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KUWAIT AMIR, JORDAN KING RENEW COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL SECURITY

Diplomacy at forefront of joint declaration

- Two-state solution for Palestine
- Protect religious sites, shipping routes
- Commitment to Khor Abdullah agreement
- Sovereignty assertion over Durra oilfield

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation concluded their state visit to Jordan, returning home on Wednesday.

During the visit, the delegation, which included Minister of Finance Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, and senior officials from the Amiri Diwan, engaged in fruitful discussions aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two nations.

Expressing gratitude, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to King Abdullah II of Jordan, thanking him for the warm welcome and hospitality extended during the visit. The cable highlighted the deep and distinguished relations between the two countries and aimed to strengthen cooperation for the mutual benefit of their peoples.

Additionally, His Highness expressed his deep appreciation for being honored with the Order of Al-Hussein ibn Ali by the King of Jordan.

Upon departure, His Highness the Amir was bid farewell at the airport by Jordanian King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein, along with other dignitaries including Prince Mered bin Raad, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh, Head of the Royal Court Yusuf Al-Esawi, and Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Jordanian King Abdullah II reiterated on Wednesday support for regional security and stability, along with dialogue and diplomatic solutions for conflicts.

This came in a joint statement issued by both sides following His Highness the Amir's two-day-long state visit to Amman.

They also underlined the significance of opening communication channels for building bridges of partnership and cooperation, promoting values of solidarity, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, ensuring sustainable regional growth, stability, and peace, and respecting states' sovereignty.

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NewsWatch

JEDDAH: The Saudi Royal Court announced, Wednesday, King Salman bin Abdulaziz was admitted to the King Faisal Hospital in Jeddah for routine checkups.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported that the medical checkups are routine and would only take a few hours. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: A ship near the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait saw an explosion in the distance Wednesday, marking what may be a new attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels through the crucial waterway for international trade.

The explosion, reported by the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center, comes after a relative lull from the Houthis after they launched dozens of attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the blast, but suspicion fell on the group as they've repeatedly targeted ships in the same area. It typically takes the Houthis several hours before acknowledging their assaults. (AP)

MANILA: The Philippine government Wednesday banned the deployment of Filipino seafarers on passenger and cruise ships transiting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden due to the risk of sailing in those regions.

The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) issued the order after 23 Filipino sailors were either killed or taken hostage in recent months.

"The move comes after recent amendments to the International Transport Workers' Federation and International Bargaining Forum list of 'high-risk areas' and 'war-like zones' to include the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden," the order said. (Xinhua)

MUSCAT: Oman's Foreign Minister Bader Al-Busaidi and his Bahraini counterpart Doctor Abdullahif Al-Zayani, affirmed Wednesday the importance of a ceasefire and putting effort into avoiding further conflict in Gaza.

This came in a statement from the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs after receiving Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs during his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting the ministers discussed recent developments and the need for a ceasefire, as well as reaching a just solution for the Palestinian cause as per International resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. (KUNA)

KATHMANDU: Nepal's president asked the Amir of Qatar, who is on a two-day visit to the South Asian country, to help release a Nepali student held hostage by Palestinian militant group Hamas, officials said on Wednesday.

President Ram Chandra Poudel met with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at the president's house in the capital, Kathmandu. (AP)



Amiri Diwan photos
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his official delegation departed from Amman, Jordan, following a state visit. Jordanian King Abdullah II bid farewell to His Highness the Amir at the airport.

Amir's Jordan visit draws praise

AMMAN, April 24, (KUNA): The visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Jordan headlined Wednesday's news in the Hashemite Kingdom, welcoming him to the country.

The headlines included extensive coverage of His Highness the Amir's visit, articles and reports discussing the importance of his visit that strengthens ties between Kuwait and Jordan.

The Jordanian news posted picture of His Highness the Amir and the Jordanian King Abdullah II, who bestowed Kuwait Amir with the Order of Al-Hussain bin Ali, as an embodiment of the strong bilateral ties and on his first visit to Jordan.

Jordanian editors-in-chief have described His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Amman as an important step towards Arab coordination for pressing the Israeli occupation to end its aggression on the Gaza Strip.

In separate statements to KUNA, they noted that His Highness the Amir's visit would also strengthen economic cooperation between the two sisterly countries.

"His Highness the Amir's visit comes at a delicate time in the region, in light of the ongoing Israeli occupation's aggression on Gaza," Editor-in-Chief of the Jordanian Al-Rai newspaper Dr. Khaled Al-Shogran told KUNA.

He pointed out that the leadership of the two sisterly countries share identical views of the recent regional developments.

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Egyptian work permits freeze amid transparency concerns

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In a recent development, Al-Jarida daily quoting sources within Kuwait's Ministry of Interior and the Public Authority for Manpower have disclosed a suspension in the issuance of work permits for Egyptian workers, effective as of yesterday.

This decision, prompted by complaints from employers, aims to address concerns over alleged pressure from Egyptian authorities to obtain worker insurance from non-Kuwaiti companies, casting doubts on recruitment

transparency.

To mitigate these concerns, authorities are working to implement stricter controls over the recruitment of Egyptian workers, prioritizing those with advanced degrees and specialized skills relevant to Kuwait's labor market needs.

This step underscores broader efforts to enhance transparency in recruitment processes and ensure foreign workers contribute meaningfully to Kuwait's workforce. Further updates on these measures are anticipated soon.

MPs call for immediate release

Candidate's arrest sparks outcry

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The decision of the State Security General Department at the Interior Ministry to arrest and interrogate Fourth Constituency candidate Mused Al-Qeraifa for the opinions he expressed during the National Assembly election campaign period has drawn flak from several MPs-elect, who described the move as unjustified and abusive while calling for the release of Al-Qeraifa.

MP-elect Khalid Al-Otaibi considers the move a part of the ministry's intimidation policy, indicating the government is creating crises and putting things back to square one without any consideration for public interest. He then cited the Penal Code, which states an individual should be summoned through official letter or telephone call since his identity and address are known.

MP-elect Fares Al-Otaibi said the unjustified and abusive measures taken by the ministry are unacceptable and a violation of the Constitution. He called for the

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Kuwait joins 'telecom' conference in Bahrain

MANAMA, April 24, (KUNA): The International Telecommunication Institute conference in the Middle East and North Africa region kicked off Tuesday in the Kingdom of Bahrain with participation from the State of Kuwait.

The conference, will discuss the importance of digital economy, and will be attended by members from the Kuwait Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA).

The one-day conference, hosted by the Bahrain Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, aims to discuss the most challenging digital and technological issues in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The conference included discussion representatives on the digital economy, safety when using the Internet, protecting society, and finding a regulatory model for artificial intelligence (AI).

They also discussed protecting data privacy in light of the constant use of the Internet and cybersecurity measures.

'Double standards'

Kuwait diplomat condemns Gaza crisis response

CAIRO, April 24, (KUNA): The chief of a pan-Arab human rights committee condemned on Tuesday what he called the "double standards" of the international community in dealing with the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

The international human rights system has been "shaken to its core" at the double standards of the international community given the "mass genocide" unfolding in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, which includes impediments to aid delivery for the Palestinians, Talal Al-Mutairi told pan-Arab human rights committee talks in the Egyptian capital.

The Kuwaiti diplomat castigated Israeli occupation forces for "persistent transgressions" that aim to alter the "demographic landscape" of the Palestinian enclave, while simultaneously lashing out at the United Nations for not recognizing a Palestinian state through membership.

Given the existential conditions, Arab nations are left with no choice but to "work hand in hand," citing Bah-

rain and Egypt as countries whose human rights systems are tantamount to success stories given the institutionalized reforms seen in Manama and Cairo.

Some two decades after the Arab human rights charter, which has been approved by some 18 countries, was introduced, the Kuwaiti diplomat hailed it as a testament to the region's "unwavering commitment" to the principle of human rights, which represents a pillar of democracy.

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit welcomed UN-appointed independent committee's findings on Israeli allegations against United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees' (UNRWA) neutrality and members' involvement in the October attacks.



Al-Mutairi

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:49	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	05:13	Maghrib ..	18:20
Zohr	11:46	Isha	19:42

Local

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

UNHCR, KSL ink deal to share expertise

Trade, investment boost eyed as GCC commerce officials meet in Doha

DOHA, April 24, (KUNA): Undersecretaries of the ministries of commerce of the GCC member countries convened their 58th meeting in Doha on Tuesday to prepare for the 66th ministerial meeting of the committee on trade cooperation.

The delegation of the State of Kuwait is led by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ziad Al-Najem.

The preparatory meeting focused on the plan to set up an ad hoc committee on investment and the trade legislations in the GCC, including the law on consumer protection and the regulation of competition.

Undersecretary of the Qatari Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Maleli, the chair of the meeting, said the conferees continue the efforts to promote GCC joint action and realize the common aspirations for economic development.

He thanked the Sultanate of Oman for the efforts it made while chairing the GCC committees on trade and industry cooperation in the last year which led to fruitful results.

The meeting reviewed the blueprint of a framework of GCC e-trade code and GCC franchise code.

The blueprint will be tabled to the 66th meeting of the committee on trade cooperation, to be held in Doha this May, for endorsement by the ministers of commerce and industry.

Today's meeting also discussed the progress made by the committees on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship, domestic

trade and foreign trade, as well as the latest developments of the free trade talks region regional blocs.

Meanwhile, undersecretaries of the GCC ministries of commerce convened their 44th meeting to prepare for the 52nd ministerial meeting of the committee on industrial cooperation.

The State of Kuwait was represented by acting Director General of the Public Authority for Industry Mohammad Al-Adwani.

UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait and Kuwait Society of Lawyers (KSL) inked Tuesday a partnership deal to boost cooperation and share expertise on humanitarian and legal issues related to asylum and displacement.

Speaking in a news statement, Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR representative in Kuwait, said the agreement enhances legal consultation and services for free, adding that it shows the importance of cooperation between civil society organizations and specialized associations in Kuwait.

She commended efforts made to raise legal awareness and achieve social justice, which is one of the main pillars of this strategic partnership, and keenness of the society on boosting collaboration through offering support to the UNHCR.

Meanwhile, Adel Abul, deputy chairman of KSL praised this cooperation to provide legal support and disseminate legal awareness among individuals.

He hoped that the KSL would have social participation in legal fields.

This is the first deal in its kind in Kuwait that will link humanitarian action to societal legal responsibility through legal support for persons that concern UNHCR.



Nisreen Rubaian

Private sector key to jobs

'Most Kuwaitis reluctant, opt for public sector'

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In light of the inability of the public sector to generate new job opportunities for citizens and the inability to employ 300,000 young men and women who will enter the labor market in the next 10 years, it is necessary to create a productive private sector that contributes to generating job opportunities for citizens, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The private sector can contribute to providing jobs for Kuwaitis only through the government's support in the form of tenders, manpower or labor assistance.

Kuwaitis working in the private sector constitute only 4.4 percent of the total number of employees. This is a shocking and alarming figure, as it implies the reluctance of citizens to work in the private sector and their tendency to cling to government jobs. The total number of nationals employed in the private sector has reached 72,300 out of 448,000 citizens working in the private and public sectors.

These figures indicate that more than 377,000 Kuwaitis are employed in the government; thereby, burdening the State budget. This is a crisis that might worsen without a radical solution.

The daily interviewed experts who shed light on the role of the private sector in employing Kuwaitis, especially since their percentage in the sector is shocking and does not fit into Kuwait Vision 2035.

Director General of the Federation of Kuwaiti Industries Hoda Al-Baqshi said "the industrial sector is being pursued due to the lack of good infrastructure even at the level of investors, and there has been an exodus to local factories. The Kuwaiti market is small, most projects are at a standstill, and there is no preference for the local product unless the factories' work is guaranteed. This necessitates support and commitment from the government by purchasing local products for the sector to be able to pay the salaries of Kuwaitis."

Remuneration

Al-Baqshi has stressed the need of a special remuneration package for employees in private companies, depending on the field where they are working. "For example, those working in factories should receive an allowance specific for the industrial sector. The private sector cannot provide lucrative employment benefits due to the limited market. The sector is strongly committed to the Kuwaiti productive element, but it cannot compete with the advantages offered by the public sector," she explained.

She also confirmed that the government sector suffers from disguised unemployment due to the society's perception that it is a safe haven for providing endless job opportunities, in addition to the absence of the principle of reward and punishment and the lack of accountability and evaluation of productive and unproductive employees.

She asserted there is no unemployment in the country and there is no scarcity of job opportunities, but there is reliance on expatriate workers for productivity. She also cited the culture that prevents Kuwaitis from working in technical jobs, as many evaluate and classify them as not befitting the level. "A culture and an ancient legacy prevail — that the Kuwaiti works only in certain sectors. The lack of a clear plan and strategy for young people to engage in technical jobs in the private sector led to disguised unemployment in the public sector. The solution lies in creating a clear job description, appointing employees according to the manpower needs of each sector, and changing the State's policy regarding appointments and evaluating applicants. It is illogical to employ a Kuwaiti just because he is a Kuwaiti," she added.

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

By Night: Mild and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

Station Max Exp Min Rec
Kuwait City 35 25

Kuwait Airport	36	25
Abdaly	36	21
Jahra	37	24
Salmiyah	33	25
Nuwaisib	36	24
Wafra	35	24

'Move boosts ties'

Hindi language program on Radio Kuwait begins

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait announced the launch of the first Indian radio broadcast of its kind in Kuwait, praising the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information for starting an Indian program on "Kuwait Radio" on the FM 93.3 and AM 96.3 waves every Sunday, noting that "this step will further strengthen the ties between the two countries."



Dr. Swaika

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr. Adarsh Swaika, said "Starting the first ever Hindi language program on Kuwait National Radio is a historic step that strengthens relations between the two countries, and will help bridge the information gap within the largest Indian expatriate community in Kuwait about developments in India and Kuwait, and it will also be a source of entertainment."

He added, "I take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Information Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi and his team for making this possible, and I am sure that the Indian community in Kuwait will welcome this initiative."

Regarding the content that will be presented, the Indian envoy explained, "The content addresses recent developments in bilateral relations, important news in both countries, and entertainment, including sports news, Bollywood news, and Indian songs, and this content will be presented on Kuwait Radio."

Workshop to up capacity in preparing int'l reports

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a workshop to enhance the capacities of relevant entities in preparing international reports related to women's rights within the framework of implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Ministry said in a press statement that this two-day workshop is held in cooperation between the Human Rights Department of the ministry - as the head of the Permanent National Committee for preparation and formulation of national reports on human rights- and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ES-CWA), with the participation of several government entities.

The workshop constitutes an important step in Kuwait's path towards achieving equality and enhancing women's rights on national and international levels in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 5 which is related to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls to realize their full potential.

The workshop aims to improve the quality and accuracy of national reports on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and provide an ideal opportunity for exchanging experiences and expertise among various relevant entities in Kuwait, ministries, and government institutions.

The statement pointed out that Kuwait is one of the leading countries in fulfilling its international commitments by regularly submitting its national reports.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait affirmed on Wednesday the importance of group work in facing common challenges especially in light of recent armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

This came in a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

"Kuwait appreciates the role of international organizations and groups, especially the United Nations, in leading the international movement to confront the unprecedented challenges that affect everyone, including international relief and humanitarian work to alleviate the suffering of peoples due to armed conflicts and natural disasters," said the statement.

"Kuwait renews its firm commitment to the principle of multi-lateralism and diplomacy as basic tools for maintaining international peace and security, calling on all countries to cooperate closely with the United Nations and other organizations and groups to adhere to the principles of multi-lateralism in order to achieve a more peaceful and prosperous world for all," it added.



Italian Ambassador Lorenzo Morini

Timely delivery of Eurofighter vowed

'Ties between Italy, Kuwait stand on long-term trust'

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Lorenzo Morini, expressed his pleasure in representing Italy in Kuwait during his first press conference following the presentation of his credentials to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad.

Emphasizing on the distinguished relations between the two countries, built on long-term trust, the Italian envoy highlighted the upcoming celebration of the 60th anniversary of their establishment.

Morini also highlighted Italy's historical support for Kuwait during the Gulf War and its continuous positive relationship, not only at the official level but also among the people, with many Italian citizens residing and working in Kuwait, and vice versa.

Regarding trade volume, the ambassador mentioned that trade in 2023 amounted to approximately two billion dollars and is expected to increase. He acknowledged Kuwait investments in Italy, particularly in gas and oil, while also noting Italian investments in Ku-

wait, primarily in oil, gas, infrastructure, automotive, and fashion industries.

Speaking about tourism, Morini revealed that over 31,000 tourist visas were issued to Kuwaitis and residents in the previous year, indicating a growing interest in travel between the two countries. He assured the embassy is fully prepared to process visa applications, especially as summer approaches.

In terms of security cooperation and the Eurofighter aircraft program, Morini addressed delays due to the global pandemic but assured Kuwait of the timely delivery of all fighters.

He discussed recent agreements signed between the two countries and expressed his commitment to fostering educational exchanges, particularly by promoting Italian language studies in Kuwait.

Regarding regional concerns, Morini expressed Italy's support for reducing tensions and promoting dialogue in conflict areas such as Gaza, reaffirming the country's humanitarian aid efforts and commitment to the two-state solution supported by relevant UN resolutions.

Arab expat teacher detained

Students threatened with needle

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Public Prosecution has ordered the detention of a 24-year-old Syrian expatriate teacher following allegations of threatening behavior towards students at a private school where she works, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The accusations arose after a parent reported that the expatriate, holding a family residence permit, allegedly injected his son with a needle obtained from the school clinic and intimidated other students to exert control over the class.

According to details provided by a security source to Al-Jarida, the incident was reported to the Salmiya Police Station by a concerned parent. The parent claimed that the expatriate employee had assaulted and intimidated his son using a medical needle, while also threatening other students in the class.

Upon investigation, it was discovered that the expatriate worker was in violation of school regulations and her residency status was not in compliance with her employment. She explained her presence in the classroom as per the school administration's instructions, citing a student disturbance as the reason for bringing a medical needle from the school clinic. However, she claimed that she did not intentionally harm any student.

The case has been registered and referred to the General Department of Criminal Investigation - Juvenile Police Department, and subsequently to the Public Prosecution.

The expatriate woman has been detained pending further investigation, while authorities continue to gather information from the school administration and the affected student.

Education reforms hailed

Digital test system implemented

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education, Hessa Al-Mutawa, has announced the initiation of the development of question banks and test forms for secondary school students through the "Teams" program, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This move aims to furnish approved learning materials across all subjects, streamlining the review process for upcoming end-of-year exams starting on May 15.

Al-Mutawa conveyed this during a meeting with academic instructors to discuss final exam preparations for intermediate and secondary levels.

She commended the efforts of technical guidance in enhancing the educational process, lauding their contributions that led to Ministry students achieving commendable positions in local, Arab, and Gulf competitions.

Additionally, the Library Association

is actively promoting reading and safeguarding authors' rights through various activities.

Meanwhile, in line with Al-Jarida news dated January 20, the Education Ministry's Libraries Department is relocating several departments to the main Ministry building in South Surra, with plans to transfer employees of the Educational Information Department to the Ministry's General Office.

This move prepares for the transition of current administrative buildings to the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Suwaid, Chairman of the Library and Information Association, highlighted the significance of World Book Day, designated by UNESCO to foster reading habits and protect authors' rights, emphasizing the association's continuous efforts in collaboration with government bodies and public benefit associations to uphold these principles.

School for 'special' kids

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Special Education Department in the Ministry of Education recently organized an enlightenment meeting to introduce the project, which aims to integrate students with motor disabilities into general education schools, in the presence of a number of parents, experts and academicians, reports Al-Anba daily.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Special Education Affairs Dr. Salman Al-Lafi confirmed that the introductory lecture on integrating students with motor disabilities into general education schools targeted parents to make them aware of the importance of integration and its goals.

He also unveiled a plan to lay down the mechanism for transferring students with motor disabilities to general education schools in coordination with the Public Education Sector and the Educational Facilities Sector in order to prepare everything needed to ensure the smooth process of integrating students with disabilities into regular schools.

He explained this is the current global trend and the ministry is keen on achieving such goal in cooperation with other concerned sectors by identifying mechanisms for the integration, providing support services for students with disabilities and preparing the school environment to cover all their needs.

'Political stability crucial to push forward wheels of development'

"DEVELOPMENT was hampered in the last twenty years, and then completely disrupted in the last five years. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is political instability," columnist **Mubarak Fahd Al-Duwailah** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"But this does not justify our situation, as the resignation of many governments in record periods was not for fundamental reasons or for a necessary interest, but rather was due to wrong government decisions and the absence of the independence of the three authorities from each other.

"One example of failure is the absence of the human element capable of leading the government to safety, and this was clear in the choices of former prime ministers and ministers, as the limited options available appeared to us.

"Another factor in failure is that the government is run -- sometimes -- by other parties, through their tools spread throughout the body of the executive authority, and the subsequent "breaking of heads", obstructing achievements, and disrupting development, and perhaps the model of the senior leader in the Public Authority for Sports, and the method of dismissing him by the Minister of Youth in the "dealing with urgent matters" government, and in the last days of his term, is the greatest evidence.

"An example of failure is the inability of successive governments to reconstitute the Central Tenders Committee (the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders), due to the conflict of interests, and the resulting delay in awarding many important and sensitive projects, such as completing the new airport building, awarding the roads leading to it, and others.

"There are many projects that the country needs, and if the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) had not -- in accordance with the law -- had an exception to award its projects, the country would have been completely paralyzed in all aspects.

"An example of failure is that the priority of government agencies is the so-called purification of Kuwaiti nationality files from fraud and duplication, and all the state's capabilities are harnessed for this noble goal, and a group comes that has no weight in the reality of the situation, to give the impression to those concerned that these are the priorities of the people of Kuwait, and they know that it is their citizenship that was revoked.

"They were people who had been in prison for several years, due to the issuance of judicial rulings against them on charges of forging citizenship, and their numbers do not exceed dozens. This is an undisputed procedure, but we should not create jellyfish achievements and cartoon heroics out of nothing.

"As for opening the file of persons holding dual citizenship, perhaps I will find in this an opportunity to advise the next Minister of the Interior not to include it in a raft! There are families in the suburb, Shuwaikh, and some areas that will be the first victims of opening this file!

"There are many models of failure, and we have mentioned their solutions in previous articles, the most important of which is political stability, which will only come with complete conviction in the constitution and acceptance of the results of its implementation, both good and bad."

Also:

"Iran and its neighbors... Iran has wasted many economic opportunities. It harmed its people, their standard of living and its national currency, while it possesses natural resources and long coastlines. It could have become a developed country or the Singapore of the Gulf. It could compete with European countries in the field of tourism, but it chose the medieval style, as if it has no good liner close to the leadership to advise it in times of crises," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawaas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Have you read about the wars between Denmark and Sweden, and the results and lessons learned from them? Denmark entered into many wars with its neighbor, Sweden -- a total of 11 wars -- either to satisfy the arrogance of this or that king in order to prove his personal or military superiority or for non-political reasons. These wars got various names -- Denmark and Sweden War, Seven Years War, Kalmar War, Torstenson War, Scanian War, Great Northern War and Theater War.

"With the passage of time, Denmark realized the enormity of material and human losses, and that its military and political approach was wrong. It was better for it to reconcile with Sweden and lay down arms so that their societies could develop and live. After those devastating wars, the two countries were convinced that relations between countries are not built on the idea or principle, 'I win and you lose'. The 'I win and you win too' principle must be taken into account.

"Indeed, these countries have changed for the better. All restrictions on the movement of people between the two countries without a travel or personal identification document were abolished within the framework of the European Union.

"I visited Denmark in 1975 and found it to be a first-class advanced

country, an upscale society whose people speak more than one language. Whoever walks on its roads feels like he is in a beautiful garden.

"Europe lived more than a thousand years torn by religious and ethnic wars. About 100 million people died between World War I and the end of World War II. After that, the Europeans realized their grave mistakes. Europe then decided to take a different path, the path of no return to the past, no return to religious fanaticism, but towards a brighter future.

"It would have been better for Iran to open a good page in its relations with the Arab countries and attract Gulf, European and American investments to develop the tourism, agriculture and industrial sectors, which could open the doors of work for millions of Iranians, thus, raising their standard of living. Today, a nation's strength is not military power, but economic power. This is evident in the progress of South Korea and the backwardness of North Korea. I have repeated this many times because of its importance.

"Nevertheless, Iran chose the method of the Middle Ages and interfered in Arab affairs, which led to the destruction of four Arab countries. Many died or lost their properties, and the conflict was prolonged. It does not think about political negotiation. The Danish-Swedish lesson is very important to it in particular. Let it do as Denmark and Sweden did.

"What we are saying is not the language of the weak, but the language of the wise. Allah prevents us from killing people and shedding blood. Our current situation is one of the destruction of crops and offspring, and a waste of huge funds from the Arab and Iranian sides.

"Let us ask ourselves, which is better, encouraging Gulf investments in Iran, the Islamic country, so that peace and goodness may prevail for all, or wasting huge funds in conflicts on both sides -- Arab and Iranian, and loading hearts with the language of sectarian hatred, while losing the future of our countries and our children?

"Arab countries are peaceful countries that have always wished well for all nations. In May 2021, the Saudi Crown Prince called on Iran to end differences and start a new page in its relationships. It is a courageous position of the leadership, instead of loading the souls of the peoples of the region with the language of hatred against each other, and wasting their financial resources.

"No one asked me to write this article. I swear to Allah Almighty to do what I say."

"Speaker of the National Assembly... I will not predict who will be the speaker, but I will talk about what the speaker should do in the next stage, which could be pregnant with developments that will undoubtedly be reflected in the performance of both the government and the Assembly and on the entire political scene," columnist **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"What are the required specifications of the speaker of the Assembly? Presiding over the Assembly is not an easy matter. It is an assignment, not an honor. Whoever holds it bears a great responsibility. The speaker position is important in the political structure of the State, and protocol comes in second place. Accordingly, the Assembly speaker seat should be for everyone, that is, for all members of the Assembly regardless of their opinions and ideas.

"The tasks of the speaker include managing the political process impartially, without being involved with any party or authority. Past experience has shown that involving the speaker in a dispute or disagreement makes him a party to the dispute. He loses the ability to compromise.

"The neutrality of the speaker in managing the political process requires extensive knowledge and experience regarding the Constitution, bylaws, and relevant decisions of the Constitutional Court. All of these constitute the basis and starting point for the tasks of the speaker, to enable him to establish neutrality.

"Among the important specifications for the Assembly speaker are flexibility, open-mindedness, tolerance of other opinions, and giving members of the Assembly enough space to express their opinions and ideas. The speaker does not rule the Assembly, as he rather manages it.

"It is natural for the speaker to face harassment, deviation or unacceptable behavior. Here comes experience, sophistication and wisdom in dealing with the three authorities -- legislative, executive and judiciary. The explanatory memorandum stipulates that His Highness the Amir is the father of all the people of the nation. This requires the speaker to consider the leadership's views in a flexible manner.

"The primary goal that a speaker should keep in mind is cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities, while ensuring the independence of the judiciary. All of these have constitutional bases. If they are not achieved, the political stability contract will be broken, then everyone will falter and the loser is the nation. Cooperation is possible only through purposeful, calm dialogue and the desire to reach a middle ground. In all of this, the speaker must ensure that differences of opinion do not turn into disagreements."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Worker dies in fall

Court sets May 21 ruling on many Poll 24 appeals

By Jaber Al-Humoud/Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Constitutional Court, chaired by Justice Fouad Al-Zwaid, has set May 21 as the date to announce its decisions on various electoral appeals. Additionally, the court has scheduled a session on May 1 for hearing the arguments regarding two appeals filed by candidate Fahd Fahd Al-Anazi.

The court has also assigned judges to visit the National Assembly to examine some of the election records as part of the appeal lodged by Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi, a candidate from the fourth electoral district.

In total, the court received 13 electoral appeals, which were closed after the submissions were processed. Among these appeals are two that question the validity of the electoral process, alleging that it was conducted based on an invalid necessity decree and raising concerns over the voting rights of children of naturalized citizens. Other appeals focus on the legitimacy of a representative's candidacy and claim errors in vote tallying.

Lawyer Abdullah Al-Kandari, representing candidate Abdullah Fahad, has requested that the court visit the National Assembly to open three ballot boxes and review the minutes from the relevant electoral committees, which are currently held by the Ministry of Interior.

□ □ □

One dead in fall: A person died after falling from a height at a construction site in the Al-Mutlaa area. The body was taken to forensic medicine, and authorities have launched an investigation.

The Ministry of Interior's operations center received a report of a worker's fatal fall from a building under construction in the Al-Mutlaa area. Responding to the incident, security personnel transported the body to forensic medicine and detained the contractor for questioning.

Separately, an officer in the Public Security Sector's Special Tasks Company sustained a broken leg after being run over by a hit-and-run driver. The officer was on duty in the Abdullah Al-Mubarak area when he was struck by an unidentified person who then fled the scene. The officer was rushed to the hospital, where doctors confirmed the leg fracture. Authorities are actively seeking the driver responsible for the incident.



A ministry inspector seals a restaurant.



Drug pills ready for sale in sachets.

Police arrest peddlers, seize drug pills, shabu

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Jahra security officers recently conducted a 24-hour operation across residential and commercial areas, as well as major roads within the Jahra Governorate. This initiative aimed to capture wanted individuals, enforce residency and work laws, and curb drug-related crimes. The security campaign, carried out under the directives of Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs, Major General Hamad Al-Munaifi, and Brigadier General Dr. Hamad Al-Tawala, led to the arrest of five individuals in possession of illegal drugs and related paraphernalia, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

During the operation, police stopped a Japanese-made car driven by one individual with another as a passenger. A search of the vehicle revealed approximately 400 narcotic pills and two bags of Shabu, along with drug-dealing equipment. The suspects admitted during initial questioning that they were engaged in the sale of these narcotic substances to drug users, confirming that the seized items were intended for distribution to their customers.

This successful operation demonstrates the ongoing efforts of Jahra's security forces to combat drug-related crimes and maintain safety in the region. The authorities continue to prioritize public safety by cracking down on drug trafficking and ensuring compliance with residency and work laws.

Six Jahra shops shut for selling fake items

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry closed six stores in Jahra for selling counterfeit goods like bags, clothes, shoes and accessories, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In a press statement, the ministry affirmed that the closure of these stores is part of its ongoing efforts to combat commercial fraud and counterfeiting trademarks. It revealed that around 4,550 items were confiscated and the owners of these stores were referred to the Commercial Prosecution to complete legal procedures and impose legal penalties on them.

The ministry added that Kuwait has been named one of the countries keen on eliminating intellectual property rights violations; owing to the Commercial Control Department's strictness in arresting those who trade in counterfeit goods, referring them to the judiciary, and confiscating and destroying the counterfeit goods, given the harmful impact of counterfeiting crimes and piracy on the economy, public health and safety.



The Court House in Kuwait City.

Mol officer and lawyer detained on fraud, charges of bad checks

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Public Prosecution ordered the detention of a Ministry of Interior officer and a lawyer for 10 days pending investigation on charges of fraud and issuing bad checks. The charges stem from a case brought by a citizen who accused the officer of purchasing two luxury vehicles and presenting checks that later turned out to be worthless, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

A security source revealed to **Al-Jarida** that the investigation team from the General Department of Criminal Investigation arrested the officer and his lawyer partner after a citizen filed a complaint alleging that he was scammed by the accused. The complainant, who owns a luxury car showroom, reported that the officer bought a high-end car from him for 52,000 dinars, offering a signed check as payment. Later, the officer purchased another vehicle worth 23,000 dinars, again with a signed check. When the complainant attempted to cash the

checks, he was informed by the bank that they were invalid, and the signatures did not belong to the account holder.

Following a thorough investigation, the detectives arrested the officer, who claimed he had no knowledge of the checks and blamed his lawyer for issuing them without his consent. The officer mentioned that the lawyer told him the vehicles were gifts. Further inquiry led to the arrest of the lawyer, who confessed that the signatures on the checks were from an expatriate employee working in his company.

The Public Prosecution has registered a case against the officer and the lawyer on charges of "issuing bad checks, fraud, and misappropriation of others' funds." Both the officer and the lawyer were ordered to be detained pending further investigation. Meanwhile, detectives are continuing their search for the expatriate employee who remains at large.

3 restaurants, bakery, & sweets shop sealed

Raids conducted in Hawalli, Salmiya

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: **Muhammad Al-Kandari, the Hawalli Governorate Inspection Supervisor at the Food and Nutrition Public Authority, has announced the closure of four food establishments in Hawalli and Salmiya due to severe violations. The closures were part of an ongoing effort to ensure food safety and public health through rigorous inspections and adherence to international food safety standards.**

In an interview with **Al-Anba** newspaper, Al-Kandari explained that these closures are part of a broader initiative to maintain high safety standards in food production and distribution. The inspection tour revealed multiple violations, including the presence of flying and crawling insects in food preparation areas, poor personal hygiene among staff (such as untrimmed nails), and the sale of adulterated or expired food products. These infractions prompted immediate legal action and the closure of the offending establishments.

Al-Kandari stressed that even if the food products currently appear safe, conditions can change over time. Thus, reopening is contingent upon a thorough re-inspection to ensure all violations have been resolved. The closed establishments undergo temporary reopening to allow for corrective measures, after which inspectors return for follow-up checks. Only once all issues are resolved, and previous violations are addressed, is permanent reopening permitted.

The closed establishments include a bakery, a sweets shop, and a restaurant in the Hawalli area, along with two restaurants in the Salmiya area. The Food and Nutrition Public Authority's inspection team has been conducting regular visits throughout the governorate to monitor compliance and enforce regulations. Al-Kandari emphasized that these efforts are essential to protect consumer health and uphold food safety standards in the market.

Al-Kandari's team remains committed to ensuring that food establishments meet safety requirements. This commitment reflects the Authority's dedication to implementing effective policies and control systems in accordance with international standards. These actions contribute to preserving public health and maintaining consumer confidence in food safety.



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Day serves as a tribute to authors, publishers and book lovers

Embassy of Spain organizes World Book and Copyright Day

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Embassy of Spain in Kuwait organized the World Book and Copyright Day, which is celebrated annually on April 23, to promote the importance of books, reading, and the protection of intellectual property rights.

Established by UNESCO in 1995, this day serves as a tribute to authors, publishers, and book lovers worldwide. It aims to foster a love for reading, encourage literacy, and raise awareness about the significance of copyright laws in protecting literary works.

World Book and Copyright Day celebrates the power of books to inspire, educate, and entertain, while also highlighting the need to safeguard the rights of creators and ensure access to knowledge for all. Various events, initiatives, and promotions take place globally to commemorate this day, emphasizing the enduring relevance and value of books in our society.

In 1995 UNESCO instituted the World Book and Copyright Day as a tribute to books and authors, encouraging everyone to discover the pleasure of reading. The day chosen for this annual commemoration, 23rd April, draws its inspiration from a Spanish initiative and is a symbolic date for world literature, marking the death of prominent authors Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare.

The Embassy of Spain in Kuwait and 'That Al Salasil' wish to contribute to this celebration by offering readers and lovers of culture and literature in Kuwait the opportunity to enjoy books on Spanish heritage, language, and cuisine that will be displayed together with roses. Both books and roses are deeply rooted in Spanish tradition, because not only

is the World Book Day, but also Saint George's Day – patron saint of the Spanish regions of Aragon and Catalonia. According to the legend of this medieval knight, roses sprouted from the spilled blood of the dragon vanquished by Saint George to save the princess. Those very same roses are given as gifts, together with books, on this special day.

Kuwait's Consulate in Saudi Arabia pledges enhanced pilgrim services

Kuwait participates in Umrah and Tourism Forum in Madinah

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Kuwait's Consul General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and permanent representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Mohammad Al-Mutairi has confirmed the Consulate's commitment to better serve pilgrims and visitors by laying down plans and an integrated system to enrich their experience before their arrival until they complete their rituals with ease, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the participation of the Consulate and Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in the Umrah and Tourism Forum in Madinah, Al-Mutairi stressed the importance of active participation in the forum; including dialogue sessions and workshops in order to fully benefit from the results and apply them within the framework of practical plans. He pointed out the importance of learning about the latest innovative and sustainable services, facilities and solutions provided by various companies in the field of Umrah through the exhibition accompanying the conference. He praised the efforts exerted by the Saudi government in launching development initiatives that contribute to improving service for pilgrims and

Register for scholarship, study leave: MoH

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Ministry of Health has opened the registration for scholarship and study leave for technical and allied medical specializations for the year 2024/2025 until the end of official working hours on May 16, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry urged employees, who intend to apply for scholarship or study leave, to visit the Public Jobs Department-Leave Control in the Scholarships and Study Leaves Section. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) had earlier approved the ministry's scholarship and study leave plan for technical and allied medical spe-

cializations for the year 2024/2025; consisting of 365 seats for master's, doctorate and bachelor's degrees and diploma as well as the national program for developing the skills of the nursing staff and others.

A total of 165 seats were allocated for graduate studies (masteral and doctorate degrees) and distributed as follows: 30 for study leave, 130 for scholarship and five for the Arabian Gulf University.

For university studies (diploma and bachelor's degrees), 100 seats were allocated – 40 for study leave and 60 for scholarship.

visitors as part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

The first edition of the forum, which was held Tuesday in Madinah, was organized by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, in partnership with the Program for Serving the Guests of God -- one of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 programs. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs is among the participants.

The Kuwaiti delegation is headed by Assistant Undersecretary for Media and Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Mutairi, while the members are Director of the Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department Sattam Al-Muzain and Hajj and Umrah Affairs Controller Abdullah Al-Baijan.

The forum, which concludes on Wednesday, is an opportunity for decision-makers, officials and entities directly involved in Umrah and tourism sector, entrepreneurs and innovators to discuss challenges, opportunities and emerging trends.

The forum aims to enhance dialogue and creativity to present recommendations that contribute to developing services and products to improve the experience of pilgrims and visitors, in addition to stimulating partnerships and building sustainable relationships between establishments operating in the Umrah and tourism sector, as well as expanding local and international networks to provide integrated solutions for pilgrims and visitors.



A photo from the event.

Event will 'enhance environ awareness'

College of Health Sciences explores new programs at 'Earth Day' forum

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Dr. Badr Al-Khalaf, Dean of the College of Health Sciences at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, revealed the college's aspirations to introduce innovative programs like the "Respiratory Therapist" program, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He also highlighted ongoing evaluations for programs including Bachelor of Food Science, Bachelor of Nutrition, Blood Testing Diploma, and Ophthalmic Technician Diploma.

These remarks were made during the "Earth Day" forum organized by Environmental Health at the College of Health Sciences, held under the patronage and presence of the Authority's Director General, Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam.

Al-Khalaf emphasized the college's recent successes in securing academic accred-

itation for scientific specializations. He expressed hopes that the forum would enhance environmental awareness within society, aiding in the management of environmental pollution—an issue the college aims to address through innovative solutions.

Dr. Halima Al-Kandari, Head of the Environment Department at the College of Health Sciences and the Forum's Organizing President, outlined plans for this year's celebration, highlighting a new approach emphasizing continuity, diversity, and expansion.

The forum features an official website and wide participation from government, private sectors, volunteer teams, and over 30 entities in the accompanying exhibition. Activities include lectures and workshops presented by specialists in the field.



Dr Badr Al-Khalaf during the event.

Move to obtain, renew A-17 passports

MoSA launches new service for co-op societies' shareholders on Sahel app

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Ahmad Al-Anzi, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and official spokesperson for the Ministry of Social Affairs, revealed Monday, the launch of a new feature within the ministry's services on the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel). This enhancement allows users to inquire about the data of shareholders in cooperative societies, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, Al-Anzi elaborated that the new feature enables users to access information regarding shareholder numbers in cooperative societies and their voting rights in general assemblies and elections.

This data can be conveniently viewed through a dedicated section within the (Sahel) application.

Al-Anzi further disclosed that the total number of shareholders in cooperative societies stands at 513,319, comprising 288,716 males and 224,603 females. These shareholders are distributed among 77 consumer, production, craft, and qualitative cooperative societies. The activation of this service underscores the ministry's commitment to its strategic

objectives and its dedication to supporting the digital transformation process.

By prioritizing the delivery of high-quality services and enhancing accessibility for citizens, the ministry aims to streamline processes and facilitate ease of use for the public.

Article 17 passports: The Passport Department in Adan area has started receiving requests to obtain and renew Article 17 passports to travel abroad for the purposes of medical treatment and studies. Such a move follows a temporary suspension implemented since last month, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Prior appointment must be booked on the Ministry of Interior's website for this purpose.

According to informed sources, in order to obtain Article 17 passports for medical treatment and studies, it is necessary to bring proof of a certificate of study in the case of studying abroad, or medical reports in the case of treatment, provided that the security card is valid and there are no security restrictions.

KPC (Holding) unveils strategic focus on key sectors for sustainable growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) emphasizes its dedication to preserving and expanding its investments, aiming for long-term value and sustainable growth, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During a presentation led by CEO Sheikhha Adana Nasser Al-Sabah, the company outlined its achievements in 2023 and aspirations for 2024 after its general assembly meeting chaired by Vice Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Nasser.

The company's strategic priorities encompass six primary sectors: financial services, petrochemicals, food, health and education, industrial and oil services, and real estate. Sheikhha Adana reiterated the mission of value preservation for stakeholders and outlined the vision to become a leading investment entity, adaptable

and focused on sectors vital for society's present and future.

Efforts since 2022 have concentrated on enhancing performance in key investments, identifying growth opportunities, and strengthening governance.

Notable deals, including the merger with Qurain Petrochemical Company and acquisitions in the oil services and banking sectors, contributed to the company's growth trajectory.

Proactive management of liabilities has been pivotal, with the issuance of sukuk, marking a significant milestone for the company and Kuwait's financial landscape. Noteworthy divestments, such as the sale of its stake in Gulf Insurance Group and the merger between OSN+ and Anghami, have generated substantial returns and positioned the company for further expansion.

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EU Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Koistinen presenting the Chaillot Prize to President of KSHR's Board of Directors, Khaled Al-Humaidi.

Diplomacy at

Continued from Page 1

Both leaders also stressed that it is essential to work to reduce tensions in the Middle East, fend off military escalation and find fair, all-out, and lasting peaceful solutions to regional conflicts.

They called on the international community, particularly the UN Security Council (UNSC), to adopt a resolution imposing an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, protecting civilians, delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, staving off further escalation, and rejecting war spillover, incursions into Rafah and displacement.

The leaders of Kuwait and Jordan, further, reaffirmed that Palestine is a central cause and that a fair solution would fulfill all legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, based on the two-state approach involving an independent Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 border with Eastern Jerusalem as its capital, in line with relevant international legitimacy resolutions.

In this context, they underlined that the Arab Peace Initiative is the sole way to achieve just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

Furthermore, both sides called for maintaining the existing historical and legal status of Islamic and Christian holy sites, with His Highness the Amir emphasizing the role of Jordan in protecting religious sanctuaries and their Islamic and Christian identity.

They stressed that regional shipping routes should be protected in line with international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in order to maintain the interests of all world countries and that agreements concluded by the region's countries be respected.

The Khor Abdullah agreement reached by Kuwait and Iraq on April 29, 2012, which became effective as of December 18, 2013, should be observed, calling for protecting Khor Abdullah from any transnational terrorist and criminal activities, according to the joint statement.

In this context, both leaders called for commitment to the security exchange protocol, calling on Iraq to reconsider the protocol signed with Kuwait in 2008, which includes a specific revision and cancellation mechanism.

The Kuwait-Iraqi sea border demarcation should be completed to be beyond the mark 162 as per relevant UN conventions and treaties, urging the respect of Kuwait's sea and land sovereignty in line with UNSC Resolution 833/1993.

They also underscored that Durra offshore oilfield falls within the maritime boundaries of Kuwait and that natural resources in the divided zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, including Durra field, only belong to both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as per international law and bilateral accords.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation arrived on Tuesday in Jordan on a state visit.

His Highness the Amir was received by Jordanian King Abdullah II and the Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Jordanian King Abdullah II held official talks at Basman Palace on Tuesday, about the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the two countries and ways of boosting cooperation to serve the aspirations of the two peoples.

His Highness the Amir congratulated King Abdullah II on the 25th anniversary of his coronation, praising Jordan's achievements under his wise leadership.

The King of Jordan awarded His Highness the Amir the Order of Al-Hussein ibn Ali as a sign of deep and firm relations between both countries.

His Highness the Amir voiced his deepest gratitude and thanks to the King of Jordan for awarding His Highness the Order of Al-Hussein ibn Ali.

At the end of his visit, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the King of Jordan for the warm welcome and hospitality during the visit.

His Highness the Amir said that the visit reflected deep and distinguished relations between the two countries and peoples, and aimed to strengthen fruitful and constructive cooperation between the two countries in a way that serves common interests and realizes their peoples' aspirations.

His Highness the Amir also invited the King of Jordan to visit the State of Kuwait at a date to be determined later through bilateral diplomatic channels.

Amir's Jordan

Continued from Page 1

He noted that the balanced and moderate foreign policies of Kuwait and Jordan play an important role in international and regional politics.

Al-Shogran stressed that Jordan highly appreciates the historical stances of the Kuwaiti leaderships, which have always sided

with the Palestinian rights.

The stances of the two countries have also effectively contributed to enhancing joint Arab action and Arab economic cooperation, he said, pointing to Kuwait's hosting of the Arab Economic Summit in 2009, a turning point in the efforts to ameliorate Arab economic cooperation and trade exchange.

He highly appreciated Kuwait's support to Jordan's development and economy over the past decades.

"This support embodied the deep historical relations between the two countries," he said.

For his part, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ghad newspaper Makram Tarawneh told KUNA that the visit of His Highness the Amir consolidates bilateral relations.

He commended Kuwaiti-Jordanian relations as a role model for Arab relations in political, economic, social and security fields.

"This visit provides an opportunity for the leaderships of the two countries to continue their consultations and coordination on the current difficult regional developments," Tarawneh said.

He affirmed that the talks in Amman would focus on restoring stability in the Middle East and ending the Israeli war on Gaza.

Tarawneh added that the two leaders are also keen on upgrading the partnership between their countries.

Kuwait has the largest foreign investments in the Kingdom, he pointed out, adding that this is appreciated by the government and people of Jordan.

Tarawneh said that Jordanians are hoping His Highness the Amir's visit would help further enhance cooperation in various domains to serve the interests of the two countries at this sensitive political and economic stage.

Meanwhile, Editor-in-Chief of Alawal News website Usama Al-Rantisi said that the visit of His Highness the Amir to Jordan comes after about 200 days of the Israeli occupation's genocidal war on the Palestinian people.

"This visit demonstrates the depth of the Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, which is characterized by coordination and understanding of the overall political and international situation," he said.

He affirmed the similarity of their stances with regard to the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Gaza Strip and the regional developments.

Al-Rantisi hoped that the visit of His Highness the Amir would help boost economic cooperation and increase Kuwaiti investments in Jordan.

Candidate's arrest

Continued from Page 1

release of Al-Qeraifa, stressing that the Constitution protects the individuals' dignity and freedom.

MP-elect Mubarak Al-Hajraf stated that the detention of Al-Qeraifa is common in a police State and it has no space at the Assembly. He added the police State strategy has been curtailing freedom in recent years.

MP-elect Osama Al-Zaid said he previously warned about the pile up of errors in the system of the ministry. He asserted that such provocative measures are unjustified. He stressed this manner of dealing with individuals expressing their political views is unacceptable and futile.

MP-elect Shuaib Shaaban thinks the police attitude was adopted by previous governments that failed as per the public and political standards. He urged everyone to bear their political responsibility right now.

MP-elect Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi pointed out that an authority that plants seeds of fear will gain nothing but hatred. He underscored the need to preserve individual freedom for the security of the society. He added that arresting a well-known, patriotic and sincere young man like Al-Qeraifa in such manner is a violation of personal freedom. He asked interim Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah to summon individuals according to legal procedures.

On the other hand, the Public Relations and Security Media General Department in the ministry issued a press statement affirming that the arrest of Al-Qeraifa was in line with the relevant laws and the directive of the Public Prosecution. It stressed that the ministry is committed to the proper implementation of laws and decisions of the concerned institutions.

Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court, chaired by Judge Fuad Al-Zewaid, adjourned until next Wednesday the issuance of verdicts on appeals regarding the recent parliamentary election.

The court received a total of 13 appeals, two of which are on nullifying the election because of the unconstitutionality of the relevant decree and cancelling the votes for naturalized citizens. The rest of the appeals are on the election results to ensure the accuracy of the counting of votes.

The Constitutional Court has assigned judges to check the ballots and election minutes in the Assembly building, including three ballots for former MP and Fourth Constituency candidate Abdullah Fahad.



EU Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Anne Koistinen in a group photo during the presentation of the 2023 Chaillot Prize to the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights.

EU envoy honors Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights with '23 Chaillot Prize

A great moral support for KSHR: Al-Humaidi

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The EU Ambassador to the State of Kuwait H.E. Anne Koistinen presented the 2023 Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC region to the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights (KSHR). The European Union awards the Chaillot Prize every year for actions, campaigns, projects and lifetime achievements that favour human rights promotion and awareness in the GCC region. The prize is named after the Palais de Chaillot in Paris where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 Decem-

ber 1948.

In her speech during the ceremony held at the EU Residence in Kuwait, Ambassador Koistinen said: "I am honored to present the Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC Region to the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights for their unwavering dedication over the years to promoting and advancing human rights in Kuwait. I would like to highlight in particular their work in supporting and advocating for migrant workers' rights in Kuwait and raising awareness about their labour rights."

Engagement with the civil society in Kuwait is a very important part of EU Delegation's work, therefore I am looking forward to continuing our long-standing cooperation with the Kuwait Society for Human Rights."

Mr. Khaled Al-Humaidi, President of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights, said in his speech during the ceremony that "To be honored today by awarding us the Chaillot Prize for Human Rights is a great moral support for the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights. This Society has taken upon itself the responsibility of defending human rights and promoting them in the Kuwaiti society through concerted efforts at the government and community levels. We are delighted that the Chaillot Prize was granted to us for our tireless efforts in protecting the rights of migrant workers in Kuwait through the 'Together Project', which aims at raising awareness and protecting the rights of migrant workers in Kuwait."

Implemented This project was implemented by the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights in cooperation with the European Union Delegation in Kuwait, the Netherlands Embassy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, in addition to the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

For the EU, promoting and protecting human rights is at the heart of EU external policy as they are among the EU's founding values of human dignity, freedom and respect of human rights. Cooperation on human rights and engagement with the civil society are an integral part of the relations between the European Union and all countries, including Kuwait.

The European Union and Kuwait held their fourth Human Rights Dialogue in Brussels on 5 December 2023, where the two sides exchanged about the latest developments on both sides and reiterated their commitment to an open and constructive dialogue to jointly address human rights challenges and share best practices.

AIU makes historic connection with Int'l Space Station



A group photo from the event.

Events mark new era of space communication, education in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: American International University (AIU) is gearing up to host two groundbreaking ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) events on April 22 and April 25, 2024, heralding a new era of space communication and education in Kuwait.

The April 22 event, "Connecting Kuwait to the International Space Station," signifies a historic collaboration between AIU and the Kuwait Amateur Radio Society, aimed at establishing a direct radio connection with astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS). This landmark initiative underscores AIU's steadfast commitment to advancing space exploration and fostering collaboration within the Kuwaiti scientific community.

Distinguished speakers for the April 22 event included Ms. Lama Aloraiman, Founder & CEO of BluDot App for Space Exploration, shedding light on the burgeoning aerospace industry in the MENA region, and Mr. Bader Al Moulah, Architectural Engineer and Co-Founder of Ignition, mapping out the future trajectory of Kuwaiti space exploration. Moreover, the event featured an exclusive engagement with Dr. Michael Barrat, an esteemed astronaut, and ISS crew member, adding prestige and legitimacy to the occasion.

On April 25, AIU will continue its journey of innovation with a distinguished speaker series featuring Dr. Ben Ashman at the AIU Auditorium. Dr. Ashman, an aerospace engineer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, will share his expertise as a co-investigator for the Lunar GNSS Receiver Experiment, navigation lead for NASA's lunar relay development, and details to the Space Communications and Navigation program at NASA headquarters. His insights promise to provide attendees with a deeper understanding of cutting-edge space technologies and their implications for future lunar missions.



Top and above: Some more photos from the event.

Attendees will also have the unique opportunity to interact with Dr. Ashman during a meet-and-greet session, fostering meaningful connections and inspiring the next generation of space enthusiasts. The event will feature exhibitions showcasing AIU's collaborative research endeavors, including an

astrophotography display, a pop-up ASTROLAB gallery, and a research showcase highlighting projects in partnership with esteemed organizations such as the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

The ARISS Connection Events epitomize AIU's commitment to

pushing the boundaries of space exploration, fostering collaboration, and inspiring innovation within the global scientific community. As AIU continues to champion space education, it remains dedicated to empowering individuals to explore the cosmos and unlock the mysteries of the universe.

Charitable Fund for Social Development's board reconstituted

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Development Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi has revealed that acting Undersecretary of the ministry Abdulaziz Sari issued an administrative decision to reconstitute the Board of Directors of the Charitable Fund for Social Development, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Ajmi was appointed chairman

of the board, the Charitable Societies and Foundations Department director as vice chairman and the Financial Affairs Department director as secretary; while the members include the Civil Associations Department director, the Family Welfare Department director, the Community Development Department director, a representative of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department,

and director of the Professional and Civil Associations Department.

In a press statement, Al-Ajmi stated that the formation of the Fund is a confirmation of the State's commitment to activate and strengthen the role of business incubators; as well as providing raw materials, performing emergency maintenance works, improving business incubator services, and covering urgent or

unusual expenses that contribute to developing or facilitating work in the ministry and its departments or halls under its management.

He said the Fund's capital consists of subsidies and material and in-kind donations from public and private entities and individuals. He added the Fund lays down an annual work plan and its estimated budget, including the expected expenses and revenues.

World News Roundup

Europe

Moscow court rejects Gershkovich appeal: Wall Street Journal reporter **Evan Gershkovich** will remain jailed on espionage charges until at least late June, after a Moscow court on Tuesday rejected his appeal that sought to end his pretrial detention.

The 32-year-old US citizen was detained in late March 2023 while on a reporting trip and has spent over a year in jail, with authorities routinely extending his time behind bars and rejecting his appeals. Last month, his pretrial detention was continued yet again - until June 30 - in a ruling that he and his lawyers later challenged. A Moscow appellate court rejected it Tuesday.

In the courtroom on Tuesday, Gershkovich, wearing a white T-shirt and an open checked shirt, looked relaxed, at times laughing and chatting with members of his legal team.



Gershkovich

His arrest in the city of Yekaterinburg rattled journalists in Russia, where authorities have not detailed what, if any, evidence they have to support the espionage charges.

Gershkovich and his employer have denied the allegations, and the US government has declared him to be wrongfully detained.

Analysts have pointed out that Moscow may be using jailed Americans as bargaining chips in soaring US-Russian tensions over the Kremlin's military operation in Ukraine. At least two US citizens arrested in Russia in recent years - including WNBA star Brittney Griner - have been exchanged for Russians jailed in the US. (AP)

Top Russian military official appears in court: A top Russian military official arrested on suspicion of accepting a bribe was sent to pre-trial detention Wednesday after appearing before a court in central Moscow, court officials said in a statement.

Timur Ivanov, 48, one of Russia's 12 deputy defense ministers, was arrested Tuesday evening, Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement. It gave no further information, apart from specifying that Ivanov is suspected of taking an especially large bribe - a criminal offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

According to a statement from the court, investigators told Moscow's Basmany court Wednesday that Ivanov had conspired with third parties to receive a bribe in the form of unspecified property services "during contracting and subcontracting work for the needs of the Ministry of Defense." (AP)

Russian priest suspended by Moscow church: A priest who oversaw a memorial for late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been suspended for three years by the head of the country's Orthodox Church.

Dmitry Safronov held a memorial service by Navalny's grave in Moscow on March 26 to mark 40 days since the politician's death, an important ritual within Russian Orthodox tradition.

An order published Tuesday on the Moscow diocese website publicly demoted Safronov from his position as priest to that of a psalm-reader and stripped him of the right to give blessings or to wear a cassock for the next three years. He was also transferred to another church within the capital. (AP)

Military horses run loose in London, 4 hurt: Several military horses bolted during routine exercises Wednesday and ran loose through central London, injuring four people and damaging vehicles during the morning rush hour.

A spokesperson for the London Ambulance Service said it was called at 8:25 a.m. to reports of a person being thrown from a horse in Buckingham Palace Road, and the first paramedic was on the scene within five minutes.

Pictures and videos of two of the animals, one white and the other black, circulated widely across social media. One of the horses had its front covered by what appeared to be blood or red paint.

The two horses were later contained in Limehouse, around 4 miles (6 kms) east of central London, City of London police said. (AP)

Britain's home secretary touts deal: Britain's home secretary on Tuesday touted Britain's migrant deportation deal with Rwanda as a "new and creative" deterrent to an old and growing problem. But he said he took seriously criticism by the UN refugee agency that it violates international law.

Home Secretary James Cleverly visited Italy, ground zero in Europe's migration debate, hours after the UK Parliament approved legislation to enable the government to deport some people to Rwanda who enter Britain illegally.

The deal, in which Britain will pay Rwanda to process the migrants, is aimed at deterring people from crossing the English Channel from France. It is similar in some basic aspects to Italy's controversial pact to outsource the processing of asylum-seekers to Italian-run centers in Albania. (AP)

North Macedonia holds presidential polls: Voters were lining up Wednesday in North Macedonia to cast ballots for a president they hope will oversee the country's long-anticipated entry into the European Union.

The small Balkan country has orbited the EU for nearly two decades with little to show for its efforts to join the 27-nation bloc.

A second round of voting is almost certain to follow on May 8 - coinciding with parliamentary elections - as no candidate is expected to exceed the 50% threshold of registered voters required for outright victory. Seven candidates are running for the largely ceremonial position, with the brief campaigning period focusing on EU accession, the rule of law, fighting corruption and reducing poverty.

State Electoral Commission head Aleksandar Dashtevski said during a morning news briefing that all polls opened on time at 7 am. Voting was going smoothly, he said, with only a minor technical problem with biometric devices at some polling centers which was quickly resolved. (AP)

'Finland now front-line state for alliance': Finnish President Alexander Stubb said Tuesday that joining the NATO alliance a year ago has transformed his country into a "front-line state," given that it has doubled the military bloc's border with Russia.

Finland, which became the 31st NATO member in April 2023, has a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) land border with Russia that runs mostly through thick forests in the south and rugged landscape in the Arctic north.

Stubb was visiting neighboring Sweden and spoke at a joint news conference in Stockholm on Tuesday with Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. For decades, the two countries embraced a policy of neutrality, refusing to take sides in wars or join any military alliance, but that changed after Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022. (AP)

Nations move closer to normalizing ties: Armenia and Azerbaijan on Tuesday came a step closer toward normalizing relations after a bitter conflict over territory, as experts in both countries worked to demarcate their boundaries and the first border marker was placed.

The two nations are working toward a peace treaty after Azerbaijan regained full control of the Karabakh province that had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces since the 1990s. A six-week war in 2020 resulted in Azerbaijan retaking large parts of the breakaway region, and in September 2023, Azerbaijani forces launched a lightning blitz that forced Karabakh's Armenian authorities to capitulate in negotiations mediated by Russian forces.

Several days ago, Armenia and Azerbaijan reached an agreement over a stretch of border that would cut through four Armenian villages in the Tavush province, meaning that Armenia would cede some territory to Azerbaijan. (AP)



The Iowa Capitol is visible before sunrise, Jan 12, 2024, in Des Moines, Iowa. After a marathon day that stretched into the early hours of April 20, Iowa lawmakers wrapped up a four-month legislative session that was focused on reforming the way special education is managed and speeding up tax cuts. (AP)

Politics

Casey, McCormick to face each other

Senate passes aid for Ukraine, Taiwan

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): The Senate has passed \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, sending the legislation to President Joe Biden after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars.

The bill passed the Senate on an overwhelming 79-18 vote late Tuesday after the House had approved the package Saturday. Biden, who worked with congressional leaders to win support, said in a statement immediately after passage that he will sign it Wednesday and start the process of sending weapons to Ukraine, which has been struggling to hold its front lines against Russia.

Critical

"Tonight, a bipartisan majority in the Senate joined the House to answer history's call at this critical inflection point," Biden said.

The legislation would also send \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to citizens of Gaza, and \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific. US officials said about \$1 billion of the aid could be on its way shortly, with the bulk following in coming weeks.

In an interview with The Associated Press shortly before the vote, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that if Congress hadn't passed the aid, "America would have paid a price economically, politically, militarily."

"Very few things we have done have risen to this level of historic importance," he said.

On the Senate floor, Schumer said the Senate was sending a message to US allies: "We will stand with you."

Schumer and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell made passage of the legislation a top priority, agreeing to tie the Ukraine and Israel aid to help ensure passage and arguing there could be dire consequences for the United States and many of its global allies if Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression is left unchecked. They worked with House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, to overcome seemingly intractable Republican opposition to the Ukraine aid, in particular - eventually winning large

Trump meets with Japan official after court session in his hush money trial

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): Former US President Donald Trump is meeting with another foreign leader while he's in New York for his criminal hush money trial.

The presumptive GOP nominee was hosting former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, one of the country's most influential politicians, at Trump Tower on Tuesday evening.

"He's a highly respected man in Japan and beyond," Trump told reporters as he greeted Aso in the Trump Tower lobby. "It's a great honor to have him."

Aso is just the latest foreign leader to spend time with Trump in recent weeks as US allies prepare for the possibility that he could win back the White House this November. Trump and Democratic President Joe Biden are locked in what is expected to be an extremely close rematch, even as Trump stands criminal trial in Manhattan and faces three additional criminal indictments.

"Leaders from around the world know that with President Trump we

had a safer, more peaceful world," said Trump spokesperson Brian Hughes in a statement. "Meetings and calls from world leaders reflect the recognition of what we already know here at home. Joe Biden is weak, and when President Trump is sworn in as the 47th President of the United States, the world will be more secure and America will be more prosperous."

Trump met last week with Polish President Andrzej Duda at Trump Tower and met recently with British Foreign Secretary David Cameron and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Trump was close with Shinzo Abe, the former Japanese prime minister who was assassinated in 2022, and their relationship underscored the premium Trump puts on personal ties when it comes to foreign affairs.

Trump told reporters he'd gotten to know Aso "through our very dear friend, Shinzo," whom he praised as "one of my favorite people in the world."

majorities in both chambers.

McConnell said in a separate interview before the vote that it "is one of the biggest days in the time that I've been here."

"At least on this episode, I think we turned the tables on the isolationists," McConnell said.

Also:

HARRISBURG, Pa.: Democratic Sen. **Bob Casey** and Republican challenger **David McCormick** will face each other in **Pennsylvania's** high-stakes US Senate contest this fall, as Tuesday's primary election put the men on track for a race that is expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars and help decide control of the Senate next year.

Casey and McCormick won their respective party primary contests after

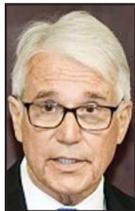
they were uncontested and now enter what is likely to be a grueling, expensive and hard-fought 2024 general election campaign that culminates in the Nov. 5 vote.

Casey, seeking his fourth term, is perhaps Pennsylvania's best-known politician and a stalwart of the presidential swing state's Democratic Party - the son of a former two-term governor and Pennsylvania's longest-ever serving Democrat in the Senate.

McCormick is a two-time Senate challenger, a former hedge fund CEO and a Pennsylvania native who spent \$14 million of his own money only to lose narrowly to celebrity heart surgeon Dr. **Mehmet Oz** in 2022's seven-way GOP primary. Oz then lost to Democratic Sen. **John Fetterman** in a pivotal Senate contest.



US Republican presidential candidate former US president Donald Trump meets with former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso at Trump Tower in midtown Manhattan in New York on April 23. (AP)



Gascon



Bass

America

Ex-police officer kills self: A former Washington state police officer wanted after killing two people, including his ex-wife, was found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound following a chase in Oregon, authorities said Tuesday. His 1-year-old baby, who was with him, was taken safely into custody by Oregon State Police troopers.

The troopers began chasing the ex-Yakima officer, **Elias Huizar**, when they saw him driving southbound on Interstate 5 near Eugene, Oregon, at about 3 p.m. Tuesday.

Oregon State Police Capt. Kyle Kennedy said at a media briefing Tuesday evening that Huizar fled after a trooper tried to pull over his vehicle.

Troopers pursued Huizar's vehicle at high speeds and at one point exchanged gunfire with him, according to Kennedy. The pursuit, over about 25 miles (40 kilometers), ended when Huizar's vehicle hit a commercial vehicle that was stopped on the interstate because of an unrelated crash.

Huizar's vehicle spun and became immobile in the median, and when troopers tried to make contact with him, he shot himself and died at the scene, Kennedy said. The 1-year-old was uninjured and removed from the vehicle, Kennedy said. (AP)

'Suspect targeting Bass': A 29-year-old suspect in a break-in at the home of Los Angeles Mayor **Karen Bass** last weekend was charged Tuesday with burglary and vandalism, and authorities said they believe he was "targeting" the mayor but did not know why.

Ephraim Matthew Hunter, a Los Angeles resident, was charged with a felony count of first-degree residential burglary and a felony count of vandalism, Los Angeles County District Attorney **George Gascon** said. Hunter shattered a rear glass door early Sunday morning to gain entry to the Getty House, the mayor's official residence near downtown, and was cut by glass and left blood stains throughout the home, Gascon said.

The mayor, her daughter, son-in-law and grandchild were in the home at the time.

"We believe that he was targeting the mayor," Gascon said, without providing specific details how investigators reached that conclusion. "We are going on the assumption that he knew that it was her residence." (AP)

Migrants indicted in Texas: A Texas grand jury indicted more than 140 migrants on misdemeanor rioting charges Tuesday

over an alleged mass attempt to breach the US-Mexico border, a day after a judge threw out the cases.

No injuries were reported during the al-

leged breach on April 12 in El Paso, which authorities say began when someone in the group cut through a razor wire barrier. Mass arrests also followed a separate episode in

the Texas border city in March.

On Monday, a county judge had thrown out the charges against those who were arrested this month, ruling there was insufficient probable cause. A public defender representing the migrants had argued there was not enough evidence and accused authorities of trying to make headlines.

"The citizens of El Paso, through the grand jury, essentially overruled the judge's ruling and found probable cause to believe that the riots did occur," El Paso County District Attorney Bill Hicks told reporters Tuesday. Kelli Childress-Diaz, the El Paso Public Defender who is representing the 141 defendants, said she wasn't surprised. (AP)



Two horses on the loose bolt through the streets of London near Aldwych, injuring four people and damaging vehicles during the morning rush hour on April 24. The horses were later contained in Limehouse, around 4 miles (6 kms) east of central London, City of London police said. (AP)

Plane crashes into river: A Douglas C-54 Skymaster airplane carrying two people crashed into the Tanana River near Fairbanks on Tuesday and burst into flames, authorities said. No survivors have been found.

The plane took off in the morning from Fairbanks International Airport. It crashed about 7 miles (11 kilometers) from there and "slid into a steep hill on the bank of the river where it caught fire," according to Alaska State Troopers.

Clint Johnson, chief of the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska regional office, said it remained unclear what happened in the time between the takeoff and the crash but the tower operator "saw a large plume of smoke." (AP)



This aerial drone photo taken on April 20, 2024 shows naval vessel Tangshan docking at Tangshan City, north China's Hebei Province. This year marks the 75th founding anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy. (Xinhua)

Lat/Am

Austerity measures

Argentiniens protest over education cuts

Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 24, (AP): Raising their textbooks and diplomas and singing the national anthem, hundreds of thousands of Argentines filled the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities on Tuesday to demand increased funding for the country's public universities, in an outpouring of anger at libertarian President Javier Milei's harsh austerity measures.



Milei

The scale of the demonstration in downtown Buenos Aires appeared to exceed other massive demonstrations that have rocked the capital since Milei came to power.

Students and professors coordinated with the country's powerful trade unions and leftist political parties to push back against budget cuts that have forced Argentina's most venerable university to declare a financial emergency and warn of imminent closure.

In a sign unrest was growing in response to Milei's policies, even conservative politicians, private university administrators and right-wing TV personalities joined the march, defending the common cause of public education in Argentina that has underpinned the country's social progress for decades.

"It is historic," said Ariana Thiele Lara, a 25-year-old recent graduate protesting. "It feels like we were all united."

Describing universities as bastions of socialism where professors indoctrinate their students, Milei has tried to dismiss the university budget crisis as politics as usual.

Generates

"The cognitive dissonance that brainwashing generates in public education is tremendous," he said.

At the University of Buenos Aires, or UBA, halls went dark, elevators froze and air conditioning stopped working in some buildings last week. Professors taught 200-person lectures without microphones or projectors because the public university couldn't cover its electricity bill.

"It's an unthinkable crisis," said Valeria Añón, a 50-year-old literature professor at the university, known as UBA. "I feel sad for my students and for myself as professor and researcher."

In his drive to reach zero deficit, Milei is slashing spending across Argentina - shuttering ministries, defunding cultural centers, laying off state workers and cutting subsidies. On Monday he had something to show for it, announcing Argentina's first quarterly fiscal surplus since 2008 and promising the public the pain would pay off.

"We are making the impossible possible even with the majority of politics, unions, the media and most economic actors against us," he said in a televised address.

Also:

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Armored vehicles roll slowly past Haiti's National Palace as police scan the horizon for gangs. Every day, bullets whiz past the area, striking buildings and people alike.

Gangs control most of the territory that surrounds the palace, but a transitional council charged with selecting a new prime minister and Cabinet for Haiti is demanding that its members be sworn in at the palace.

The ceremony was scheduled for Wednesday even as officials scramble to impose tight security measures, according to two high-ranking regional officials with knowledge of the matter who asked that their names be withheld because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The push to hold the ceremony at the palace is considered by some a show of force to suggest the Haitian government is still in charge despite marauding gangs who have previously attacked the palace and have promised to derail the ceremony as a daily barrage of gunfire persists in downtown Port-au-Prince.

"No one out here is safe," said Josil Djajmeska, 33, as he waved his hand in reference to the sprawling public park known as Champ de Mars where he sat Tuesday morning near the palace.

Just steps from where he sat, a stray bullet struck Djajmeska late last week. The bullet is still in his calf, and he's hoping a doctor will operate on him soon.

Shortly after he spoke, a pop-pop-pop of gunfire erupted briefly nearby.



Indonesian Defense Minister and president-elect Prabowo Subianto, (center), salutes to journalists in front of his running mate Gibran Rakabuming Raka, the eldest son of Indonesian President Joko Widodo, during their formal declaration as president and vice president-elect at the General Election Commission building in Jakarta, Indonesia, on April 24. (AP)



Togo



McCain

Africa

Bodies of 19 migrants recovered: The bodies of 19 people were recovered Tuesday off the coast of Tunisia, one of the primary points of departure for those seeking to traverse the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

The Tunisian coast guard said in a statement that it had recovered the bodies near the port cities of Mahdia and Sfax, the country's second largest city where migrants have in recent weeks clashed with law enforcement.

Despite risks, migrants continue to attempt the treacherous voyage from North Africa to Europe, traveling in boats from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya to Italy, Greece, Malta and Spain's Canary Islands.

More than 49,000 people have come to Europe by sea this year, including more than 7,000 from Tunisia to Italy. Many more have attempted the journey, including thousands who have been intercepted by North African authorities and an estimated 473 believed to be dead or missing, according to the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration. (AP)

Heat wave surges thru W. Africa: Street vendors in Mali's capital of Bamako peddle water sachets, ubiquitous for this part of West Africa during the hottest months. This year, an unprecedented heat wave has led to a surge in deaths, experts say, warning of more scorching weather ahead as effects of climate change roll the continent.

The heat wave began in late March. Temperatures in Bamako reached 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit) and weather forecasts say it's not letting up anytime soon.

The city's Gabriel-Touré Hospital reported 102 deaths in the first four days of the month, compared to 130 deaths in all of April last year. It's unknown how many of the fatalities were due to the extreme weather as such data cannot be made public under the regulations imposed by the country's military rulers.

Cheikh A Traoré, Mali's general direc-

Asia

Indonesia declares Subianto president-elect

US secretary of state begins China visit

SHANGHAI, April 24, (AP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has begun a critical trip to China armed with a strengthened diplomatic hand following Senate approval of a foreign aid package that will provide billions of dollars in assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform -- all areas of contention between Washington and Beijing.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday just hours after the Senate vote on the long-stalled legislation and shortly before President Joe Biden is expected to sign it into law to demonstrate US resolve in defending its allies and partners. Passage of the bill will add further complications to an already complex relationship that has been strained by disagreements over numerous global and regional disputes.

Still, the fact that Blinken is making the trip - shortly after a conversation between Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, a similar visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the US and Chinese defense chiefs - is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

Of primary interest to China, the bill sets aside \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific and gives China's ByteDance nine months to sell TikTok with a possible three-month extension if a sale is in progress. China has railed against US assistance to Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, and immediately condemned the move as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

The bill also allots \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza, and \$61 billion for Ukraine to defend itself from Russia's invasion. The Biden administration has been disappointed in China's response to the war in Gaza and has complained loudly that Chinese support for Russia's military-industrial sector has allowed Moscow to subvert Western sanctions and ramp up attacks on Ukraine.

China blasts US aid to Taiwan: China on Wednesday blasted the latest package of US military assistance to Taiwan on Wednesday, saying that

Australia arrests seven alleged teen extremist tied to stabbing of bishop

SYDNEY, April 24, (AP): Australian police arrested seven teenagers accused of following a violent extremist ideology in raids across Sydney on Wednesday to protect the community from a potential attack, officials said.

The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy accused of the stabbing of a bishop in a Sydney church on April 15, police said.

Five other teenagers were still being questioned late Wednesday by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, which includes federal and state police as well as the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, the nation's main domestic spy agency, and the New South Wales Crime Commission, which specializes in extremists and organized crime.

More than 400 police officers executed 13 search warrants at properties across southwest Sydney because the suspects were considered an immediate threat, New

South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner David Hudson said.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Philippine troops killed the leader of a small Muslim rebel group and eleven of his men blamed for past bombings and extortion in a clash in the country's south, military officials said Tuesday.

Seven soldiers were wounded in the hourlong gunbattle Monday against suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in a marshy hinterland in **Datu Saudi Ampatuan town in Maguindanao del Sur province, Brig. Gen. Jose Vladimir Cagara** said.

Cagara said a key commander of the rebel group, **Mohiden Anim-bang**, who used the nom de guerre **Karialan**, was killed, along with his brother, **Saga Animbang** and 10 other suspected militants. About a dozen of their firearms were recovered from the battle scene.

such funding was pushing the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation."

The US Senate late Tuesday passed \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars. The package included \$8 billion for Taiwan, meant to counter the threat of invasion by China, which claims the entire island as its own territory and has threatened to take it by force if necessary.

The mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said the aid "seriously violates" US commitments to China and "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces."

Subianto declared prez-elect: Indonesia's electoral commission formally declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony on Wednesday, after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his

landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates.

Subianto, who is currently defense minister, won the election with 58.6% of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by either of the other two candidates. But his rivals alleged that his victory had depended on large-scale fraud and widespread state interference.

Authorities blocked streets leading to the General Election Commission compound, where more than 4,200 police and soldiers were deployed. Wearing matching long-sleeved white shirts, Subianto and vice president elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka waved to their supporters as they arrived at the building.

"The race has finished ... the tough contest, with sometimes heated debates, is over," Subianto said during the ceremony, attended by the country's political elite, including rival candidate Anies Baswedan and his running mate Muhaimin Iskandar.

tor for health, said significantly more elderly people have died during this period although there were no statistics available

due to the measures.

Mali has experienced two coups since 2020, leading a wave of political instabil-



Police guard the Casa Rosada presidential palace during a march demanding more funding for public universities and to protest against austerity measures proposed by President Javier Milei, in Buenos Aires, Argentina on April 23. (AP)

ity that has swept across West and Central Africa in recent years. Along with its political troubles, the country is also in the grip of a worsening insurgency by militants linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre says that a lack of data in Mali and other West Africa countries affected by this month's heat wave makes it impossible to know how many heat-related deaths there were but estimated that the death toll was likely in the hundreds if not thousands.

The heat is also endangering already vulnerable children in Mali - 1 million under the age of 5 were at risk of acute malnutrition at the end of 2023 due to protracted violence, internal displacement, and restricted access to humanitarian aid, according to the World Food Program. **Cindy McCain** is the executive director of the World Food Program.

Professor **Boubacar Togo**, head of pediatrics at Gabriel-Touré, told The Associated Press that the hospital has had six cases of meningitis in children in the last week, an unusually high number. He also added that there were many illnesses with diarrhea as a leading symptom. Togo did not elaborate or offer specific data. (AP)

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑	DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+1.01	4,167.33		
	JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+907.92	38,460.08		
	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+65.95	6,572.75		
	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+699.57	72,086.00		
	SAUDI	-	Tadawul	-128.72	12,355.69		
↓	EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-859.46	25,917.59		

Business

Earning per share reached 10.24 fils

KFH reports net profit of KD 162.8m attributable to the shareholders of the bank for Q1 of 2024

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq announced that KFH achieved a net profit of KD 162.8 million for the first quarter of 2024 for shareholders, representing an increase of 0.5% compared to the same period last year, while the comparative period last year included revenues and profits from sale of investments amounted to KD 74.3 million, most of which were non-recurring and were not realized during the current period, and an increase of 32.4% compared to three months period ended Q4 2023.

Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2024 reached 10.24 fils; an increase of 1% compared to the same period last year.

Net financing income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 263.4 million; an increase of 17% compared to the same period last year.

Total operating income for the first quarter of the year increased, supported by the increase in all core activities to reach KD 392.4 million; an increase of 3.5% compared to the same period last year, and an increase of 14% compared to Q4 2023.

Financing receivables as of the end of the first quarter of 2024 reached KD 18.9 billion, affected by the classification of Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain as assets held for sale, as well as the impact of foreign currency fluctuations during the current period.

Total assets for the first quarter of the year amounted to KD 37 billion, Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 5.3 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2024.

Depositors' accounts as of the end of the first quarter of 2024 amounted to KD 20 billion.

In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.77% which is above the limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid capital base of KFH.

High profitability

Al Marzouq highlighted KFH's successful achievement of its Group strategy's key goals, further solidifying its leading position. Strong financial performance, evident in high liquidity ratios, a solid capital base, and robust operating performance, drove growth in operating income, profits, the financing portfolio, and all key financial indicators. The acquisition of Ahli United Bank-Bahrain further bolstered these positive trends, propelling KFH to its highest ever profit rates in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Largest market cap

Al Marzouq revealed that KFH holds the top spot in Kuwait and ranked fourth in the Middle East in terms of market capitalization which exceeded KD 12 billion.

Unprecedented deal

Al Marzouq noted that KFH is focused on achieving sustainable profitability by pursuing a strategy of innovation and digital transformation to create added value. The bank also expands its customer base and promotes harmony among its Group subsidiaries across 12 geographies, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, the UK, Germany. This network is supported by approximately 630 branches and nearly 2,250 ATMs, contributing to further profitability and strengthening its financial position, in addition to ongoing talent acquisition and retention.

He emphasized that the acquisition of AUB - Bahrain represents an unprecedented deal in Kuwait's banking sector. This



KFH Chairman Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq



CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood

- **Al Marzouq:** KFH is focused on achieving sustainable profitability
- Net financing income reached KD 263.4 million, an increase of 17%
- Total operating income reached KD392.4 million, an increase of 3.5%
- KFH is the largest bank in Kuwait and the fourth largest regionally by market capitalization
- A harmony among the Group's subsidiaries across 12 countries
- The acquisition of Bahrain's AUB is a landmark deal for the Kuwaiti banking sector

- **Al Rushood:** Strong financial soundness is reflected in Q1 financial indicators
- The Sukuk market is particularly important as it is a prominent financing instrument in global markets
- KFH demonstrates excellence in its digital transformation strategy
- KFH is at the forefront of institutions that are adopting sustainability practices in their operations

will bolster Kuwait's financial standing, establishing it as the headquarters of one of the leading and dominant banks in the Middle East and world-leading Islamic bank. Additionally, it is expected to increase the national employment rate and create new job opportunities within the local market.

Financing mega projects

Al Marzouq emphasized that KFH is committed to providing financing to companies and mega projects locally and regionally, as well as supporting SMEs and micro-enterprises. This commitment is reflected in their diversified and solid financing portfolio.

He pointed out that during the first quarter of the year, KFH successfully implemented a number of financing projects. Notably, KFH acted as the lead financier for the Beyout Plus project, a KD 100 million complex with a commercial area of 250,000 square meters in Mutlaa Residential City.

API Technology

Al Marzouq mentioned that KFH is leveraging cutting-edge technologies in the banking industry such as robotics and AI to streamline back-office operations, utilizing big data analytics for innovating products and services that meet customers aspira-

tions. He highlighted KFH's keenness to cooperate with fintech companies, utilize emerging technologies in its digital transformation journey according to the best and latest global standards and in compliance with the regulatory controls and guidelines.

KD 38 million contribution

Al Marzouq highlighted KFH's prominent role in society, emphasizing its policies and goals that reinforce strategic social initiatives with significant added value. These initiatives include contributing KD 8 million to the reconstruction of Al Mubarakiya. KFH further demonstrated its commitment by participating in the national campaign to help defaulting debtors. Their contribution consisted additional funds amounting to KD 7 million, bringing the total to KD 38 million since 2019. Additionally, KFH partnered with the Kuwait Food Bank, pledging KD 1 million to support underprivileged families in Kuwait. These are just a few examples of KFH's many social responsibility initiatives. In recognition of its leadership in this area, EMEA Finance awarded KFH the Corporate Social Responsibility- Middle East Award.

Financial soundness

KFH Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, confirmed that KFH's Q1 2024 financial statements demonstrate financial soundness and growth. This is evi-

dent in several indicators, such as profitability, value and quality of assets, capital adequacy, and liquidity ratios, all of which have improved compared to the same period in 2023. KFH also saw an increase in operating profits and diversification of its revenue streams. Furthermore, KFH has successfully maintained a healthy coverage ratio for non-performing debts and a favourable cost-to-income ratio.

US\$ 1 bn Sukuk

"As one of the most important financing tools in global markets, Sukuk is a key focus for KFH. Demonstrating this commitment, KFH successfully issued a 5-year Senior Unsecured Sukuk of US\$1 bn. This is the first issue under KFH US\$ 4 bn Sukuk Program," Al Rushood said.

Meanwhile, KFH maintained its leading position in the primary and secondary markets for the Sukuk issuance of the International Islamic Liquidity Management (IILM) Sukuk Program. KFH achieved the top rank amongst the IILM primary dealers.

Convenient banking experience

Al Rushood emphasized that KFH maintains its excellence in digital transformation strategy and leadership in offering innovative digital services and financial solutions. These solutions are available through the KFHOnline app (mobile and website) XTMs, and KFH-GO branches. He added that KFH recently launched TAM, the first Islamic digital bank in Kuwait, and Zaheb, the digital payment platform. These are just a few examples of KFH's commitment to providing a convenient and exceptional banking experience for its customers.

Sustainability and green finance

"KFH strengthens its leadership position by prioritizing sustainability within its core business in Kuwait and its subsidiaries. The bank has a proven track record in leading and arranging green Sukuk issuances. It has also financed and participated in numerous environmentally friendly projects and deals. These actions align with KFH's vision of providing sustainable financial solutions and creating positive social and economic impacts," Al Rushood explained.

Renowned achievements

Highlighting KFH's achievements, Al Rushood announced the bank's win of several prestigious awards during the first quarter. These included Best Islamic Bank - Middle East, Best Bank in Kuwait, and Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait from EMEA Finance magazine. The awards serve as a testament to KFH's leadership in the banking industry, geographic expansion, and strong brand reputation. They further recognize the bank's successful strategic relationships, creditworthiness, and its commitment to delivering innovative solutions and exceptional financial products and services.

Trusted partner

In conclusion, Al Rushood expressed confidence in sustaining the bank's strong and positive results. He thanked shareholders, customers, and the Board of Directors for their trust and support. He acknowledged the important role of the Central Bank of Kuwait and regulatory authorities, and praised the efforts of employees, partners, and all stakeholders. Al Rushood emphasized KFH's commitment to strengthening its position as a leading Islamic bank and a trusted partner for its customers and the community.

Highest in Kuwait Banking Sector

Praise be to Allah

Net Profit for Shareholders Q1 of 2024

162.8

"KD Million"

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House

Net Profit for Shareholders "KD Million"			Total Operating Income "KD Million"		
31/03/2024	31/03/2023	%	31/03/2024	31/03/2023	%
162.8	162.1	0.5	392.4	379.1	3.5
Earnings per Share "Fils"			Total Assets "KD Million"		
31/03/2024	31/03/2023	%	31/03/2024	31/12/2023	%
10.24	10.15	0.9	37,023	38,010	(2.6)
Total Financing Income "KD Million"			Financing Receivables* "KD Million"		
31/03/2024	31/03/2023	%	31/03/2024	31/12/2023	%
677.8	495.5	36.8	18,889	19,425	(2.8)
Net Financing Income "KD Million"			Depositors' Accounts* "KD Million"		
31/03/2024	31/03/2023	%	31/03/2024	31/12/2023	%
263.4	226.0	16.6	20,008	21,813	(8.3)

* Financing receivable and depositors accounts decreased due to the effect of Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain assets and liabilities classification as held for sale as well as the impact of foreign currency fluctuations during the current period.

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BUSINESS

Boubyan petrochemicals surges

Boursa Kuwait extends winning streak for fourth straight session

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Boursa Kuwait continued its positive streak for the fourth consecutive session, closing in the green midway through this week's trading sessions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index saw a modest increase of 0.04 percent, reaching 7074.70 points, with trading activity totaling 53.7 million dinars. Over 177.7 million shares were traded across 17,906 transactions, with 63 shares gaining, 43 losing, and 12 stabilizing.

In the First Market Index, there was a marginal gain of 0.09 points, closing at 7,719.77 points, and liquidity reached 44.1 million dinars. Trading saw 110.3 million shares exchanged through 12,304 transactions, with 17 gaining, 12 losing, and 4 remaining unchanged. Similarly, the main market index experienced a 0.23 percent increase, closing at 5,930.31 points, with liquidity at 9.5 million dinars. Out of 67.4 million shares traded, 46 gained, 31 lost, and 8 remained stable.

The trading session kicked off with positive earnings announcements, notably from the National Bank and Boubyan Bank, reflecting

growth trends. This prompted initial purchases, particularly in leading stocks like Agility, KFH, NBK, and Boubyan. Boubyan Petrochemicals saw notable gains, reaching its highest level in over six months.

While most stocks experienced gains, Human Soft witnessed a decline, eventually dropping by more than 300 fils. Profit-taking operations were interspersed throughout the session, with NBK and Agility initially rising before later declining. The session also saw increased activity in small-cap stocks, including Oula Takaful, Tahseelat, Al Nakheel, and Sanam.

The positive sentiment extended beyond Kuwait, with all Gulf Cooperation Council countries closing in the green, albeit with limited gains.

Despite oil prices remaining stable at \$87 per barrel, gold prices experienced a decline, shedding approximately \$100 from its peak of \$2,400 per ounce. This was attributed to easing geopolitical tensions between Iran and Israel and the recalibration of economic expectations in the American economy, resulting in increased positivity across markets.

Limited investment options

Foreign liquidity in Kuwait's market stays below KD 5 bln

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The recent downturn in the market, characterized by a storm of declines over the past few days, has kept foreign liquidity just below the 5 billion dinar mark, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Despite selective purchases targeting leading stocks and a halt in the decline of others affected by geopolitical pressures, the outlook remains uncertain due to conflicting expectations regarding Kuwait's economic performance.

The World Bank projects a growth target of approximately 2.8 percent, while the International Monetary Fund forecasts a negative performance of about 1.4 percent, leading to confusion among investors.

However, positive growth announcements from banks, despite stiff competition and stalled strategic projects due to bureaucratic delays, have provided some reassurance. Both the National Bank and Boubyan Bank have seen positive growth, setting a positive tone for the sector

as a whole.

Foreign liquidity closed at 5.157 billion dinars in the last settlement, with fluctuations driven by individual selling rather than institutional activity. The revaluation of certain stocks and adjustments to shareholder rights has also impacted liquidity.

However, the market's limitations on investment diversification, particularly in terms of available instruments, continue to hinder foreign investment.

Derivatives remain a preferred option for many foreign investors, but with limitations on their availability, there is a pressing need for expansion and diversification.

Currently, only about 33 companies are targeted for foreign investment, with progress in this area hindered by bureaucratic delays and regulatory issues. Despite interest from major companies, reforms and additional options are needed to attract more foreign investment and drive market growth.

IPOs lead activity

MENA Africa capital markets witness \$1.2 billion in Q1 24

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Data released by the London Stock Exchange Group revealed that capital markets across the Middle East and North Africa region garnered \$1.2 billion from share issuances and subscriptions in the first quarter of 2024. This figure reflects a 6% decline compared to the corresponding period last year, marking the lowest first-quarter level since 2021, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Initial public offerings (IPOs) dominated capital market activity in the region, constituting 80% of the total activity in the first quarter of the current year. However, only nine IPOs were recorded during this period, four fewer than the previous year.

In terms of proceeds, IPOs in the first quarter of 2024 raised \$931.4 million, reflecting a substantial 74% decrease compared to the same period last year.

Notably, Parkin, a parking company based in Dubai, led the IPOs with

a \$428.7 million offering in March, making it the largest stock offering of the first quarter. This was followed by the IPO of the Saudi Modern Mills Company, raising \$314 million, while the IPO of the Middle East Pharmaceutical Industries Company in Saudi Arabia secured the third spot with \$130 million.

The consumer products and services sector emerged as the most active sector in the first quarter of 2024, raising \$448 million, which accounted for 38% of the total increase in capital issuance in the region. It was followed by the consumer goods sector with 27% and the basic materials sector with 15%.

Furthermore, the London Stock Exchange Group noted that Emirates NBD and HSBC shared the top position in the IPO advisory fee tables for the Middle East and North Africa region during the first quarter. Each entity claimed a market share of 19.5%, with both receiving fees totaling \$228.6 million.

US Treasury designates Iranian cyber actors targeting US firms

WASHINGTON, April 24, (KUNA): The US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned two companies and four individuals Tuesday involved in malicious cyber activity on behalf of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Cyber Electronic Command (IRGC-CEC).

A statement by the department said, "these actors targeted more than a dozen US companies and government entities through cyber operations, including spear phishing and malware attacks."

"In conjunction with today's action, the US Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is unsealing an indictment against the four individuals for their roles in cyber activity targeting US entities," the statement said.

"Iranian malicious cyber actors continue to target US companies and government entities in a coordinated, multi-pronged campaign intended to destabilize our critical infrastructure and cause harm to our citizens," said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson.

"The United States will continue to leverage our whole-of-government approach to expose and disrupt these networks' operations," Nelson added.

Iranian cyber actors continue to target

the United States using a wide range of malicious cyber activity, from conducting ransomware attacks against critical infrastructure to conducting spear phishing and other social engineering campaigns against individuals, companies, and government entities.

The IRGC-CEC, one of the Iranian government organizations behind malicious cyber activity, works through a series of front companies to target the United States and several other countries.

Today's action is being taken pursuant to the counterterrorism authority Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended.

OFAC designated the IRGC-CEC, also known as the IRGC Electronic Warfare and Cyber Defense Organization, pursuant to E.O. 13606 on January 12, 2018, for being owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, the IRGC, which itself was designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 on October 13, 2017.

In February 2024, OFAC designated six IRGC-CEC officials in response to recent cyber operations in which IRGC-affiliated cyber actors manipulated programmable logic controllers, which impacted critical infrastructure systems, including in the United States.



Photos from the event.

India aims to become second-largest economy globally with estimated 32 trillion dollars GDP

Envisions exponential growth by 2047

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In collaboration with the Indian Business & Professional Council (IBPC), Kuwait, with support of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), and the Union of Investment Companies (UIC), Kuwait, the Indian Embassy organized the second edition of the India-Kuwait Investment Conference at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait.

In his address to the gathering, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika said, "The positive vibes created by last year's Investment Conference encouraged us to organize the event this year as well and we hope to institutionalize this annual event for the next few years in the calendar of events in Kuwait.

"Allow me," he said, "to thank all stakeholders for their presence here, particularly Managing Director of KIA, Kuwait Conference despite current geopolitical uncertainties and climatic vagaries in the region. I also take the opportunity to thank all potential end-users of this conference for their presence. Most importantly, this event would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the Executive Committee members of the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC).

Investment opportunities in India abound across diverse sectors including manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, and agriculture. India's rapidly growing economy, pro-business reforms, thriving startup ecosystem, strategic location, and large market size make it an attractive destination for both domestic and foreign investors. Initiatives like Make in India and Digital India further enhance the investment landscape, promising lucrative prospects for those seeking to capitalize on India's dynamic market potential.

The Indian envoy emphasized that the cornerstone of India-Kuwait relations has historically been trade and commerce, a reality that remains relevant as both nations stand on the brink of significant transformation. India, poised as the world's fifth-largest economy, aims to achieve developed status by 2047 under the banner of 'Viksit Bharat', while Kuwait pursues its ambitious Vision 2035.

Dr Swaika added, the pivotal challenge lies in harnessing this momentum, translating it into tangible opportunities, identifying connections, assessing viability, and crafting compelling business cases. Reflecting on past inquiries, he reiterated the fundamental question: Why invest in India? The answer, he contended, lies not in subjective philosophies but in factual evidence:

Economic Resilience and Growth -- India boasts

the title of the fastest-growing major economy globally, currently ranking as the fifth-largest with a GDP of USD 3.5 trillion. Projections anticipate it ascending to the world's third-largest economy by 2027-28. With over 522 million in its workforce, India maintains a remarkable growth rate above 6% annually, with a GDP growth rate of 7.2% last year.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Inflows -- India consistently attracts FDI, reflecting investor confidence in its economic fundamentals. Over the past decade, FDI inflows totaled USD 596 billion, with an annual increase from USD 35 billion to USD 84 billion last year. The implementation of a National Single Window Clearance system further streamlines investment processes.

Diverse Investment Opportunities -- India offers a diverse array of investment prospects across sectors such as manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, and agriculture. Initiatives like Make in India and Digital India bolster its attractiveness. Notably, the Productivity-linked Investment scheme, with USD 44 billion in financial incentives, aims to foster domestic production across 14 priority sectors.

Strategic Location and Market Access -- With a market size exceeding 1.4 billion people, India serves as a strategic gateway to South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. In 2023, Indian exports reached USD 770 billion.

Massive Infrastructure Development -- India's infrastructure expansion includes 100 critical transport projects worth USD 9 billion, offering investment opportunities. Over the past decade, the number of airports doubled to 149, while rail and road networks expanded significantly.

Innovation

Technology and Innovation Hub -- India has emerged as a global hub for innovation and technology, boasting a thriving startup ecosystem. It is poised to become a USD 1 trillion digital economy by 2026, with significant patent grants and startup registrations.

"These achievements," the Indian envoy said, "are the result of pro-business reforms by the Indian government, evidenced by a 79-position jump in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking over five years. Initiatives like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) have fostered a more favorable investment climate."

Looking to the future, India envisions exponential growth by 2047, aiming to become the second-largest economy globally with an estimated USD 32 trillion GDP. Foreign direct investment and exports are projected to grow twelvefold, while India will boast the largest and youngest working population, with a median age of 29.

Acknowledging the current bilateral trade of approximately USD 14 billion, primarily centered on oil and food sectors, he stressed the potential for diversification into infrastructure, manufacturing, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, tourism, and agriculture.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the interdependence between Kuwait's energy needs and India's role in ensuring food security. Efforts to broaden the trade spectrum must align with strategic investments, necessitating collaboration between public and private sectors.

He highlighted the increasing involvement of Indian companies in delivering high-quality infrastructure projects in Kuwait, signaling a growing partnership. The conference would provide detailed insights into India's investment landscape, showcasing opportunities across various sectors, inviting attendees to capitalize on India's allure as a global investment hotspot and manufacturing hub.

Saleh Al-Selmi, Chairman, Union of Investment Companies (UIC); in his address said India and Kuwait share a long history of cooperation across various sectors, including energy, infrastructure, finance, and technology. The strategic geographical location of Kuwait and the vibrant economy of India have complemented each other, offering significant opportunities for bilateral investment and trade.

To support his statement, Al-Selmi highlighted some trade and economic statistics to illustrate the depth of India-Kuwait partnership:

■ In fiscal year 2022-23, bilateral trade between Kuwait and India reached USD 13.8 billion, reflecting a steady upward trend over the past decade.

■ India is one of Kuwait's largest trading partners, with key exports including petroleum products, chemicals, and machinery, while imports from India consist of textiles, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products.

■ Kuwaiti investments in India have also witnessed remarkable growth, with cumulative investments exceeding USD 30 billion across various sectors, including infrastructure, telecommunications, and renewable energy.

■ Similarly, Indian companies have made significant investments in Kuwait, contributing to the development of key sectors such as construction, healthcare, and hospitality.

Moreover, our enduring partnership is not only about economic gains but also about fostering cultural exchange and people-to-people connections. The vibrant Indian community in Kuwait and the growing presence of Kuwaiti businesses in India exemplify the deep-rooted ties that bind our countries together.

As we look ahead, there are immense possibilities for further strengthening our investment relationship. With the evolving global economic landscape and the emergence of new opportunities, it is imperative that we continue to nurture and expand our collaboration.

Prominent dignitaries who attended the conference included Ghanem Al Ghenaiman, Managing Director, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA); Saleh Al-Selmi, Chairman, UIC; Rabah A. Al-Rabah, Director General, KCCI; K Rajaraman, Chairperson of International Financial Services Centers Authority - Gift City; Sanjiv Aggarwal, MD & CEO of National Investment and Infrastructure Fund of India; and delegates from Invest India, Confederation of Indian Industry, Gurvinder Singh Lamba, Chairman, IBPC and co-partner for this event.

Concerns rise over counterfeit gold

Turkish investors flock to gold amid Middle East turmoils

ISTANBUL, April 24, (Xinhua): Faruk Mutlu, a Turkish citizen, stepped into a bustling jewelry store in Türkiye's vibrant city of Istanbul. Armed with his savings, he resolved to convert them into gold, an alternative he deems "always valuable."

With the escalating tensions in the Middle East at the beginning of last week, rumors swirled of an imminent rise in gold prices, prompting Mutlu to seize the opportunity.

"In Türkiye, it's a cherished tradition to bestow gold upon newlyweds, and with the summer wedding season fast approaching, our demand for this precious metal is soaring," Mutlu told Xinhua.

In Kuyumcukent, a neighborhood in Istanbul renowned as Türkiye's jewelry industry hub, lengthy queues have formed at gold stores amid concerns that the tension between Israel and Iran could escalate into the broader region.

After Iran launched missile and drone attacks on Israel on April 13, Riza Gokay Tugsavrol, owner of the Harem Gold jewelry store, told Xinhua that the continued rise in prices, driven by increasing need, has made



A jeweler is seen at a jewelry store in Ankara, Türkiye, on Feb. 14, 2022. (Photo by Mustafa Kaya/Xinhua)

gold even more attractive.

"In times of chaos and geopolitical upheavals such as war, investors often see gold as a secure refuge, relying on it as a stable asset," he said.

"Before the conflict, one gram of gold was hovering around the

2,500-Turkish-lira (76.75-U.S.-dollar) mark," he said. "After the escalation, it surged to 2,630 liras and even began testing the 2,650 levels."

At the start of the year, one gram of gold debuted at approximately 2,000 liras in Türkiye.

As tensions slightly eased, the price of one gram of gold went down to the 2,450 mark on Tuesday. Nonetheless, experts anticipate rounds of rise throughout the year in gold prices, spurred by escalating petrol costs amidst global uncertainties.

Echoing Tugsavrol, Murat Tufan, an analyst with the Ekoturk broadcaster, said that the rising prices and the escalating rush for gold underscored the heightened geopolitical risks in global foreign policy. "The fear index has started to exert its influence, especially after Iran's retaliatory measures against Israel," Tufan said.

"This uptick suggests that investors are growing increasingly uneasy in financial markets, with concerns that the conflict between Israel and Iran could potentially escalate further."

As demand among Turks continues to increase, Abdullah Yasin Sahin, head of the Turkish State Mint, has issued a cautionary note to citizens and shop owners regarding counterfeit gold in small workshops, particularly at a time when gold production is struggling to meet demand.

Program designed to improve financial literacy among students in public and private schools

NBK executive management monitors 'Bankee' program implementation at schools

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Executive Management of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continued their school visits across Kuwait to monitor the implementation of the "Bankee" program, which was officially initiated in the current academic year through a partnership with the Ministry of Education, Kuwait Authority for Anti-Corruption "Nazaha," and Creative Confidence Company.

The bank arranged an exclusive visit to Husain Al Asousi School, featuring participation from Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK Kuwait accompanied by representatives from Ministry of Education and Nazaha and Sumayah Al-Jasem, Founder, Managing Director at Creative Confidence, as part of the event.

The purpose of the visit was to update attendees on the latest advancements in the "Bankee" program's implementation in schools, aiming to enhance financial literacy and awareness among students across public and private schools.

Al-Fulaij toured several classrooms within the school to observe firsthand how the program has been integrated into the students' daily classroom activities, and to see the manner in which awards are given for exceptional performance and behavior.

Al-Fulaij observed the comprehensive implementation of the Bankee program, including the experience with the virtual bank that enables students to manage a financial account trading in the virtual "Bankoz" currency, and how students are rewarded based on the accumulation of the program's currency in their accounts.

During the visit, there was notable student engagement with the program's features, and parents expressed their delight over the positive shifts in their children's behaviors and financial understanding. Conversations also took place with teachers regarding the program's impact on student development.

Commenting on this visit, Al-Fulaij said, "We, at NBK, take great pride in the significant accomplishments of this key initiative. It serves as a foundational element in fostering financial inclusion and enhancing financial literacy among our students during this pivotal stage of their lives. Its goal is to establish the essential knowledge required for managing their financial affairs in the future."

"It's crucial for our students to understand the significance of saving, budgeting, and prudent spending right from a young age. The sooner they start, the more profound the effect will be," Al-Fulaij emphasized.

Al-Fulaij further mentioned that NBK is a bank with a strong community orientation, acknowledging the value of financial education for the youth. The bank has initiated ef-

forts to nurture a financial culture within society, driven by the conviction that financial literacy is not only crucial but also contributes significantly to economic enrichment, fostering both growth and development.

Al-Fulaij highlighted the importance of making financial education a priority in schools, as it equips students with sound financial habits that will benefit them for a lifetime. Moreover, he noted that when the younger generation is knowledgeable about managing their finances, it will also positively impact the economy over the long term.

He also emphasized that enhancing financial literacy among children and young people is a long-term endeavor, which might involve offering financial education both within schools and beyond. He pointed out that initiatives aimed at boosting financial literacy are crucial for private sector institutions to support financial inclusion efforts and enhance measures of financial socialization.

Having achieved a remarkable success in its pilot phase, Bankee encouraged more schools and students to join it. Out of 150 applicants, 30 schools have been enrolled in the program so far, in addition to a special needs school for learning difficulties (Joan Al-Kuwait Elementary School), with a total of 15,000 students and more than 3,000 teachers.

Bankee also launched its website in Arabic and English, as well as social media pages on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, to enable all participants to benefit from the provided content, activities and events held at different schools all year round.

NBK has recently been honored with the Bronze Award from Qorus in the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) category for Bankee Program. This recognition signifies the bank's commitment to incorporating innovations that integrate sustainability and environmental, social, and governance standards into its activities.

"Bankee" stands as the pioneering program launched by NBK, designed to contribute to financial inclusion within the community. Specifically tailored for students in schools, the program seeks to enhance levels of financial literacy, ensuring sustainable improvement for the future. NBK officially inaugurated the program in October in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Nazaha.

The program's objective is to familiarize students with fundamental economic concepts and practices, including earning, spending, saving, and financial responsibilities. This is achieved through the implementation of a classroom system that mirrors the real economic environment, employing practical methods within an interactive setting.



Photo from the event

ABK announces Ahmad Chano Ajeel as winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 draw prize

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Ahmad Chano Ajeel, as the KD10,000 Alfouz weekly draw winner on Monday, 22 April, 2024, whereby the draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

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

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

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account and/or increase their balances to have more chances in winning in the upcoming monthly draw winner announcement, which will take place on Monday, 29 April, 2024. The higher the deposits, the higher the chances to win.



Alfouz weekly winner

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



A group photo of the bank employees participating in the initiative.

Bank collaborates with TrashTag Kuwait & Trolley

Gulf Bank takes part in 'Earth Day' beach cleanup initiative

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote environmental sustainability, Gulf Bank participated in a beach cleaning campaign in collaboration with TrashTag Kuwait and Trolley, coinciding with Earth Day celebrations.

TrashTag Kuwait is a popular non-governmental organization dedicated to serving the environment and the community. It originated from a global social media challenge and gained popularity in 2019. This year's Earth Day marks the fifth anniversary of the organization's five-year commitment to cleaning Kuwait's coasts and deserts, in collaboration with the community to strengthen its connection to the environment.

The global challenge seeks to highlight the environmental impact of waste by capturing images of litter in recreational spaces and documenting

cleanup efforts. Participants share "before and after" photos on social media using the challenge's hashtag to increase awareness.

Many volunteers from Gulf Bank actively took part in the beach cleaning campaign, with the goal of raising environmental awareness and emphasizing the importance of environmental preservation. This initiative aligns with Gulf Bank's strategy aimed at promoting sustainability principles within the community.

This participation reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to raising awareness about the importance of supporting environmental initiatives. Annually, the bank participates in Earth Day initiatives, which aim to shed light on environmental issues and inspire millions around the world to adopt more sustainable practices.

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.

Bank leads the way in Islamic digital banking

Warba Bank reveals winners of Al-Sunbula Grand draw on radio

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the Al-Sunbula Grand Draw for the first quarter of 2024, in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees, via Radio 360FM.

Mansour Fayed Khalifan Khamis was the lucky winner of the grand prize amounting to KD 250,000. As for the rest of the draws, each of the 10 lucky winners received KD 1,000, for a total of KD 10,000, and the winners are: Basel Ahmed Tawfeeq Adas, Zaid Jasim Al-Khaldi, Abdul-Wahab Hussein Al-Kanderi, Bader Saad Hamad Al-Azmi, Marek Woldz Remirez Weiss, Amro Atef Barham Abdul Halim, Abdullah Shaker Mahmoud Al-Zeyadi, Mohammed Rashid Khanfar Al-Otaibi, Jaber Nasser Suleiman Al-Shuali, Yaseen TaherOglu.

As for the monthly Sunbula Kids draw, 7 winners were announced, where the first winner received an amount of KD 1,000, which was Masouma Sayed Ibrahim Al-Qalaf, while the second winner received an amount of KD 500, which was Yousef Nafel Mubarak Aweesh, while the winners from third to seventh received 100 each, and they are: Sultan Musaed Sultan Shlash, Nasser Mohammed Shahatha Al-Mutairi, Abdul Rahman Fahad Daoud Murad, Yousef Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Awadhi, and Nadia Bader Obaid Al-Azmi.

As for the Sunbula account, it is the ideal choice for all those wishing to save money and achieve appropriate financial returns on their accounts at the same time, in addition to the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Regarding the Al-Sunbula campaign in 2024, Warba Bank continues to hold weekly draw, where each of the 10 winners receives KD 1,000. As for the major draws, there will be a quarterly draw for the amount of KD 250,000, at a rate of 4 draws during the year, where the first draw was held in April, the second draw will be held in July, the third draw will be held in October, and the fourth and final draw will be in January 2025.

Regarding the conditions, KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and major draws, and the client still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the ac-



Sunbula Weekly winners

count, and the chances are counted according to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to count the chances. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the client's chances to win".

Notably Warba Bank launched its latest banking solutions service, "Customer Onboarding", in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, which enables non-Warba Bank clients to apply for opening a Sunbula account in an easy digital way via the Bank's website without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new clients will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

Entrepreneurs gear up for digital competition

KIB Mubader Center unveils 'E-Cothon', Kuwait's first e-commerce competition

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: KIB Mubader Center, the subsidiary of Kuwait International Bank (KIB), announced the launch of the country's first e-commerce marathon. Taking place on May 1st, 'E-Cothon' aims to foster entrepreneurial spirit and innovation, enhancing sales skills via social media platforms and equipping entrepreneurs with the knowledge to create effective marketing strategies.

Commenting on the initiative, Mohammad Al-Huwaidi, Head of Mubader, said: "Organizing the digital commerce competition 'E-Cothon' is part of KIB Mubader Center's ongoing commitment to actively contribute to the development of a generation of talented Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and meet the needs of local business leaders. By providing the modern and comprehensive entrepreneurial environment they seek, KIB Mubader aims to help them achieve their goals across various business sectors. This support is delivered through offering the highest level of educational and training services, utilizing the latest advanced curricula and cutting-edge technology.

The marathon will kick off by providing a range of training and educational programs for the participating entrepreneurs from May 15 to May 30. These programs will cover a variety of important topics, including business models, value proposition models, business improvement strategies, marketing pathways, and using Meta's Ad Manager.



E-Cothon logo

The trainings will be followed by practical application and the launch of sales campaigns from June 1 to June 10. The marathon will conclude on June 12, with the top three winners being honored the following day. The first-place winner will receive a certificate of program completion, KD 100, and 30% of the net profits from their sales campaign. The second-place winner will also receive a certificate, KD 100, and 20% of the net profits from their campaign. The third-place winner will be awarded a certificate, KD 100, and 10% of the net profits from their sales campaign.

It is worth mentioning that KIB Mubader Center is a company established by KIB as a comprehensive business ecosystem designed to qualify Kuwaiti entrepreneurs from small and medium-sized enterprises. It works alongside them as a business incubator and accelerator, supporting every stage of their business projects through a comprehensive, multi-level training program, along with a suite of supportive entrepreneurial services.

LuLu Hypermarket celebrates its 22nd anniversary with grand sale promotion

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: LuLu Hypermarket celebrated its 22nd anniversary in Kuwait with a never-before sales promotion that offered up to 70 percent discount on items across all categories.

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retail brand in the region, celebrates its more than two decades of operations in Kuwait with a week-long shopping extravaganza across all its outlets in Kuwait, from 24-30 April.

Shoppers across the country flocked to LuLu outlets to take advantage of jaw-dropping deals on a massive selection of products. Customers were treated to amazing discounts of up to 70 percent on items across all categories. From groceries and home essentials to electronics, fashion, and everything in between.

In addition to incredible offers on clothing, toys, homeware, and



LuLu 22nd anniversary logo

everything needed to spruce up one's home, the 22nd anniversary sale promotion provided amazing and unbeatable deals in pantry staples, fresh produce, beauty products and other everyday essentials. The latest gadgets, appliances, and IT essentials were also available at steeply discounted prices, allowing IT buffs to buy all their bucket-list gadgets at never-before prices.

Additionally, the hypermarket

offered a variety of special promotions to elevate the shopping experience. While a selection of items was available at a flat 50 percent discount during the sale period, LuLu also provided 22 products daily from different categories at unimaginable discounts, creating a treasure hunt for shoppers.

Shoppers were able to find their favorite name brands at unbelievable prices, making it the perfect opportunity to snag dream items. All outlets also hosted exciting in-store activities and entertainment that helped create an enjoyable festive shopping atmosphere.

Throughout the week-long 22nd anniversary celebration, the emphasis was on thanking customers for their more than 20 years of support to the brand, and on ensuring that everyone had a wonderful time shopping at LuLu Hypermarket.

Phish takes fans on a multisensory adventure at the Sphere

LAS VEGAS, April 24, (AP) — Adele, Mariah Carey and Garth Brooks tower over the Las Vegas Strip, peering out from billboards advertising their various casino residencies. But the 20,000 fans marching toward the glowing Sphere last week were there for a band that many Strip visitors have no idea exists.

Over the past 40 years, legions of dedicated Phish fans have followed the Vermont jam band no matter where it goes. This time, it happened to be Las Vegas, for four nights at the \$2.3 billion immersive arena. No two Phish shows are the same, and while the band had played Vegas 26 times before, the Sphere offered a game-changing canvas for its signature light shows.

The fans came in sequined, glittery dresses and tie-dye alike, in button-down shirts and overalls printed with the band's red doughnut logo. Once inside, they were greeted with a LED screen the size of a football field.

Over 68 songs over the four nights, co-creative director Abigail Rosen Holmes would use that expanse to drive fans across bold visual worlds inspired by the four states of matter: solid, liquid, gas and plasma. As Phish jammed, the Sphere's screens became an art show, taking the audience through flowing streams of color and simple dots of light, around an enchanted lake and a field of psychedelic trees, and through a car wash (yes, a car wash).

"It gives me hope," said Sean Marmora, 31, who traveled from New Jersey. "It's inspiring that they're pushing boundaries and doing things that they have never done before."

Some displays were more abstract - during "Sand" and "Chalkdust Torture," specks of light danced on screen in time to the music - while others were easier to discern: "Bathtub Gin" featured computer-generated people on floats made of donuts, pineapples and pizza slices in

a wave pool. During "Maze," a narrow line of video blew up into bits across the screen. For "Leaves," hundreds of digital balloons joined the very real balloons flying up inside the Sphere.

"It was a very different Phish show, so special in its own right," said Tim Urbashich, 38, from Wisconsin. "This is a whole evolutionary experience in what's happening. They deserve visual representation of their music."

Phish's light shows are typically driven by Chris Kuroda, whom fans have nicknamed CK5 - as in, the fifth member of the band.

Spotlights

Kuroda was still heavily involved in the shows at the Sphere, albeit with a stripped-down light setup offsetting the screen. Phish frontman Trey Anastasio said Kuroda played a key role in fighting against the "tyranny of the wall" of visuals.

On Saturday night, the screen lit a digital version of the band ablaze during "Fuego," eventually subsiding into a calm blue. As the real band jumped into "Golden Age," Kuroda lit them in his signature soft purple and yellow spotlights.

Holmes says the production team learned to be looser over the course of the Vegas run, refining and adopting subtle changes to make the visuals more responsive to the music.

"This is such a new and different environment, where we started trying to make everything perfect. And then being more comfortable, taking chances and pushing things a bit further," Holmes said. "I think Chris Kuroda and I were able to reach further and mesh better as the nights went on."

As much as the Sphere shows will be remembered for the visuals, though, it's the music that ultimately makes Phish.

No song was repeated, and the band took advantage of the ability to isolate sounds across the room's 167,000 speaker drivers. Anastasio says he was proud the band could still go in without a plan. Most large visual concert experiences include a click track to know when to hit certain marks. Phish insisted on being able to improvise.

"I felt like if we didn't have that element, it wouldn't be a Phish concert," Anastasio said.

At the end of Sunday night's show, Anastasio vowed to return to the Sphere. Phish was only the second band to play it after U2 opened it with a 40-show run. Dead and Company are scheduled to play there this summer.

Meanwhile, Phish will release its 16th studio album, "Evolve," in July, when it will also launch a summer tour.

"As long as the four of us are together and walking this planet, I would like to think that Phish exists and that we can keep playing," McConnell said of the band's stamina and longevity.

So much of the band's time together is spent thinking about processes and new approaches, he said.

"So we don't exactly know where it goes and where it's going. But I have a good feeling that it's going to go on for a long time," he said. "I really hope it does."

As long as Phish keeps going, so too will its community. Both Marmora and Urbashich were among the dozens of artists selling their Phish-inspired work at the PhanArt show that pops up at the band's stops.

"We're all trying here to find something special," Urbashich said. "You have to open up your mind to the simplest things. It's so out there and abstract. If you don't give it patience you might not think it's what you're looking for."

Music

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ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024



This image released by Metro Goldwyn Mayer Pictures shows Zendaya in a scene from 'Challengers.' (AP)

Film

Zendaya, O'Connor, and Faist deliver intense performance

Tennis drama with a twist in 'Challengers'

By Lindsey Bahr

'Challengers' is a bit of a tease. That's what makes it fun.

There is plenty of skin, sweat, close-ups of muscly thighs and smoldering looks of lust and hate in this deliciously over-the-top psychodrama. But get that image of Josh O'Connor.

Zendaya and Mike Faist sitting together on the bed out of your mind. Most of this action takes place on the tennis court.

It's still a sexy tennis movie about friendship, love, competition and sport set to a synth-y score from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross - it just might not contain exactly what you think it does. But remember, Luca Guadagnino is the one who filmed *Timothée Chalamet* with that peach, perhaps more memorable than any actual sex scene from the past decade. Manage expectations, but also trust.

And like "Call Me By Your Name" did for Chalamet, "Challengers" is one of those rare original big-screen delights that firmly announces the arrival of a new generation of movie stars. Zendaya and Faist already had a bit of a leg up. She has played significant supporting roles in some of the biggest movies of the past few years, from "Spider-Man" to "Dune," and he had his big cinematic breakthrough as Riff in Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story." But it's O'Connor who really comes out on top, effectively shedding any lingering image of him as a whiny, dweeby Prince Charles in seasons three and four of "The Crown." In "Challengers," his Patrick Zweig is the cocky, flirty, slightly mean, slightly dirty and slightly broken bad boyfriend of our fictional dreams.

Written by playwright Justin Kuritzkes (who is married to "Past Lives" filmmaker Celine Song) "Challengers" is a prickly treat, about fractured relationships, egos, infidelity and ambition. Set during a qualifying match at the New Rochelle Tennis Club, outside New York City, the intricately woven story reveals itself through flashbacks that build to a crescendo in the present-day match.

O'Connor's Patrick and Faist's Art are old boarding school roommates turned tennis teammates. It's a

relationship that's at turns brotherly and competitive. Whatever it is, they are definitely too close and not remotely prepared for Zendaya's Tashi Duncan to enter the mix.

Tashi, in high school, is well on her way to becoming the next big tennis superstar. Art and Patrick watch her play, mouths agape at her technical form and physical beauty. Later, they both ask for her number, leading to a revealing night in a grungy hotel room. She promises her number to the one who wins the singles match the next day. Tashi just wants to see some good tennis, she says, but she also knows how to motivate and manipulate.

Famous

Because of the fractured timeline, we know that Tashi in the present day does not play tennis anymore. She was injured at some point and never recovered, unlike her husband, Art, who is now one of the most famous players in the world. The two of them are wildly wealthy, living in a ritzy hotel and fronting Aston Martin ad campaigns. At night, Tashi uses Augustinus Bader cream to moisturize her legs. Guadagnino, who likes to wink at and luxuriate in wealth signifiers, enlisted JW Anderson designer Jonathan Anderson to do the costumes, which will surely populate summer style inspiration boards the way his "A Bigger Splash" and "Call Me By Your Name" have in the past.

But while they are technically at the top, Art is also on a losing streak, so Tashi sends him to a low-stakes tournament where he can get his confidence back. That's where they encounter Patrick, who has not been so fortunate over the years and who has fallen out with his old friends. Of course, it's all building to Patrick and Art playing one another in the final match, a part of which is so wildly and comically drawn out that you can almost envision the "Saturday Night Live" spoof.

"Challengers" is a drama, but a funny and self-aware one. It doesn't take itself very seriously and has a lot of fun with its characters, all three of which are anti-heroes in a way. You might have a favorite, but you're probably not rooting for anyone exactly - just glued to the screen to see how it all plays out on and off the court.

"Challengers," an MGM release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "lan-

guage throughout, some sexual content and graphic nudity." Running time: 131 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Several crew members were injured and two were hospitalized when a car and truck collided during shooting of the **Eddie Murphy** film "The Pickup" from Amazon MGM Studios, the studio and a person close to the production said Tuesday.

A studio spokesperson said in a statement to The Associated Press that the scene that led to Saturday's accident in **Georgia** had been rehearsed and all safety precautions were taken.

Neither **Murphy** nor the film's other stars, including **Keke Palmer** and **Pete Davidson**, were on the set at the time.

The injuries ranged from bumps and bruises to broken bones, the person close to the production said. Two crew members were taken to the hospital, and one remained hospitalized Tuesday. All are expected to make a full recovery.

The accident happened on a location outside of Atlanta when a truck locked up and hit a car, the person said.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly. "It was a completely freak accident," the person said. "It wasn't even a complicated or dangerous stunt."

The scene was being shot by a second unit on the production, which generally shoots less-central scenes not involving the director or principal actors.

"Unfortunately, the sequence did not go as planned and several members of the crew were injured as a result. We are still in the process of gathering facts on what happened and why, but first and foremost our thoughts are with those who are recovering," a statement to the AP from the studio spokesperson said. "The well-being of the entire crew and cast is our first priority, and we will continue to insist on the highest industry standards of safety while filming. All safety precautions were reviewed prior to and monitored during the shoot."

The studio did not give details on the injuries or the roles of the crew members who were hurt. (AP)

LONDON: Two novels that tell complex and surprising stories of migration are among six finalists for the 2024 Women's Prize for Fiction.

US-French writer **Aube Rey** *Lecture's* debut novel "River East, River West" depicts west to east immigration through the story of Americans in **China**, while British author **Isabella Hammad's** "Enter Ghost" charts a Shakespearean actress's complicated return to her Palestinian homeland.

The shortlist announced Wednesday for the 30,000 pound (\$37,000) award includes two Irish writers: **Claire Kilroy**, for her story of motherhood, "Soldier,

Sailor," and **Anne Enright** for multigenerational saga "The Wren, The Wren."

Australia's **Kate Grenville**, a previous Women's Prize winner, makes the list with her eighth novel, historical adventure "Restless Dolly Maunder." US writer **V. V. Ganeshanathan** is nominated for her second novel, "Brotherless



Lecture



Judd

Night," set during **Sri Lanka's** civil war.

Founded in 1996, the prize is open to female English-language writers from any country. Past winners include **Zadie Smith**, **Tayari Jones** and **Barbara Kingsolver**, who won last year for "Demon Copperhead." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Fresh off her Oscar nomination, **Lily Gladstone** stars in a new limited series for Hulu called "Under the Bridge" with **Riley Keough**. Based on a true-crime novel by **Rebecca Godfrey**, "Under the Bridge" tells the story of the murder of Canadian teen **Reena Virk** in the late 1990s. Gladstone plays a police

officer investigating the case and Keough plays Godfrey, who immersed herself in Virk's world to detail not only what happened, but the social and cultural implications surrounding her death. "Under the Bridge" premiered Wednesday on Hulu and is already garnering Emmy buzz for both Gladstone and Keough. (AP)

People & Places

Books

'Funny Story'

Henry talks on healthy relationship with love

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): "Nothing forces you to face your demons like falling in love."

And it's almost always worth it, **Emily Henry** says during a recent interview ahead of Tuesday's release of her latest novel, "Funny Story." She would know, having churned out a new bestselling romance read every year since 2020.

"You find out so much about yourself by how you react to the complicated feelings of falling in love, and that can lead into something very toxic and exhausting. But it also can lead into something so beautiful and life changing," she says.

Henry talked with The Associated Press about her journey to becoming a novelist, why people shouldn't feel shame about reading romance and how her personal mental health journey influences her characters. She also dives into whether books are better than movies, with a few insights into the film adaptations of her books in the works.

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

AP: Before you started writing the books that became bestsellers, you were in a bit of a life rut, which anyone can relate to. What advice do you have for people who are also stuck?

Henry: You could try writing a book. That's only halfway a joke, because I really do feel like "Beach Read" was the most meta thing I'd ever done.

There's a reason that most of my books have ended with one or both characters going to therapy. For a happy ending to be sustained, for a relationship to continue growing and changing, you probably need some help.

Also getting on medicine was huge for me. I thought I was doing more or less OK until I found out what it felt like to be OK.

AP: You write a lot about the complexities and vulnerabilities of love. What's your favorite stage of a relationship?

Henry: Because I'm in a steady, stable relationship, it's really easy to romanticize those early phases. But then when I'm talking to my single friends, I'm like, "Oh yeah, it is hell." I feel like I have such affection for that phase when you don't know for sure how the other person feels. It's like a feeling you don't get from many other things in life.

AP: There were a lot of different things that used to happen in romance novels that aren't happening as much anymore, or authors are reversing them. What do you think about where we are now?

Henry: Contemporary romance has tried to move toward something that's a little bit more grounded and more realistic with a focus on the health of a relationship and the positivity of it.

It's interesting that it has been treated as a guilty pleasure for so long. There's a wide variety of romance and erotica that leaves room for people to have their fantasies and that's separate from the real world.

AP: For people who are not aware of all the ins and outs of the publishing industry, what do you think is something that people might misunderstand about it?

Henry: Try to enjoy writing before you publish, because it is really strange how much it changes once it belongs to the world.

It's sort of like you have to appreciate your single days if you're trying to wind up in a serious partnership. It can be horrible and terrible, but when it's fun, try to live that up, because that also is an experience you're someday probably not going to have again.

AP: Speaking of trying new things, three of your novels are being adapted. How involved in that process are you?

Henry: I am very close with two of the directors who've been formally announced for "People We Meet on Vacation" and "Beach Read." I feel really lucky that they want to know what the readers care about.

AP: Any casting things you can leak or share?

Henry: No, you know how it is. They're all still in early-ish phases of development. So hopefully more soon.

AP: In my opinion, books are almost always better than the adaptations. Why do you think that is and how are you feeling about giving your work to that world?

Henry: What's cool about film is the exact thing that also makes it tricky for adaptation, which is it's no longer the reader and the writer collaborating.

The books will always be the books. I have started to think about the adaptations more along the lines of a Broadway show or a "Batman" franchise. Batman is Batman, but there are a lot of different Batmans.

The movies are all going to be something very special. And I think that they'll have the heart of the books, hopefully.

AP: There's the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover," but what do you want people to take away from yours?

Henry: Primarily joy. I'm always trying to balance the joy of life and the pain of life. I want it to feel like this is the book you want to buy at the airport and read on the plane or on the beach.

AP: I think it is successful at that. Before I read "Beach Read," one of my friends was like, "Hey, trigger warning. It focuses on a character whose dad died," and my dad had just died. I appreciated the warning and also felt very seen by the nuanced take of the narrative in the book.

Henry: Every book I do is taking the hardest parts of life and not trying to justify them, but trying to balance them against the best parts of life and leave the reader with the feeling that the hard shit that you're going through is worth it for the experience of getting to love and be loved. Not necessarily — any kind of love.

You cannot love anyone without accepting that there's a real chance of grief, whether that's a breakup or a loss. They go hand in hand.



Henry



Jon Bon Jovi poses for a portrait in New York on Sept. 23, 2020 to promote his new album '2020'. Hulu is streaming a four-part docuseries 'Thank You, Good Night: The Bon Jovi Story,' premiering April 26. (AP)



Famke Janssen attends the premiere of 'Boy Kills World' at the SVA Theatre on Tuesday, April 23, in New York. (AP)



Pelosi



Megan

Variety

LOS ANGELES: A photographer who worked for **Megan Thee Stallion** said in a lawsuit filed Tuesday that he was forced to watch her have sex, was unfairly fired soon after and was abused as her employee.

In the suit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, **Emilio Garcia** said that after a night out in 2022 in **Ibiza, Spain**, he was in an SUV with the hip-hop star when she began having sex with another woman right next to him. He was unable to get out of the moving car, and would have been in the middle of nowhere in a foreign country even if he was able. Garcia was "embarrassed, mortified and offended throughout the whole ordeal," according to the lawsuit.

Alex Spiro, Megan's lawyer, said she would fight the lawsuit in court. "This is an employment claim for money - with no sexual harassment claim filed and with salacious accusations to attempt to embarrass her," Spiro said.

The next day Megan told Garcia never to discuss what he saw and berated and fat-shamed him, the lawsuit said. The complaint also said Garcia, who had already considered quitting because he was overworked and underpaid in a hostile work environment aggravated by Megan's possessiveness and abusiveness, was misclassified as an independent contractor but treated as an exclusive employee.

Garcia raised those issues in the conversation with Megan, and was fired the following day after four years of working for her, the suit said. He has since filed a job discrimination complaint with the California Civil Rights Department.

The lawsuit, first reported by NBC News, names as defendants Megan, whose legal name is **Megan Pete**; her companies Megan Thee Stallion Entertainment and Hot Girl Touring; and her label, Roc Nation. A defense response has yet to be filed. There was no immediate response to an email seeking comment from a representative of Roc Nation. (AP)

NEW YORK: Former House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** has completed a book about her years in public life, from legislation she helped enact to such traumatizing moments as the Jan. 6 siege of the US Capitol and the assault at her **San Francisco** home that left her husband with a fractured skull.

Simon & Schuster announced Thursday that Pelosi's "The Art of Power" will be released Aug. 6.

"People always ask me how I did what I did in the House," Pelosi, the first woman

Music

4 decades in music and major vocal surgery

Bon Jovi rocks on after surgery

PASADENA, Calif., April 24, (AP): When Jon Bon Jovi agreed to let director Gotham Chopra follow him with a documentary camera to delve into the history of his band, Bon Jovi, he didn't anticipate it would catch him at a major low point in his career.

The band was launching a tour, and despite doing all he could do to be vocally ready, the "Livin' on a Prayer" singer struggled through songs and couldn't hit the notes the way he used to.

Critics noticed and wrote about it. A review from Pioneer Press in St. Paul, Minnesota, said: "It felt like he had forgotten how to sing."

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Bon Jovi said the reaction at the time was "heartbreaking." After exhausting holistic options, he saw a doctor who said one of his vocal cords was atrophying.

"This was unique. It wasn't a nodule. The strong (vocal cord) was pushing the weak one around, and suddenly, my inabilities were just exacerbated," said Bon Jovi. He underwent major surgery and is still recovering.

"Every day is sort of like doing curls with weights and just getting them both to be the same size and to function together."

This year has been a turning point. In February, he performed for an audience for the first time since his surgery at the MusiCares Person of the Year benefit gala where he was also named Person of the Year. The band's next album, "Forever" hits stores June 7, and its first single "Legendary" is out now. The four-part, "Thank You, Goodnight: The Bon Jovi Story," debuts Friday on Hulu.

In a Q&A, Bon Jovi talks about his voice, his famous hair, the music industry and his work ethic.

Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: The work you put in behind-the-scenes is like a quarterback in between football games. Are you still

rehearsing at that intensity, and how are you now?

Bon Jovi: I'm doing great. The record was easy to do. The process has been steady. Would I like it to be a light switch? Yeah. I said to the doctor, 'I want to flip the switch and be done with this.' It's just not how it works. Like an athlete coming back from an ACL tear or whatever, it just takes time. The therapy is still intensive and yet I'm confident that it gets progressively better.

AP: We learn in the docuseries that your father was a barber. You've always been known for having good hair, especially in the 1980's. Does that come from your dad?

Bon Jovi: Not in as much where he sat down and said, 'I've got this idea.' Really, I was a byproduct of what was the 80s. Those were my baby pictures. I love laughing at them. Now, I can jokingly at least say, 'After 40 years of a career, I still have all my hair.' That is a good thing. Genetics works in my favor.

AP: Do you ever think about acting again?

Bon Jovi: I do, on occasion. My day job then comes back to get in the way. In truth, I've got a big record coming out, and I'm hoping to go out on the road, so I don't have time for it. And I respect the craft far too much to think I'm going to walk on a set and hit my marks and call that acting.

AP: Your work ethic stands out in "Thank You, Goodnight." We see in the early days you would sleep at the music studio. Where does that come from?

Bon Jovi: If you're not going to be great, the guy that's coming in tomorrow night is going to be better. This isn't a career that you should take lightly. There's a million other young guys that are waiting to take your spot. And there are no guarantees in this business...You have to win hearts in order to win people's hard-earned dollar. If you're asking them to stay with you for four decades, that's a task. You

better be one of the greats or else good luck.

AP: Richie Sambora is interviewed in the series. The fans love seeing him. Do you think you will ever perform together again?

Bon Jovi: We never had a big falling out. He quit 10 years ago. It's not that we're not in contact or anything like that, but he was choosing to, as a single dad, raise his child. The door is always open if he wants to come up and sing a song. I mean, there's many of them that we co-wrote together. That's a great part of both of our lives. There's no animosity here.

AP: A lot of musicians are selling their music catalog. Would you?

Bon Jovi: For some, it makes sense because they need to. For some, it makes sense because they want to. I just find (Bon Jovi's music) to be my baby, and I have no desire at this juncture in my life to ever even consider it.

AP: You're one of New Jersey's favorite sons like Bruce Springsteen. It's a point of pride for New Jersey residents that you're from there, but you moved to Florida?

Bon Jovi: Part-time! My license is still New Jersey. I still vote in New Jersey.

AP: The music industry is such a singles market now. Did you ever consider just putting out some new songs and not an entire album?

Bon Jovi: See, I'm the opposite. I can only put out an album. I do all I know how to do. I have to tell the complete story. It has to be the beginning, a middle and an end because that's who and what we are.

AP: How do you describe the new album?

Bon Jovi: What comes through is joy. My goal with this record was to capture joy which for these last few years has been difficult, whether it's the dark cloud of COVID that the world experienced or my own personal journey. With this record, I think we captured joy.

to become speaker, said in a statement. "In 'The Art of Power,' I reveal how - and more importantly, why."

Pelosi, 84, was first elected to the House in 1987, rose to minority leader in 2003 and to speaker four years later, when the Democrats became the majority party. She served as speaker from 2007-2011, and again from 2019-2023, and was widely credited with

helping to mobilize support for and pass such landmark bills as the Affordable Care Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

She stepped away from any leadership positions after Republicans retook the majority in the 2022 elections, but she continues to represent California's 11th district.

According to Simon & Schuster, Pelosi

also will offer a "personal account" of Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of President **Donald Trump's** supporters rampaged through the Capitol as Congress voted to certify **Joe Biden's** victory over Trump. She also recounts the night in 2022 when an intruder broke into the Pelosi home and assaulted her husband, **Paul Pelosi**, with a hammer. (AP)

LAS VEGAS: The defense attorney representing a former Los Angeles-area gang leader accused of killing hip-hop music icon **Tupac Shakur** in 1996 in Las Vegas said Tuesday his client's accounts of the killing are fiction and prosecutors lack key evidence to obtain a murder conviction.

"He himself is giving different stories," attorney **Carl Arnold** told reporters outside a courtroom following a brief status check with his client, **Duane "Keffe D" Davis**, in front of a Nevada judge. His trial is scheduled for Nov. 4.

"We haven't seen more than just his word," Arnold said of Davis' police and media interviews since 2008 in which prosecutors say he incriminated himself in Shakur's killing - including Davis' 2019 tell-all memoir of life leading a street gang in **Compton, California**.

Prosecutor **Binu Palal** did not immediately comment outside court about Arnold's statements. **Clark County** District Attorney **Steve Wolfson** has said evidence against Davis is strong and it will be up to a jury to decide the credibility of Davis' accounts. (AP)



Keyboardist Page McConnell, (left), and Trey Anastasio, guitarist and singer-songwriter of the band Phish, rehearse before the group's four-night engagement at the Sphere on Tuesday, April 16, in Las Vegas. (AP) — Details Page 11

HEALTH/SCIENCE

Stress, anxiety blamed for sleep deprivation

Experts share 5 tips for better sleep

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): Spending too many nights trying to fall asleep - or worrying there aren't enough ZZZs in your day? You're not alone.

Nearly one-third of American adults say they don't get the recommended seven to nine hours a night. Some of the major causes: Stress, anxiety and a culture that experts say is about productivity, not rest.

"You need to understand what your body needs and try your hardest to prioritize that and not just see sleep as kind of what's left over of the day," said Molly Atwood, an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Don't fall for online fads or unproven methods to fall asleep and stay asleep. Instead, try these simple tricks recommended by sleep experts.

Create a buffer zone:

Work-related stress is inevitable, and it can be hard to disconnect. Try creating a "buffer zone" between the end of your work day and your bedtime.

Experts suggest leaving career work and daily responsibilities alone about an hour before bed. Don't check email, pay bills, do chores or scroll endlessly through social media. Instead, create a routine where you relax with a book, indulge in a hobby or spend time with loved ones.

"It goes back to the core value of mindfulness," said Dr. Annise Wilson, an assistant professor of neurology and medicine at Baylor University. "Anything that helps to center you and just helps you focus and release a lot of that tension from the day will then help promote sleep."

Watch what you eat:

Eating a large meal right before bedtime can disrupt your sleep, so try to grub in the early evening hours.

"I would say that eating a large meal is impactful simply because it's like giving your body a really large job to do right before sleep at a time when things are supposed to be shutting down," Atwood said.

But don't go to bed super-hungry, either. Try snacks with protein or healthy fats, like cheese, almonds or peanut butter on whole grain bread.

Avoid caffeine and alcohol:

Having a nightcap or post-dinner espresso might feel relaxing, but it could lead to a long night.

While alcohol can help you fall asleep initially, it can disrupt your sleep cycle, reducing the quality of sleep and increasing the chances you'll wake up more often in the middle of the night.

Caffeine is a stimulant that blocks adenosine, a chemical that contributes to the feeling of sleepiness - and it can take your body up to 10 hours to clear caffeine.

For these reasons, experts suggest finishing up your caffeinated or boozy beverages several hours before bed.

Limit technology:

Light from phones and computer screens can disrupt the circadian rhythm - or the internal clock that naturally wakes us up - by suppressing melatonin, which assists with sleep.

But you'll need self-discipline to stop streaming or scrolling, said Dr. Dianne Augelli, an assistant professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.

"TikTok doesn't want you to stop," Augelli said. "Only you can stop you, so you have to learn to put that stuff away."

Talk to your doctor:

If nothing's working and you've struggled to get a good night's sleep for more than a month, experts say it's time to go to a doctor. This is especially true if your sleepless nights are interfering with your work performance or your mood.

"It doesn't matter how much relaxation you do. At a certain point, it's not going to be effective if there's a significant amount of stress," Atwood said. "... It might involve some problem-solving to figure that out."

No risk to consumers

Bird flu virus found in pasteurized milk: FDA

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): The US Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday that samples of pasteurized milk had tested positive for remnants of the bird flu virus that has infected dairy cows.

The agency stressed that the material is inactivated and that the findings "do not represent actual virus that may be a risk to consumers." Officials added that they're continuing to study the issue.

"To date, we have seen nothing that would change our assessment that the commercial milk supply is safe," the FDA said in a statement.

The announcement comes nearly a month after an avian influenza virus that has sickened millions of wild and commercial birds in recent years was detected in dairy cows in at least eight states. The Agriculture Department says 33 herds have been affected to date.

FDA officials didn't indicate how many samples they tested or where they were obtained. The agency has been evaluating milk during processing and from grocery stores, officials said. Results of additional tests are expected in "the next few days to weeks."

The PCR lab test the FDA used would have detected viral genetic material even after live virus was killed by pasteurization, or heat treatment, said Lee-Ann Jaykus, an emeritus food microbiologist and virologist at North Carolina State University.

"There is no evidence to date that this is infectious virus and the FDA is following up on that," Jaykus said.

Destroyed

Officials with the FDA and the USDA had previously said milk from affected cattle did not enter the commercial supply. Milk from sick animals is supposed to be diverted and destroyed. Federal regulations require milk that enters interstate commerce to be pasteurized.

Because the detection of the bird flu virus known as Type A H5N1 in dairy cattle is new and the situation is evolving, no studies on the effects of pasteurization on the virus have been completed, FDA officials said. But past research shows that pasteurization is "very likely" to inactivate heat-sensitive viruses like H5N1, the agency added.

Matt Herrick, a spokesman for the International Dairy Foods Association, said that time and temperature regulations for pasteurization ensure that the commercial U.S. milk supply is safe. Remnants of the virus "have zero impact on human health," he wrote in an email.

Scientists confirmed the H5N1 virus in dairy cows in March after weeks of reports that cows in Texas were suffering from a mysterious malady. The cows were lethargic and saw a dramatic reduction in milk production. Although the H5N1 virus is lethal to commercial poultry, most infected cattle seem to recover within two weeks, experts said.

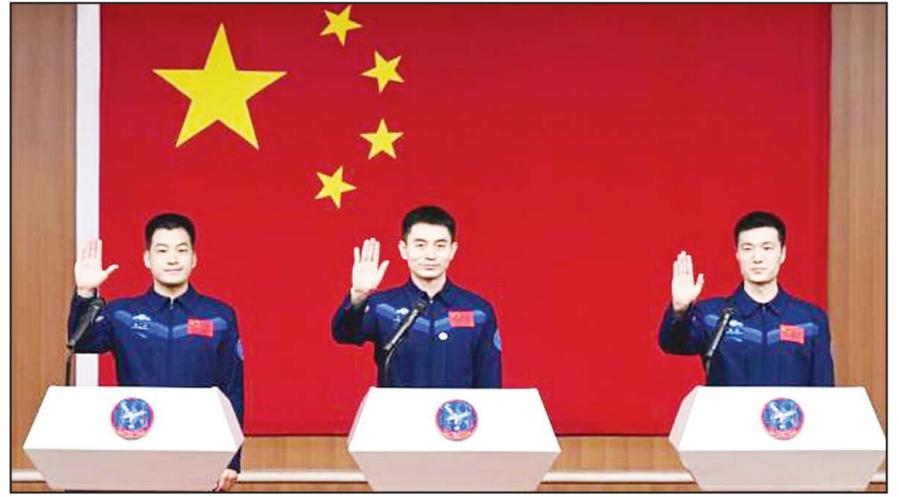
To date, two people in US have been infected with bird flu. A Texas dairy worker who was in close contact with an infected cow recently developed a mild eye infection and has recovered. In 2022, a prison inmate in a work program caught it while killing infected birds at a Colorado poultry farm. His only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

US warns doctors on fake Botox jabs

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): US health officials issued a warning Tuesday about counterfeit Botox injections that have sickened 22 people. Half of the individuals have ended up in the hospital, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency issued an alert to doctors on Tuesday.

The cases started in early November and have been reported in 11 states. The CDC said the shots were administered by unlicensed or untrained individuals or in settings like homes or spas. Most of the people said they got injections of botulinum toxin for cosmetic reasons.

Six people were treated for suspected botulism, health officials said. When it gets into the bloodstream, botulinum toxin can cause botulism.



Ye Guangfu (center), Li Cong (right) and Li Guangsu, the three Chinese astronauts for the upcoming Shenzhou-18 spaceflight mission, meet the press at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, April 24, 2024. (Xinhua)

Spaceship set for automated docking

China announces Shenzhou-18 crew and goals for space station mission

Discover the year's top tasks

China unveils latest sci-tech 'challenges' in astronautics

JIUQUAN, April 24, (Xinhua): Chinese astronauts Ye Guangfu, Li Cong and Li Guangsu will carry out the Shenzhou-18 crewed spaceflight mission, and Ye will be the commander, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced at a press conference on Wednesday.

The Shenzhou-18 crewed spaceship will be launched at 8:59 p.m. Thursday (Beijing Time) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, said Lin Xiqiang, deputy director of the CMSA.

After entering orbit, the Shenzhou-18 spaceship will perform a fast automated rendezvous and docking with the radial port of the space station core module Tianhe, which will take about 6.5 hours, forming a combination of three modules and three spacecraft, Lin said.

This will be the second space flight mission for Ye Guangfu who was a crew member of the Shenzhou-13 mission from October 2021 to April 2022. Li Cong and Li Guangsu, among the third batch of Chinese astronauts, are both newcomers to space.

Generation

All the three Shenzhou-18 astronauts are the post-1980s generation.

"My two crew members and I, as well as the entire space mission team, are fully prepared and confident (in our ability) to complete this space flight mission," said Ye when meeting the press on Wednesday.

The crew will stay in orbit for about six months, and they will witness the arrival of the Tianzhou-8 cargo craft and Shenzhou-19 crewed spaceship during their stay, Lin said.

The crew will utilize the scientific experiment cabinets and extravehicular payloads to carry out more than 90 experiments in the fields of basic physics in microgravity, space material science, space life science, space medicine and space technology, Lin said.

The country's first in-orbit aquatic ecological research project will also be implemented during the mission. Using zebrafish and goldfish algae to establish a self-cycling aquatic ecosystem in orbit, the project aims to make to a breakthrough in the cultivation of vertebrates in space, Lin noted.

The world's first in-orbit stem cell study on the plant's stem tips will be made to explore plant evolutionary adaptation to gravity and provide theoretical support for space cropping, said Lin.

The Shenzhou-18 astronauts will carry out two to three extravehicular activities (EVAs), implement six cargo

outbound deliveries via the station's cargo airlock module. During the EVAs, the astronauts will install space debris protection reinforcements for extravehicular piping, cables and critical equipment, and carry out extravehicular inspections, as

appropriate, to further ensure the safety of the space station, Lin said.

The Shenzhou-18 crew are scheduled to return to the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in late October this year.

Technologies concerning space computing center construction and operation, intelligent and flexible landing for detection and development of small celestial body, industrial application of space remote sensing large models, and rapid evaluation and verification for reusable rocket, are also mentioned.

Wang Wei, director of the Research and Development Department under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, announced the list.

The list will promote the research of new and disruptive technologies in the aerospace field, strengthen the collaborative innovation mechanism, create a chain of sci-tech innovation, and promote high-level innovation and development in the aerospace field, he added.

SLIM responds

Japan's moon lander survives 3rd freezing lunar night, keeps going

TOKYO, April 24, (AP): Japan's first moon lander has survived a third freezing lunar night, Japan's space agency said Wednesday after receiving an image from the device three months after it landed on the moon.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the lunar probe responded to a signal from the earth Tuesday night, confirming it has survived another weeklong lunar night.

Temperatures can fall to minus 170 degrees Celsius (minus 274 degrees

Fahrenheit) during a lunar night, and rise to around 100 Celsius (212 Fahrenheit) during a lunar day.

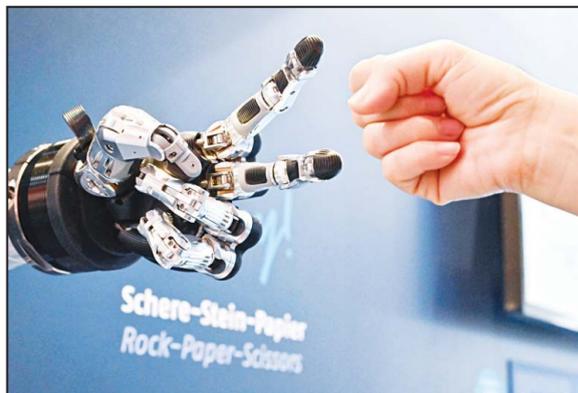
The probe, Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, reached the lunar surface on Jan. 20, making Japan the fifth country to successfully place a probe on the moon. SLIM on Jan. 20 landed the wrong way up with its solar panels initially unable to see the sun, and had to be turned off within hours, but powered on when the sun rose eight days later.

outbound deliveries via the station's cargo airlock module.

During the EVAs, the astronauts will install space debris protection reinforcements for extravehicular piping, cables and critical equipment, and carry out extravehicular inspections, as

appropriate, to further ensure the safety of the space station, Lin said.

The Shenzhou-18 crew are scheduled to return to the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in late October this year.



A visitor plays rock paper scissors game with an intelligent robot at Hannover Messe in Hannover, Germany, April 23. Hannover Messe 2024, Germany's leading industrial trade fair, kicked off on Monday with a clear emphasis on carbon-neutral production and hydrogen fuel cells. (Xinhua)

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Eight-time overall World Cup champ abandons Austria

Hirscher coming out of retirement, plans to ski for the Netherlands

VIENNA, April 24, (AP) — Eight-time overall World Cup champion Marcel Hirscher is planning to return to ski racing next season after five years in retirement. And he's going to compete for the Netherlands - his mother's country - instead of his native Austria.

The Austrian winter sports federation announced Wednesday that it had released the 35-year-old Hirscher and endorsed his nation change.

SKIING

"We have of course tried very hard to offer Marcel the best possible and individual conditions in the event of a return to Alpine racing and were able to explain these to him in a personal exchange," the federation, known as ÖSV, said. "Of course, we very much regret his decision to request a change of nation to the Dutch Ski Association but in the end we supported it."

Hirscher was born and raised in

Austria to an Austrian father and a Dutch mother, Sylvia. His father, Ferdinand, coached him throughout his career.

Patrick Riml, the ski racing director at Red Bull, Hirscher's sponsor, said that Hirscher plans to enter lower-level FIS races in New Zealand in August to get the necessary points to return to the World Cup circuit and that his main aim is to compete at next season's world championships in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria.

"He's been training the whole season. He's been on snow pretty much every day of the winter testing his equipment," Riml said, adding that Hirscher plans to compete in both slalom and giant slalom.

Hirscher retired in 2019 following his record eighth straight overall World Cup title.

So can he still compete at the highest level?

"He was amazing when he was racing, he was the best one out there," Riml told The Associated Press. "Marcel is Marcel."

Hirscher's return follows that of another Red Bull athlete, Lucas Braathen, who is switching from Norway to Brazil - his mother's home nation.

Skiers must comply with International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) rules to change national eligibility - though the process is made easier if the team they are leaving agrees to the move.

Riml said there was no shared planning or communication between Hirscher and Braathen, and noted that Hirscher has not formally joined the Dutch association yet. "My understanding is that the last couple of years, he was always thinking about it," Riml said. "Then he decided on very, very short notice that he really wants to do this. And then we basically got to work trying to get all the documentations in place and everything will be submitted today to the FIS council for approval, which is just a formality."

Might Hirscher extend his comeback to the Milan-Cortina

Olympics in 2026? Hirscher won two golds at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games and a bronze at the 2014 Sochi Games.

"It's hard to predict anything right now," Riml said. "We just have to see how things are going. It's a step by step process. ... The goal right now is to get back on track, train hard and get some first races and then see where he's at. ... Right now the goal is this season. But then then you never know, right?"

Riml stepped down as the U.S. Ski Team's Alpine director a few months ago but remains a consultant for the Americans.

"This was not in the plan when it came up, but it's very exciting for the sport in general," Riml said of having Hirscher back along with Braathen.

So which skiers will change nations next?

"You never know what's coming up," Riml said. "I'm pretty sure that those two guys are inspirations for a lot of athletes. So we'll see."



In this file photo, Austria's Marcel Hirscher speeds down the course during an alpine ski, men's World Cup slalom in Wengen, Switzerland, Sunday, Jan. 14, 2018. (AP)

Stoinis powers Lucknow to 6-wicket win over Chennai



Lucknow Super Giants' Marcus Stoinis plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants in Chennai, India, Tuesday, April 23, 2024. (AP)

Visitors finish with 213-4 with three balls to spare

CHENNAI, India, April 24, (AP) — Marcus Stoinis' century canceled out Ruturaj Gaikwad's hundred as Lucknow Super Giants beat Chennai Super Kings by six wickets in the Indian Premier League.

Stoinis scored 124 not out off 63 balls, including 13 fours and six sixes, as Lucknow put dewy conditions to good use to successfully chase down the highest IPL total at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

Rituraj Gaikwad was 108 not out as the hosts finished with 210-4 in 20 overs. Lucknow finished with 213-4 with three balls to spare.

Stoinis' maiden hundred spearheaded the chase for the Super Giants after their openers fell cheaply - Quinton de Kock was out bowled for a three-ball duck, while Lokesh Rahul scored 16 runs.

CRICKET

Stoinis then countered with 50 off 26 balls, hitting six fours and two sixes. Impact player Devdutt Padikkal was a spectator at the other end, contributing only 13 runs in a 55-run partnership for the third wicket.

The latter was out in the 11th over, and Nicholas Pooran walked out to smash 34 off 15 balls. He put on 70 off 34 balls with Stoinis and their partnership changed the game for Lucknow.

Pooran fell after the strategic timeout, but Stoinis stayed on to the

Paris will become no-fly zone to safeguard opening ceremony

PARIS, April 24, (AP) — Skies over the Paris region will be closed for six hours as part of the massive security operation for the July 26 opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the Paris airports operator said Wednesday.

Augustin de Romanet, chairman of Aéroports de Paris, said airlines are being warned in advance about the closure and told they will have to fly around the restricted airspace.

"For six hours, there won't be any aircraft over the Paris region," he said on France Info radio.

The no-fly zone will extend for a radius of 150 kilometers (93 miles) around Paris, the civil aviation authority and Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin have said.

The unprecedented waterborne ceremony on the

River Seine running through the French capital is the stiffest single security challenge for Paris Games organizers, with crowds of more than 320,000 people expected to line the waterway.

At least one French military AWACS surveillance aircraft will police the skies during the Olympics, using its powerful radar to watch for any potential airborne threats, the French AWACS squadron's commander previously told The Associated Press. Other military aircraft can be scrambled to intercept any non-authorized flights that enter restricted Olympic airspace.

Separately, de Romanet said there's still a "very, very high" probability that small electric-powered airborne taxis will be trialled with passengers over Paris during the July 26-Aug. 11 Games, which he said would be a world first.

end to finish the job along with Deepak Hooda (17 not out).

In doing so, Stoinis brought up his

maiden IPL century off 56 balls, finishing with the highest individual score in an IPL run-chase.



Chennai Super Kings' Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad celebrates scoring a century as Shivam Dube watches during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants in Chennai, India, Tuesday, April 23, 2024. (AP)

Earlier, Gaikwad had powered his way through a second IPL century off 56 balls. He hit 12 fours and three sixes in his 60-ball knock, anchoring the Chennai innings after Ajinkya Rahane (1) and Daryl Mitchell (11) fell cheaply.

Ravindra Jadeja was promoted up again, but he was caught behind for 16 runs.

Gaikwad was then aided by in-form Shivam Dube, who scored 66 off 27 balls.

Dube hit seven sixes as he put on 104 runs off 47 balls with Gaikwad for the fourth wicket, taking Chennai past the 200-mark.

It was in vain though, as the five-time champions lost a second game to Lucknow this season. Chennai is now down to fifth with eight points from eight games.

Lucknow jumped over Chennai into fourth, with 10 points from five wins in eight games.

Unsure about playing French Open

Nadal says he is not 100% fit ahead of Madrid debut

MADRID, April 24, (AP) — Rafael Nadal will play in the Madrid Open despite not being fully fit and didn't seem too optimistic about his chances of being ready for the French Open later this month.

Nadal said Wednesday he would not play in Paris if he arrives there feeling the same way that he is feeling ahead of his debut in Madrid this week.

"The sensations haven't been perfect this week. If it wasn't Madrid, maybe I

TENNIS

wouldn't play. But there are a lot of emotions involved," Nadal said. "I don't know what's going to happen in the following three weeks. I'll keep fighting and doing the things that I think I need to do to play in Paris. And if it's possible, then it's possible. If not, then not. I'm not going to play in Paris the way I'm feeling today. It is Paris, I wouldn't be playing."

The 37-year-old Nadal has said this is likely his farewell year on tour, and is hoping to be competitive one last time at Roland Garros, where he is a 14-time champion.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner is a record five-time champion in Madrid, with his last title in the Spanish capital coming in 2017. He is scheduled to debut on Thursday against 16-year-old American Darwin Blanch.

"Hopefully I can play without many limitations," Nadal said. "Then we'll see what happens. If I play without limitations, even if I lose, then it will be positive."

Nadal, who had hip surgery last summer, lost to Alex de Minaur in the second round in Barcelona in what was his first tournament in more than three months.

"The goal is to be on court. Enjoy as long as possible," he said. "I mean, that's the thing. Try to finish the tournament alive



In this file photo, Spain's Rafael Nadal attends a training session ahead of the Laver Cup tennis tournament in London, England, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022. (AP)

in terms of body issues, and enjoy the fact that I will be able to compete one more time in the professional tour and here at home in Madrid, a place that give me everything, no, in terms of support."

He said he is giving himself "a chance" and hopes to "find better feelings" in his body going forward.

"I don't lose hope. I just accept the situation that I have today," he said. "I mean, I am not playing bad. It's about more body limitations."

He said the "body feelings are not enough good to feel myself playing with free enough in terms of body issues. That's not allowed me to compete the way that I would like to compete."

Carlos Alcaraz is being cautious with his expectations at the Madrid Open and would be happy to play "three or four matches" in his return from injury.

Sixers' Maxey tops Bulls' White, wins the NBA's Most Improved Player award

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP) — Tyrese Maxey was sixth in the Most Improved Player voting two years ago, a tribute to the jump he made between his first and second seasons in the NBA.

Voters thought the jump he made from his third year to his fourth was even more impressive.

Philadelphia's All-Star guard on Tuesday night was named the league's most improved this season. Maxey's scoring rose for the third consecutive year, and he finished the regular season averaging 25.9 points, 6.2 assists, 3.7 rebounds and 1.0 steals per game - all career bests.

BASKETBALL

It's not uncommon for players to see their numbers soar when given a new role, but that wasn't the case with Maxey. Consider: two years ago, he averaged 17.5 points, 4.3 assists, 3.2 rebounds and 0.7 steals in 35.3 minutes per game. This year, he topped all those numbers and averaged only 2.2 more minutes per contest.

"It feels great," Maxey said on the TNT broadcast where the award was announced. "Somebody like myself, who prides myself on putting in a lot of work and outworking people and finding ways to get 1% better every single time I step in the gym, it feels good for that to come to light, honestly."

Maxey edged Chicago's Coby White in the voting. Houston's Alperen Sengun was third. White averaged 19.1 points, 4.5 rebounds and 5.1 assists per game - all career highs. Sengun averaged 21.1 points, 9.3 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 1.2 steals in 32.5 minutes per game - also all career highs.

The awards were selected by a panel of reporters and broadcasters who cover the league. Their ballots were due last week before the start of the play-in tournament. NBA awards take only the regular season into consideration.

Utah's Lauri Markkanen won the MIP award last season. The other finalists from a year ago - Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and New York's Jalen Brunson - were MVP candidates this season.

The MIP award was the first of seven individual trophies that will be handed out in the coming weeks, along with All-NBA, All-Rookie and All-Defensive teams.

The Sixth Man gets announced Wednesday (Sacramento's Malik Monk, Milwaukee's Bobby Portis or Minnesota's Naz Reid); Clutch Player on Thursday (Golden State's Stephen Curry, Chicago's DeMar DeRozan or Gilgeous-Alexander); and Coach of the Year on Sunday (Oklahoma City's Mark Daigneault, Minnesota's Chris Finch or Orlando's Jamahl Mosley).

All those announcements will be made on TNT's pregame shows that night.

Change Name

I, HATIM S/O ASHIM ABBAS ALI HOLDER OF INDIAN PASSPORT NO U0613172 ISSUED AT KUWAIT ON 01-06-2020 RESIDENT OF 158, NEAR OLD HOSPITAL, DUNGARPUR RAJASTHAN INDIA HAS CHANGED MY NAME FROM HATIM TO HATIM KHANDWALA IN ALL MY DEALINGS AND DOCUMENTS. I WILL BE KNOWN BY NAME OF HATIM (GIVEN NAME) AND KHANDWALA (SURNAME)

Change Name

I, SAKINA D/O ASHIM ABBAS ALI HOLDER OF INDIAN PASSPORT NO U0613183 ISSUED AT KUWAIT ON 01-06-2020 RESIDENT OF 158, NEAR OLD HOSPITAL, DUNGARPUR RAJASTHAN INDIA HAS CHANGED MY NAME FROM SAKINA TO SAKINA KHANDWALA IN ALL MY DEALINGS AND DOCUMENTS. I WILL BE KNOWN BY NAME OF SAKINA (GIVEN NAME) AND KHANDWALA (SURNAME)

German police subdue 'hooligans' in training exercise for Euro 2024

STÜTZERBACH, Germany, April 24, (AP) — An idyllic springtime morning in the sleepy village of Stützerbach was disturbed Tuesday with hundreds of German police taking on "soccer hooligans" in preparation for the European Championship.

Birds were chirping and golden sunshine was starting to warm a new day when a train of trouble arrived to shatter the peaceful scene at the village train station.

Some 200 trainee police officers were on board to play the role of violent soccer fans.

They were met by local state police, who quickly called hundreds of federal police to assist as the situation was simulated toward getting out of hand.

The train's walls shook as the "hooligans" rampaged inside, singing, chanting and cheering. They burst out of the train when the federal police arrived, setting off loud pyrotechnics that sent clouds of red and white smoke up to the clear blue sky.

Germany hosts the European Championship from June 14 to July 14, when security

will be a priority with hundreds of thousands of fans expected for the 24-country soccer tournament.

"As police we have to be prepared because there's the potential risk of hooligans or violent people. Today we use the chance to train for those circumstances, how to stop them, how to communicate with them, and also how to force them if they've done any trouble," Thuringia police spokesman Karsten Täschner told The Associated Press. "The main goal of today's practice is

to see how the federal and the state police are cooperating together."

Altogether around 600 police were involved in Tuesday's training, including about 100 off-site officers and the 200 police trainees.

The police forbade any filming or taking photos from inside a sealed-off training area where officers processed the supposed troublemakers. They simulated identifying individuals, recording them, registering them, and issuing stadium and other location bans.



Players and officials pose for a group photo after the closing ceremony.

Curtains drawn on the Kuwait U-16 Tennis Championship

The National Tennis Championship for under 16 years, organized by the Kuwait Tennis Federation, reached its conclusion on the courts of Khaitan Sports Club. The final match and coronation ceremony were graced by the presence of Hakim Fawaz Al-Takhakh, the Secretary General of Khaitan Sports Club, alongside Abdul-Rida Jassem Al-Gharib, Vice President of the Kuwait

Tennis Federation.

In the individual competitions, Omar Hisham Mahjoub from Khaitan clinched the top spot, followed by Muhammad Ali Qali from Kuwait Club in second place. Tariq Masoud Hasban from Yarmouk and Khaled Falah Al-Mutairi from Khaitan secured third place jointly.

Moving to the doubles competitions, the duo from

Yarmouk Sports Club, comprising Abdul Rahman Abdul-Latif Al Abdullah and Tariq Hasban Masoud, seized the first-place position. Following closely behind, the duo from Khaitan Sports Club, Omar Hisham Mahjoub and Khaled Falah Al Mutairi, claimed second place. The third-place spot was shared by the Yarmouk Sports Club duo of Fares Nasser Al-Kazemi and Muhammad

Mutlaq Fanesan, as well as the Kuwait Sports Club duo of Musaed Saqr Maddoh and Muhammad Ali Qali.

For the overall club standings, Khaitan Sports Club emerged victorious with 322 points, securing the first-place position. Yarmouk Sports Club followed closely with 249 points, claiming second place, while Kuwait Sports Club secured third place with 174 points.

Kuwait Club Congolese star Arsène Zola embraces Islam

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Kuwait Club's Congolese star formerly known as Arsène Zola, embraced Islam, adopting the name Malik, at the Zaid Muhammad Al-Mailem Mosque. The ceremony witnessed the presence of the club's honorary president, Marzouq Al-Ghanem, alongside the technical and administrative staff and fellow players.

At 28 years old, Malik made his mark in Kuwait following his move during the winter transfer window last January, captivating audiences with his stellar performances. The Kuwait Club officially announced Malik's conversion to Islam through their social media channels, sharing images of him with his teammates. Imam Malik, at the Zaid Al-Mailem Mosque in Kuwait, administered the sacred testimonies, evoking great joy among the Kuwaiti Club players and their Tunisian

coach, Nabil Maaloul.

Marzouq Al-Ghanem, the honorary president of the Kuwait Club, hailed Malik's conversion as his greatest achievement, expressing profound happiness and commending the club's environment for fostering the spiritual growth of multiple foreign players.

Reflecting on the significance of Malik's decision, Al-Ghanem remarked, "It is a moment of true joy for me, transcending the worldly affairs. The embrace of Islam by an individual signifies a momentous and pivotal event."

Al-Ghanem concluded with heartfelt praise, stating, "Malik's choice to embrace Islam resonates far beyond mere sporting achievements. It is a testament to the nurturing environment fostered by President Khaled Al-Ghanem, the club's administrative and technical staff, and fellow players. Indeed, his conversion to Islam stands as a milestone eclipsing a thousand championships."



Zola takes the Shahada.

Juventus require a late goal to beat Lazio and reach the Italian Cup final

ROME, April 24, (AP): A late goal that Timothy Weah set up for Arkadiusz Milik earned Juventus a spot in the Italian Cup final on Tuesday - keeping alive the Turin squad's chances of winning its first trophy in three years.

While Lazio won the second leg of their semifinal 2-1, Juventus advanced 3-2 on aggregate.

Weah sent in a cross seven minutes from time that Milik tapped in.

Taty Castellanos scored a goal in each half for Lazio.

Juventus won the first leg 2-0 with goals from Federico Chiesa and Dusan Vlahovic.

Juventus has won the Italian Cup a record 14 times, with its title in 2021 the most recent trophy the Bianconeri have claimed.

By reaching the final, Juventus also qualified for next season's four-team Italian Super Cup.

SOCCER

Castellanos is no stranger to coming up big in important matches, having scored four against Real Madrid last April while with Girona.

His first goal came 12 minutes in at the Stadio Olimpico when he leapt over Alex Sandro to head in a corner. Then shortly after the break, he muscled off Gleison Bremer to finish off a counterattack.

Juventus midfielder and United States international Weston McKennie limped off with an apparent left ankle issue after Castellanos' second goal but then came back on before eventually being substituted in the 81st.

Austria coach Ralf Rangnick has confirmed he is a candidate to take over at Bayern Munich next season.

"There has been contact from Bayern Munich," Rangnick told Austrian website 90minuten.at in an interview that was picked up by German media on Wednesday.

The German coach said he has informed the Austrian soccer federation

about Bayern's interest but "at the moment there is no reason for me to deal with it intensively or specifically."

Asked when that moment would be, Rangnick replied, "when Bayern would say, 'We want you.' And then I would have to ask myself, 'Do I want this at all?'"

Bayern is looking for a new coach with Thomas Tuchel poised to leave the German powerhouse at the end of the season.

After missing out on the Bundesliga title, Bayern faces the prospect of a first trophyless season since 2012. Tuchel's team is still in contention in the Champions League, where it faces Real Madrid in the semifinals.

Pacers even series with Bucks

MILWAUKEE, April 24, (AP): As a former champion on a team without much postseason experience, Pascal Siakam understands what it's going to take for the Indiana Pacers to advance beyond the first round of the playoffs for the first time in a decade.

Siakam's certainly doing his part.

The former Toronto Raptors forward scored 37 points and the Pacers overcame another fantastic first-half performance from Damian Lillard to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 125-108 on Tuesday night and tie their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

BASKETBALL

Game 3 is Friday in Indianapolis. "We've got to be the hungry team," Siakam said. "We've got to be the team that's coming in and wanting to show something. That's the attitude that we've got to have against those guys, because they've done it before."

The Pacers had plenty of appetite Tuesday as they snapped a 10-game playoff losing streak that began with a Game 7 loss to Cleveland in a 2018 first-round series.

Indiana acquired Siakam in January in part because of his experience as a member of the 2019 Toronto Raptors championship team. He followed up his 36-point performance in Game 1 by shooting 16 of 23 from the floor and finishing with 11 rebounds and six assists on Tuesday.

According to Stats Perform, Siakam is the first NBA player to open a post-season with consecutive 35-point, 10-rebound performances since Wilt Chamberlain in 1967.

"His experience in the playoffs is so valuable," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "He's not a guy that's going to get rattled by anything. Never has once since January, since we got him. He's a guy that people confide in and look up to."

The Pacers needed Siakam to step up because Lillard was once again coming up huge for the Bucks, at least in the first two periods.

Two nights after scoring all 35 of his points in the first half of the Bucks' 109-94 Game 1 victory, Lillard had 26 by halftime Tuesday and finished with 34.

It wasn't enough.

Suns on the brink of elimination



Indiana Pacers' Ben Sheppard drives past Milwaukee Bucks' Jae Crowder during the second half of Game 2 of the first round NBA playoff basketball series in Milwaukee. The Pacers won 125-108 to tie the series 1-1. (AP)

Al-Ain reach Asian Champions League final

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, April 24, (AP): Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates reached the final of the Asian Champions League after beating Al-Hilal 5-4 on aggregate in the semifinals to end Saudi Arabia's chances of winning the continental prize.

Four-time champion Al-Hilal, missing injured forwards Neymar and Aleksandar Mitrovic, won 2-1 in Riyadh but was unable to overturn the 4-2 deficit from last week's first leg.

Al-Hilal is the fourth Saudi Pro League club to be eliminated since the knockout stages began in February.

The second leg started well for Al-Hilal and its capacity crowd at the Kingdom Arena was on its feet after just four minutes.

Ruben Neves, who arrived last summer from English Premier League team Wolverhampton, converted a penalty after Kouame Kouadio brought down Brazilian forward Michael Delgado.

"I think both games we had a lot of success in the first two quarters mainly, and then in the second half we kind of get away from the things we had a lot of success doing," Lillard said.

Lillard didn't get enough help with the Bucks once again missing two-time MVP Gianni Antetokounmpo due to a strained left calf. Antetokounmpo hasn't played since he was hurt in an April 9 victory over the Bos-

ton Celtics.

Even after Lillard's big early onslaught, the Bucks still trailed 60-55 at halftime. Indiana stayed ahead throughout the second half.

"We were more consistent, played with more force, played with more attitude," Carlisle said. "There were some tough stretches in the game. I liked the way we kept our poise and our aggression. We kept attacking."

The Pacers led the NBA with 123.3 points per game during the regular season but posted their lowest point total and field-goal percentage (.396) while shooting 8 of 38 on 3-pointers in Game 1. This time, Indiana looked more like the team that won four of five regular-season matchups with the Bucks while scoring at least 122 points in each.

Myles Turner scored 22 points and Andrew Nembhard 20 for the Pacers. Tyrese Haliburton had 12 points and 12 assists.

Milwaukee's Brook Lopez scored 22 points and shot 6 of 7 from 3-point range. Khris Middleton scored 15 points. Bobby Portis had 14 points and 11 rebounds.

The Bucks cut Indiana's lead to one late in the third quarter and got it down to four in the opening minutes of the fourth. The Pacers responded each time and pushed their lead to 23 in the fourth quarter by following Siakam's advice.

"He's established himself on a our team as a veteran leader, as somewhat of a mentor because he's been there," Carlisle said. "He's constantly saying, 'Keep your edge. Keep your edge. Keep your edge.' He's been through these things too many times."

Timberwolves 105, Suns 93

In Minneapolis, Jaden McDaniels scored 25 points for a career best in the playoffs and spearheaded another

The home fans were silenced just seven minutes later when Al-Ain, the 2003 champion and two-time runner-up, restored its two-goal cushion. Yahia Nader passed to Erik Jorgens on the edge of the area and the Brazilian found the bottom corner with a low shot.

SOCCER

Six minutes after the restart, Salem Al-Dawsari got Al-Hilal back in the tie. The Asian player of the year collected the ball after a weak defensive header and drilled a low shot through a crowd of players into the back of the net.

The home players raced back to their positions eyeing the goal that would level the tie. Delgado, alone in the penalty area, then saw his shot hit the legs of goalkeeper Khalid Eisa.

In May, Al-Ain will face Yokohama F. Marinos who beat Ulsan HD of South Korea 5-4 on penalties.

stifling defensive performance by the Minnesota Timberwolves in a victory over the Phoenix Suns to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round series.

Mike Conley and Rudy Gobert each added 18 points to help the Timberwolves offset the smothering of Anthony Edwards by the Suns, who held the All-Star to 15 points after allowing him 33 in the opener. Edwards went 3 for 12 from the floor.

The teams head to Phoenix for Game 3 on Friday night. Minnesota has held a 2-0 series lead only one other time in franchise history, against Denver in the first round in 2004 en route to a 4-1 series victory.

Devin Booker scored 20 points, Kevin Durant added 18 and sixth man Eric Gordon had 15 for the Suns, who again failed to get their high-octane offense in gear. The big three of Booker, Durant and Bradley Beal combined to shoot 18 for 45, with McDaniels leading the list of reasons for the slump.

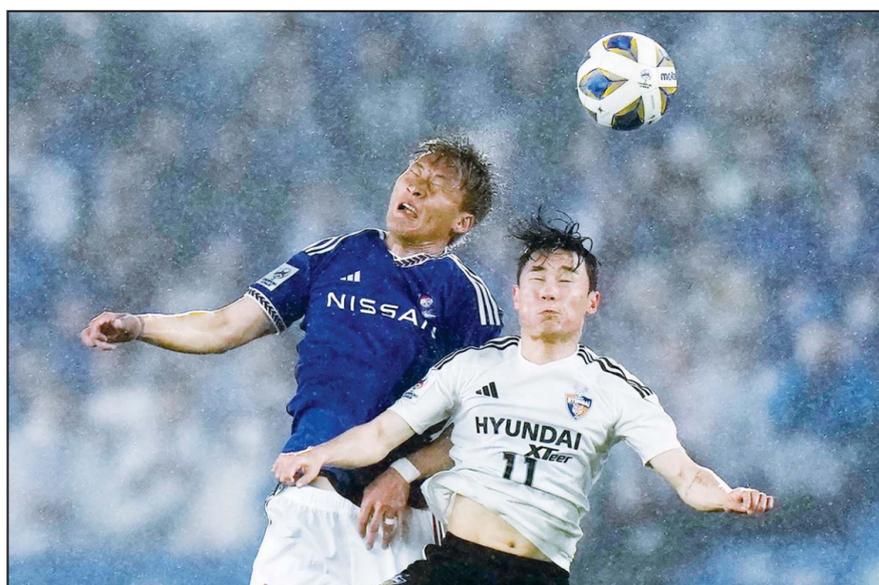
Mavericks 96, Clippers 93

In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic scored 32 points and Dallas overcame the return of Clippers superstar Kawhi Leonard to beat the Los Angeles Clippers and tie their Western Conference first-round playoff series at a game apiece.

Leonard had 15 points and seven rebounds in 35 minutes of his first game since March 31. He hadn't played or had any contact practices during that stretch because of inflammation in his surgically repaired right knee.

Kyrie Irving added 23 points for the Mavs, who led most of the game two days after they trailed by 29 points and eventually lost 109-97. P.J. Washington Jr. added 18 points.

Game 3 is on Friday in Dallas.



Yokohama F. Marinos' Shinnosuke Hatanaka (left), and Ulsan Hyundai's Um Won-sang (right), compete for the ball during the second leg of the AFC Champions League semifinal soccer match between Yokohama F. Marinos and Ulsan Hyundai in Yokohama, south of Tokyo. F. Marinos advanced to the final with 5-4 shootout win. (AP)



Arsenal's Kai Havertz (left), duels for the ball with Chelsea's Marc Cucurella during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Chelsea at Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)

Sports

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Arsenal rout Chelsea to cement EPL lead

Havertz scores 2

LONDON, April 24, (AP): Arsenal earned its biggest win ever over Chelsea as Kai Havertz scored twice against his former team in a 5-0 rout that solidified the Gunners' place atop the Premier League standings.

Ben White also got a second-half double against a dismal Chelsea team that collapsed after the break and saw most of the away fans leave Emirates Stadium well before the final whistle.

"It's a great night," said Arsenal winger Leandro Trossard, who opened the scoring in the fourth minute. "The early goal helped us and after that we played so well. We had a lot of chances and we turned them into goals."

The win ensures Arsenal will go into the weekend with the league lead. Manchester City is four points back before it plays at Brighton on Thursday, with another game in hand.

SOCCER

For Chelsea, it was another dispiriting loss after a 1-0 defeat to Man City in the FA Cup semifinals on Saturday that ended any hope of finishing a disappointing season on a high note.

Chelsea's leading scorer Cole Palmer was absent with an injury but the manner of the team's second-half collapse will only renew questions about what progress - if any - the expensively assembled team has made in its first season under Mauricio Pochettino.

The Argentine manager said his players "gave up" after Arsenal's third goal and lamented his team's inconsistency throughout the season, with Chelsea languishing 30 points behind Arsenal in ninth place. "When we have bad days, we are so bad," Pochettino said.

Arsenal's previous biggest league win over its London rival was 5-1 in 1930.

Pochettino, though, insisted he didn't feel let down by his players' overall effort, pointing to mitigating circumstances such as Palmer's absence, a young starting lineup and fatigue from what he called "an amazing performance" against Man City three days ago.

"I'm not going to blame the players," Pochettino said. "The circumstances are bigger than the performance of the players."

Trossard gave Arsenal the early lead by beating Chelsea goalkeeper Djordje Petrovic at his near post from a tight angle. Petrovic made amends by single-handedly

Kuwait volleyball team continues winning streak



Kuwait players celebrate their victory over Qatar.

DUBAI, April 24: The Kuwaiti volleyball team secured a notable 3-1 victory against the Qatari team, during the fourth round of the Gulf Youth Games held at the Al-Nasr Club hall in Dubai.

This marked the third consecutive win for Al-Azraq after their initial setback against Bahrain in the tournament's opening match.

They have since claimed victories over Oman, the Emirates, and Qatar. Their final challenge awaits against the Saudi team today.

The match unfolded with the Kuwaiti team dominating the first and second halves, clinching them with scores of 25-23 and 25-22 respectively.

However, the Qatari team rallied in the third half, securing it with a score of 25-20. Nonetheless, Al-Azraq rallied in the fourth half, ultimately triumphing with a score of 25-22.

Meanwhile, in Sharjah at the Al-Bataeh Cultural and Sports Club hall, Kuwait handball team encountered its first defeat of the tournament against the Saudi team, concluding with a score of 22-32.

Despite a promising start where the youth team led

with a score of 8-5, courtesy of playmaker Hussein Mandani and Youssef Maddouh, defensive lapses and rushed attacks allowed Saudi Arabia to seize control, leading 13-12 by halftime.

The Saudi team maintained dominance in the second half, exploiting Kuwait's lapses to secure a convincing victory with a final score of 32-22.

Today, teams will rest as preparations for the fifth and final round, as well as the coronation ceremony for tomorrow. Matches scheduled include Bahrain versus Oman, Kuwait against the Emirates, and Saudi Arabia versus Qatar.

GULF YOUTH GAMES

The final round's match order was determined in the previous technical committee meeting, ensuring that the title decider serves as the tournament's closing spectacle.

Meanwhile, the delegations for 3x3 basketball, swimming, judo, karate, archery, and esports are set to arrive in the Emirates today, readying themselves for their upcoming competitions in the tournament.

Kuwait squash team continues to shine at Qatar Championship



Players gear up for action.

DOHA, April 24: The Kuwaiti squash national team continued its string of positive outcomes at the Qatar International Open Championship, hosted at the Khalifa International Complex in the capital city of Doha, with the tournament concluding today.

In the U-11 category, Salman Al-Saleh secured a spot in the semi-finals by defeating his Iranian opponent, Mustafa Ahrari, 3-0. Similarly, Saleh Al-Kandari advanced to the semi-finals in the U-13 category after a hard-fought victory against Qatari player Omar Faraj, with a score of 3-2.

However, in the under-15 category, Abdul Rahman Al-Kandari faced a tough challenge and was defeated by the top-seeded Malaysian player, Muhammad Razi, with a score of 0-3.

In the under-17 category, Abdullah Hani demonstrated impressive skills, securing a spot in the quarter-finals after a convincing win over Qatari player

Ali Darwish, with a score of 3-0. Likewise, Khaled Al-Fawzan advanced to the same round with a commanding victory against Qatari player Khaled Al-Hammadi, also with a score of 3-0.

In the under-19 category, Abdul Rahman Al-Maghribi showcased exceptional performance, earning a place in the semi-finals by defeating Pakistani player Saad Saeed with a score of 3-0.

Hamed Al-Omran, the head of the delegation and Secretary General of the Squash Federation, commended the emerging players for their remarkable performances in the tournament. He expressed optimism for achieving further positive results to elevate Kuwait's reputation in the sport.

Al-Omran emphasized the importance of such tournaments, which provide valuable experience for players from various countries and contribute to their development in the sport.

'Maxey was fouled twice before turnover'

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): Philadelphia's Tyrese Maxey was fouled twice before his turnover that led to the go-ahead 3-pointer by Donte DiVincenzo in the New York Knicks' victory over the 76ers in Game 2, the NBA determined Tuesday.

In its Last 2 Minutes report, the league also said 76ers coach Nick Nurse twice attempted to call timeouts that were "neither recognized nor granted by the officials" during the possession.

The furious 76ers planned to file a grievance regarding the officiating after falling into a 2-0 hole in the series following the Knicks' 104-101 victory on

Monday night. But on Tuesday - speaking on TNT after being revealed as the league's Most Improved Player this season - Maxey offered perspective.

"It is what it is. It happened. We've got to let it go," Maxey said. "We can't dwell on it now. If we dwell on it, then in a couple days we'll be down 0-3. We don't want to be down 0-3. We know that we can still win this series. We're going to go out there and prove that to everybody, not just ourselves. It starts today, letting that go. And then tomorrow at practice, and when the ball goes up on Thursday be the tougher team - not just physically, but mentally as well."

Indonesia eye first Olympic qualification

Kuwait end Under-23 Asian Cup campaign on high note

DOHA, April 24: The coach of Kuwait's under-23 soccer team, Emilio Peixe from Portugal, expressed his satisfaction with Al-Azraq's recent victory against Malaysia, securing a 2-1 win in their final match of the Asian Cup held in Doha. Despite failing to advance to the tournament's quarter-finals, Peixe remained optimistic about the team's potential.

Speaking at a press conference following the match, Peixe emphasized the need for the national team players to gain experience in order to achieve more victories. He highlighted their talent while underscoring the importance of player development to enhance performance on the field.

Peixe stated that his primary goal at the tournament was to elevate the players' skill levels and showcase the best possible representation of the Kuwaiti national team.

Meanwhile, national team player Talal Al-Qaisi expressed disappointment over the team's inability to progress to the quarter-finals of the Asian Championship. He stressed the importance of focusing on future endeavors and striving for positive outcomes.

Al-Qaisi extended gratitude to the organizers of the AFC U-23 Cup for their hospitality and warm welcome.

In other tournament news, the quarter-finals commence today with

two matches. The Qatari team will face off against Japan in the first match at 5:30 pm, followed by a clash between South Korea and Indonesia at 8:30 pm.

SOCCER

Indonesia heads into its quarter-final match against South Korea at the Under-23 Asian Cup with a chance to move a step closer to its first-ever Olympic appearance.

The top three teams in the 16-nation tournament qualify automati-

cally for the Paris Games.

Indonesia finished second in Group A behind host Qatar with wins over Jordan and Australia to progress to the last eight. The quarter-final games are on Thursday.

"The team has only reached 50% of the goal that I set. We want to be in the semifinals," said Indonesia coach Shin Tae-yong, who was in charge of South Korea at the 2018 World Cup and will now try to prevent his home nation from making a 10th straight Olympic appearance.

The successful group stage is another example of Indonesia's resur-



Players leave the field after the final whistle.