffs' counsel Lawyer Hawra Al-Habib explained that justice does not come only in financial spending, but also in family care and expressing feelings resulting from affection and mercy recommended by the Holy Qur'an.

Her clients are asking for divorce after being neglected, as some of their husbands do not provide for them financially or emotionally, and others were neglected by their husbands to the extent of even not asking about their well being after getting involved with other women.

She emphasized that masculinity is justice, not injustice, and therefore the demand for equality is not supposed to exist, but rather it is the origin and based on one's own initiative.

Lawyer Al-Habib revealed that there are about 1,400 Kuwaiti citizens who are polygamous, according to statistics, but everyone who takes this step must know that there are conditions for ensuring justice and fairness, otherwise he will be held accountable before the law.

Appeal put off to May 20: The Court of Cassation adjourned to May 20 the appeal submitted by the Public Prosecution against the acquittal of 13 citizens who were accused of financing terrorism using the donations from a charity committee and joining a banned group Hezbollah.

Earlier, the Court of First Instance confirmed in its ruling that there is no legislation in the country that criminalizes the collection of money for public purposes without a license since the establishment of the Department of Social Affairs on December 14, 1954.

This is what tied the court's hands and distanced it from using its authority stipulated in article 132 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Trials by amending the description of the accusation in question to a legal description - which is supposed to exist - that is more correct and accurate.

According to its view, this is a legislative flaw that requires care to control and correct it in order to place all individuals and groups in the field of fundraising with their various beliefs and orientations under the eyes of the auditor, and under the eye of the censor who prevents the recurrence of the same and similar incident under accusation in order to spare the country from any harm that may befall it or its position internally or externally at the local, regional or international levels.

Ex-minister's trial begins: The Ministers Court will today witness the trial of a former minister who was accused of squandering public funds and abusing authority.

According to the case files, the minister, when he was an MP in the National Assembly, and when he had assumed the ministerial portfolio, had registered two plots in the name of a retired soldier so that the charge would not be proven against him.

The matter was discovered after the former soldier, with whom he was referred in the same case to the Court of Ministers, sold one of the two plots and transferred an amount of KD 700 thousand to the account of the minister.

It is noteworthy that the minister did not disclose this matter to the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and also purchased a residential apartment in London with public money.

Bid to rationalize costs

Kuwait shuts embassies in five foreign countries

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya has announced the implementation of Decree No. 68 of 2024, which entails the closure of several Kuwaiti diplomatic missions abroad. This includes the shuttering of five embassies in Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Gabon, and Zimbabwe, as well as the closing of the Kuwaiti Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This decision aims to streamline and optimize Kuwait's diplomatic presence overseas. Minister Al-Yahya emphasized that the closure of these missions is part of a broader effort to rationalize Kuwait's interests abroad and does not reflect any diplomatic sensitivities with the countries in question. Rather, it is a strategic measure aimed at enhancing efficiency and aligning diplomatic efforts with national priorities.

He noted that similar initiatives are underway in other affluent countries as part of ongoing reform efforts.

Furthermore, Al-Yahya indicated that additional embassy closures and openings are planned based on geographical considerations, following a scheduled timeline. This proactive approach underscores Kuwait's commitment to adapt its diplomatic footprint to evolving geopolitical dynamics while prioritizing the country's long-term interests.

The Official Gazette, Kuwait Today, published in its issue Sunday a decree closing some diplomatic missions of the State of Kuwait abroad. The decree stipulates in its first article: The following diplomatic representation missions of the State of Kuwait abroad shall be cancelled:

Embassy of Kuwait in the Federal Republic of Myanmar; the embassy in the Kingdom of Cambodia; the embassy in the Lao People's Democratic Republic; in the Republic of Gabon and the Republic of Zimbabwe

The decree stipulates in its second article: "The Minister of Foreign Affairs must implement this decree, and it shall be effective from the date of its issuance, and shall be published in the Official Gazette."

Gov't gets tough on drug users, pursues peddlers

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Efforts are ongoing to finalize the establishment of a new branch of the General Medical Council (GMC) in the Farwaniya region, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily added, the branch set to begin work soon will cater to the needs of Farwaniya Governorate residents.

This initiative, part of the Ministry of Health's commitment to enhancing patient accessibility and alleviating pressure on the General Medical Council in the Al-Sabah Specialized Medical District, aims to elevate the standard of healthcare services for citizens. The sources informed the new branch will welcome both male and female employees and recent graduates from Farwaniya Governorate, facilitating a range of medical, laboratory, and x-ray examinations along with health assessments.

Furthermore, it will feature four clinical examination clinics, two for each gender, and an equal number of blood drawing clinics.

This expansion in Farwaniya Governorate marks the fourth branch dedicated to serving the nation's populace, following those in the Al-Sabah region, Funaitees (for Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates), and Jahra Governorate.



Al-Yahya

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah and hopes of the Kuwaitis

"AN AMIRI order has been issued assigning Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah to assume the position of Prime Minister in circumstances in which Kuwaitis' hopes are multiplying, that the new Premier will deal with the people's expectations in a positive manner," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Kuwait is poised to break free from a prolonged period of stagnation, marked by fluctuating leadership within the Council of Ministers. Previous administrations struggled to formulate a cohesive strategy for progress, leaving the Kuwaiti populace yearning for substantial change. Now, with Sheikh Ahmad assuming leadership responsibilities, our expectations are clear:



Bishara

"First: it is imperative for the government to reaffirm its commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the Constitution. Central to this commitment is the recognition of the constitutional mandate for collaboration between Parliament and the executive branch.

"This collaboration is essential for outlining domestic development strategies and ensuring national security. The essence of Kuwait's political system lies in fostering a harmonious relationship between leadership and citizenry, grounded in consensus rather than discord. Elected representatives serve as conduits between the government and the people, tasked with actively participating in the formulation and execution of plans. Their role is pivotal in fostering cooperation and aligning strategies with shared national objectives.

"Second: the Constitution embodies parliamentary principles that complement Kuwait's governmental framework. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, during his tenure (1950-1965), embraced these principles as they served to uphold historical traditions while facilitating progress towards modernization.

"Recognizing the need for continuity amidst evolving societal dynamics, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem saw in these principles a mechanism for preserving the enduring bond between the people and the state. However, certain practices, such as parliamentary interrogations, have deviated from the constitutional ethos and hindered effective collaboration. It is essential to address such impediments to partnership and ensure that parliamentary exceptionalism aligns harmoniously with Kuwait's governance structure, fostering a conducive environment for collective progress.

"Third: the Kuwaiti Constitution delineates a distinct role for the Speaker of Parliament, serving as the Council's representative in facilitating dialogue between the government and the legislative body. The Speaker's mandate includes fostering understanding, diffusing tensions, deepening cooperation, and mitigating conflicts.

"Within the framework of partnership, there is no room for an adversarial opposition akin to those found in European parliaments. Rather, the Constitution emphasizes the consolidation of collaboration. It is imperative that the Prime Minister cultivates a robust and harmonious relationship with the Speaker to ensure that governmental decisions align with the Constitution's principles, thus reinforcing the foundation of partnership.

"Fourth: Kuwait eagerly anticipates a comprehensive developmental roadmap encompassing economic, commercial, and investment strategies characterized by adaptability and pragmatism. This vision must be tailored to Kuwait's capabilities and responsive to the imperatives of implementation, thereby putting an end to prolonged delays, particularly concerning major projects like the Mubarak Port, residential city constructions, road infrastructure enhancements, and the expansion of the oil sector. Despite lingering on the agenda for some time, these initiatives have yet to attain the requisite stability for fruition.

"Fifth: one of the most significant lessons gleaned from the invasion is the imperative of safeguarding Kuwait's security amidst escalating regional threats and instability. In response, Kuwait forged strategic partnerships with Britain and the United States, centered on deterrence to uphold homeland stability and sovereignty.

"The Prime Minister is keenly attuned to the dynamics of these alliances, which entail robust consultation, reciprocal visits, and multifaceted cooperation spanning political, economic, investment, commercial, and cultural realms. These partnerships are underpinned by a national consensus rooted in Kuwait's geographical position and its historical interactions within the region.

"Sixth: there is growing concern among Kuwaitis regarding the proliferation of fraudulent practices surrounding Kuwaiti citizenship. Expatriates, enticed by bribes, have illicitly obtained citizenship, with some assuming security roles. Kuwaitis are increasingly hopeful that stringent measures will be enacted to combat this detrimental phenomenon.

"The Ministry of Interior must prioritize tackling this threat to the state's integrity and national unity. Expectations are high for the government of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah to address this issue decisively, including pursuing individuals with dual citizenship residing abroad who acquired Kuwaiti nationality through deceitful means. This issue remains a pressing concern across all

segments of Kuwaiti society, warranting immediate attention and action.

"Seventh: recent weeks have seen intensified diplomatic activity across the region, particularly involving regional countries, major powers, and Security Council members, in response to the Israeli aggression on Gaza. The situation further escalated following Israel's destruction of the Iranian consulate in Damascus and the subsequent demise of influential Iranian figures.

"Despite the potential threats posed by this regional turmoil to Kuwait's security, Kuwait's absence from these diplomatic initiatives has been conspicuous. Internal preoccupations, including ministerial arrangements, have inadvertently projected an image of Kuwait's disengagement from regional affairs.

"However, the root cause lies in the breakdown of parliamentary partnership as outlined in the constitution. The hope now rests on the new government formation to restore this partnership. Failure to achieve understanding and stability may result in greater losses for Kuwait than anticipated.

"Eighth: Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, the Prime Minister-designate, recognizes the significance of inter-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) relations, particularly Kuwait's bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia. These relations, underscored by Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in Kuwait's liberation and its prominence in global diplomacy, especially in investment and oil sectors, are characterized by diplomatic positivity. Communication channels between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia remain open, reaffirming the Kingdom's status as Kuwait's strategic ally and the primary guarantor of its security.

"Ninth: Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah's life will undergo a significant transformation as he assumes diverse responsibilities, necessitating his active presence and oversight. Particularly crucial are the files pertaining to Kuwait's partners within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its strategic allies, Britain and the United States.

"Comprehensive bilateral dialogues on political, security, defense, commercial, investment, cultural, and energy fronts are imperative. Moreover, developments in the energy sector, coupled with military presences crucial for deterrence, demand his approval and diligent follow-up on decisions made during these dialogues. Given their direct impact on security realities, decisions arising from these discussions must receive prioritized implementation.

"Tenth: Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah will navigate through uncertain waters, confronting the challenging transformations Kuwait has undergone. His leadership will be instrumental in guiding Kuwait towards stability and progress, necessitating determination and the unwavering support of the Kuwaiti people. Despite the weighty burdens he will carry, Sheikh Ahmad must exhibit patience and steadfastness, grounded in his belief in success.

"His confidence is bolstered by the strong backing of both the Kuwaiti populace and the Council representatives. Crucially, he must continue to enjoy the trust of His Highness the Amir and the enduring support of the people, acknowledging that his acceptance of responsibility reflects the collective desire of Kuwaitis to overcome challenges and pursue a path of prosperity, regardless of the obstacles encountered.

"Eleventh: upon reflecting on the varied experiences Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah has traversed and the array of responsibilities he has shouldered, one can't help but feel optimistic about Kuwait's journey towards a brighter developmental chapter.

"It is anticipated that the upcoming development plan will encompass a comprehensive array of initiatives, addressing all facets of progress. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Sheikh Ahmad on earning the confidence of His Highness the Amir, and we fervently pray for his success in this pivotal role. Sheikh Ahmed is acutely attuned to the precise circumstances Kuwait faces, and we beseech God to encompass him with His guidance and bestow upon him the patience."

Also:

"For the sake of Kuwait... Volunteers in Kuwait, young men and women, decided to clean the pedestrian bridge that connects Bayan and Mishref. This is a youth initiative that demonstrates national responsibility. They called it the 'Bridge Initiative' with an aim to clean whatever has been damaged by some citizens and expatriates using the bridge. These people destroyed the bridge without any sense of responsibility," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"These young people gathered, put their trust in the Almighty Creator, strengthened their resolve, and accomplished a great work that only those loyal to their country can do. Before them, some young people also volunteered to fill potholes on the streets that claimed lives and damaged properties. These youths also succeeded in that impossible mission. They preceded the Ministry of Public Works and the story of foreign companies -- our book and your book.

"May Allah Almighty grant them the best reward. We lack such good initiatives. We noticed that some reckless people deliberately destroy and tamper with facilities, write on bridges and power transmission walls, and destroy lighting poles, etc., without fear or modesty, while those who are loyal to the nation take the initiative to decorate bridges with drawings and other creative forms!"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Municipality dismantles a fodder market set up on State property.

KUNA photo



The three liquor peddlers in police custody.

KD10 liquor bottle at doorstep; 3 nabbed

Suspects resist arrest

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department, Salmiya, have arrested three expatriates for bootlegging.

The Al-Seyassah daily said the suspects were caught in Salmiya in possession of 213 bottles of locally produced booze. They were caught red-handed while attempting to transfer booze bottles from a taxi to another vehicle.

According to a security source, the expatriates were intercepted near a vacant lot. A police patrol suspected a parked taxi adjacent to another car, with the suspects busy transferring 'something' between the two vehicles.

When the CID men approached the taxi, the suspects attempted to escape but were arrested after putting up a fierce resistance. During interrogation, the bootleggers confessed to manufacturing alcohol for sale. They added, they sold one bottle for 10 dinars (for home delivery service).

Manhunt launched: The Jahra police investigator has ordered the arrest of an unidentified person, who allegedly used the influence of drugs or alcohol, damaged 10 modern vehicles belonging to Kuwaiti citizens, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the incidents have been documented by the CCTV cameras.

The daily quoting security sources said the incident happened between 8.50 pm and 11:00 pm Saturday. A Kuwaiti who lives in the Jahra Governorate reportedly filed the first report accusing 'someone' of breaking the windows of 5 vehicles belonging family.

His neighbor, also a Kuwaiti filed a report with the same police station accusing an un-

identified person of damaging 5 other luxury vehicles.

The two victims agreed that the perpetrator of the incident was one person, and they presented a documented video clip of what happened. They also stated that the destruction of the 10 vehicles, according to camera time, was at 8:50 pm

It is noteworthy to say the clip shows a young man staggering and carrying in his hands two sharp tools, one of which resembled a cleaver, and he appeared in the clip destroying vehicles one after the other.

Maid robs sponsor, flees: A Kuwaiti woman, born in 1952, has filed a complaint with the Al-Waha Police Station accusing her domestic worker of stealing 500 dinars before fleeing the country, reports Al-Anba daily. The woman said she was surprised to find out her maid had left at dawn last Thursday.

Drug peddler held: Officers from Farwaniya Security Directorate arrested a man, in his 30s, for the possession of 19 packs of hashish and marijuana that are ready for sale, reports Al-Anba daily.

The suspect was arrested when the officers noticed the suspicious movement of a vehicle and signaled for him to stop for the issuance of a traffic violation citation. He tried to escape by going towards the opposite direction of the road, but the officers chased and arrested him.

During the initial investigation, he admitted to trading in drugs and that he was on his way to sell drugs when he was arrested. On the other hand, Fahaheel Security Directorate officers arrested two people for the possession of some narcotic pills.

All the three suspects were referred to the Drugs Control General Department.

Structures dismantled

Municipality recovers 28 State-owned plots

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): Kuwait Municipality announced on Monday that up to 28 seized plots of State-owned lands had been recovered in non-developed regions in South Kuwait. The assigned team dismantled a fodder marketplace close to Al-Wafra farm Road 600, said the head of the offenses department in Al-Ahmedi Municipality, Majed Al-Mutairi, in a press release.

The liberated plots have been sealed off with barbed wires and other barricades, he said, affirming that all encroachments on the State assets without licenses would be dismantled.

The campaign will continue and the violators will be given warnings before removing the illegal structures.

He called for cooperation with the field teams in all the governorates, warning that the laws would be applied literally.

3,825 violations daily

Chaos seen on roads despite 'tough' laws

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Traffic Sector issued 26,778 traffic violation citations over the past week with a daily average of 3,825; in addition to dealing with 2,682 incidents and 1,243 accidents -- a total of 3,925 and 263 injuries, reports Al-Ra daily.

This week-long campaign is in compliance with the directives of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Sector at the Interior Ministry Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, and under the monitoring of Director General of the General Traffic Department Brigadier General Jamal Al-Foudari.

The campaign included measures to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and arrest of anyone proven to have violated the law like the reckless motorists.

It led to the impounding of 188 vehicles and motorcycles, 32 people were detained in the Traffic Police Unit, 30 people wanted by law were arrested, 63 vehicles used in committing crimes were impounded, four people were referred to the Drugs Control General Department, one person was referred to the Firearm Possession Investigation Department, and many juveniles were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution.

These ongoing campaigns are part of the plan laid down by security officials to follow up the traffic situation and track down those who violate traffic regulations.



Al-Khadda

Now Hiring

For Al Hala Industrial Co.

- Secretary (Male) • Production Manager
- Site Supervisor Carpentry
- Maintenance Supervisor

To apply, please send your CV to

hr@halakw.com

Now Hiring

For Almuna Advertising

- Sales Manager

To apply, please send your CV to

hr@almuna.org

KD 1,226 lost in call scam

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: A Kuwaiti citizen fell victim to a video call scam and lost 1,226 dinars, despite numerous warnings from the Central Bank and media outlets about fraudulent schemes. The victim was deceived by someone pretending to be a police officer, who asked for sensitive financial information under the guise of updating bank records, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the incident was reported at the Al-Mutlaa Police Station. The victim explained that he received a video call from a person dressed in a police uniform and speaking fluent Kuwaiti dialect. The caller claimed to be from the Ministry of Interior and asked for the victim's bank card details, including his secret security code. Trusting the scammer, the victim provided the requested information.

Now Hiring

For Al Hadaf Press

- CTP Operator (FujiFilm Luxel V8)
- GTO Operator

To apply, please send your CV to

hr@alhadafkuwait.com

Now Hiring

For al Seyassah Newspaper

- IT Support
- IT Supervisor
- Senior Social Media Officer/Executive

To apply, please send your CV to

hr@alseyassah.com

Celebrate with Style

A place to make unforgettable memories

MUGHAL MAHAL FAHAHEEL

AL-RAYAN FAMILY LOUNGE & FUNCTION HALL

Sea view | Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175 / 97644421

Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com
info@mughalmahal.com

www.mughalmahal.com



Daoud Marafi poses for a photo with those on the autism spectrum.

Al-Jarida photo

'The Kuwaiti Farmer Brings Us Together' holds awareness event

Kuwait's community initiative aiming to 'integrate' persons with autism spectrum disorder into society

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: During the Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month in April, the community initiative 'The Kuwaiti Farmer Brings Us Together' was launched at the Abdullah Al-Salem Suburb and Al-Mansouriya Cooperative Society, under the auspices of Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Communications, Daoud Marafi, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The initiative aims to empower individuals on the autism spectrum by integrating them into society, providing job opportunities tailored to their abilities and skills, and ensuring their rights.

Mashaal Al-Kulaib, a board member of the Abdullah Al-Salem and Al-Mansouriya Suburbs Cooperative Society and head of the Social Committee, emphasized that addressing the needs of people with disabilities, specifically those with autism spectrum disorder, is not merely a media or social gesture but a humanitarian and

Al-Ajmi advocates for rights of deaf & mute community

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: For the first time in the history of Kuwaiti politics, Ayed Mohsen Al-Ajmi contested the National Assembly elections to see the betterment of the deaf and the mute category from the fifth constituency, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Ajmi said that one of the most important priorities of his candidacy is to provide full care for people with special needs in hospitals, schools and universities and to provide all means of support to this group, noting that the rights of people with disabilities are lacking in education and in society.

He added, "It is heartbreaking and painful to see their rights 'stolen'. They need full support and care, urgent treatment and education, and must have the right to vote."

national obligation.

She highlighted the importance of recog-

nizing their rights and supporting their independence and safety.

Al-Kulaib underscored the significance of integrating individuals with disabilities into society, particularly through initiatives like the Kuwaiti farmers' market, where their skills and potential can be showcased.

She emphasized the collaborative efforts between the cooperative societies and the TEACCH Center for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, led by Dr. Abeer Al-Safran, and praised the dedicated team of Kuwaiti youth, teachers, and specialists working to support individuals with disabilities.

The event aims to foster community partnerships and raise awareness about the needs of people with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of providing adequate support to them and their families. It underscores the commitment to making inclusion and support for individuals with disabilities a top priority in Kuwaiti society.

MEW 'achieves' record revenue in fiscal '23/24

New strategies hailed

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy achieved the highest revenue in its history -- KD453,294,000 -- in fiscal 2023/2024 its history, reports Al-Anba daily.

This is attributed to the new strategies of the ministry including the diversity of collection methods like the automated linking with other ministries, most notably the Ministry of Interior, such as restricting the completion of transactions for individuals with outstanding electricity and water bills.

In an interview with the daily, acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Customer Service Sector Eng Falah Al-Mutairi disclosed that he expects the collection of KD600 million in the next fiscal year due to the implementation of the automated link with the Ministry of Interior regarding citizens' transactions within a month. "We have a clear strategy to raise collection rates, the most important of which is linking with government agencies like the ministries of Interior, Public Works and Commerce as well as the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM). This will contribute to raising the collection rate that may reach KD600 million through the coordinated efforts of all employees in the sector. If things go as planned, the ministry will grow its revenues in fiscal 2024/2025," he explained.

Collecting

He pointed out that the link with the Ministry of Interior began in September 2023 with the aim of collecting payments from expatriates. Linking the ministry's services with its interior counterpart was an urgent need as it has sought for years to integrate these services with other ministries, he added.

On the mechanism for collecting dues from citizens, Al-Mutairi affirmed that work in this regard is in full swing. The transactions of citizens with outstanding bills amounting to more than KD500 or those who fail to pay for three consecutive months will be suspended. Those who cannot pay the full amount are given the option to pay in installments, he revealed.

"Any citizen indebted to the Ministry of Electricity and Water can make a debt declaration appended in the executive form and is committed to paying the installments as soon as the debt declaration becomes the guarantor of the ministry's entitlements. If the debtor stops paying the installments, the ministry initiates its legal procedures in accordance with the debt declaration," Al-

Mutairi explained.

On activating this mechanism, he stated: "We are currently in the experimental phase with the Ministry of Interior and we have already completed the connection with the Ministry of Public Works, but the start of implementation will take about a month to complete the link. Automated linking with other government agencies in collecting payments is one of the main steps toward ensuring the effectiveness of collection operations. This approach contributes to reducing periods, enhancing the accuracy of operations and minimizing human errors. Automated linking allows the use of electronic payment and online collection technologies. This provides more comfort and ease for users and contributes to enhancing digital transformation in the government sector."

Regarding the customer service officers, he said the number of customer service offices in all governorates has reached 63. "Even the borders provide various services to all customers. The aim is to make it easier for the public. New offices and centers will be opened soon including Jaber Al-Ali Office, Jaber Al-Ahmad Training Center, Wafra Office, Saad Al-Abdullah One Office and Qusour Office," he disclosed.

Electronically

He added the Customer Service Sector provides most of its services electronically, while 90 percent of the services in the ministry are now electronic and the rest of the services are being converted. "We have completed the first phase of digital meters and are in the process of signing the second phase to include all meters," he stated.

He continued: "The sector also provides bill payment services electronically and through several methods -- ministry's website or government applications on mobile devices and others as all daily collections for these services are done automatically and entered into the ministry's accounts directly. Around 127,000 digital electricity meters were installed in the investment or commercial sector with Hawally Governorate having the lion's share as 90 percent of such meters were installed in the governorate. The first phase of the included the supply of 200,000 meters, while the second is the supply of 500,000 digital electricity meters. The tender for the second phase will be awarded soon. It is currently with the regulatory authorities. We hope to speed up its implementation."

Asked about cutting electricity or water for those who default on payment, Al-Mutairi asserted: "This is the last resort as several measures are taken prior to disconnection, such as the issuance of notifications or warnings. These measures are taken as per Law No. 48/2005, which grants the ministry full authority to cut off electricity and water for those who default on payment. At the same time, the ministry provides facilities for citizens to reschedule payments according to debt declarations."



Part of the honoring during the opening of National Immunization Week.

MoH to regularly review, update National Immunization Program

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health (MoH) confirmed on Monday its keenness to regularly review and update the National Immunization Program with the help of national specialist in agreement with the latest scientific developments at the international level.

This came in a speech by the Assistant Undersecretary of MoH for Public Health Affairs Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi during the opening of National Immunization Week which includes multiple scientific and awareness raising activities.

Dr. Al-Hasawi revealed that this week

coincides with World Immunization Week, which many countries partake in. This year also happens to be the 50th Anniversary of the World Health Organization's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI).

A seminar about modern medicine and the latest scientific developments regarding the prevention of infectious diseases will be held during the week.

Dr. Al-Hasawi mentioned the accomplishments that the world has made through immunization, especially Kuwait with the last case of Poliomyelitis (Polio) being registered in 1986 after administering the vaccine in 1963.

Remaining 27 preps to implement

28 entities link fingerprint attendance to CSC

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: A total of 28 ministries, government agencies and institutions have linked the employees fingerprint attendance system with the integrated systems of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) as per the latter's decision on such linking, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said the remaining 27 of the 55 entities connected to the CSC's integrated systems are now preparing to implement procedures for linking the employees fingerprint attendance system. Sources explained this link is in view of the decision to allot 30 percent for fingerprint attendance in evaluating the performance of employees.

Asked about the exemption of some entities from the fingerprint decision due to their working conditions, sources stressed it is not true that there are exceptions to linking the employees' fingerprints in the 55 entities.

Moreover, Resolution No. 2/2024 stipulates that all government agencies must automatically link the fingerprint attendance system with the integrated civil service systems at the CSC. The responsible official and the next-in-command should take all the necessary measures to implement the linking decision. These officials' level of commitment in this regard will be considered in evaluating their performance.



أبريل عروض الغرف

APRIL

ROOM PROMOTION







أيام الأسبوع (من السبت إلى الأربعاء)	
إقامة ليلة واحدة في شاليه لغرفتين مع الإفطار لأربعة أشخاص.	إقامة ليلة واحدة في كابانا كوين مع الإفطار لشخصين.
الآن	الآن
دينار 136.198	دينار 60.984
Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net

Promo period from 20th - 30th April 2024

مدة العرض من ٢٠ أبريل حتى ٣٠ أبريل ٢٠٢٤

Terms & conditions apply*

LOCAL

4 tenders soon for low-cost housing project in Naayem

Project targets three categories

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: According to informed sources, four tenders will be announced within the next two weeks for a low-cost housing project in Naayem area to establish, complete and maintain infrastructure and public buildings that serve 6,455 homes.

The project targets three categories - Kuwaitis with rental homes, Kuwaiti women who are wives of non-Kuwaitis, and divorced Kuwaiti women. The project generally includes the completion of 9,800 homes with public buildings and infrastructural services.

The first tender No. 1401 will include the construction, completion and maintenance of 1,608 houses and public buildings, asphalt surface layer works, supply

and installation of low and medium pressure cables, and road lighting works in sectors PB6 and PB9 of the project.

The second tender No. 1294 includes the construction, completion and maintenance of 1,700 houses, public buildings, asphalt surface layer works, supply and installation of low and medium pressure cables, and road lighting works in sectors PB5 and PB8.

Tender

The third tender No. 1276 includes the construction, completion and maintenance of 1,162 houses, public buildings, asphalt surface layer works, supply and installation of low and medium pressure cables, and road lighting works in sectors PB5 and PB8.

The fourth tender No. 1395 includes the construction, completion and maintenance of 1,985 houses, public buildings, asphalt surface layer works, supply and installation of low and medium pressure cables, and road lighting works in sectors PB4 and PB7.

In addition, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) announced that it will proceed with the procedures for announcing the allocation of plots in Taima and Sulaiybiya for those with existing housing applications from the year 2002 and before.

In a press release, it revealed that it will announce the allocation dates on May 19, 2024.

PAHW explained that work is underway to obtain approvals from the relevant government agencies to approve the plans for the two areas, complete technical studies, and carry out the planning and design works for roads and infrastructure networks.

In addition, political sources said they expect the organizational plan for the two areas to be completed in June, which began last December.

They stressed that the details of the plans and public services include environmental studies for the project, traffic studies, and infrastructure network design work for the Taima and Sulaiybiya projects for completion in 2027.



Top and above: Some photos from the seminar.

'Vital to take part in dialogue sessions, workshops'

Kuwait participates in Umrah Forum

JEDDAH, April 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's Consul in Saudi Arabia, and its permanent representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Muhammad Al-Mutairi, confirmed Monday the consulate's keenness to harness all efforts that contribute to serving the pilgrims and visitors of Makkah.

This came during the participation of Kuwait's consulate and Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in the Umrah and Visitation Forum held in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah.

In a statement, Al-Mutairi told KUNA that this would happen by developing integrated plans systems concerned with enriching the pilgrims' experience before their arrival until they complete their rituals in every way.

Al-Mutairi stressed the importance of active participation in the forum,

Total of 635 employees

MoH promotion by selection

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Minister of Health Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi has approved the lists of employees eligible for promotion by selection - a total of 635 employees, reports Al-Anba daily.

The minister's decision states that the promotion took effect on March 31, covering 60 lists of eligible employees.

The conditions for promotion by selection include obtaining 'with distinction' rating in the competency evaluation.

including dialogue sessions and workshops, to benefit from the discussions and apply them within the framework of practical plans, as well as viewing the latest innovative and sustainable services and solutions provided by various companies in the field of Umrah.

He also affirmed the importance of the ministry's participation in this important forum to learn about the latest

services and facilities for Umrah performers and visitors.

Al-Mutairi praised the efforts provided by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by launching development initiatives that contribute to raising the quality levels of services provided in light of the increasing numbers of Umrah pilgrims and visitors, and this comes within the Kingdom's vision 2030.

foundation for cooperation and partnership. He affirmed the event reflects the vision of the political leadership of both countries, which believe in the importance of economic integration among GCC states and obtain utmost advantages from available resources.

He revealed the participants include public, private and partnership companies. He said all the participating companies have significant contributions to the UAE economy and some of them already have economic links with the Kuwaiti market, while others have yet to establish such link. He confirmed that all the participating companies are listed on UAE stock markets.

He stressed that the event will facilitate direct contact between the concerned parties and the investment methods will be determined according to the agreements they will conclude - either through the exports or partnership.

The participating Emirati companies include Abu Dhabi Ship Building, Emirates Steel Arkan, Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation, Marmum Dairy, Ducab, Al Ain Farms, Aramex, Aghthia, Silal, Burjeel, Sanad, Zabeel Feed and Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi.

Few months

Continued from Page 1

This is why when a citizen asks, "What did we benefit from the hundreds of officials who held successive positions? What did they leave for Kuwait?", the leadership has no choice but to acknowledge that 30 years have been wasted either due to lack of management, or because there are those who consider Kuwait as merely Ali Baba's Cave whose doors are open to all thieves.

This exceptional situation is recognized by the leadership, which is why the leadership started with itself, its household, and its large family. This is based on its conviction that "injustice by rendering everyone equal is justice" and to treat everyone equally and not discriminate against them. Otherwise, it would mean returning to the corrupt custom that almost destroyed Kuwait and its people.

That is why, the leadership, from the first day of assuming power, was clear in declaring its ambition, which was supported by all Kuwaitis, who aspire, just like their leadership, to always see their country as the best.

Therefore, His Highness's speeches were clear in terms of not returning to the past era, regardless of the reasons, even if it was through painful surgical operations. This is because time is quickly running out, and international and regional circumstances will not allow any failed experiments. Therefore, we have a few months ahead of us with lots of changes.

KCCI hosts event

Seminar held on role of private sector in supporting a greener economy in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The European Union (EU) delegation to Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the International Labour Organization organized a high-level seminar titled "Supporting a Just Transition towards a greener economy in Kuwait: The role of the private sector."

The seminar which was hosted by the KCCI, aimed to explore the role of the private sector in helping devise strategies to foster a Just Transition towards an environmentally sustainable society and a greener economy. The participants of the event concluded that private sector plays a very important role to support Kuwait's efforts to reduce carbon emissions, in particular in strategic sectors such as energy, retail, banking, water and desalination, construction and circular economy.

Degradation

In the opening remarks the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that: "The urgency of addressing climate change and environmental degradation is undeniable, necessitating global economies to adopt policies prioritizing environmental sustainability and climate adaptation. Today, in light of the success of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and the inaugural just transition event in Kuwait held by the Supreme Council

for Planning and Development, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the European Union delegation in Kuwait, is hosting a seminar. This seminar aims to illuminate the pivotal role of the private sector in fostering sustainable enterprises, driving innovation, accelerating cleaner production and resource efficiency, all while developing workers' skills."

Speaking at the event, H.E. Ms. Anne Koistinen, European Union Ambassador to Kuwait said: "The European Union has long been at the forefront of global efforts to combat climate change and transition towards a more environmentally sustainable future. Our commitment to a Just Transition towards a greener economy is deeply rooted in our policies and actions, aiming to ensure that no one is left behind in this global transformation. We firmly believe that the private sector both in Kuwait and the EU plays a pivotal role in driving sustainable development and facilitating the transition to green economies. The EU is a world leader in adopting policies that require European companies to accelerate the green transition, while also protecting human rights of workers across the supply chain. This seminar aims at sharing our experience and promoting such a policy environment to achieve a just transition towards

a greener Kuwait. I am pleased to see that this seminar as part of our Europe Month activities in Kuwait, providing a platform to exchange best practices from Kuwait, Europe and beyond on private sector's efforts to foster sustainability."

Contribution

From the ILO side, Mr. Jose Manuel Medina focused his intervention on the ILO Just Transition approach and the positive contribution the private sector may play: "Employers' organizations have identified globally climate change as a common concern. Supporting a Just Transition for the private sector means to ensure continued business development and inclusive economic growth for large, but also medium and small companies, including through a more enabling business environment, access to finance, upskilling or reskilling of the workforce and technical support for companies to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices and even seizing new business opportunities in emerging green sectors."

The event brought together Kuwaiti, European and international experts, private sectors representatives sharing best practices from both Kuwaiti and European Union companies, sustainability scholars. Representatives of Kuwaiti government authorities and members of the diplomatic community.

Amir heads

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait has eyed with high-value efforts exerted by King Abdullah II namely his steady stand in support of the people of Gaza, hailing his personal involvement in dropping relief aid to the Gazans from the air.

At the parliamentary level, Amman and Kuwait have also maintained close coordination at diverse levels for serving causes that serve the interests of the two brotherly peoples, the Arab and Muslim nations.

In the economic realm, Kuwait devotes special concern to promoting economic cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom, as Kuwaiti investments in the country have reached USD 20 billion, topping the Arab enterprises. The invested Kuwaiti funds cover tourism, industries, raw materials, banks, transport, property and communications.

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) is a main partner at the level of development enterprises in the Kingdom, financing some 32 ventures at a value exceeding 230 million Kuwaiti dinars (approx. USD 746 million).

Kuwait for its part hosts some 60,000 Jordanian nationals who work in several fields namely medical care and education. Moreover, at this level, there is a number of Jordanians who study at the universities in Kuwait and some 3,700 Kuwaiti students are enrolled at the higher education faculties in the Hashemite Kingdom.

In the military sector, the two countries signed, in February 2024, minutes of the joint military commission for coordinating training and combat skills. Kuwait's National Guards began cooperating with the Jordanian Army in 2017 after holding the first joint military cooperation session.

Amman and Kuwait cooperate at the humanitarian level. The Kuwaiti embassy in Amman spares no effort to support Kuwaiti charities that help Palestinian and Syrian refugees as well as limited-income Jordanian families.

Furthermore, the Kuwaiti and Jordanians have close bonds at the social level. In May 2023, the representative of His Highness the Amir attended the wedding of His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, the Hashemite Kingdom's Crown Prince.

In December 2023, the Jordanian Royal Court announced a seven-day mourning for the demise of the late Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber A-Sabah.

Over 1,800

Continued from Page 1

To streamline the process, the Ministry outlined operational procedures with two designated reception periods. The morning period, held during official working hours, caters to individuals seeking to amend their status, with appointments scheduled at their respective Department of Residence Affairs in the governorates. An evening period from 3 pm to 8 pm has been designated for violators intending to depart the country, provided they possess valid passports or travel documents registered in the Ministry's systems. Those meeting these criteria may register directly with the Residence Affairs Departments for Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Farwaniya governorates, eliminating the need for prior review.

These concerted efforts by the Ministry aim to ensure a smooth transition for residency law violators towards legal status or departure, aligning with Kuwait's regulatory framework.

Kuwait hosts

Continued from Page 1

He expressed his gratitude to the UAE, represented by Ambassador of the UAE to Kuwait Dr Matar Al-Neyadi. He wished for the success of the event, while affirming the commitment of UIC to provide any form of support.

He also put the spotlight on the extraordinary advantage of the event - the opportunity to directly contact leading companies, which is not easy and available all the time. He urged the Kuwaiti businesspersons and companies to attend the event, which offers excellent investment opportunities.

On the other hand, Al-Neyadi disclosed that the UAE Companies Investment Meet aims to improve the Emirati investments in Kuwait through the participation of 22 leading companies covering most investment fields including food, security, steel, health, industry, infrastructure, transportation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and others.

He added the event is also aimed at attracting young investors, not just major businesses; asserting they will definitely find excellent investment opportunities. He confirmed that the Kuwaiti government and the concerned public institutions fully support the event. He thanked HH the interim Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah for sponsoring the event.

He went on to say that the event will also provide Business-to-Business (B2B) direct contact to lay down the

JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA

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

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

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **23 APR 2024** up to **12 MAY 2024** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

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

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	012254-R1	S/F INGERSOLL DRESSER PUMP	25
2	012346-R1	S/F UNION PUMPS	5
3	012631-R1	S/F LUFKIN PUMPS	15
4	013011-R1	S/F SULZER PUMPS	50
5	014846-R1	S/F PACIFIC PUMPS	5
6	015107	S/F NUOVOPIGNONE	25
7	015108	S/F MICROMOTION FLOW METERS	5
8	015124	S/F HOUTTUIN BV SHIPPING PUMP	25
9	015422	S/F DAVID BROWN PUMPS	15
10	015475	S/F HYDROCYCLONE, PETRECO INTERNATIONAL	50
11	015476	S/F BAKER HUGHES PROCESS SYSTEM, CAMERON	25
12	015477	S/F ANSUL FOAM POURER	5
13	015492	S/F ZEECO FLARE SYSTEM	15
14	015559	PIPE, PIPE FITTINGS & GASKETS	5
15	016024	BATTERY LEAD ACID, ENERSYS INC	25
16	016116	CMBM SUBMARINE HOSES, YOKOHAMA OR DUNLOP	15

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

For additional information, you may contact: Tel No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**

World News Roundup

Europe

Nations with Patriots hesitant to give any to Kyiv:

European Union countries possessing Patriot air defense systems appeared hesitant on Monday to give any to Ukraine, which is desperately seeking at least seven of the missile batteries to help fend off Russian air attacks.



Slot

Russia's air force is vastly more powerful than Ukraine's, but sophisticated missile systems provided by Kyiv's Western partners can pose a major threat to Russian aviation as the Kremlin's forces slowly push forward along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line in the war.

Dutch Foreign Minister **Hanke Slot** said the Netherlands is "looking at every kind of possibility at the moment" and is offering financial support to a German initiative to help Ukraine bolster its air defenses and to buy more drones.

Asked at a meeting of European Union foreign and defense ministers why the Netherlands is reluctant to send some of its Patriot systems, Slot said: "We are looking again if we can deplete our store of what we still have, but that will be difficult."

Last week, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that the military organization "has mapped out existing capabilities across the alliance and there are systems that can be made available to Ukraine." He did not name the countries that possess Patriots. (AP)

'1st flights will leave UK for Rwanda in 10-12 wks':

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged Monday that the first deportation flights carrying migrants who enter the country illegally to Rwanda would leave in 10-12 weeks, as he vowed to end the Parliamentary deadlock over a key policy promise before an election expected later this year.

Sunak made the comments at a news conference where he demanded that the unelected House of Lords stop blocking legislation that would permit the deportation flights, a central part of the government's strategy to "stop the boats" carrying migrants across the English Channel illegally.

The prime minister vowed that Parliament would remain in session until the legislation is passed. The House of Commons will take up the bill later in the day, followed by consideration in the House of Lords.

"Enough is enough," Sunak said, adding that commercial charter planes are booked to carry the asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Illegal channel crossings are a potent political issue in Britain, where they are seen as evidence of the government's failure to control migration. The number of people arriving on small boats soared to 45,774 in 2022 from just 299 four years earlier.

Small boat arrivals dropped to 29,437 last year as the government cracked down on people smugglers and reached an agreement to return Albanians to their home country. (AP)

UK lawmaker won't run again: A British lawmaker who allegedly used campaign funds to pay off people who were holding him hostage said Sunday that he wouldn't seek reelection after the governing Conservative Party found his behavior fell below the standard expected of members of Parliament.

Mark Menzies' downfall is the latest in a series of scandals to hit the Conservatives, undermining support for a party that has been in power for the past 14 years as it prepares for a general election later this year.

The Times of London recently reported that Menzies called a 78-year-old aide at 3 a.m. in December asking for funds to pay off "bad people" who had locked him in an apartment and were demanding money for his release. Menzies' office manager ultimately paid 6,500 pounds (\$8,100) from her personal bank account, which was reimbursed from funds donated by political backers, the newspaper said.

Menzies, who denies the allegations, has represented the seat of Fylde in northwest England since 2010.

"Due to the pressures on myself and my elderly mother, I have decided to resign from the Conservative Party and will not stand at the forthcoming general election," he said. "This has been a very difficult week for me, and I request that my family's privacy is respected." (AP)

Poland's PM celebrates after party wins: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk is celebrating after a series of candidates supported by his party won weekend races for mayor.

Tusk declared victory in the second round of the country's local elections late Sunday and listed the many cities where candidates backed by his Civic Coalition won, among them Krakow, Poznan, Wroclaw and Rzeszow.

It puts the pro-European Union centrist Civic Coalition in a favorable position as the country looks next to elections to the European Parliament on June 9.

"I think we won the second round. We won't stop!" Tusk wrote on social platform X.

Mayors were chosen in a total of 748 cities and towns where no single candidate won at least 50% of the vote during the first round on April 7.

Candidates for Tusk's party also recaptured cities where they had not held power for many years, including Zielona Gora, Legnica and Torun.

The local and regional elections were viewed as a test for Tusk's pro-European Union government four months after it took power at the national level. (AP)

Norway's King Harald back at work:

Europe's oldest monarch, King Harald V of Norway, returned to work Monday after a long sick leave following two surgeries to implant pacemakers, as the royal household said he would scale back his official activities from now on.

The first scheduled tasks for Harald, 87, is to receive Norwegian military officers at the royal palace in Oslo, according to the Norwegian royal calendar.

"The king will make adjustments to his program in the future, due to his age. This will entail a permanent reduction in the number and scope of activities in which the king participates," the royal household said in a statement. "Practical arrangements will also be made in the implementation of his official activity."

Harald repeatedly has said he has no plans to abdicate, unlike his second cousin Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, who stepped down earlier this year.

Harald fell ill in late February during a private holiday with his wife, Queen Sonja, on the Malaysian resort island of Langkawi. He received a temporary pacemaker there due to a low heart rate on March 2.

Harald returned to Norway aboard a medical airplane and was immediately transferred to a hospital. He underwent a second surgery to receive a permanent pacemaker 10 days later at Oslo's university hospital. (AP)

3 Germans held on suspicion of spying for China:

Three people suspected of spying for China and arranging to transfer information on technology with potential military uses were arrested in Germany on Monday.

Prosecutors said the three German citizens are accused of having acted for Chinese intelligence since some point before June 2022. They are also suspected of violating German export laws by exporting a special laser without permission.

One of the suspects, identified only as Thomas R. in line with German privacy laws, was allegedly an agent for an employee of China's Ministry of State Security and procured information in Germany on "militarily usable innovative technologies" for that person, federal prosecutors said in a statement.

To do that, prosecutors said, he used Herwig F. and Ina F., a couple who own a company in Duesseldorf that was used to contact and work with German researchers.

The couple allegedly set up a research transfer agreement with an unidentified German university, the first step in which was to draw up a study for a Chinese partner on the technology of machine parts that could be used for powerful ship engines, including those in battleships. Thomas R.'s handler at the MSS was behind the Chinese partner and the project was financed by the Chinese state, prosecutors said. (AP)



Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. speaks to supporters during a campaign event on April 21, in Royal Oak, Mich. Kennedy on Sunday acknowledged endorsements from more than a dozen of his relatives who are backing Democratic President Joe Biden, noting that he feels no ill will over the family political divide. (AP)

Politics

Kennedy says he loves his family 'either way'

Election workers fear threats to their safety

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich., April 22, (AP) — The group gathered inside the conference room, mostly women, fell silent as the audio recording began to play.

The male voice, clearly agitated, railed against what he thought had been fraud that cost former President Donald Trump reelection four years ago.

"You're gonna pay for it," said the man, filling his message with expletives and suggesting his target's throat be slashed with a knife. "We will ... take you out. Your family, your life."

The call had been directed at one of their own, a city clerk who had overseen elections in 2020 in her suburban Detroit community. The former clerk, Tina Barton, played the recording of the call she had received to an audience that included several dozen local election clerks and a few law enforcement officials who had gathered recently inside an office building conference room in northern Michigan.

"I want you to understand this voicemail is the same type of thing that we're seeing across the country, and it can find you anywhere you are - small community, large community, Michigan, Arizona. It can find you," said Barton, who was overseeing elections in Rochester Hills when she received the voicemail a week after the 2020 presidential election.

The recent gathering in Traverse City, a picturesque community on the shores of Lake Michigan in a county that has twice voted for Trump, was part of a national effort to train local election workers on how they can respond to threats and work with law enforcement to counter them.

Alarming

As the nation barrels toward another highly charged presidential election, the threats to election officials that have been an alarming consequence of Trump's false claims about his 2020 loss loom as a perilous wildcard for the thousands of local government workers who will oversee the indispensable infrastructure of the nation's democracy this fall. The constant threats and harassment have contributed to an exodus of election officials across the

country.

Barton left her job in Rochester Hills shortly after the 2020 election and later became part of the newly formed Committee for Safe and Secure Elections. Since joining, she has given nearly 100 presentations throughout the country.

Earlier this month, The Associated Press was granted rare access inside the committee's training session in Traverse City and allowed to observe the scenarios election workers are likely to face this year and the discussions about how they and law enforcement can prepare for them.

"None of these scenarios are sensational. They are all things that have already happened in some way, shape or form across the country," Barton tells the group. "To say, 'Oh, that could never happen.' These things are already happening."

Barton's partner in the training is Justin Smith, the former sheriff in Larimer County, Colorado, who signed up after retiring last year and hearing directly from local election officials about the onslaught of threats they have faced since 2020.

Training

During the training, Smith often speaks directly to the police officers and sheriff's deputies in the room, explaining the role they play in elections and how the environment has changed since 2020. In past years, election officials were likely to deal with issues on their own, such as protesters or unruly citizens looking to promote their candidates at polling places.

"It's not that simple anymore," Smith tells the group. "We need to be at the table and be part of the solution."

To election officials, he explains how law enforcement has historically sought to keep its distance from anything to do with elections, mindful of First Amendment concerns and not wanting to interfere with anyone's right to vote.

Barton guides the election officials through various scenarios and encourages them to think through their responses, when it makes sense to alert law enforcement and when to consider releasing information to the public.

"I know there's been some, maybe disgruntlement across the country from some election officials that feel that they haven't gotten the response from law enforcement that they thought law enforcement should give," Barton tells the election officials. "So these conversations help us understand what they can actually do in those scenarios and what they can't do."

She said election offices might deal with everything from threatening emails and phone calls to an AI-generated robocall sent to poll workers telling them to stay home on Election Day. One of the scenarios Barton presents to the group mirrors events that unfolded in the days immediately after elections last fall, when local election offices in a handful of states received letters in the mail that contained fentanyl, a highly potent synthetic opioid.

Also:

ROYAL OAK, Mich.: Independent candidate **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** on Sunday acknowledged endorsements from more than a dozen of his relatives who are backing Democratic President **Joe Biden**, noting that he feels no ill will over the family political divide.

"Some of them don't like the fact that I'm running," Kennedy said of his relatives, after a comedy showcase in suburban **Detroit** to benefit his campaign.

Kennedy - who last year launched an independent presidential bid after first challenging Biden for the Democratic nomination - was reacting to the endorsements from his sister and other relatives last week, a move by the Biden campaign that signals how seriously the president's team is taking a long-shot candidate using his last name's lingering Democratic magic to siphon support from the incumbent.

In Philadelphia, Kerry Kennedy, a daughter of former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, niece of former President **John F. Kennedy** and sister of the current presidential candidate, called Biden "my hero," saying - without mention of her brother - that the family wanted to "make crystal clear" their support for reelecting Biden.

a man believed to be the shooting suspect was later fatally shot by police, authorities said Sunday.

Deputy **Tobin Bolter**, 27, was shot

as he approached the driver's window at about 9 p.m. Saturday in Boise, and the suspect took off, Ada County Sheriff Matt Clifford said Sunday. Bolter was the first

sheriff's deputy in the county to be killed in the line of duty, Clifford said.

Boise police found the shooting suspect's vehicle unoccupied about a half hour after the shooting, and found a man believed to be the suspect outside a home, Boise Police Chief Ron Winegar said. (AP)

Woman killed at university: An 18-year-old woman died after she was shot on the campus of Delaware State University on Sunday, authorities said.

Dover police said officers responded at about 1:40 a.m. to a report of shots on the campus.

Police said an 18-year-old Wilmington woman who was not a registered student was found with a gunshot wound to the upper body near Warren-Franklin Hall, which the university describes as a freshman dorm.

The victim was provided aid and rushed to Bayhealth Kent Campus, where she was pronounced dead, police said. Her name wasn't immediately released pending notification of her family. No other injuries were reported and no description of a suspect was immediately available.

A university statement provided by police said the campus was closed Sunday with no visitation permitted, all events canceled and police patrols increased. (AP)



Britain's Queen Camilla inspects the 152 Lancers on a parade during her visit to the Royal Lancers, in Catterick, England, April 22. Queen Camilla undertakes her first visit to the Regiment since being appointed as their Colonel-in-Chief. (AP)



Bolter



Bass

America

LA Mayor Bass safe: Police in Los Angeles arrested a suspect following a break-in at the home of Mayor **Karen Bass** on Sunday morning, officials said.

Bass and her family were not harmed when a suspect gained access to Getty House, the LA mayor's official residence on Irving Boulevard.

"Around 6:40 am this morning an individual smashed a window to gain entry into the Getty House while occupied," the Los Angeles Police Department said in a statement on social media, adding that police responded and took a suspect into custody without incident.

"Mayor Bass and her family were not injured and are safe. The Mayor is grateful to LAPD for responding and arresting the suspect," her office said in a statement.

The LAPD did not immediately release the name or other information about the suspect and said an investigation is ongoing. (AP)

Teen held on murder charge: An Arkansas teen is in custody on a first-degree murder charge in connection with the fatal shooting of a high school senior outside a party early Sunday following a high school prom.

Donterious Stephens, 19, of Helena, turned himself in to authorities Sunday afternoon in the shooting death of Lorenzo Harrison III, 18, an Arkansas State Police spokeswoman said.

Harrison, a senior at Helena-West Helena's Central High School, was shot and killed at an off-campus party following the school's prom. Helena-West Helena is located about 52 miles (85 kilometers) southwest of Memphis, Tennessee, along the Mississippi River.

Stephens was being held at the Phillips County jail Sunday, according to an inmate roster. It was not clear Sunday afternoon if he had an attorney representing him, or when he would first appear in court. Stephens was a previous graduate of the school, State Police said. (AP)

Suspect fatally shot by police: An Idaho sheriff's deputy died after being shot by a driver during a traffic stop, and



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, (right), and Poland's President Andrzej Duda board HMCS Regina as HMCS Max Bernays, the Royal Canadian Navy's arctic offshore patrol vessel, is seen behind them at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in Esquimalt, British Columbia on April 20. (AP)

Lat/Am

Colombians protest

Conservative Brazilians laud Elon Musk at rally

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 22, (AP): Conservative Brazilians heaped praise Sunday on **Elon Musk** at a rally in support of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro, whose legal troubles are mounting in tandem with the billionaire entrepreneur's feud with the South American nation's Supreme Court.

"Brazil Thanks Elon Musk," read one giant sign in English at the rally alongside Copacabana beach in the seaside city of Rio de Janeiro. Thousands of die-hard supporters of Bolsonaro attended.

Musk, a self-declared free speech absolutist, is a target in an ongoing investigation over the dissemination of fake news by supporters of Bolsonaro. Musk said the social platform X wouldn't comply with a high court justice's order to remove certain accounts accused of spreading disinformation.



Musk

Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX who took over Twitter - now X - in late 2022, accused Justice Alexandre de Moraes of suppressing free speech and violating Brazil's constitution. He noted on X that users could seek to bypass any shutdown of the social media platform by using VPNs, or virtual private networks.

That prompted de Moraes to include Musk in an ongoing investigation into so-called digital militias and open a new investigation into obstruction, incitement and criminal conspiracy.

Several speakers lauded Musk at Sunday's rally. "What you see here are people who love liberty, who will not give up and will not kneel down to dictators, people who are willing to give their lives for freedom," said Gustavo Gayer, a pro-Bolsonaro congressman.

For his part, the former president lauded Musk for demonstrating "courage" in the face of what he called censorship by de Moraes.

"He is the man who really preserves true freedom for all of us," said Bolsonaro, who is himself under investigation for a plethora of crimes ranging from aiding an effort to overturn the 2022 election results and plotting a coup against his leftist successor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Brazil is an important market for social media companies. About 40 million Brazilians, or about 18% of the population, access X at least once per month, according to the market research group Emarketer.

Sheinbaum stopped by masked men: Masked men stopped a vehicle carrying Mexico's leading presidential candidate while she was traveling between campaign stops Sunday to ask that she address the violence in the southern state of Chiapas if she wins the June 2 election.

Former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, the governing Morena party's candidate, remained in the front passenger seat of the vehicle listening calmly with her window down. Masked men filmed the interaction on their cell phones and one shook her hand before letting her move on.

The men, who identified themselves as local residents, said they felt "powerless" because the government has not done enough to provide security. They asked her to take action as president so that their township, Motozintla, along Mexico's southern border with Guatemala, does not become a "disaster" like other communities in the region.

During her campaign swing through Chiapas, Sheinbaum was escorted by the army and national guard.

The border area of Chiapas has been plagued by violence as the rival Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels battle for territory. Thousands of people have been displaced as the cartels work to control migrant, drug and weapons smuggling routes and forcibly recruit locals.

Later Sunday, Sheinbaum confirmed the incident had occurred, but downplayed it and said she did not believe the men were part of an organized crime group. She described the encounter as "very strange" because she said a media outlet critical of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's administration first published it. Sheinbaum has maintained a comfortable lead in the presidential race, according to polls.

A federal lawmaker from López Obrador's party who was traveling with Sheinbaum had earlier described the encounter on the social platform X. Federal deputy Carmen Patricia Armendáriz wrote that they had been stopped by masked men from one of the cartels battling for the area's control, but she later deleted it.

Colombians protest against prez: Thousands of Colombians took to the streets Sunday in the latest rebuke of leftist President Gustavo Petro's reform agenda.

The demonstrations took place in several cities, including the capital. Protesters filled Bolívar Plaza outside the presidential palace in Bogotá.

While protests have been a constant since the former leftist guerrilla took office in 2022, they've gained momentum of late. Petro has floated the possibility of rewriting the constitution to spur social reforms that he's been unable to advance in the face of opposition by a hostile congress and conservative business groups.

Petro recently suffered an important defeat when Colombia's congress refused to pass legislation to boost state control of the country's health care system aimed at improving and lowering the cost of medical care.

In response to the defeat, Petro ordered by decree the takeover of two of the country's top medical insurers, on which millions of Colombians depend.

Ecuadorians vote 'yes': Ecuador's fledgling president got a resounding victory Sunday in a referendum that he touted as a way to crack down on criminal gangs behind a spiraling wave of violence.

An official quick count showed that Ecuadorians overwhelmingly voted "yes" to all nine questions focused on tightening security measures, rejecting only two more controversial economic proposals.

The quick count was announced by the head of the Electoral National Council, Diana Atamaint. It confirmed a private exit poll released hours before that indicated a resounding victory and sign of support for President Daniel Noboa, the scion of a wealthy banana exporting family.

Among the measures approved are President Noboa's call to deploy the army in the fight against the gangs, to loosen obstacles for extraditing accused criminals and to lengthen prison sentences for convicted drug traffickers.



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center), walks with Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, (right), during arrival honors at the Malacanang Presidential palace in Manila, Philippines on April 22. (AP)

Philippines and Qatar sign several MoUs

President of Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jr and the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani inked on Monday several Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) including technical cooperation and capacity-building on climate change.

Philippine News Agency stated that both sides exchanged agreements of visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, private and official passports,

MoUs for cooperation in the fields of sports, youth and combating human trafficking.

It added that they also signed MoUs on technical cooperation and capacity-building on climate change, tourism and business events, on mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates.

Moreover, other MoUs were signed by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the

Qatari Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as a MoU between Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In his opening speech for their bilateral meeting, Marcos said he is hoping that their discussions will translate into stronger collaboration in various fields of common interests. (KUNA)

Asia

Chinese general takes harsh line on Taiwan

US, Philippine forces launch combat drills

MANILA, Philippines, April 22, (AP): American and Filipino forces launched their largest combat exercises in years Monday in a show of allied firepower near the disputed South China Sea that has alarmed Beijing.

The annual exercises by the long-time treaty allies will run until May 10 and involve more than 16,000 of their military personnel, along with more than 250 French and Australian forces.

While the Philippine military maintains that the Balikatan - Tagalog for "shoulder-to-shoulder" - trainings are not directed at a particular country, some of their main conflict scenarios are set in or near the disputed South China Sea, where Chinese and Philippine coast guard and accompanying ships have figured in a series of increasingly tense territorial faceoffs since last year.

In encounters in disputed areas, Chinese coast guard vessels have resorting to water cannons, blocking and other dangerous maneuvers that have caused injuries to Philippine navy personnel and damaged supply boats.

The Philippine military said a key focus of this year's drills is territorial defense. "We're dead serious about protecting our territory - that's why we do these Balikatan exercises," Col. Michael Logico, who speaks for the Philippine military on the combat drills, told The Associated Press.

Also:

QINGDAO, China: One of China's top military leaders took a harsh line on regional territorial disputes, telling an international naval gathering in northeastern China on Monday that the country would strike back with force if its interests came under threat.

The 19th biennial meeting of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium opened in the port city of Qingdao, where China's northern naval force is based, providing a vivid backdrop to China's massive military expansion over the past two decades that has seen it build or refurbish three aircraft carriers.

The four-day meeting has drawn representatives from partners and

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 22, (AP): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday criticized social media platform X for refusing to remove graphic posts about a knife attack on a bishop and priest in a Sydney church last week.

X Corp, the tech company founded last year by billionaire Elon Musk to succeed Twitter, announced last week it would fight in court Australian orders to take down posts relating to a knife attack on a bishop in an Assyrian Orthodox church as a service was being streamed online.

Albanese said social media posts, misinformation and dissemination of violent images had exacerbated suffering from the Christ the Good Shepherd Church attack, which the two clerics survived, and a knife attack at a Sydney shopping

mall two days earlier which killed six people.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape accused Joe Biden of disparaging the South Pacific island nation by implying that an uncle of the U.S. president had been eaten by "cannibals" there during World War II.

Biden's comments offended a key strategic ally as China moves to increase its influence in the region.

The president spoke at a Pennsylvania war memorial last week about his Army Air Corps aviator uncle Ambrose Finnegan, who was shot down over Papua New Guinea, which was a theater of heavy fighting.

and undersea resources.

SEOUL, South Korea: North Korea on Monday test-fired suspected short-range ballistic missiles into the sea, the country's neighbors said, as speculation swirled that it could soon launch a banned satellite into orbit.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons launched from the North's capital region flew about 300 kilometers (185 miles) before crashing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The ranges suggest the weapons could likely target sites in South Korea.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff strongly condemned the launches, saying they were a "clear provocation" that threatens peace on the Korean Peninsula. It said it will maintain readiness to "overwhelmingly" respond to North Korean provocations in step with its military alliance with the United States.



In this photo released by Prime Minister Office, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, (left), walks with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during a welcome ceremony in the prime minister house in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 22. The meeting came as part of efforts by Islamabad and Tehran to mend ties which had been briefly strained in January when the two sides carried out tit-for-tat strikes targeting militants accused of attacking their security forces. (AP)



Niteretse



Sabushimike

Africa

Nigeria's army rescues woman: Nigerian soldiers rescued a woman who was abducted by extremists a decade ago while she was a schoolgirl in the village of Chibok, the army said. Her three children were also rescued.

Lydia Simon, who is five months pregnant, was rescued by Nigerian troops in the Gwoza council area of Borno state, where the 15-year insurgency by Islamic extremists is concentrated, according to a statement from the army. Her age wasn't immediately released by authorities, but she is most likely in her 20s.

The statement was accompanied by a picture of Simon and her children, who appear to be between the ages of 2 and 4. She has yet to be reunited with her family.

Simon was among 276 girls seized from their school in Chibok in April 2014 at the height of the extremist violence in the region. About 82 of them are still in captivity.

The first of a series of mass school kidnappings in the West African nation, the Chibok abduction shocked the world and triggered a global social media campaign tagged #BringBackOurGirls.

The Nigerian army didn't say how she was freed other than that she was rescued in a hot spot known as Ngoshe, 130 kilometers (74 miles) north of the Borno state capital of Maiduguri.

Some Chibok parents and security analysts have said there is little evidence to show there is a special military operation to free the women. Those who returned in recent years were mostly found abandoned in the forests. (AP)

Floods wreak havoc across Africa: Deadly floods are wreaking havoc in many parts of East Africa that face torrential rainfall, with the poor nation of Burundi calling for international help to deal with the aftermath.

Lake Tanganyika's rising waters have

invaded the port of Bujumbura, Burundi's economic capital, disrupting business there and elsewhere in the country that re-

lies heavily on donor support to run government programs.

"We are issuing this statement to ask



Zhang Youxia, (front left), vice chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission, waves as he walks with Hu Zhongming, China's Navy chief on arrival for a group photo before attending the Western Pacific Navy Symposium held in Qingdao in eastern China's Shandong province on April 22. (AP)

our development partners to combine efforts with the state of Burundi to help all people affected by these disasters," Interior Minister Martin Niteretse said April 17. "We need that support."

Niteretse spoke in Bujumbura alongside Violet Kenyana Kakyomya, the U.N. resident coordinator in Burundi.

Between September and April 7, some 203,944 people were affected by flooding, with 19,250 homes and 209 classrooms destroyed during that time. The number of people internally displaced by flooding rose by 25%, reaching over 98,000 people, according to Kakyomya.

Burundi is one of the world's poorest countries, with 80% of its 13 million people employed in agriculture, according to the World Bank.

Flooding there has created surreal scenes like game rangers entering the waterlogged Rusizi National Park in a canoe. The Boulevard du Japon, a major highway in Bujumbura, has been completely flooded in recent days.

"It must be said directly that these floods are associated with climate changes that affect Burundi like other countries in the region," said Jean Marie Sabushimike, a geographer and disaster management expert who teaches at the University of Burundi. (AP)

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts		
↑	JAPAN	- Nikkei	+370.26	37,438.61	↓	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-9.29	12,508.93
	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+1.08	6,444.08		DUBAI	- DFM	-6.90	4,167.66
	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+509.43	71,453.63		EGYPT	- EGX 30	-479.17	28,144.22

Business

Oil prices boost Kuwait's public finances in Q1 2024, confidence improves

Kuwait's Q1 2024 economy softens, real estate and project activity dip

By National Bank of Kuwait

Data on Kuwait's economy remained relatively soft in Q1 2024, following a muted 2023. Both real estate sales and project activity dipped, while credit growth stood at multi-year lows. Inflation also eased, albeit modestly, pointing to cooling private demand. Some of this softness may have been linked to seasonal factors, including the holy month of Ramadan, which fell mostly in March, perhaps auguring for a better Q2. On the positive side, oil's recent rise to over \$90/bbl (above our estimates of the breakeven oil price for the government's budget) has boosted the public finances and perhaps overall confidence as well, though the government still ran a significant fiscal deficit in the first 10M of FY23/24 on elevated and difficult-to-rein in spending. Q1 was also characterized by fresh domestic political volatility, with the Emir dissolving parliament for the 4th time in 4 years and elections called for early April. The poll ultimately resulted in the return of most of the previous MPs, pointing to no obvious shift in the political deadlock that has delayed key economic reforms until now.

Non-oil activity accelerated in Q3 2023

According to data published by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), non-oil GDP rose by 2.8% y/y in Q3 2023 while the oil sector declined for the second consecutive quarter, by a steep 9% y/y, due to Kuwait's OPEC+ production cut obligations. (Chart 1.) As a result, overall GDP declined by 3.7% y/y, a second consecutive quarterly decline.

The pick-up in non-oil growth came from gains in the financial services (+2.7% y/y), public administration (+1.0%) and transportation & storage (+28%) categories, with the latter contributing almost half of the increase in non-oil activity. However, manufacturing activity, which includes oil refining and accounts for

almost 16% of nonoil GDP in real terms, remained in negative growth territory (-1.3% y/y) for the sixth quarter in a row.

Moreover, the CSB release included revisions for the previous quarter (Q2 2023), which saw growth shift from 1.5% y/y to -2.5%. Non-oil growth for Q1-Q3 2023 averaged 0.1% y/y and, in the absence of further data revisions or especially robust growth in the final quarter, decent growth for the full year looks unattainable.

Although an improvement in growth is expected for 2024, given the soft start to the year across a range of non-oil metrics mentioned above, as well as ongoing domestic and international headwinds, we expect growth to remain on the soft side at 2.5% or less.

Oil prices rise in Q1 on tighter fundamentals

Oil prices surged in Q1 2024, with Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) rising 8.5% q/q to end March at \$86.3/bbl. The rally reflected tightening oil market fundamentals following the implementation—and later extension—of OPEC+ supply cuts (2.1 mb/d) to end-H1 2024. This was also allied to stronger-than-expected oil demand growth, with the global economy proving surprisingly resilient amid elevated interest rates and fears of entrenched inflation across the US and EU and higher geopolitical risk premia linked to Israel-Iran tensions. We have raised our 2024 oil price forecast to \$85/bbl reflecting the above dynamics.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's crude production in Q1 was broadly in line with its OPEC quota of 2.41 mb/d. OPEC+ will meet in June to assess the state of the market and decide on any potential unwinding of the supply cuts. Our base case sees these cuts extended to end-2024, though if oil trades consistently in the \$95-\$100 range in H2 2024, there might be pressure from both outside and inside OPEC+ to loosen the market a little.

Consumer spending growth slows sharply

Consumer spending, the pre-eminent driver of non-oil activity post-pandemic, has slowed sharply, albeit from exceptional levels. According to central bank cards data, total card spending grew by 5.4% y/y in Q4 2023, down from 8.7% in Q3 2023. (Chart 3.) Looking ahead to 2024, we expect only limited upside amid a challenging local and international macroeconomic environment, which includes elevated interest rates and some budgeted cuts in government spending. That said, the recent increase in oil prices, if sustained, could provide a boost to consumer confidence.

Real estate sales ease in Q1 2024

After showing improvement in Q4 2023, real estate sales weakened in the first three months of 2024, falling to a cumulative KD697 million (-9.5% q/q; -2.3% y/y) by the quarter's close. The quarterly fall reflected reduced activity in the commercial property sector, while sales in both the residential and investment sectors increased only slightly, the latter for the third consecutive quarter.

Seasonality, with the holy month of Ramadan falling in March, may have played a part in Q1—transaction volumes were down on Q4 2023—though if so, the effect appears to have been limited to the commercial sector, where bigger ticket, more complex sale executions are the norm. Looking ahead, while it is noteworthy that the rate of annual decline in real estate sales had slowed to -2.3% y/y in Q1 from its lowest point of -38% in Q2 2023, we still expect any improvement this year to be modest given elevated interest rates, relatively subdued sentiment and an uncertain macroeconomic backdrop.

Project activity dips in Q1

Following a much-improved 2023, the value of awarded projects in Q1 2024 declined significantly to KD98 million (-78% q/q; -80% y/y), with only a handful of mainly infrastructure-related projects (e.g. the Al-Mutlaa and Sabah Al-Ahmad cities) seeing any movement. The Q1 figure was the lowest in two decades, although as with real estate sales above, it could be partly explained by seasonal effects, including Ramadan. The outlook for the rest of 2024 should be better given positive signals emanating from the Al-Zour IWPP phases 2&3 project (KD1.2 billion) and the pipeline of PAHW-related city projects. MEED estimates total awards could reach KD6.3 billion in 2024.

Inflation easing but gradually

Consumer price inflation came in at 3.4% y/y in February, ticking up slightly from January but down on the 3.7% average recorded in Q4 2023. Core inflation, which strips out food and housing, stood at 3.3% y/y in February, not far off its 2023 peak of 3.5% recorded last

November. Although not high, price pressures have been somewhat persistent across the CPI basket, easing only gradually. Food price inflation has now risen for two months in a row to 5.0% in February. We think inflation this year will trend downwards to an average of around 3.0% or slightly below, in line with expectations of still muted economic activity. Expat population closes in on pre-pandemic peak of 2019.

According to the Public Authority of Civil Information (PACI), Kuwait's population rose by 2.6% in 2023 to 4.86 million (+8% in 2022). The population of Kuwaiti nationals increased by a steady 1.9% to 1.55 million, while the number of expatriates rose by 2.9% to 3.31 million (much slower than the 11.1% recorded in 2022), just below the peak level, pre-pandemic.

Meanwhile, the number of Kuwaitis in employment rose in 2023 by 3.3% to 470K. Gains (net) were exclusively on account of public sector hiring (+17K new jobs), as Kuwaiti employment in the private sector continued to decline, with 1.8K jobs shed to 72.6K. Expatriate jobs, on the other hand, rose by 5.4% y/y, led by domestic workers (+6.6%). Should project activity gain more momentum in 2024, then it is reasonable to expect this number to increase. The boost to private consumption may be less pronounced, however, given that most new hires would likely be in the low-end wage category. The resumption of family visa issuance could also work to augment the number of expatriates.

Fiscal balance logs a deficit in 10M FY23/24

Ministry of Finance data for 10M FY23/24 (April-January) showed the government posting a fiscal deficit of KD1.1 billion (-2.6% of estimated GDP) on revenues of KD17.8 billion (-24% y/y) and expenditures of KD18.9 billion (+61% y/y). The 10-month figure is in stark contrast to last year's equivalent period reading, when the public finances were in surplus (KD10.2 billion; +18.5% of GDP) amid spiking international oil prices.

Nevertheless, the fiscal deficit is narrower than the KD1.7 billion posted in the 9-month accounts published a month earlier, an improvement that reflects revenue growth outpacing expenditure growth. Oil revenues stood at KD16.4 billion (-25% y/y) and non-oil revenues KD1.4 billion (+8.4% y/y).

On the expenditure side, current expenditures came in at KD16.6 billion (+66% y/y) on higher outlays in the compensation of employees and grants categories. Meanwhile, capex reached KD821 million, declining 15.6% y/y. As a proportion of the capex budget allocation, 55% remained unspent by January's close. Based on historical spending patterns, the deficit could widen to more than KD3 billion (6% of GDP) in FY23/24.

The draft budget for FY24/25 projects another sizeable deficit of KD5.9 billion and still reflects long-standing structural challenges, namely the high reliance on oil revenues and inflated current spending, which continue to undermine long-term sustainability. Recently, Fitch rating agency affirmed Kuwait's sovereign credit rating at a high AA- with a stable outlook on a strong fiscal balance sheet (financial assets at 529% of GDP in FY24/25) while noting the ever-expanding welfare state coupled with lack of traction on economic reforms.

Credit growth picks up in February

After a weak 2023, credit growth showed some improvement in Jan-Feb 2024, though remained historically weak in year-on-year terms. According to the latest CBK release, credit increased by a strong 0.7% m/m in February (+1.8% y/y; +0.5% ytd) on the back of higher household (+0.2% m/m; +1.9% y/y) and business lending (+0.5% m/m; +0.7% y/y). (Chart 8.) In the former, so far in 2024 growth in consumer loans (+1.1% ytd) outpaced housing loan growth (+0.3% ytd), a reversal of the trend in 2022-2023. Business lending, meanwhile, has been broad-based across sectors, with the construction sector posting the quickest growth after two months (+5.6% ytd), in line with its performance in 2022-2023.

Kuwaiti banks' unified assets upsurge to 87.66 billion dinars

Rise in foreign investments drives growth in foreign assets

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The combined assets of local banks saw a notable rise, increasing by approximately 1.55 billion dinars, or 1.8%, to reach 87.66 billion by the end of February compared to 86.11 billion in the same period last year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This growth stemmed from various factors, including a surge in foreign assets by 1.69 billion dinars, marking a 7.3% increase to a total of 24.74 billion. Additionally, demands from the private sector rose by 1.58 billion dinars, a 3.6% uptick, totaling 45.81 billion, while demands from public institutions saw a modest increase of 1.2%, reaching 3.68 billion.

Banking demands from the private sector constitute the largest portion of local banks' assets, making up 52.3% of the total, followed by foreign assets at 28.2%. Private sector deposits serve as the primary financing source for local banks, accounting for 42.9% of total liabilities as of the end of February. Government deposits comprise 2.2%, and deposits from public institutions make up 7.9%.

Meanwhile, quasi-cash balances, including savings deposits in dinars, time deposits in dinars, and deposits in foreign currencies, experienced a significant increase of 1.22 billion dinars, or 4.4%.

The uptick in foreign assets was

Private housing transaction leads the decline

Real estate transactions decline by 21.1% in Kuwait, says report

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Kuwait Finance House (KFH) report revealed that real estate transactions in 2023 amounted to 3.1 billion dinars (contracts and agencies), marking a 21.1% decrease from the previous year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This decline was primarily driven by reduced transactions in private housing, which amounted to approximately 1.45 billion dinars, down by 27.2% compared to the previous year, representing 47.1% of total transactions. Investment real estate transactions also decreased to 906 million dinars, a drop of 18.8%, constituting 29.2% of total deals.

Meanwhile, commercial real estate transactions recorded 514 million dinars, down by 15%, making up approximately 16.5% of total transactions.

The craft sector, trade fairs, and industrial plots witnessed a significant decline to about 84 million dinars, a decrease of 51.8% from 2022. However, the coastal strip sector saw a notable increase, reaching 140 million dinars, more than four times its value in 2022, contributing 4.5% to total transactions.

The report also noted a decline in real estate demand in 2023, evidenced by a 28.5% decrease in the number of deals, totaling 4,443 deals.

This decline was observed across various sectors, except for the coastal strip, which experienced an increase. However, the coastal strip's contribution to total transac-

tions remained minimal.

Private housing transactions decreased to 3,114 deals, down by 31.5% from the previous year, while investment deals reached 1,149, a decrease of 17.3%. Commercial sector deals totaled 118, down by 26.7% compared to 2022.

Private housing prices saw a modest decline of 1% by the end of the fourth quarter of 2023, marking the second annual decline in five years. Investment real estate prices increased by 1%, while commercial real estate prices rose by 2.8% in the same period. Chalet area prices remained stable, while creek area prices experienced slight decreases. Residential area prices varied across regions, with declines observed in some areas of the Capital and Hawalli governorates.

The average price per square meter of ownership for apartments in investment properties remained stable across most governorates, while rental values increased slightly by 1.7% annually. The average rental value for private housing saw a minor decrease of 0.2% annually.

In the Capital Governorate, the average price per square meter for private housing decreased to 1,408 dinars, while investment real estate reached 2,397 dinars.

In Hawalli Governorate, private housing prices declined to 1,167 dinars, while investment real estate increased to 1,685 dinars. Farwaniya Governorate saw private housing prices at 775 dinars on average, with investment real estate reaching 1,500 dinars.

attributed to the rise in foreign investments and credit facilities to non-residents, coupled with a decrease in deposits held with foreign banks

by 6.2% and foreign bank loans by 1.4%.

The Central Bank's latest detailed data revealed a substantial increase

in the net foreign assets of local banks, soaring by 2.80 billion dinars, or 27.9%, to approximately 12.82 billion by the end of February.

Global growth projection upgraded to 3.2% for 2024

IMF revises down growth forecasts for MENA and GCC regions

By KAMCO Invest Research

In its latest regional economic outlook for the MENA region, the IMF revised down its growth forecast for both the MENA region as well as the GCC region despite resilient global economic activity and easing of inflationary pressures.

The IMF underlined the impact of the ongoing conflicts in the region including the shipping disruptions as well as the effect of lower oil production on the economies of energy exporters. In terms of global economic recovery, the IMF noted that the global economic activity has been resilient during the past two years despite the tightening of monetary policies as favorable demand and supply developments sustained growth in several of the global major economies.

GDP growth in the MENA region is revised down by 70 bps for 2024 from the IMF's earlier October-2023 forecast and is expected to average 2.7% in 2024 and 4.2% in 2025. Similarly, GCC GDP growth forecast for 2024 witnessed 130 bps cut from the IMF's previous forecast and is expected to average 2.4% and 4.9% in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

The greater rate downgrade reflects lower hydrocarbon production, persistent tight monetary policy and the uncertainty caused by the ongoing conflicts in the region. On the other hand, the IMF expects growth in both the MENA and GCC region to strengthen next year as the impact of current uncertainty caused by the conflicts in the region and oil production cuts dissipate. In contrast, the IMF upgraded global growth projection by 30 bps from the October-2023 World Economic Outlook forecast to 3.2% for 2024 and also penciled 3.2% growth for 2025.

All GCC countries witnessed downgrades in their GDP growth forecasts for 2024 vs. October-2023 forecast except for Bahrain which maintained its previous 3.6% GDP forecast topping the table as the highest forecasted growth in the region.

The UAE followed with the second largest GDP growth forecast for 2024 at 3.5% despite witnessing a 50 bps downgrade from the previous forecast. Similarly, Saudi Arabia GDP growth was penciled at 2.6% for 2024 witnessing a downward revision of 140 bps from its previous forecast as voluntary oil production cuts weigh on the Kingdom's economy for the near future.

The IMF warned that the uncertainty of current ongoing conflicts in the region, especially, the war on Gaza, and the probable spillover effect it could have on neighboring states of the region citing the disruption in the Red Sea as a good example of the possible expansion of the conflict into other countries of the region.

GCC oil GDP growth slashed; non-oil GDP growth revised up marginally.

GCC real oil GDP growth is expected to contract by 1.1% in 2024 after a 5.9% contraction in 2023. Headline GCC oil GDP forecast for 2024 was lowered by 420 bps, due to the expectation that the voluntary oil production cuts will remain intact during the year. However, growth in GCC real oil GDP is expected to bounce back in 2025 and is projected to average 6.0% during 2025 as oil production increases in the region take effect. Three out of six of the GCC member countries are expected to witness contractions in their oil GDP growth during 2024; namely Saudi Arabia (-2.4%), Kuwait (-4.3%) and Oman (-0.9%).

Comparatively, Qatar is expected to lead in terms of real oil GDP growth at 2.0% in 2024 followed by the UAE at 1.8% and Bahrain at 1.4%. GCC oil GDP growth is expected to recover in 2025 led by Saudi Arabia which is expected to

witness 8.1% real oil GDP expansion in 2025 followed by the Kuwait (+4.8%) and the UAE (+4.1%).

In terms of non-oil GDP activity, the GCC region is expected to witness a relatively higher growth rate of 3.6% in 2024 despite registering a 40 bps growth rate downward revision followed by 4.5% expected growth rate in 2025. Ongoing ambitious plans to diversify the economies of the region are currently having the expected positive effect by bolstering growth in the region's non-oil economy. The IMF expects the UAE to lead in terms of non-oil GDP growth in the GCC region in 2024 at 4.1% followed by Bahrain (+4.0%) and Saudi Arabia (+3.9%). GCC inflation continues to remain subdued as commodity prices remain moderate.

Inflationary pressures have been easing in many of the MENA economies including the GCC as real and headline inflation have taken a downward trajectory path in 2023 mainly because of the impact of a combination of monetary tightening policies and relatively lower commodity prices. For many of the oil exporting countries monthly sequential core and headline inflation have declined significantly to levels that are close to historical averages. On the other hand, inflation has endured and remained continual in some of the economies of the MENA region. The persistent high inflation in certain economies of the region reflected structural concerns including food import shortages, accommodative fiscal and monetary policies, and foreign exchange shortages in certain states.

There are fears that the current ongoing conflicts in the region such as the war on Gaza might exacerbate inflationary pressures on the oil and food importing countries in the broader MENA region as they face disruption and higher prices in their imports. Higher shipping costs and reduced trade have been the effect the Red Sea disruption has had on global trade so far.

For countries that significantly rely on the Red Sea trade such as Egypt, the Red Sea disruption has been dire for economic activity in the country. Global trade through the Suez Canal more than halved from 38 million metric tons to 16 million tons between November-2023 till the end of February-2024 due to ship attacks in the Bab el-Mandeb. In context, it is estimated that that between 12% to 15% of global trade per year passes through the Suez Canal.

In terms of global inflationary outlook, inflationary pressures have been easing worldwide as global headline inflation is projected to drop to an annual average of 5.9% in 2024 and 4.5% in 2025 led by advanced economies which are expected to hit their inflationary targets earlier before emerging market and developing economies.

For the GCC, headline inflation is expected to remain significantly lower as compared to global trends especially the larger MENA region. GCC headline inflation is expected to be unchanged at 2.2% in 2024 but decline to 2.1% in 2025 while MENA headline inflation is forecasted to witness a marginal decline from 16% in 2023 to 15.4% in 2024 followed by a further drop to 12.4% in 2025. On the other hand, GCC core inflation is expected to increase from 0.5% in 2023 to 1.6% in 2024 and witness further increase to 2.0% in 2025.

Oil revenues expected to stay low in 2024

The decrease in oil revenues in 2023 due to the voluntary production cuts weighed on GCC and other MENA oil exporters economic activity. As a result, there has been a significant increase in fiscal breakeven oil prices for all the GCC

countries barring Qatar for 2024.

When compared to average Brent spot crude oil price for 2024, the fiscal breakeven oil price is expected to be below the average oil price for the year (USD 84.1 per barrel) for four out of six GCC countries. The 2024 fiscal breakeven price is expected to be the highest in the case of Bahrain at USD 125.7/b while Qatar continues to show the lowest price of USD 43.1/b. GCC oil production is expected to decline for the second consecutive year in 2024 due to the continuing voluntary oil production cuts by GCC member states but is expected to recover in 2025. According to IMF estimates, total GCC crude oil production is expected to decline from 17 mb/d in 2023 to 16.5 mb/d in 2024 followed by 17.9 mb/d in 2025.

Oil revenues for GCC and MENA energy exporters are expected to recover from July this year. According to the IMF, OPEC member states will increase their oil put from July-2024 and a full reversal of oil production cuts will be achieved by member states by the start of 2025.

Fiscal surplus expectations revised downwards versus previous expectations... On the fiscal front, the IMF continues to forecast fiscal surpluses for the GCC region in 2024 and 2025. However, the projected surplus as a percentage of GDP has been downgraded. The IMF now expects a fiscal surplus of 2.3% of GDP for the GCC region in 2024 as compared to its previous surplus of 3.4% made in 2023.

Similarly, the fiscal deficit forecast for the broader MENA region was also revised down from an October-2023 estimate 1.3% of GDP in 2024 to 1.5% of GDP. Moreover, the IMF expects the MENA region's fiscal deficit to decelerate to 1.1% of GDP in 2025. The current account surplus for the GCC region in 2024 has also been revised down to USD 138.9 Bn as compared to previous estimate of USD 194.7 Bn. Moreover, the surplus is expected to decline a bit further in 2025 and reach USD 113.8 Bn.

The decline in the GCC current account balance mainly reflects the impact of voluntary oil production cuts made by oil exporting GCC countries.

Saudi Arabia's current account balance is projected to witness steep contraction from USD 42.1 Bn in 2023 to a mere USD 5.3 Bn in 2024 reflecting the expected continuing voluntary oil production cuts in the Kingdom. In terms of individual countries in the GCC, there was only one upward revision on many GCC countries made by the IMF mainly reflecting the significant increase in oil prices of around 30% during Q3-2023.

Kuwait realized USD 53.0 Bn in its current account balance in 2023 beating earlier IMF expectations of USD 48.4 Bn.

Saudi Arabia which was expected to witness a fiscal deficit of 0.3% of GDP in 2023 in the previous forecast has now recorded 2% deficit during that year. The Kingdom's deficit is projected to reach 2.8% and 1.6% in 2024 and 2025 respectively. Kuwait is expected to post the biggest fiscal surplus of 27.3% this year (vs. 29.4% in actual surplus recorded in 2023) followed by a slightly higher surplus of 28.1% next year.

The IMF forecasts Bahrain to record 6.9% fiscal deficit in 2024, the biggest among the GCC countries, and 7.6% of fiscal deficit in 2025. Only Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are expected to record fiscal deficits in 2024 and 2025. The forecast for Qatar continues to show the second-biggest fiscal surplus of 10.1% of GDP in 2025 after Kuwait.

watchdog orders Google to fix ad search limits

Japan's antitrust watchdog said Monday that U.S. search giant Google must fix its advertising search restrictions affecting Yahoo in Japan. The Japan Fair Trade Commission said in a statement that its recent study of Google's practices showed it was undermining fair competition in the advertising market. Google did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Yahoo has merged with

Japanese social media platform Line, and Line Yahoo declined comment. The alleged questionable practices by Google began about a decade ago and continued for more than seven years, according to the commission. Google will be under review for the next three years, to ensure it carries out needed changes, the commission said. There is no immediate fine or other penalties for Google, which remains popular among Japanese.

The commission's move follows another setback for Google in Japan. Last week, Japanese doctors filed a civil lawsuit against the company, demanding damages for what they claim are groundless derogatory and often false comments. The Tokyo District Court suit demands 1.4 million yen (\$9,400) in damages for 63 medical professionals, for reviews posted on Google Maps. (AP)

Tesla cuts the price of its 'Full Self Driving' system

Tesla knocked roughly a third off the price of its "Full Self Driving" system - which can't drive itself and so drivers must remain alert and be ready to intervene - to \$8,000 from \$12,000, according to the company website. Tesla CEO and billionaire Elon Musk promised in 2019 that there would be a fleet of robotaxis on the road in 2020, but the promise has yet to materialize, and the system still has to be supervised by humans.

The cuts, which occurred on Saturday, follow Tesla's moves to slash \$2,000 off the prices of three of its five models in the United States late Friday. That's the latest evidence of the challenges facing the electric vehicle maker. Tesla reduced the prices of the Model Y, a small SUV which is Tesla's most popular model and the top-selling electric vehicle in the U.S., and also of the Models X and S, its older and

more expensive models. Prices for the Model 3 sedan and the Cybertruck stayed the same. The price reduction came the day after Tesla's stock dropped below \$150 per share, wiping out all gains made over the past year. The Austin, Texas, company's stock price has dropped about 40% so far this year amid falling sales and increased competition. Discounted sticker prices are a way to try to entice more car buyers. (AP)

Anger over 'business as usual' mining practices

Growing demand for minerals sparks Indigenous outcry

BRASILIA, Brazil, April 22, (AP): Indigenous representatives from 35 countries issued a declaration Thursday criticizing the fact that they are too rarely consulted about mining that takes place on or near their lands, an issue that has become more acute with increased demand for minerals needed in the transition to a cleaner energy system.

"We recognize and support the need to end fossil fuel reliance and shift to renewable energy as critical in addressing the climate crisis," the statement read. "However, the current trajectory of the energy transition fails to meet the criteria of justice, social equity, and environmental sustainability, particularly from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples' rights and well-being."

The document comes out of the Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Just Transition which took place in New York last week. Indigenous leaders from the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Kenya, Australia and Norway among other countries attended.

Lithium, nickel and cobalt are often used in batteries, which are key to both electric vehicles and extending production from solar and wind farms. Copper and

aluminum are in higher demand as countries expand their electrical grids. Lesser-known rare earth elements are used in magnets in electric motors.

Mining has left a legacy of environmental damage in many places for more than a century and is now expanding. The declaration also mentioned increasing criminal persecution and attacks against Indigenous leaders.

Statement

The statement called out both the International Council of Mining and Metals, a trade group that says it represents a third of the industry, and the International Seabed Authority, for failing to respect Indigenous rights and conducting what it calls business as usual. Neither group responded to queries from The Associated Press.

About half of energy transition minerals and metal projects are located on or near the lands of Indigenous and other subsistence farmers, according to a study published in 2022 by the journal Nature Sustainability.

"We are those who generate the least impact on the planet," Ruth Alipaz Cuqui, an Indigenous leader from the Bolivian Amazon who attended the conference, told

the AP in a phone interview. "But even so, we understand that we have to be part of this whole process." That participation should be comprehensive or else the energy transition will not be fair, she said.

Alipaz Cuqui cited conflicts in the arid region of Uyuni, Bolivia, where local communities oppose the intense use of water to produce lithium. The project, still in its beginnings, is a joint venture between Bolivia and China. The Bolivian Ministry of Energy did not respond to a request for comment.

The lead organizer for the conference was the Indigenous Peoples Rights International, a nonprofit registered in the Philippines and the U.S., with financial support from Nia Tero, a nonprofit that supports Indigenous rights, The Christensen Fund, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Waverley ST Foundation, and the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, according to the event website.

The Associated Press' climate and environmental coverage receives financial support from multiple private foundations. AP is solely responsible for all content. Find AP's standards for working with philanthropies, a list of supporters and funded coverage areas at AP.org.

For chip plants

US to provide \$6.1bn to Micron Technology

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): The Biden administration has reached an agreement to provide \$6.1 billion in government support for Micron Technology to produce advanced memory computer chips in New York and Idaho.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., personally courted Micron to build what would ultimately be a set of four chip factories near Syracuse in the town of Clay. He noted in a Wednesday interview that the announcement was a sign to voters about how Democrats were reviving the manufacturing sector.

"It will be the biggest memory chip plant in America," said Schumer. "For the Syracuse area, this is the best thing that's happened probably since the Erie Canal."

The comparison to the 1825 infrastructure project that connected the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean is audacious, but it gets at the possible magnitude of the economic impact as well as the national security stakes in an increasingly digital world.

Including the government support, Micron plans to invest \$100 billion in upstate New York over the next two decades. The investment would lead to an estimated 9,000 direct jobs and 40,000 construction jobs. Micron has also announced plans for a \$15 billion memory chip plant in its hometown of Boise, Idaho.

The funding comes from the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, which is set to provide government support for new and expanded facilities being developed by Intel, TSMC, Samsung and Global Foundries, among other chip companies.

The law included \$52 billion to support the domestic semiconductor industry, reducing the risk that the chip shortages experienced amid the pandemic could hurt the U.S. economy and national security.

The Democratic administration has set a goal for 20% of the world's advanced chips to be made in the United States and has restricted the flow of chips into China.

A senior Biden administration official, insisting on anonymity to discuss the deal before its official announcement, confirmed the agreement with Micron.

President Joe Biden discussed in Pittsburgh on Wednesday the importance of computer chips that power everything from weapons to artificial intelligence to household appliances such as refrigerators.

Biden noted that Republican Donald Trump, the former president and his election-year rival, had not been as aggressive in boosting the sector and curbing China's access to chips.

There's 'plenty to worry about': IMF

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): The head of the International Monetary Fund said Thursday that the world economy has proven surprisingly resilient in the face of higher interest rates and the shock of war in Ukraine and Gaza, but "there is plenty to worry about," including stubborn inflation and rising levels of government debt.

"Inflation is down but not gone," Kristalina Georgieva told reporters at the spring meeting of the IMF and its sister organization, the World Bank.

In the United States, she said, "the flipside" of unexpectedly strong economic growth is that it "taking longer than expected" to bring inflation down.

Georgieva also warned that government debts are growing around the world. Last year, they ticked up to 93% of global economic output - up from 84% in 2019 before the response to the COVID-19 pandemic pushed governments to spend more to provide healthcare and economic assistance. She urged countries to more efficiently collect taxes and spend public money.

"In a world where the crises keep coming, countries must urgently build fiscal resilience to be prepared for the next shock," she said.

US restricts oil & gas leasing in 13m acres of Alaska's petroleum reserve

Step aimed at protecting wildlife

JUNEAU, Alaska, April 22, (AP): The Biden administration said Friday it will restrict new oil and gas leasing on 13 million acres (5.3 million hectares) of a federal petroleum reserve in Alaska to help protect wildlife such as caribou and polar bears as the Arctic continues to warm.

The decision - part of a years-long fight over whether and how to develop the vast oil resources in the state - finalizes protections first proposed last year as the Democratic administration prepared to approve the contentious Willow oil project.

The approval of Willow drew fury from environmentalists, who said the large oil project violated President Joe Biden's pledge to combat climate change. Friday's decision also completes an earlier plan that called for closing nearly half the reserve to oil and gas leasing.

A group of Republican lawmakers, led by Alaska U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, jumped out ahead of Friday's announcement about the new limitations in the National Petroleum-Reserve Alaska before it was publicly announced. Sullivan called it an "illegal" attack on the state's economic lifeblood, and he predicted lawsuits.

Resources

"It's more than a one-two punch to Alaska," Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said, "because when you take off access to our resources, when you say you cannot drill, you cannot produce, you cannot explore, you cannot move it - this is the energy insecurity that we're talking about."

The decision by the Interior Department doesn't change the terms of existing leases in the reserve or affect currently authorized operations, including Willow.

The Biden administration also Friday recommended the rejection of a state corporation's application related to a proposed 210-mile (338-kilometer) road in the northwest part of the state to allow mining of critical mineral deposits, including including copper, cobalt, zinc, silver and gold.

There are no mining proposals or current mines in the area, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management determined the road-building alternatives analyzed "would significantly and irrevocably impact resources," the agency said in a statement. A final decision on the recommendation is pending.

Brian Ridley, chief of Tanana Chiefs Conference, an Alaska Native nonprofit corporation, said the administration's "choice to reject the Ambler Road Project is a monumental step forward in the fight for Indigenous rights and environmental justice." The tribes of the Tanana Chiefs Conference had expressed concerns a road would harm their communities, land and wildlife.

Sullivan accused the administration of



Robots weld bodysells of cars at a workshop of Chinese electric vehicle (EV) maker Li Auto Inc. in Changzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province, Jan. 10, 2024. (Xinhua)

Common prosperity goals catalyze regional cooperation in China's Yangtze River Delta

HANGZHOU, April 22, (Xinhua): The Yangtze River Delta, one of China's most economically vibrant regions, has set its sights on taking the lead in promoting common prosperity, with regional cooperation and local initiatives within its four provincial-level regions.

The delta, encompassing the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui, as well as the Shanghai Municipality, generates nearly a quarter of China's gross domestic product (GDP), despite having just 4 percent of the country's total land area. Notably, urban-rural income gaps in the four regions of this delta are all smaller than China's average level.

In 2021, China rolled out a guideline to build Zhejiang into a demonstration zone in pursuit of common prosperity. Two years later, China called on the delta to take the lead in promoting common prosperity and to strive for major breakthroughs in the integrated development of the delta.

Common prosperity, an essential requirement of socialism and a key feature of Chinese modernization, aims to create a future in which prosperity is shared by everyone in the country.

"The essence of common prosperity is affluence and sharing, or in other words, making the pie bigger and dividing it properly," said He Wenjiang, vice president of the Institute for Common Prosperity and Development of Zhejiang University.

Bigger pie
The delta has strengthened industrial chain collaboration as it continues to promote high-quality integrated development, showing determination to make a bigger pie for common prosperity.

As a major new energy vehicle (NEV) production base, it produces two out of every five NEVs in China. Through industrial chain cooperation, an NEV in the delta can contain chips and software from Shanghai, a power

battery from Jiangsu, and a car body from Zhejiang, before being assembled in Anhui.

Zhang Yiqiong, who hails from a small village in Xianju County of Zhejiang, is one of the beneficiaries of these efforts in the delta. With a childhood dream of leaving her mountainous hometown for the big city, Zhang, 33, never expected to return to work for an NEV power battery plant in her hometown.

In 2023, half of the eight production lines of the power battery project became operational. When fully operational, its annual output value will exceed 20 billion yuan (2.8 billion U.S. dollars) -- doubling the county's industrial output.

"Now I earn nearly 100,000 yuan a year, almost the same level as my earlier job," Zhang said. "The plant will create over 6,000 jobs and many young people have returned for these well-paid jobs."

The NEV plant is just one example of how an industry cluster within a four-hour drive is being built across the region.

The industrial cluster has helped Hefei, capital of Anhui Province, to become one of the fastest-developing cities in the region. It is now home to six NEV manufacturers, including BYD and Volkswagen, with the NEV industry contributing to over 60 percent of its industrial output.

The rapid growth of high-tech industrial clusters has driven robust economic growth in the Yangtze River Delta. From 2018 to 2023, the region's GDP had risen to 30.51 trillion yuan from 22.1 trillion yuan.

The output value of its high-tech manufacturing contributes about 31 percent of China's total, with the integrated circuit sector accounting for 60 percent and biomedicine and artificial intelligence each contributing one-third.

undermining U.S. national security interests with both decisions. Alaska political leaders have long accused the administration of harming the state with decisions limiting the development of oil and gas, minerals and timber.

"Joe Biden is fine with our adversaries producing energy and dominating the world's critical minerals while shutting down our own in America, as long as the far-left radicals he feels are key to his reelection are satisfied," Sullivan said Thursday at a Capitol news conference with 10 other GOP senators. "What a dangerous world this

president has created." Biden defended his decision regarding the petroleum reserve.

Alaska's "majestic and rugged lands and waters are among the most remarkable and healthy landscapes in the world," are critical to Alaska Native communities and "demand our protection," he said in a statement.

Nagruk Harcharek, president of Voice of the Arctic Inupiat, a group whose members include leaders from across much of Alaska's North Slope region, in a statement said the decision "does not reflect our communities' wishes." The

group's board of directors previously passed a resolution opposing the administration's plans for the reserve.

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry's top lobbying group, called the rule "misguided" and said it sharply limits future oil and natural gas development in the petroleum reserve, "a region explicitly intended by Congress to bolster America's energy security" and generate revenue for Alaskan communities.

"At a time when the world is looking for American energy leadership, this is yet another step in the wrong direc-

tion," said Dustin Meyer, an API senior vice president.

The petroleum reserve, about 100 miles (161 kilometers) west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, is home to caribou and polar bears and provides habitat for millions of migrating birds. It was set aside around a century ago as an emergency oil source for the U.S. Navy, but since the 1970s it has been overseen by the Interior Department.

There has been ongoing, longstanding debate over where oil and gas development should occur.

Beijing accelerates development of information software industry

BEIJING, April 22, (Xinhua): Beijing has recently unveiled an action plan aimed at propelling its information software industry to new heights, with a target of pushing the sector's revenue to 4.8 trillion yuan (about 675.65 billion U.S. dollars) by 2027.

The city will explore cutting-edge technologies in artificial general in-

telligence, support the development of large language model (LLM) tool software, and establish native software application stores and secure testing grounds for LLM, according to the action plan released by Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology.

Efforts will also be made to create artificial intelligence (AI) scene ap-

plication laboratories in fields such as education, healthcare, culture, and industry to develop demonstrative projects, showcasing the practical implementation of AI scenarios, it noted.

Beijing's vision for its information software sector signals a proactive stance towards technological innovation and economic development.

You Jing, an official with Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, said the city will further support domestically produced software to expand globally and foster open-source software enterprises, in alignment with broader industry trends.

In 2023, the revenue scale of Beijing's information software industry

approached 3 trillion yuan, maintaining double-digit growth for several consecutive years.

The robust performance of Beijing's information software industry in the first quarter of this year underscores its resilience and growth trajectory, with an added value of 237.92 billion yuan, marking a year-on-year growth of 13.7 percent.

In support of educational and artistic activities for youth

Gulf Bank celebrates Kuwaiti heritage with 'Journey of the Dinar' exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: In alignment with its commitment to upholding sustainability principles and supporting educational endeavors within the Ministry of Education, Gulf Bank successfully concluded its sponsorship of the "Journey of the Dinar" art and cultural exhibition. Organized by the Capital Educational Zone at The Avenues Mall, the event marked the initial issuance of the Kuwaiti Dinar currency in April 1961. It took place under the patronage of the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education, Dr. Hessa Al-Mutawa, with Gulf Bank's General Manager of Consumer Banking, Mr. Mohammed Al-Qattan, also in attendance.

The exhibition showcased the evolution of the Kuwaiti Dinar through 80 artistic pieces from different educational districts within the Ministry of Education, creatively depicting the currency's history from its initial issuance to its rise as one of the most valuable currencies in the world.

Since its initial release, the Kuwaiti Dinar has undergone several updates, the most recent being the sixth issuance released in June 2014. This edition is marked by a consistent and sophisticated design, highlighting important symbols from Kuwait's national heritage and key economic milestones. The currency notes feature representations of significant national symbols on the front and historical narratives of Kuwait's development and economic achievements on the reverse side.

Gulf Bank eagerly sponsored this distinctive cultural art exhibition, which high-



Gulf Bank celebrates Kuwaiti heritage at the Avenues Mall.

lights the younger generation's connection to symbols of national independence, particularly the introduction of the national currency. This sponsorship aligns with celebrating the country's founding and the start of its modern revival.

In line with Kuwait's vision and its five-year banking strategy that prioritizes youth, Gulf Bank is committed to actively supporting and encouraging young individuals in various sectors and activities, with a particular focus on the arts, creativity, and Kuwaiti heritage.

Furthermore, the bank organizes numerous events and initiatives aimed at educating and training youth in financial and banking matters, preparing them for the job market and qualifying them to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

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

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



Thanima Kuwait Joint Convener Vijesh Velayudhan lays flowers at the Raju Zacharias memorial meeting.

Thanima Kuwait gathers to remember Raju Zacharias

Thanima Kuwait organized a memorial meeting with the memory of the late Raju Zacharias, who was a hardcore member of Thanima and a prominent presence in the social and cultural sector of India Diaspora in Kuwait, in the fields of art, literature, culture, politics, sports and business in Kuwait.

Thanima Sr. hardcore member

Jacob Varghese presided over the function and Babuji Batheri welcomed by sharing his experiences with Raju Zacharias. Shaji Varghese read the condolence resolution. Jacob Varghese, in his inaugural address, recalled Raju Zacharias' work at Thanima.

BEC Exchange CEO Mathews Varghese, Chessil Ramapuram, Tommy Cyriak, Bobby George, Mu-

rali S. Panicker, Thomas Mathew Kadavil, Jayan Hitech, Hameed Keloth, Krishnan Kadalundi, Firoz Hameed, Sijo Kurien, Jayesh Kumar, Roy Andrews, Zakir Pudunagaram shared their memories with Raju Zacharias and expressed their condolences. D. K. Dileep coordinated the condolence meeting and Habibullah Mutichur expressed vote of thanks.



AAW receives delegates from 'Business France'

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Chairman and CEO of Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa, received today members from 'Business France', the French national agency supporting the international development of the French economy. The meeting was attended by Head of French Trade Commissions in the Middle East, Mr. Axel Baroux, Business France Middle East coordinator, Ms. Camille Tricoire, and the Head of Trade Commission Commercial Counsel, Embassy of France in Kuwait Mr Rabih Soufngi.

During the visit, the parties discussed bilateral commercial relations between AAW and private sector companies in France and explored potential business opportunities.

AAW Chairman and CEO Mr. Faisal Al Mutawa said: "We are delighted to welcome members from Business France, the prestigious French agency with whom we share the goal of supporting partnership and exploring op-



portunities for bilateral cooperation between private sector companies in France and Kuwait."

AAW is a partner and supporter of Business France. The company has participated in numerous conferences and events including the first edition of the "Vision Golfe" 2023 and the "Ambition Middle East Forum" 2022. Additionally, AAW regularly contributes to the French Business Guide, which is pub-

lished periodically.

Founded in 2015, Business France is the French national agency that supports the development of exports and international investments in France. Its goal is to help the French economy on the international level by assisting the French producers and entrepreneurs and encouraging investment in France. It also seeks to increase France's attractiveness and strengthen its economic ties.



Group photo of participants and organizers.

Collaboration with EU delegation & KAS Foundation

AUK hosts two-day simulation game on sustainability and climate change

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) in collaboration with the European Union Delegation to Kuwait and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation (KAS) hosted a two-day simulation game on sustainability and climate change. The games were aimed at AUK students from various colleges and took place on-campus.

The simulation game engaged AUK students in exploring and formulating comprehensive climate resilience policies through interactive simulations and collaborative discussions. The activity aimed at facilitating skill-building as well as providing a better understanding of the importance of climate action and the art of negotiations when making inclusive policy decisions. It also aimed to encourage youth participation in sustainability discussions and solution-building through creative thinking.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, AUK President, Dr. Rawda Awad, said, "Tonight we are embarking on an incredible journey, which transcends boundaries and redefines the very essence of traditional education. Imagine for a moment the world as our students see it, a world not confined to the pages of textbooks or the walls of classrooms, but a world where the backyard becomes our front yard, and every corner holds the promise of discovery. This paradigm shift is at the heart of AUK's liberal arts mission, an education that knows no bounds, that empowers our students to think globally, and act globally. To make the world better. And what better environment of this philosophy than the simulation game on sustainability policy."

Addressing the students, H.E. Anne Koistinen, European Union Ambassador to Kuwait highlighted the importance of youth participation in addressing climate change and sustainability challenges. She said: "Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and the EU remains committed to fostering collaborations with all the stakeholders in Kuwait to address it. This simulation game is part of long series of engagements the EU Delegation has organised with educational institutions in Kuwait to enable skills-building and closer bilateral cooperation in the academic field. I am pleased to see that our first activity in the context of Europe Month this year has a focus on Youth and Climate Action, both being top priorities for the European Union."

Philipp Dienstbier, Director of the Regional Programme Gulf at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation added: "As the impacts of climate change will have an imminent effect on the young generation in the Gulf region, we aim to actively engage and strengthen their engagement in climate affairs. Projects like this simulation game, which engaged exemplary students from the American University in Kuwait, or prior endeavors of KAS, such as a side event at COP28 that allowed young delegates from the GCC to showcase their climate change initiatives in their respective countries, allow us to empower the next generation on this urgent issue as part of our ongoing efforts across the region."

The students developed a comprehensive climate resilience plan and learnt how to identify common goals, reach a consensus and outline the outcomes in a common resolution, also harnessing their negotiation and presentation skills. They also benefited from learnings around a myriad of topics such as water, energy, food security, health, and the economy, providing creative solutions to address climate change.

The simulation game was facilitated by CRISP, a non-profit Berlin-based organisation committed to empowering individuals and communities to address complex societal challenges.

Exclusive opportunity to meet Mohamed Salah

National Bank Kuwait unveils 'NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card'

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to reward its customers and ensure providing them with innovative products serving their needs and enhancing their banking experience. In this context, the bank has launched the new NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card offering customers up to 24% cashback on their daily purchases.

Customers will be able to transfer their daily spends from their debit card to the new prepaid card to get cashback of 24% on streaming services (Payment should be done through the streaming app or website and not through any other service provider), 7% on Food delivery (food delivery applications, it doesn't include ordering directly from the restaurant), 4% on Bill payments (Telecom bills that are paid through the app or website of the telecom companies or through any of their branches, and not through any service provider), 2% on Grocery, 2% on Hospitals, clinics and pharmacies and 0.7% on Digital payments (made using digital wallets).

One of the first 1,000 customers to apply for the card will get the opportunity to meet the beloved star Mohamed Salah. Noting that date and place to meet the star will be confirmed later on by the bank.

Customers can apply for the card through NBK Mobile Banking App and once they enroll the card in the digital wallet, they will be able to use the card immediately. Now and for the first time, customers will have the option of using a digital card or choosing to issue a physical card.

Speaking on the new card, Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, CEO-Consumer



Al Othman

and Digital Banking National Bank of Kuwait said, "At NBK, we always strive to provide our customers with new products tailored to their needs. As the name suggests, the newly introduced NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card will be customers' companion 24/7, giving them valuable cashback on their daily purchases."

"The new card launch comes within NBK's consistent endeavors to be always closer to its customers and to serve all their banking needs through unmatched products providing the best benefits," he noted.

"We also wanted to provide customers with the unique opportunity to meet global icon Mohamed Salah who is loved worldwide, being one of the best soccer players of his generation, with unprecedented achievements over the span of his career," he added.

"We're delighted to partner with NBK to reward their Visa cardholders with innovative products that meet their needs and enhance their payment experience. The launch of the NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card is a prime example of this commitment," said Mohamed Reyad, Visa's Head of Financial Institutions in Kuwait.

NBK provides an array of prepaid cards which offer numerous benefits, while helping customers spend their money confidently and conveniently, making sure they never go over their budget.

'Flexible and rewarding'

KFH's Jameati best investment plan to secure children's university education

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Considering its pioneering role in offering unique solutions and innovative products, Kuwait Finance house (KFH) has continued its distinction in fulfilling customers aspirations and providing the best investment plans and solutions according to the highest international standards.

KFH understands the importance of helping customers ensure their children can achieve the highest levels of education. Therefore, it designed the long-term investment plan "Jameati" to help parents prepare for their children's bright future.

The investment plan for university education "Jameati" provides solutions that enable customers to save monthly amounts, and provide higher investment profits on savings, in addition to takaful coverage.

Among the conditions of the investment plan is that the age of the son or daughter be less than 14 years, and the age of the customer must range between 21 and 61 years. The investment period ranges from 4 years to 18 years.

The investment plan "Jameati" advantages include the following: the investment amount or monthly payments may be amended at any time and the amounts shall be automatically transferred on monthly basis from the customer account to the flexible investment plan "Jameati" account.

Also, the customer can withdraw 60% of the balance in the first year and 60% every year after the first withdrawal. The saving amount and accrued profit during the investment period shall fall due upon expiration of the investment plan. The investment plan can be cancelled at any time and the



KFH's Jameati

invested amount and profits accrued on the date of closing shall be refunded to the customer.

Jameati Higher Education Investment Plan has been designed for children when they reach the age of 18. The customer can determine the targeted amount for the plan. Amounts are invested and profits are deposited on annual basis so that the customer would benefit from the invested amount and all accumulated profits when children enter university.

Long term investment plans provided by KFH encourage and inspire customers to enhance future planning and saving culture, determine family spending priorities and enhance chances of increasing family income through innovative and flexible solutions with rewarding investment returns.

KIB offers best financing offer on Nissan Patrol models through KIB PayTally app

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently announced the launch of the best financing offer on various Nissan Patrol models through its innovative KIB PayTally app. The offer includes a 5-year Musawama financing, with Zero profit and 5 years of free service, along with an additional warranty on the vehicle for 3 years or 100,000 kilometers, subject to the terms and conditions of the offer. This step comes as part of the Bank's strategy aimed at continuing to provide the highest level of distinctive financing offers, and enhancing its partnership with the local agent for Nissan Patrol vehicles, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co.

Commenting on the launch of this exceptional offer, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Head of the Central Sales Unit - Retail at KIB, said, said: "We take pride in continuing to offer the best car financing deals, as part of the ongoing development of the innovative KIB PayTally program and application. This represents a qualitative leap in the world of Islamic banking solutions, adding even more value to our customers' experience. We also see this new offer as an advanced step in our strategy aimed at strengthening our relationships with our partners from elite car agents and companies in Kuwait. It also allows us to continue providing unique and distinctive financing offers that enable customers to own luxury cars, with exclusive benefits that meet their expectations and suit their modern lifestyles."



Al-Shammari

It is worth noting that the new KIB PayTally application distinguishes it-



Nissan Patrol-Paytally

self as the first bank-led digital marketplace in Kuwait, offering its users the opportunity to shop in a more efficient and flexible manner by easily applying for and monitoring financing applications. It is designed to achieve a qualitative breakthrough in how customers access financing services and enjoy a comprehensive experience without the need to browse or visit multiple websites and branches. The platform is user-friendly, supported by unique features, and specifically designed to elevate the concept of digital shopping through exclusive offers not available elsewhere. Through this innovative application, KIB offers flexible financing ranging from KD 300 to KD 25,000, payable over a period of 3 to 60 months, without the need for salary transfer, making it the ideal choice for a wide range of customers, both citizens and residents alike.

Living up to its main slogan "Bank for Life," KIB spares no effort in developing a diverse range of banking and financing services and products that ensure its customers have access to facilities and offers that best meet their various requirements and growing needs. This is particularly evident in fulfilling their aspirations to acquire the latest car models, especially Nissan Patrol vehicles.

'He demonstrated great bravery and resolve'

Anderson, reporter held captive for years in Lebanon, dies at 76

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP): **Terry Anderson**, the globe-trotting Associated Press correspondent who became one of America's longest-held hostages after he was snatched from a street in war-torn Lebanon in 1985 and held for nearly seven years, has died at 76.

Anderson, who chronicled his abduction and torturous imprisonment by Islamic militants in his best-selling 1993 memoir "Den of Lions," died on Sunday at his home in Greenwood Lake, New York, said his daughter, Sulome Anderson.

Anderson died of complications from recent heart surgery, his daughter said.

"Terry was deeply committed to on-the-ground eyewitness reporting and demonstrated great bravery and resolve, both in his journalism and during his years held hostage. We are so appreciative of the sacrifices he and his family made as the result of his work," said Julie Pace, senior vice president and executive editor of the AP.

"He never liked to be called a hero, but that's what everyone persisted in calling him," said Sulome Anderson. "I saw him a week ago and my partner asked him if he had anything on his bucket list, anything that he wanted to do. He said, 'I've lived so much and I've done so much. I'm content.'"

After returning to the United States in 1991, Anderson led a peripatetic life, giving public speeches, teaching journalism at several prominent universities and, at various times, operating a blues bar, Cajun restaurant, horse ranch and gourmet restaurant.

He also struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, won millions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets after a federal court concluded that

country played a role in his capture, then lost most of it to bad investments. He filed for bankruptcy in 2009.

Upon retiring from the University of Florida in 2015, Anderson settled on a small horse farm in a quiet, rural section of northern Virginia he had discovered while camping with friends.

"I live in the country and it's reasonably good weather and quiet out here and a nice place, so I'm doing all right," he said with a chuckle during a 2018 interview with The Associated Press.

In 1985, Anderson became one of several Westerners abducted by members of the Shiite Muslim group Hezbollah during a time of war that had plunged Lebanon into chaos.



Anderson

Hero

After his release, he returned to a hero's welcome at AP's New York headquarters.

Louis D. Boccardi, the president and chief executive officer of the AP at the time, recalled Sunday that Anderson's plight was never far from his AP colleagues' minds.

"The word 'hero' gets tossed around a lot but applying it to Terry Anderson just enhances it," Boccardi said. "His six-and-a-half-year ordeal as a hostage of terrorists was as unimaginable as it was real - chains, being transported from hiding place to hiding place strapped to the chassis of a truck, given often inedible food, cut off from the world he reported on with such skill and caring."

As the AP's chief Middle East correspondent, Anderson had been reporting for several years on the rising violence gripping Lebanon as the country fought a war with Israel, while Iran funded militant groups trying to topple its government.

On March 16, 1985, a day off, he had taken a break to play tennis with former AP photographer Don Mell and was dropping Mell off at his home when gun-toting kidnappers dragged him from his car.

He was likely targeted, he said, because he was one of the few Westerners still in Lebanon and because his role as a journalist aroused suspicion among members of Hezbollah.

"Because in their terms, people who go around asking questions in awkward and dangerous places have to be spies," he told the Virginia newspaper The Review of Orange County in 2018.

What followed was nearly seven years of brutality during which he was beaten, chained to a wall, threatened with death, often had guns held to his head and was kept in solitary confinement for long periods of time.

Anderson was the longest held of several Western hostages Hezbollah abducted over the years, including Terry Waite, the former envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had arrived to try to negotiate Anderson's release.

By Anderson's and other hostages' accounts, he was also their most hostile prisoner, constantly demanding better food and treatment, arguing religion and politics with his captors, and teaching other hostages sign language and where to hide messages so they could communicate privately.

Variety



This image released by Polk & Co shows the artists during a performance of 'Hell's Kitchen' on Broadway. (AP)

Stage

Alicia Keys' Broadway musical sparks debate

'Hell's Kitchen,' a unique blend of hits

By Mark Kennedy

If you were to close Alicia Keys' big semi-autobiographical musical on Broadway with any of her hit songs, which would it be? Of course, it has to be "Empire State of Mind." That's the natural one, right? It's also as predictable as the R train being delayed with signal problems.

"Hell's Kitchen," the coming-of-age musical about a 17-year-old piano prodigy named Ali, has wonderful new and old tunes by the 16-time Grammy Award winner and a talented cast, but only a sliver of a very safe story that tries to seem more consequential than it is.

It wants to be authentic and gritty - a remarkable number of swear words are used, including 19 f-bombs - for what ultimately is a portrait of a young, talented woman living on the 42nd floor of a doorman building in Manhattan who relearns to love her protective mom.

The musical that opened Saturday at the Shubert Theatre features reworks of Keys' best-known hits: "Fallin'," "No One," "Girl on Fire," "If I Ain't Got You," as well as several new songs, including the terrific "Kaleidoscope."

That Keys is a knockout songwriter, there is no doubt. That playwright Kristoffer Diaz is able to make a convincing, relatable rom-com that's also socially conscious is very much in doubt.

This is, appropriately, a woman-led show, with Maleah Joi Moon completely stunning in the lead role - a jaw-dropping vocalist who is funny, giggly, passionate and strident, a star turn. Shoshana Bean, who plays her single, spiky mom, makes her songs soar, while Kecia Lewis as a soulful piano teacher is the show's astounding MVP.

When we meet Ali, she's a frustrated teen who knows there's more to life and "something's calling me," as she sings in the new song, "The River." At first that's a boy: the sweet Chris Lee, playing a house painter. There's also reconnecting with her unreliable dad, a nicely slippery Brandon Victor Dixon. But the thing calling Ali is, of course, the grand piano in her building's multipurpose room.

Outside this apartment building in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood - we get a clue the time is the early 1990s - are "roaches and the rats/heroin in the cracks." But no criminality is shown - at worst some illegal krumping?

- and the cops don't actually brutalize those citizens deemed undesirable. They sort of just shoot them away. This is a sanitized New York for the M&M store tourists, despite the lyrics in Keys' songs.

Another reason the musical fails to fully connect is that a lot of the music played onstage is fake - it's actually the orchestra tucked into the sides making those piano scales and funky percussion. For a musical about a singular artist and how important music is, this feels a bit like a cheat.

Choreography by Camille A. Brown is muscular and fun using a hip-hop vocabulary, and director Michael Greif masterfully keeps things moving elegantly. But there's - forgive me - everything but the kitchen sink thrown in here: A supposed-to-be-funny chorus of two mom friends and two Ali friends, a ghost, some mild parental abuse and a weird fixation with dinner.

The way the songs are integrated is inspired, with "Girl on Fire" hysterically interrupted by rap bars, "Fallin'" turned into a humorously seductive ballad and "No One" transformed from an aching love song to a mother-daughter anthem.

But everyone is waiting for that song about "concrete jungles" where "big lights will inspire you." It comes right after we see a young woman snuggling on a couch, high over the city she will soon conquer. You can, too, if you just go past the doorman and follow your dreams.

Also:

NEW YORK: Jonathan Tetelman transformed from a nightclub DJ to an international opera star, a music deutor that was quite, well, operatic.

He stopped singing in 2011 and mixed music for New York's clubbers at Webster Hall, Pacha, Greenhouse and W.i.P. These days, the 35-year-old's gigs are at posher places such as London's Royal Opera House and the Salzburg Festival.

His career revived by a transition to tenor from baritone, Tetelman will be featured as Ruggiero in a Metropolitan Opera performance of Puccini's "La Rondine (The Swallow)" with soprano Angel Blue, televised live to theaters worldwide Saturday. Starting April 26, he sings Pinkerton in "Madama Butterfly" opposite soprano Asmik Grigorian in her Met debut.

"I kept saying to people, 'You know, I'm a DJ, but I'm actually an opera singer.' And the more I said it,

the more I was like: 'Am I really an opera singer?'" Tetelman recalled of his singing sabbatical.

So he gave himself six months. "I just sold everything. I sold all my equipment. All my speakers, all my turntables - everything - and just focused," he said.

Born in Chile, Tetelman was adopted at about 7 months and grew up in Hopewell Township, New Jersey. He got a degree from the Manhattan School of Music in 2011 and considered himself a baritone.

Tetelman moved on to the Mannes School of Music for a graduate program where he was told his upper register was his future but struggled with even audition standards. Overcome with frustration, he headed to the downtown nightlife scene in 2013.

"It just wasn't - it wasn't clicking. I threw it all away," he said.

After concluding that club life wasn't a future, Tetelman began listening to recordings of **Luciano Pavarotti, Enrico Caruso, Franco Corelli and Jonas Kaufmann** to understand how they used their voices. Working with **Mark Schnaible** and **Patricia McCaffrey**, a husband-and-wife vocal coach team, he began building his tenor technique in 2015.

"This young man is wildly talented," Schnaible said. By his mid-20s, Tetelman thought himself too old for professional training programs, so he found an agent. He sang Eisenstein in **Johann Strauss II's** "Die Fledermaus (The Bat)" at the Martina Arroyo Foundation's young artists program in 2016. He then paid a few hundred dollars to attend an open call casting audition. That led to the role of Rodolfo in Puccini's "La Bohème" at the Fujian Grand Theatre in **China** in 2017.

He was hired for "Bohème" in November 2018 at the English National Opera, where all performances are in English.

Tetelman prepared by singing in "La Bohème Warhola" - an adaptation of the classic that shifts to **Andy Warhol's** The Factory studio - with Pittsburgh Festival Opera at the Falk Auditorium, a 360-seat school theater. Around the same time, agent Alan Green arranged for Tetelman to take over Rodolfo for a concert performance at the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood Festival after **Piotr Beczala** withdrew to replace **Roberto Alagna** at the Bayreuth Festival's "Lohengrin." (AP)

NEW YORK: Andrew Davis, an acclaimed British conductor who was music director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and orchestras on three continents, has died. He was 80.

Davis died Saturday at Rusk Institute in Chicago from leukemia, his manager, **Jonathan Brill** of Opus 3 Artists, said Sunday.



Davis



Dunst

Davis had been managing the disease for between 1 1/2 and 2 years, but it became acute shortly after his 80th birthday on Feb. 2. He had conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra last December in the US premiere of his own orchestration of Handel's "Messiah."

"A consummate musician,

incredibly versatile and a phenomenal colleague, as well," soprano **Renée Fleming** said in an email to The Associated Press. "It takes a special kind of command to be a great conductor, the power to make close to a hundred musicians (each one, at heart, a diva or divo) hang on your tiniest gesture. So it is remarkable that even with

that strength, Andrew's primary quality was his innate happiness. He was gifted with an infectious joy that somehow came through in every bar of music he made."

As his 80th birthday approached, Davis was invigorated by the challenge of molding an orchestra, especially young players. (AP)

People & Places

Lifestyle

Earth Day story

A grocery shopper's fight against plastic

ALBANY, N.Y., April 22, (AP): Nature wraps bananas and oranges in peels. But in some modern supermarkets, they're bagged or wrapped in plastic too.

For **Judith Enck**, that's the epitome of pointless plastic. The baby food aisle is similarly distressing for her, with its rows and rows of blended fruits, vegetables and meat in single-use pouches that have replaced glass jars.

Less than 10% of plastic is recycled. Most is buried, burned or dumped. Recycling rates for glass, aluminum and cardboard are far higher. And cardboard or paper packaging is biodegradable.

The global theme for Earth Day on Monday is planet vs. plastic. Plastic production continues to ramp up globally and is projected to triple by 2050 if nothing changes. Most of it is made from fossil fuels and chemicals. As the world transitions away from using fossil fuels for electricity and transportation, plastics offer a lifeboat for oil and gas companies as a market that can grow.



Enck

The Earth Day environmental movement is calling for "the end of plastics for the sake of human and planetary health." People are increasingly breathing, eating and drinking tiny particles of plastic, though researchers say more work is necessary to determine its effect on human health. Millions of tons of plastic wind up in the ocean each year.

This week, thousands of negotiators and observers representing most of the world's nations are gathering in Ottawa to craft a treaty to try to end the rapidly escalating levels of plastic pollution.

Plastic is everywhere in modern society. That's evident whenever you go grocery shopping, said Enck, a former Environmental Protection Agency regional administrator who now heads up the advocacy group Beyond Plastics. There are things shoppers can do if they want to use less plastic.

On a recent trip to the Honest Weight Food Co-op in Albany, Enck bought almond butter and yogurt in glass containers. She asked that her fish be wrapped in paper and not placed in a plastic bag. She steered clear of bagged carrots and breezed past the lettuce packed in what she calls "plastic coffins."

She keeps reusable shopping bags in her car, a common practice in New York since the state banned plastic carryout bags several years ago.

"Even small steps make a difference because big supermarkets notice when people ask for less packaged material. Also, our kids pay attention. If they're shopping with us and you talk about why you're reaching for the glass jar rather than the plastic jar, it's an opportunity for education," she said.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How do you avoid plastic packaging and products at the grocery store?

Judith Enck: I tell everyone you're not going to be perfect, but do the best you can and focus on things you buy most often. I just could not keep buying those plastic orange juice jugs. So what I did on the juice was, I bought a really nice glass pitcher with a lid on it. And for juices and lemonade, I only buy the frozen concentrate. You avoid the plastic altogether. It takes a little bit of time to melt it and add three cans of water. But most people can manage that.

AP: Many shoppers start in the produce aisle. What are some tips?

Enck: I bring reusable cloth produce bags because I don't want to use those thin plastic bags. So if I need a couple of apples, a couple of avocados, I'll put them right into my reusable produce bag. I try to buy loose carrots rather than carved carrots in little plastic bags. I will never, ever buy bananas if they're in a plastic bag, which in my store they usually are not, but I have seen that sometimes. It's pretty easy to buy loose peppers. I never put broccoli into a plastic bag. You know, you don't need a lot of those produce bags.

The real dilemma is the fresh berries. Now they do come in number two plastic, which is supposed to be recyclable. I know that Driscoll's is starting to sell strawberries in a little cardboard box, which I am waiting for.

AP: What do you do when plastic is unavoidable?

Enck: For crackers, you can recycle the outside box if it's cardboard, but then there's usually a plastic bag inside or a waxy bag that you can't recycle. But you can use that waxy bag or those little plastic bags if you have pets. I don't have a pet, but my friends use bread bags and chip bags when they pick up pet poop. So why buy pet poop bags, you can just save those.

I do use regular trash bags. I don't knock myself out on that. I try not to fill it up. If you can reduce your waste generation, you're not buying as many bags. I think it's very important to compost at home if you have the space.

AP: Where have you seen improvement?

Enck: The household goods aisle. I am excited about the changes. For detergent you can get concentrates. I only use powder in the dishwasher. I strongly recommend that people avoid the plastic pods. And you can recycle the cardboard boxes from the powdered soaps. You don't have to get it in plastic. I also think the beverage aisle has some real opportunities for recycling. Better than most other aisles.

AP: What could be done so shoppers have more options?

Enck: The nice thing about paper, cardboard, glass and metal is it can be easily made from recycled content. And it actually is recyclable. You can put it in your recycling bin. And if it gets littered, the paper in the cardboard, in particular, doesn't stick around for centuries.

If we were to pass a strong packaging law to reduce plastic packaging at the state or national level, you would have packaging engineers thinking about what happens after the packaging is used. New York is considering a law right now that would reduce plastic packaging. Unless we adopt new laws, it's not going to change because the voluntary pledges by companies are falling short across the board. That's the only way to solve this.



Dave Matthews, of Dave Matthews Band, performs on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at Ameris Bank Amphitheatre in Alpharetta, Ga. Mary J. Blige, Cher, Foreigner, A Tribe Called Quest, Kool & The Gang and Ozzy Osbourne have been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The class of 2024 also will include folk-rockers Dave Matthews Band and singer-guitarist Peter Dinklage. The induction ceremony will be Oct. 19, 2024. (AP)

Music

Heart reunite for a world tour and a new song

Blige, Cher, Osbourne get into Rock Hall

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP): Mary J. Blige, Cher, Foreigner, A Tribe Called Quest, Kool & The Gang and Ozzy Osbourne have been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a class that also includes folk-rockers Dave Matthews Band and singer-guitarist Peter Dinklage.

Alexis Korner, John Mayall and Big Mama Thornton earned the Musical Influence Award, while the late Jimmy Buffett, MC5, Dionne Warwick and Norman Whitfield will get the Musical Excellence Award. Pioneering music executive Suzanne de Passe won the Ahmet Ertegun Award.

"Rock 'n' roll is an ever-evolving amalgam of sounds that impacts culture and moves generations," John Sykes, chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, said in a statement. "This diverse group of inductees each broke down musical barriers and influenced countless artists that followed in their footsteps."

The induction ceremony will be held Oct. 19 at the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio. It will stream live on Disney+ with an airing on ABC at a later date and available on Hulu the next day.

Those music acts nominated this year but didn't make the cut included Mariah Carey, Lenny Kravitz, the late Sinéad O'Connor, soul-pop singer Sade, Britpoppers Oasis, hip-hop duo Eric B. & Rakim and alt-rockers Jane's Addiction.

There had been a starry push to get Foreigner - with the hits "Urgent" and "Hot Blooded" - into the hall, with Mark Ronson, Jack Black, Slash, Dave Grohl and Paul McCartney all publicly backing the move. Ronson's stepfather is Mick Jones, Foreigner's founding member, songwriter and lead guitarist.

Osbourne, who led many parents in the 1980s to clutch their pearls with his devil imagery and sludgy music, goes in as a solo artist, having already been inducted into the hall with metal masters Black Sabbath.

Four of the eight nominees - Cher, Foreigner, Frampton and Kool & the Gang - were on the ballot for the first time.

Cher - the only artist to have a No. 1 song in each of the past six decades - and Blige, with eight multi-platinum albums and nine Grammy Awards, will help boost the number of women in the hall, which critics say is too low.

Artists must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years before they're eligible for induction.

Nominees were voted on by more than 1,000 artists, historians and music industry professionals. Fans voted online or in person at the museum, with the top five artists picked by the public making up a "fans' ballot" that was tallied with the other professional ballots.

Last year, Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Sheryl Crow, Chaka Khan, "Soul Train" creator Don Cornelius, Kate Bush and the late George Michael were some of the artists who got into the hall.

Powerhouse

Meanwhile, Heart - the pioneering band that melds Nancy Wilson's shredding guitar with her sister Ann's powerhouse vocals - is hitting the road this spring and fall for a world tour that Nancy Wilson describes as "the full-on rocker size."

"I've been strengthening. I've got my trainer," she says. "You go one day at a time and you strengthen one workout session at a time. It's a lot of work, but it's the only job I know how to do."

The Rock & Roll Hall of Famers who gave us classic tracks like "Magic Man," "Crazy on You" and "Alone" will be playing all the hits, some tracks from their solo albums - like Ann Wilson's "Miss One and Only" and Nancy Wilson's "Love Mistake" - and a new song called "Roll the Dice."

"I like to say we have really good problems because the problem we have is to choose between a bunch of different, really cool songs that people

love already," says Nancy Wilson.

Like "Barracuda," a sonic burst which first appeared on the band's second album, "Little Queen" and is one of the band's most memorable songs.

"You can't mess with 'Barracuda.' It's just the way it is. It is great. You get on the horse and you ride. It's a galloping steed of a ride to go on. And for everybody, including the band."

The tour kicks off Saturday at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville, South Carolina, and will hit cities including Atlanta, Boston, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Detroit, as well as the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, Colorado. International dates include stops in London, Oslo, Berlin, Stockholm, Montreal and Glasgow.

The band's Royal Flush Tour will have Cheap Trick as the opening act for many stops, but Def Leppard and Journey will join for three stadium dates in Cleveland, Toronto and Boston this summer.

Ann and Nancy Wilson will be filled out by Ryan Wariner (lead and rhythm guitar), Ryan Waters (guitars), Paul Moak (guitars, keyboards and backing vocals), Tony Lucido (bass and backing vocals) and Sean T. Lane (drums).

The tour is the first in several years for Heart, which was rocked by a body blow in 2016 when Ann Wilson's husband was arrested for assaulting Nancy's 16-year-old twin sons. Nancy Wilson says that's all in the past.

"We can take any kind of turbulence, me and Ann, and we've always been OK together," she says. "We're still steering the ship and happy to do it together. So we're tight."

The new tour will take them to Canada, which was warm to the band when they were starting out as what Nancy Wilson calls "a couple of chicks from Seattle." She recalls Vancouver embracing Heart, and touring in one van across Canada in the dead of winter on two lane highways.



Singer Alicia Keys, (center), takes a bow during the curtain call on the opening night of "Hell's Kitchen" Broadway musical at the Shubert Theatre on Saturday, April 20, 2024, in New York. (AP) — Details Page 11



Bacon



Ono

Variety

PAYSON, Utah: Actor **Kevin Bacon** on Saturday returned to the Utah high school where the cult classic movie "Footloose" was filmed more than 40 years.

Bacon danced his way to a stage on a Payson High School athletic field Saturday to greet students before what likely was the final prom held at the school, which is set to be torn down next spring.

"You talked me into it," Bacon said, according to video posted by Salt Lake City's ABC 4. "It's great to see that kind of commitment to anything. I also think that it's amazing to see the power that this movie has had to bring people together."

Bacon starred in "Footloose" as a Chicago teen who moved to a small town and fought its ban on dancing. Payson High School students ended Saturday with a "Footloose"-themed prom, just as the movie ended.

About 21,000 people live in Payson, which is about 60 miles south of Salt Lake City.

Principal **Jesse Sorenson** said students for years have tried to persuade Bacon to visit.

What started as lighthearted appeals on social media turned into a community wide campaign to partner with Bacon's charity, Sorenson said. Students agreed to help put together 5,000 care packages for the charity, SixDegrees, to convince Bacon to visit.

Students for weeks wrote hopeful messages for the eventual owners of each of the care packages and worked with the Utah Film Commission and SixDegrees to raise money and donations of toiletries, clothing and other items to go in the backpacks, Sorenson said. (AP)

NEW YORK: One of the country's leading artist residency programs, MacDowell, has awarded a lifetime achievement prize to **Yoko Ono**. The groundbreaking artist, filmmaker and musician is this year's recipient of the Edward MacDowell Medal, an honor previously given to **Stephen Sondheim** and **Toni Morrison** among others.

"There has never been anyone like her; there has never been work like hers," MacDowell board chair **Nell Painter** said in a statement Sunday. "Over some seven decades, she has rewarded eyes, provoked thought, inspired feminists, and defended migrants through works of a wide-ranging imagination. Enduringly fresh and pertinent, her uniquely powerful oeuvre speaks to our own times, so sorely needful of her

leitmotif: Peace."

Ono's son, **Sean Ono Lennon**, said in a statement that the medal was "an incredible honor."

"The history and list of past recipients is

truly remarkable. It makes me very proud to see her art appreciated and celebrated in this way," he said.

Ono, 91, has made few public appearances in recent years and is not expected

to attend the July awards ceremony, at the MacDowell campus in **Peterborough, New Hampshire**. Ono's music manager, **David Newgard**, will accept the award on her behalf. (AP)

HELSINKI: An artisan roastery based in the Finnish capital has introduced a coffee blend that has been developed by artificial intelligence in a trial in which it's hoped that technology can ease the workload in a sector that traditionally prides itself on manual work.

It is only apt that the Helsinki-based **Kaffa Roastery's** "AI-conic" blend was launched this week in Finland, a Nordic nation of 5.6 million that consumes the most coffee in the world at 12 kilograms per capita annually, according to the International Coffee Organization.

The blend - an AI-picked mixture with four types of beans dominated by **Brazil's** velvety **Fazenda Pinhal** - is the end result of a joint project by Kaffa, Finland's third-biggest coffee roastery, and local AI consultancy Elev.

"Leveraging models akin to ChatGPT and Copilot, the AI was tasked with crafting a blend that would ideally suit coffee enthusiasts' tastes, pushing the boundaries of conventional flavor combinations," Elev said.

Kaffa Roastery's managing director and founder **Svante Hampf** told The Associated Press on Saturday that the two partners wanted to trial how AI and its different tools could be of help in coffee roasting, a traditional artisan profession highly valued in **Finland**. (AP)



Nancy Wilson, (left), and Ann Wilson of Heart perform on opening night of the Heartbreaker Tour at the Cruzan Amphitheater in West Palm Beach, Fla., June 17, 2013. Heart is hitting the road this spring for a world tour that Nancy Wilson describes as "the full-on rocker size." (AP)

Expert tips for parents

Why good sleep vital for 'neurodiverse' children

By Beth Ann Malow, Vanderbilt University; Susan Nehiley Brasher, Emory University, and Terry Katz, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

Most of us are all too familiar with the consequences of a poor night's sleep - be it interrupted sleep or simply too little of it. If you're a parent with kids at home, it often leaves you and your children on edge.

Children with neurodiverse conditions, such as autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, are even more susceptible to the effects of poor sleep, given their emotional reactivity and impulsivity. Struggles with sleep have been linked to increased aggression, irritability, inattention and hyperactivity in children with autism spectrum disorder.

We are three sleep experts - a neurology physician with expertise in pediatrics, a psychologist and a pediatric nurse practitioner - who are working together to help neurodiverse kids, including those on the autism spectrum, get better sleep. Two of us wrote a 2014 book for parents on the topic.

We are passionate about improving sleep because it's an opportunity to help neurodiverse kids and their families both at night and throughout the day to improve how they function in the world.

There are multiple reasons why neurodiverse children don't sleep well, including medical conditions, biological causes and behavioral and environmental factors.

Medical conditions, such as obstructive sleep apnea or epilepsy, can affect a child's sleep. Medications that are used to treat medical conditions, such as antidepressants for mood disorders or stimulants for ADHD, can further disrupt sleep.

Biological causes include genes that affect sleep and issues with processing brain chemicals, such as melatonin.

Factors

Behavioral and environmental factors, including the common culprits of increased caffeine, too much screen time and too little physical activity, or any combination of these, can also affect sleep.

Neurodiverse children often struggle with understanding what's expected of them at bedtime and have difficulty transitioning from after-dinner activities to bedtime routines. They also describe having trouble "turning off their brains" when it's time to go to sleep.

All of these factors can be addressed and treated. A thorough evaluation by the child's health care provider may reveal a medical cause, or medication, that is interfering with sleep.

Behavioral approaches can make a big difference in improving sleep. These might include:

- Changes to daytime habits, including getting lots of morning light and physical activity.

- Shifts in evening habits, such as removing all screens (TV, computers, phones, etc.) and establishing calming bedtime routines.

- Modifications to how a parent interacts with their child for those families who would like a child to fall asleep and stay asleep independently.

While behavioral approaches can be successful in helping a neurodiverse child sleep, they need to be tailored to the needs of the individual child and their family. It's important to note that not all families want their children to sleep on their own. For instance, some cultures value a family bed, and in many families, children share a room with one or more siblings or other relatives.

Because there are so many factors that can cause disrupted sleep, addressing sleep problems cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach and should be done in partnership with parents.

Our team has developed a family-centered approach to address sleep problems in neurodiverse children. This involves brief behavioral sleep education, usually in an initial session lasting up to 90 minutes, and two 30-minute follow-up sessions. In this unique care model designed to increase access to sleep care for families, we train clinicians, including behavioral, speech and occupational therapists, to work with parents to put together a personalized plan.

After only four weeks using this approach, we found that children's sleep patterns improved, as did their behaviors, and that parents reported feeling more competent in their parenting.

Melatonin is a natural substance that is produced in your brain when it becomes dark in the evening. It makes us drowsy and helps set your brain's internal clock to promote sleep. Melatonin reduces anxiety and calms down an overaroused brain.

Here are some general tips for helping your child sleep better, regardless of whether they are neurodiverse:

- Choose a consistent bedtime and wake time. This consistency will help children's own natural melatonin kick in.

- Make sure bedtime isn't too early. For example, an 8 p.m. bedtime is too early for most 10-year-olds. Neurodiverse children may struggle to sleep and will become more anxious, which makes going to sleep even harder.

- Help your child get natural sunlight in the morning. Morning sunlight sets our brain's internal clock so that we can fall asleep more easily at bedtime.

- Ensure your child is getting physical activity during the day.

- Minimize naps longer than one hour, or after 4 p.m. for school-age children. Naps can interfere with going to sleep at night.

- Avoid caffeine, including many types of soda, tea and chocolate.

- Turn off all screens and smartphones at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

- In the evening leading up to bedtime, turn down all lights in the house. Consider using red night lights, if possible. Set any devices to night mode in the evening to limit exposure to blue light. (AP)



The Kuwait Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) organized an event to promote healthy sleeping habits.

'Sleep is the best meditation': Dr Jagannath

KCICAI event promotes healthy sleep habits

Balanced diet and exercise crucial for gains

Intermittent fasting linked to health benefits improved well-being, says clinical nutritionist

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Intermittent fasting has gained popularity as a highly beneficial dietary regimen often likened to a miracle. This approach involves restricting food consumption to a narrow window of time each day, typically around 6-8 hours, akin to the fasting observed during Ramadan, with the exception of consuming calorie-free beverages during fasting periods, reports Al-Qabas daily.

However, reaping the benefits of intermittent fasting necessitates complementing it with a balanced diet and regular exercise.

Numerous studies have highlighted the remarkable health advantages associated with adhering to intermittent fasting guidelines. These benefits include alterations in gene expression linked to longevity and immunity, leading to enhanced longevity and immune function.

Additionally, intermittent fasting promotes metabolic health by bolstering insulin sensitivity and mitigating oxidative stress, inflammation, and cardiovascular risk factors.

Furthermore, it enhances mental well-being by elevating levels of a hormone known to safeguard against depression

and other mental health conditions.

Clinical nutritionist Sheikhah Ahmed Al-Qallaf affirms the benefits of intermittent fasting, citing both clinical experience and study findings. She emphasizes its significance as a recommended dietary pattern, underscoring its effectiveness in facilitating weight loss, improving overall health -- particularly heart health and insulin sensitivity--and enhancing cognitive function. Moreover, intermittent fasting demonstrates a favorable impact on blood sugar regulation and the management of type 2 diabetes.

Some people have difficulty starting intermittent fasting, she says. Therefore, it is recommended to gradually increase fasting by increasing its hours on a daily basis.

In the beginning, it is recommended to stop eating any food after dinner - for example at 9 pm, and then fast from eating and drink only water, tea and coffee during the night and until breakfast in the morning (for example at 7 am). Thus, you have completed fasting for 10 hours.

Then it is recommended to serve the dinner meal one hour early each day and delay the morning meal one hour

each to reach the recommended fasting limit according to studies, which is 14 hours for women and 16 hours for men. In addition to setting times for eating and fasting periods, the calories consumed must also be rationed. One of the goals of intermittent fasting is to reduce the amount of food eaten and curb the feeling of hunger. This is to reduce calories, lose weight, and improve health.

The following are the three proven health benefits:

- Studies have shown that intermittent fasting improves cholesterol levels and blood pressure, which are the most important risk factors for heart disease.

- Intermittent fasting improves the sensitivity of the body's cells to insulin, which reduces the chance of developing diabetes and improves the management of type 2 diabetes. People with type 2 diabetes who follow intermittent fasting notice its positive effect on their blood sugar levels, especially on their HbA1c sugar levels.

- Several studies have indicated that intermittent fasting contributes to improving cognitive functions and concentration and reducing the risk of neurological aging diseases, especially Alzheimer's.

covery and mental rejuvenation. However, he cautioned against engaging in vigorous exercise too close to bedtime, recommending a gap of 2-3 hours to allow the body to wind down.

Relaxation Techniques: Attendees were introduced to various relaxation techniques to help prepare the body and mind for sleep. Dr. Jagannath emphasized the importance of establishing a relaxing pre-sleep routine, such as reading, taking a warm bath, or practicing meditation. He also introduced the concept of the "3-minute personal pause," a simple mindfulness exercise designed to promote relaxation and mental clarity before bedtime.

Sleep and Specific Groups: Dr. Jagannath discussed the unique sleep

challenges faced by women and children, highlighting statistics and potential solutions tailored to each group's needs. For instance, women were advised to prioritize sleep due to hormonal and anxiety-related factors, while teenagers were encouraged to implement a sleep plan and seek guidance from healthcare providers.

Dr. Jagannath delved into the unique sleep challenges faced by different demographic groups, including women and children. He discussed how hormonal fluctuations and anxiety contribute to sleep disturbances in women, emphasizing the need for prioritizing sleep hygiene. For children and teenagers, Dr. Jagannath highlighted the detrimental effects of insufficient sleep on growth, development, and academic

performance, urging parents to implement effective sleep strategies.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Jagannath reiterated the importance of prioritizing sleep as a cornerstone of overall health and well-being. He quoted, "Sleep is the best meditation", emphasizing the transformative power of restorative sleep in promoting physical and mental wellness. He concluded by saying "Tonight keep all your worries out of sight, just close your eyes and go to sleep and all the good times will be for you to keep".

CA Dhruv Sharma in his vote of thanks expressed gratitude to Dr. Jagannath for his enlightening speech and thanked the organizing committee, Annual sponsors NBK and Al Mulla Exchange, media partners for their support in making the event a success.



Dr. Jagannath Chodankar

Traditional Chinese medicine gains increasing recognition in New Zealand

WELLINGTON, April 22, (Xinhua): Patting the armpit and the elbow crease, stretching and yawning, hundreds of New Zealanders immersed themselves in a series of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) activities in Christchurch on Sunday.

Wang Lepeng, associate professor from the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, explained to the audience why to do the patting and knockings: "The liver likes you patting the armpit and stretching and yawning, and the heart likes knocking the elbow crease."

Local resident Felicity Smith experienced acupuncture treatment, tui na massage therapy and some TCM exercises at the "Chinese Language plus Traditional Chinese Medicine" lecture and exhibition held at the central library of Christ-

church, the largest city in New Zealand's South Island.

Expressing her long-time interest in TCM, Smith shared how she incorporates TCM exercises into her daily health routine with great enthusiasm.

At the event, experts from TCM schools and associations from all over New Zealand gathered for exchanges with the TCM experts from the Chinese capital Beijing. There were also video games about making TCM prescriptions for children to play at the exhibition.

Chinese Consul General in Christchurch He Ying told the event that TCM has gradually taken root in New Zealand. In 2021, the New Zealand government agreed to regulate TCM practices covering acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and the tui na massage therapy, among others.

Nowadays, more and more Kiwis have accepted TCM as a useful tool to protect their physical health. He said, adding TCM, with its unique theories and therapies, has proved to be effective and made a great contribution to the health of people worldwide.

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, TCM has shown significant effects from prevention to treatment and recovery, earning recognition of the World Health Organization (WHO), she said.

"TCM has not only helped keep Chinese people healthy in thousands of years, but also made important contributions to the global healthcare industry." He said, adding China has always attached great importance to TCM's development, trying to keep it alive, make it better, and use it well.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

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

For your ads on this page

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

www.arabtimesonline.com

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE
الفروانية FARWANIYA

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm
Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Regulatory body cites contaminated samples

WADA stands by decision to clear Chinese swimmers for Tokyo Olympics

MONTREAL, April 22, (AP): The world's top anti-doping regulator said after reviewing a television documentary and newspaper reports that it stands by its decision to clear 23 Chinese swimmers to compete at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics despite testing positive for a banned heart medication.

The World Anti-Doping Agency issued a statement following the release Sunday of a documentary on the cases by German broadcaster ARD.

OLYMPICS

In an earlier statement following initial newspaper reports, WADA said it agreed with Chinese authorities and ruled that the swimmers' samples had been contaminated.

The New York Times reported that Chinese anti-doping authorities found the results of the tests were Adverse Analytical Findings, but cleared the swimmers without any penalties after finding that the samples were flagged as positive as a result of contamination.

"Following WADA's review of the documentary, the agency still stands firmly by the results of its scientific investigation and legal decision con-

cerning the case," WADA said in the statement Sunday. "We are equally confident that WADA's independent Intelligence and Investigations Department followed up on all allegations received, which were not corroborated by any evidence; and thus, did not meet WADA threshold to open an investigation."

WADA said based on available scientific evidence and intelligence, "which was gathered, assessed and tested by experts in the pharmacology of trimetazidine (TMZ); and, by anti-doping experts," it had no basis under the global anti-doping code to challenge the Chinese agency's findings of environmental contamination.

WADA said the position was also accepted by World Aquatics, which governs international swimming.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Monday described the media reports as "disinformation and a misrepresentation", and affirmed WADA's decision.

Wang said China's anti-doping authorities investigated the incident and found the positive results were due to "the ingestion of contaminated food by the relevant athletes without knowledge of the contaminated food, and the Chinese swimmers involved were

Ethiopian distance runner and Oly finalist Wondemagegn banned 5 yrs for doping

MONACO, April 22, (AP): A runner from Ethiopia who reached the 3,000-meter steeplechase final at the Tokyo Olympics, and narrowly missed the world championship podium last year, has been banned for five years after testing positive for two banned substances.

Zerfe Wondemagegn admitted breaking anti-doping rules after samples she gave flagged up traces of testosterone and another substance, EPO, which can help athletes' blood transport more oxygen, the Athletics Integrity Unit said in a ruling published on Monday.

Wondemagegn was eighth at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and fourth at the 2023 world championships

in Budapest. Two of the three samples in her case were taken while she was in Hungary for the event and she has been disqualified from the competition.

OLYMPICS

The AIU ruling said it received e-mailed testimony from a doctor saying Wondemagegn had been given EPO as medicine to treat severe anemia and a kidney infection but that it "remained satisfied" she had broken anti-doping rules. The organization added that it had received a signed admission from the athlete last

week. Wondemagegn's is the latest in a series of doping cases in distance running.

The 2022 world champion in women's steeplechase, Norah Jeruto, is facing a doping hearing in June, five weeks before the Paris Olympics. World Athletics is appealing against an earlier decision to clear the runner, who was born in Kenya and competes for Kazakhstan. She has argued ulcers and a bout of COVID-19 can explain irregular blood test results.

Also Monday, the AIU reported a three-year ban for Kenyan road runner Celestine Chepchirchir, who tested positive for testosterone.

not at fault or negligent, which did not constitute a doping violation."

"I want to emphasize," he said, "that the Chinese government has maintained a firm stance of zero tolerance towards doping, strictly abides by the WADA Code, resolutely safeguards the physical and mental health of athletes, maintains fair play in sports competitions, and contributes positively to the global efforts in the crackdown on doping."

WADA scheduled a news confer-

ence for later Monday, saying its president, Witold Banka, and director general Olivier Niggli would be among the officials on hand to answer questions.

The 30-member Chinese swim team won six medals in Tokyo, including three golds. Many of the athletes still compete for China and are expected to swim at the Paris Olympics that start in July.

In its initial statement, WADA responded to what it called "some misleading and potentially defamatory

media coverage this week" and explained the process it undertook upon learning about the positive tests.

The global drug-fighting organization said it also had been given a tip by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency as early as 2020 - before this case arose - about allegations of doping cover-ups in China but that USADA never followed up with evidence.

USADA CEO Travis Tygart called the news of the Chinese positive tests "crushing."

"It's even more devastating to learn the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Chinese Anti-Doping Agency secretly, until now, swept these positives under the carpet by failing to fairly and evenly follow the global rules that apply to everyone else in the world," Tygart said.

The drug at the center of this case was also the medication that led to the suspension of Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva at the Winter Olympics in Beijing in 2022.

Korda ties record with fifth straight win, gets 2nd major



Nelly Korda poses with the trophy after winning the Chevron Championship LPGA golf tournament Sunday, April 21, 2024, at The Club at Carlton Woods in The Woodlands, Texas. (AP)

Widing of Sweden wins his first Korn Ferry Tour event

THE WOODLANDS, Texas, April 22, (AP): Nelly Korda tied an LPGA record with her fifth straight victory, closing with a 3-under 69 for a two-stroke victory in the Chevron Championship to capture her second major title.

Korda joins Nancy Lopez (1978) and Annika Sorenstam (2004-05) as the only players to win five consecutive LPGA events. Her previous major victory was in 2021 at the Women's PGA Championship.

Korda held out to win over Maja Stark of Sweden, who birdied her final two holes to shoot 69 and pull within one. Korda stayed aggressive on the par-5 18th, easily clearing the lake in front of the green and setting up a simple up-and-down for birdie.

GOLF

Haeran Ryu of South Korea shot a bogey-free 67 to enter the final round leading Korda by one. But she bogeyed the first two holes in the fourth round to fall out of the lead. She closed with a 74 and finished fifth.

Korda, who finished at 13-under 275, took home \$1.2 million from a purse of \$7.9 million, raising her season earnings to \$2,424,216.

Billy Horschel went to the Dominican Republic for the first time in search of momentum and came away with a PGA Tour victory he sorely needed Sunday in the Corales Puntacana Championship.

Horschel ran off four straight birdies on the front nine to get in the mix, began to pull away with an eagle on the par-5 12th hole and closed with a 9-under 63 for a two-shot victory over Wesley Bryan.

Horschel, who started the final round three shots behind, all but sealed it with an 18-foot birdie putt on the 16th hole.

Bryan, trying to go wire-to-wire, was only one shot behind late in the round. But right after Horschel made his final birdie, Bryan missed a par par

Supreme Court allows soccer promoter's antitrust

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): The Supreme Court on Monday allowed a soccer promoter's antitrust lawsuit to go forward against FIFA and the U.S. Soccer Federation over the world governing body's policy of not permitting a country to host league matches involving teams from other countries.

putt from just outside 2 feet and fell three behind. He birdied the 18th for a 68 and was runner-up.

Horschel finished at 23-under 265 and earned \$720,000 for his eighth PGA Tour victory, and his first in nearly two years.

Paul Broadhurst closed with a 5-under 66, playing bogey-free over the final nine holes to hang on for a one-shot victory over David Toms in the Invited Celebrity Classic for his sixth PGA Tour Champions title.

The tournament was reduced to 36 holes because of heavy rain that washed out Saturday.

Toms shot a 65. Broadhurst, who finished at 11-under 131, had not won on the PGA Tour Champions since 2018, the year he

The high court order leaves in a place a federal appeals court ruling in favor of Relevant Sports, controlled by Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross.

Relevant sued in 2019 after FIFA disrupted its plan to host a Spanish league match between Barcelona and Girona at Miami Gardens, Flori-

da, and the USSF refused permission to sanction a league match between two teams from Ecuador.

A district court dismissed the lawsuit, but a three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously reinstated it. The Biden administration weighed in on Relevant's side at the Supreme Court.

the first extra hole at No. 18. Fisk made bogey the second time around.

Miles Russell, the 15-year-old from Florida who became the youngest player in Korn Ferry Tour history to make the cut, shot a 66 to tie for 20th. The top 25 get into the next tournament.

John Catlin won for the second straight time on the Asian Tour. He closed with a 5-under 66 on Saturday for a wire-to-wire victory by seven shots over Wade Ormsby in the Saudi Open. The 33-year-old Californian now has two wins and a tie for third on the Asian Tour this year. Peter Uihlein, who finished third, had a 66-63 weekend and still lost ground to Catlin.

Garrick Porteous won for the first time in seven years when he closed with a 7-under 63 for a one-shot victory over Alexander Levy in the Abu Dhabi Challenge. It was his second title on the Challenge Tour.

Chiara Tamburini of Switzerland finished off a dominant Ladies European Tour victory with a 3-under 70, seven shots ahead of Aunchisa Utama in the Joburg Ladies Classic.

Matthew Anderson of Canada birdied his last two holes on the Rio Olympic course for a 2-under 69 and a one-shot victory in the Brazil Open on the PGA Tour Americas. Rio Takeda won her second straight tournament on the Japan LPGA, shooting a third straight round of 4-under 67 for a three-shot victory over Mitsuki Kobayashi in the Fujisankei Ladies Classic.

Eunwoo Choi closed with a 1-under 71 to successfully defend her title in the Nexen-SaintNine Masters on the Korea LPGA Tour.

Dropped catches cost hosts

New Zealand work out 7-wkt win over Pakistan

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, April 22, (AP): Mark Chapman cashed in on three dropped catches and smashed 87 not out off 42 balls as understrength New Zealand beat Pakistan by seven wickets in the third T20 to level the five-match series at 1-1.

Chapman and Dean Foxcroft (31) shared a century stand for the third wicket and New Zealand reached 179-3 in 18.2 overs, only a day after the visitors were bundled out for 90 runs to lose the second game by seven wickets.

CRICKET

An inexperienced Black Caps bowling attack, that featured debutant fast bowlers Will O'Rourke and Zak Foulkes, had earlier pinned down Pakistan to 178-4 after Michael Bracewell won the toss and chose to field first.

It was an impressive performance by New Zealand which showed its bench strength after nine of its front-line players were unavailable because of the Indian Premier League.

"Really happy with the way guys put the learnings from last night," Bracewell said. "I think the way Ish (Sodhi) bowled in the middle (overs) was outstanding... (and) the partnership between Foxy and Chapman was outstanding."

Pakistan's batting mainstays -- captain Babar Azam (37) and Mohammad Rizwan (22) -- couldn't convert good starts with Rizwan forced to retire hurt (right hamstring) midway through the innings.

Pakistan felt Rizwan's absence in the field too when makeshift wicketkeeper Usman Khan dropped one of the three catching chances of Chapman, who smashed nine fours and four sixes.

"Maybe we were 10 runs short," Babar said. "We started well with the ball in the first six overs, but when you drop a set batter's catch then he will take away the game from you. Chapman has always done well against us."

New Zealand lost both its openers within the powerplay as Tim Seifert was bowled by Abbas Afridi (2-27) off a delivery that kept low and Naseem Shah got Tim Robinson's middle stump uprooted with a brutal yorker.

But Chapman then took control against Pakistan spinners Abrar Ahmed (0-31) and Shadab Khan (0-24) before he cut loose against Naseem (1-44) and Shaheen Shah Afridi (0-37)



New Zealand's Tim Robinson plays a shot during the third T20 international cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. (AP)

in the death overs.

Chapman had scored his career-best unbeaten 104 at the same Pindi Cricket Stadium last year when New Zealand drew the T20 series 2-2. He smashed Naseem for two sixes and two fours in one over to raise the century stand in the 16th over before Foxcroft top edged a pull against Abbas in his return spell with the Black Caps needing only nine for victory.

Earlier, New Zealand was also scrappy in the field when Seifert dropped Saim Ayub (32) down the legside in the second over as the left-hander provided Pakistan with a brisk start of 54-0 in the power play.

Ayub also successfully overturned an lbw decision against him before leg-spinner Sodhi (2-25) stemmed the flow of runs soon after the power play when he had Ayub caught in the outfield.

Bracewell, who bowled two overs off of spin in the power play, returned and took the prized wicket of Babar when the Pakistan skipper offered a tame catch at backward point.

Shadab Khan's brisk 41 off 20 balls lifted Pakistan's total that included 19 runs in Bracewell's last over of his spell but not before Cole McConeh had dropped Shadab early in his knock.

The five-match series now moves to Lahore which hosts the remaining two games on Thursday and Saturday.

The first match was washed out at Rawalpindi with only two balls bowled.

Atalanta follow up elimination of Liverpool with 2-1 win at Monza

ROME, April 22, (AP): Atalanta followed up its elimination of Liverpool in the Europa League with a 2-1 win at Monza in a regional Serie A derby.

Ademola Lookman assisted on both goals, first providing the corner kick that Charles De Ketelaere headed in and then setting up El Bilal Toure to finish off a counterattack.

Daniel Maldini pulled one back for Monza in the 89th and then nearly equalized when he hit the post five minutes into stoppage time.

The victory moved Atalanta up to sixth place and one point behind Roma in the race for the final Champions League spot.

Atalanta could also qualify for the Champions League if it wins the Europa League, having beaten Liverpool on 3-1 aggregate on Thursday. The Bergamo team faces Marseille in the semifinals.

Atalanta will also look to overturn a 1-0 deficit to Fiorentina in the second leg of the Italian Cup semifinals on Wednesday.

With 21 goals and 12 assists, Lookman became the fifth player to score more than 20 goals and deliver more than 10 assists since the start of last season in Serie A, after Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, Rafael Leão, Paulo Dybala and Olivier Giroud.

Fiorentina produced two late goals to secure a 2-0 win at last-place Salernitana, moving the Tuscan club up to

ninth place and back into contention for a spot in Europe.

Christian Kouame scored with a looping header in the 80th and Jonathan Ikoné added another in stoppage time following a rebound of a save by Salernitana goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa.

Salernitana, which is 13 points from safety with five rounds remaining, is nearing mathematical relegation.

Fiorentina, which has advanced to the Europa Conference League semifinals, ended a five-match winless streak in Serie A. The Viola also have a game to make up against Atalanta.

SOCCER

There was a brief clash between Salernitana and Fiorentina supporters before kickoff that resulted in injuries to 10 police officers, the Gazzetta dello Sport reported - adding that no fans were arrested.

Also, 10th-place Torino, which is also chasing a spot in Europe, drew 0-0 with Frosinone, which is third from the bottom.

Lecco won 3-0 at Sassuolo to move seven points clear of the drop zone, while Sassuolo remained second from the bottom.

Inter Milan can seal the Italian league title with a derby win over AC Milan on Monday.



Scottie Scheffler waves after winning the weather delayed RBC Heritage golf tournament, Monday, April 22, 2024, in Hilton Head Island, S.C. (AP)

SPORTS

Six score in double-figures as Celtics cruise past Heat

Clippers win opener against Mavs

BOSTON, April 22, (AP): Jayson Tatum notched his first career playoff triple-double with 23 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists to lead the Boston Celtics past the Miami Heat 114-94 on Sunday to open their first-round playoff series.

Derrick White added 20 points and four assists for Boston, which finished with six players in double-figures.

Miami spoiled the Celtics' NBA finals dreams last season, jumping out to a 3-0 lead in the conference finals and then blowing them out in Boston in Game 7.

But Boston fed off the energy of the TD Garden crowd on Sunday, knocking down 22 3-pointers and outscoring the Heat 31-14 in the third quarter. The Celtics' lead grew as high as 34 points in the fourth. Miami used a late run to get as close as 14, but Boston was able to close it out.

BASKETBALL

Including the regular season, Boston is 38-4 at home and has won its past four meetings with the Heat.

Bam Adebayo scored 24 points for the Miami, which played for the second straight game without star Jimmy Butler following his right knee injury during the play-in round. Terry Rozier also remained out with a neck injury. Delon Wright added 17 points. Jaime Jaquez Jr. finished with 16 points.

Game 2 is Wednesday in Boston. **Clippers 109, Mavericks 97**

In Los Angeles, James Harden scored 28 points, Ivica Zubac had a double-double and Los Angeles defeated Luka Doncic and Dallas to win their playoff series opener.

Harden hit 6 of 11 3-pointers and had eight assists. Zubac's 20 points were a playoff career high to go with 15 rebounds. Paul George added 22 points. The Clippers outdid the Mavs at their own 3-point game, making 18 of 36 from long range to 10 of 33 for Dallas.

The Clippers had five players in double figures without Kawhi Leonard. The two-time NBA Finals MVP hasn't played since March 31 because of inflammation in his surgically repaired right knee.

The teams were meeting in the playoffs for the third time in five years, with the Clippers having won both previous series.

Doncic led the Mavs with 33 points and 13 rebounds. Kyrie Irving had 31 points and seven rebounds, but the Mavs got little from their supporting cast.

Trailing by 22, the Mavs outscored the Clippers 10-2 to close to 102-88. Dallas was helped by a technical on Zubac and a flagrant-1 foul for his subsequent actions after a second free throw attempt by Doncic. In all, it cost the Clippers four points after Doncic scored when the Mavs retained possession.

But Harden hit another 3-pointer, George scored four in a row and the Clippers closed out the win.

Bucks 109, Pacers 94

In Milwaukee, Damian Lillard scored all 35 of his points before halftime and Milwaukee withstood the absence of Giannis Antetokounmpo to defeat Indiana in their Eastern Conference playoff opener.

The Bucks needed Lillard to step up without Antetokounmpo, whose return date is uncertain as he deals with a strained left calf that also caused him to miss Milwaukee's final three regular-season games.

With Antetokounmpo watching from the bench, Lillard came through by setting a Bucks record for points in either half of a playoff game.

Pascal Siakam had 36 points and 13 rebounds for the Pacers, who hadn't scored fewer than 99 points in the regular season while averaging a league-high 123.3 points per game. The Pacers shot 8 of 39 from 3-point range.

Indiana is making its first playoff appearance since 2020 and is seeking to get beyond the opening round for the first time since 2014.

Khristian Middleton had 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, while Bobby Portis added 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Thunder 94, Pelicans 92

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 28 points, including the go-ahead basket in the final minute, and top-seeded Oklahoma City edged New Orleans in Game 1 of their first-round Western Conference playoff series.

New Orleans' CJ McCollum missed an off-balance 3-pointer in the closing seconds and the Thunder held on to win their first home playoff game since 2019.

Jalen Williams scored 19 points and Chet Holmgren added 15 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks for the Thunder, who will host Game 2 on Wednesday night.

Trey Murphy III scored 21 points and McCollum added 20 for the Pelicans. Zion Williamson, New Or-



LA Clippers forward Paul George (13) shoots against Dallas Mavericks center Dereck Lively II (2) during the first half of Game 1 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Los Angeles. (AP)



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kenrich Williams shoots in the first half of Game 1 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the New Orleans Pelicans in Oklahoma City. (AP)

leans' leading scorer in the regular season, sat out with a strained left hamstring.

Gilgeous-Alexander made an off-balance jumper with 32.5 seconds left to break a 90-all tie and was fouled on the play. With the crowd chanting "M-V-P!" Gilgeous-Alexander made the free throw to put Oklahoma City ahead 93-90.

McCollum's mid-range jumper made it 93-92.

Holmgren was fouled with 14 seconds left. He missed the first free throw and made the second to put the Thunder ahead 94-92 and set up McCollum's final shot.

Best of the Rest

Cannavaro gets job: Fabio Cannavaro, captain of the Italy squad that won the 2006 World Cup, was given his first Serie A coaching job on Monday at relegation-threatened Udinese.

Cannavaro becomes Udinese's third coach this season. He replaces the fired Gabriele Ciuffi, who had taken over from Andrea Sottil in October.

Cannavaro was given a contract for the final six matches of the season. His brother, Paolo, will be his number one assistant.

The move comes after a 1-0 loss at Hellas Verona on Saturday left Udinese one spot above the drop zone and level on points with 18th-place Frosinone.

Udinese has been in the top division uninterrupted since 1995.

While Cannavaro has coached several clubs in China and the Middle East, his only managerial experience in Italy came with Benevento in Serie B for part of last season.

A former center back, Cannavaro won the Ballon d'Or after helping Italy beat France in the 2006 World Cup final. (AP)

Dest injures a knee: American defender Sergiño Dest injured a knee during training with PSV Eindhoven, creating doubt whether he will be able to play for the United States in the Copa América.

The 23-year-old outside back is a regular starter under U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter.

"Sergiño Dest suffered what appears to be a serious knee injury during Saturday's training session," PSV said in a statement Sunday. "How long the winger will be sidelined is still being investigated. That it will be an extended period is almost certain."

Dest was sent from Barcelona to PSV in August for a season-long loan. He has two goals in 25 league matches and 37 overall games. (AP)

Monaco go 2nd

PSG move closer to record-extending title

PARIS, April 22, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain played the whole game without Kylian Mbappé and still routed Lyon 4-1 at home to move closer to a record-extending 12th French league title.

PSG is 11 points ahead of second-place Monaco with five games left for each side. Third-place Brest is out of contention after earlier losing 2-0 at home to Monaco.

Mbappé watched from the bench

at Parc des Princes as his teammates moved 2-0 ahead after only six minutes, with Lyon midfielder Nemanja Matic turning in a cross for an own-goal and PSG defender Lucas Beraldo scoring from close range.

Striker Gonçalo Ramos made it 3-0 with a firm header. After forward Ernest Nuamah pulled a goal back for Lyon with a low strike from 20 meters, Ramos finished off a fine counterattack shortly before the break in a high-scoring first half.

PSG remains on course for an unprecedented club treble. Coach Luis Enrique's side is through to the Champions League semifinals and faces Lyon in the French Cup final next month.

Lyon striker Alexandre Lacazette played against PSG one week after a face injury saw him taken off on a stretcher and, although he had a shot saved in the first half, he did not look as sharp as usual.

SOCCER

Surprise front-runner Brest dropped to third and sits two points behind Monaco, with only four games left for Brest.

The match ball for the Brest vs. Monaco game was delivered in an unusual way - by helicopter with a man hoisted down to the center circle with the ball in a bag.

Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria put Monaco ahead in the 40th minute, picking up a loose ball on the left of the penalty area and curling a fine shot into the right corner.

Japan forward Takumi Minamino made it 2-0 just after the break when he turned in a left-wing cross from Krépin Diatta. The goal was disallowed for offside but given when a review ruled Diatta was onside. Monaco finished with nine players after midfielder Eliesse Ben Seghir and defender Wilfried Singo were sent off in stoppage time as tempers frayed.

VAR frustrations grow

Forest cry foul play in inflammatory social-media post

Kuwait's journey in AFC U-23 Cup concludes against Malaysia

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, April 22: Tonight marks the end of the Kuwait Olympic team's run in the AFC U-23 Cup, taking place in Doha, as they face off against Malaysia at Al Janoub Stadium at 6:30 pm. Despite both teams

exiting the qualifying race after two losses each, Kuwait's Al-Azraq aims to redeem itself after setbacks against Vietnam (1-3) and Uzbekistan (0-5).

Portuguese coach Emilio Peixe is expected to field players who missed the previous matches, emphasizing

the need for a different performance against Malaysia. Peixe stated in the last press conference that the team is determined "to show a different image from the confrontation with Uzbekistan and achieve the desired benefit from the match."

Meanwhile, Qatar and Indonesia secured their spots in the quarter-finals. Indonesia defeated Jordan 4-1, while Qatar drew with Australia. Qatar leads Group A with seven points, followed by Indonesia with six points, Australia with two points, and Jordan with one point.

SOCCER

Japan, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia have already qualified for the quarter-finals, with Iraq and Thailand competing for the final spot. The top three teams in the tournament secure a spot in the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, while the fourth-place team faces further challenges.



A Kuwaiti player leaves the pitch after the final whistle.

ing down to the touchline to express his unhappiness and later approach referee Paul Tierney - came in the team's 1-0 home loss to Liverpool in March.

The winning goal arrived in the ninth minute of stoppage time - just eight minutes had been allotted - and only after a controversial call by the referee, with Forest not getting the ball back when play was stopped after Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konate sustained a knock to the head at a Forest corner before the goal.

Tierney blew his whistle with Forest in possession on the edge of Liverpool's area. After Konate quickly recovered, the referee dropped the ball to Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, who then started the attack that eventually led to the goal.

Clattenburg pointed out that the ball should have gone back to the

team that had possession when the game was stopped.

That appears to be a clear refereeing error, like the one made in Liverpool's loss at Tottenham in October when there was a mix-up in communication between the on-field referee and the VAR.

After that mistake, Liverpool said it would "explore the range of options available, given the clear need for escalation and resolution."

Tensions are running high and the finances at stake in the lucrative Premier League are leading to clubs - and its fans on social media - getting bolder and more vocal with their complaints, especially about the use of a video review system that is not proving to be the solution that was promised.

Forest went too far, though, according to Jamie Carragher, a for-



Everton's Vitaliy Mykolenko (top left), and Nottingham Forest's Neco Williams battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Nottingham Forest at Goodison Park, Liverpool, England. (AP)



Gujarat Titans' Azmatullah Omarzai plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Punjab Kings and Gujarat Titans in Mullanpur, India. Gujarat Titans beat Punjab Kings by three wickets with five balls remaining at Mullanpur. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwait rhythmic gymnastics team shines with 10 medals at Keti Cup International Championship

TBILISI, April 22: Kuwait rhythmic gymnastics team showcased exceptional talent at the Keti Cup International Championship, presently held in Georgia, securing a total of 10 medals, comprising 5 gold, 4 silver, and 1 bronze. Al-Jazi Al-Haroun (born in 2015), competing at the "A" level, clinched first place and a gold medal in the hoop routine, along with second place and a silver medal in the overall individual category.

Talia Behbehani (born in 2014) secured the gold medal in the ribbon routine in the Prophy category.

Raya Al-Qassar (born in 2013), also competing at the "A" level, displayed remarkable prowess, earning three medals: gold in the ribbon routine, silver in the hoop routine, and bronze in the overall individual category.

Amina Al-Kandari (born in 2013) excelled with two gold medals in the overall individual category and the ball routine, along with a silver medal in the hoop routine, all in the "A" level competitions.

Nabila Al-Kharafi (born in 2013) achieved a silver medal in the ball routine at the same level.

GYMNASTICS

The Gymnastics Federation extended congratulations to the national team champions for their outstanding performance, commending both the athletes' dedication and the coaching efforts of Irina Kovalchuk and Victoria Vysyuk from the Ukrainian national team.



Kuwaiti gymnasts display their medals and certificates.

Real move closer to league title after clasico win over Barcelona

Bellingham scores late



Real Madrid's Rodrygo (right), heads the ball past Barcelona's Jules Kounde (center), and Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

MADRID, April 22, (AP): With a late strike by Jude Bellingham, Real Madrid took a huge step toward winning the Spanish league.

Bellingham, who quickly became one of Madrid's most important players after his transfer last year, likely sealed the title on Sunday by scoring a stoppage-time winner in a 3-2 victory over Barcelona in the final "clasico" of the season.

Barcelona twice took the lead at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium but Madrid rallied to win for a comfortable 11-point cushion over its second-place rival entering the final six rounds.

Bellingham scored the winning goal from a difficult angle one minute into stoppage time with a left-foot strike into the top of the net after a cross toward the far post by Lucas Vázquez, who also scored and set up a goal by Vinícius Júnior.

SOCCER

"He hadn't scored in a while but scored a goal that could be crucial for us winning the Spanish league," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said of the 20-year-old midfielder.

Bellingham hadn't found the net in his last six appearances for Madrid in all competitions. The England international had scored both goals for Madrid when it won 2-1 at Barcelona in the first league clasico of the season.

It was the third straight win for Madrid over Barcelona this season. Madrid is unbeaten in 26 league games, since losing at Atletico Madrid in September.

"The title is a lot closer now. It was

a vital match, we had to win it, and we did it," Ancelotti said. "It was an even game, against a strong opponent that was doing all it could to get back into the title race again."

The clasico came four days after Madrid eliminated Manchester City on penalties in England to advance to the Champions League semifinals. Barcelona had been eliminated a day earlier by Paris Saint-Germain after a loss at home, leaving the league as the Catalan team's only title opportunity for the season.

Goalkeeper Andriy Lunin, the hero for Madrid in the shootout against City, miscalculated a cross into the area in Barcelona's first goal and failed to fully clear a ball in front of the goal in the second.

Barcelona, the defending league champion, came to the Spanish capital looking to revive its title chances and took an early lead with a header by Andreas Christensen six minutes into the match.

The hosts equalized with Vinícius

converting an 18th-minute penalty kick before Barcelona went ahead again with Fermín López's goal from close range in the 69th. Vázquez, who was fouled after a run inside the area to prompt the penalty converted by Vinícius, evened the match again after a cross by the Brazil forward in the 73rd.

Vázquez was one of the changes made to the squad by Ancelotti after the match against City. He also used Luka Modric alongside Toni Kroos in midfield, and Aurélien Tchouaméni in the defense.

Barcelona loudly complained about the penalty awarded to Madrid and wanted one for itself after a challenge on López in the second half. It also complained over a potential goal in the first half when it wasn't clear if the ball crossed the goal line before Lunin batted it away. It took several moments before video review determined that it was not a goal.

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández, likely making his last clasico appearance after saying he will leave the

club at the end of the season, said his team played better and deserved to win.

"I said yesterday that I hoped the referee wouldn't make any mistake and that he would go unnoticed, but none of that happened," Xavi said. "It's a shame. It was not a fair result. Everyone saw it"

Xavi said Barcelona would not give up on the league just yet but recognized that it was all-but-over and that Madrid had to be congratulated for its campaign.

Barcelona midfielder Frenkie De Jong left the field on a stretcher late in the first half after hurting his right leg in a clash with Madrid midfielder Federico Valverde.

The match marked the debut of the new state-of-the-art 360-degree video scoreboard at the renovated Bernabeu. Among those in attendance at the Bernabeu were tennis great Novak Djokovic, former NFL star Tom Brady and actor Andy Garcia.

Atletico Madrid followed up its Champions League elimination with a 2-0 loss at Alaves in the Spanish league, missing a chance to strengthen its hold on fourth place.

The defeat against 13th-place Alaves kept Atletico only three points ahead of fifth-place Athletic Bilbao in the fight for a Champions League spot next season. Athletic had been held to a 1-1 draw against relegation-threatened Granada at home on Friday.

Atletico failed to advance in the Champions League after losing to Borussia Dortmund 5-4 on aggregate following a 4-2 loss in Germany on Tuesday.

Alaves, which had lost three league matches in a row, won with goals by Carlos Benavidez in the 15th minute and Luis Rioja in second-half stoppage time.

In other results, sixth-place Real Sociedad was held 1-1 at midtable Getafe, while ninth-place Villarreal won 2-1 at last-place Almeria.

Kuwait Club, Manama renew rivalry

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, April 22: Kuwait Club will clash with their Bahraini hosts, Manama, at the Khalifa Sports Hall in the opening final round match of the West Asian Basketball Championship for the Gulf region at 8:00pm.

The final round adopts a "play-off" format comprising three matches, with the championship title decided by winning two matches.

BASKETBALL

Regardless of tonight's outcome, both teams secure spots in the tournament's final round, scheduled in a pool system starting next June. They will be joined by the top three teams from the Levant and Iran regions, the champions of India and Kazakhstan, with the pool champion representing the Asian continent in the Club World Cup.

This encounter mirrors last year's final, where Kuwait Club emerged as Gulf region champions, only for Manama to seek revenge in the continental final and represent Asia in the World Club Championship.

Expect an intense match as both teams boast closely matched skill levels. Manama, playing on home turf, aims to leverage home advan-



Kuwait Club player prepares to shoot.

tage and support from fans.

Kuwait Club, under German coach Peter Schumers, relies on talents like the Hamad brothers, Muhammad Adnan, Turki Hamoud, Omran Johar, Al-Musandar Al-Ghais, Fahd Al-Dhafiri, alongside Americans Tony Carr, Anthony Marcus, and Haitian Cadi Lalanne. Meanwhile, Manama's Greek coach Linos counts on professionals like Americans Dominic Ebenex and Travin, complemented by Ahmed Salman and Muhammad Amir.

Kuwaiti shooter Shahad Al-Hawal claims second place in Lusail Trap competition

DOHA, April 22: The Trap Competition kicked off at the Lusail Shooting Ranges Complex in Doha, forming a pivotal part of the concluding World Shotgun Championships, serving as a pathway to the Summer Olympic Games (Paris 2024). The event spans until April 28, attracting 433 shooters from 82 countries.

In the women's division, Maria Dmitrenko of Kazakhstan surged into the lead, notching a perfect score of 50 targets, split evenly with 25 in each round. Following closely, Shahad Al-Hawal from Kuwait claimed second place with 49 targets, while Celine Ali of Bulgaria tied for third place with an equal score. Augusta Martín Campos

from Puerto Rico secured fourth place, with Alessandra Pirelli from San Marino rounding out the top five.

SHOOTING

In the men's category, seven shooters shared the top spot with flawless scores of 50 targets across both rounds, hitting 25 targets in each. Among them were Massimo Fabrizi from Italy, William Hinton from the United States, Ali Hosseinli from Azerbaijan, Aryan Kumi from Albania, Bostjan Masek from Slovenia, Alexander Hagio Topacio from the Philippines, and Yu Haisheng from China.



Shahad Al-Hawal celebrates after claiming second.

Paintsil sparks Galaxy to victory

CARSON, Calif., April 22, (AP): Rookie Joseph Paintsil had a goal and an assist as the Los Angeles Galaxy scored three times in the first 30 minutes before holding on for a 4-3 victory over the San Jose Earthquakes.

The Galaxy (5-1-3) took a 1-0 lead in the 14th minute when rookie Gabriel Pec used assists from Dejan Joveljic and Riqui Puig to score his second goal of the season.

Paintsil gave LA a two-goal lead when he used his right foot on a penalty kick to drill a shot to the bottom right corner of the net. Paintsil's PK followed a hand ball penalty on San Jose midfielder Niko Tsakiris. Paintsil found the net in back-to-back matches and has four goals on the season.

Paintsil notched his fourth assist of the campaign on a goal by defender Maya Yoshida to make it 3-0. Yoshida has two goals this season and three in a career spanning 21 starts over the past two seasons.

The Earthquakes (1-8-0) got on the scoreboard in the 32nd minute on the first goal of the season by defender Rodrigues. Cristian Espinoza set up Rodrigues' second career netter. Puig used assists from Pec and Joveljic to score what turned out to be the winner in the 56th minute, pushing the Galaxy's lead to 4-1 with his third goal of the campaign.

San Jose again pulled within two goals when Espinoza notched his second assist on a Benjamin Kikanovic netter in the 58th minute.