



**basketball**  
Pages 15 & 16



# KUWAIT SET FOR WARM WEEKEND WEATHER, RELATIVE HUMIDITY Gulf states confront climate catastrophe

## Day by Day

IT IS true that the cellphone has transformed many aspects of our lives, sometimes with unintended consequences. The cellphone has indeed supplanted the landline phone, television, computer, watch, camera, radio, lamp, mirror, newspapers, and magazines in many ways.

While the cell phone has undeniably reshaped our world it also killed the pocket wallet, desk calendar, memo, energy, credit, marital relations, friendliness, and family intimacy.

Finding a balance between embracing its conveniences and mitigating its downsides is key to harnessing its power responsibly. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Concerns rise over activist's detention

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: A number of MPs-elect, public figures and representatives of civil society organizations recently gathered in the diwaniya of Fourth Constituency candidate and political activist Musaed Al-Qeraifa who is currently in remand detention for 21 days as per the decision of the Public Prosecution and based on the investigations conducted by the State Security General Department in Ministry of Interior in view of the opinions he expressed during the National Assembly Election campaign period.

MPs-elect Saud Al-Asfour revealed he feels sorry about the incident, indicating that he thought the era of tracking and arresting political activists already ended; but it seems to have resurfaced. He said the era of targeting activists cost a lot for the State of Kuwait; and caused damages to political stability and national unity. He added this era also made many individuals spend a part of their lives behind bars or in exile for adopting certain political opinions.

He clarified that he is not worried about Al-Qeraifa's imprisonment; because the latter has proven his strength, solid resistance and steadfastness. He is rather worried about losing political stability, stressing the era that witnessed harsh measures against politicians resulted in the worst crimes - corruption and financial scandals.

He affirmed no one will allow the return of such era, which was not fruitful and it will never be. He argued it is unacceptable to use legal measures as a form of punishment, disclosing that he and his colleagues will push for the amendment of relevant laws to enhance freedom.

MP-elect Mohammad Jawhar Hayat thinks the government is once again adopting the police attitude against politicians, instead of cooperating with the Assembly to boost the economy. He pointed out the security authorities make a big mistake whenever they consider criticism of the government as offending the Amiri entity. He clarified that the Amiri entity is protected and highly respected by the people of Kuwait.

He stressed that the prosecution should have summoned Al-Qeraifa for investigation as per the law, not detain him.

MP-elect Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi asked why Al-Qeraifa was subjected to the 21-day remand detention, considering his address is known and he is not likely to escape. He wondered why the speech of politicians is often misinterpreted.

Continued on Page 5

## NewsWatch

**JEDDAH:** The Saudi Royal Court announced, Wednesday, that Saudi King **Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud** left the King Faisal Hospital in Jeddah after completing routine medical checkups.

The Saudi Royal Court wished King Salman everlasting wellbeing. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs **Abdullah Al-Yahya** welcomed his Bahraini counterpart **Abdullatif Al-Zayani** and his accompanying delegation at Kuwait International Airport on Thursday evening.

The Bahraini minister was also welcomed by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador **Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs **Abdullah Al-Yahya** met with his visiting Greek counterpart **Giorgos Gerapetritis** on Thursday on bilateral relations between the two nations. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed the regional and international developments, especially the humanitarian crisis of Palestinians in Gaza due to the Israeli occupation aggression. (KUNA)

**MUSCAT:** Oman signed a memorandum of understanding with **Saudi Arabia** on Thursday to finance the infrastructure of a number of industrial zones in the Sultanate with the aim of developing the logistical sectors by providing all basic services.

In a statement, Oman's Ministry of Finance that the signing comes within the framework of development cooperation between the two sides to support development areas in the Sultanate. (KUNA)



The full moon ascends behind the silhouette of Kuwait City's skyline on April 24, 2024. The meteorological center announced on Thursday that the weekend weather will be warm to hot during the day, cooling to moderate temperatures at night.

Xinhua photo

## Call for action

**KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (Agencies):** The weekend weather will be warm to hot during the day and moderate at night, marked with relative humidity and unsteady and hot southeasterly winds, the meteorological center said on Thursday.

The center director, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, said in a statement to KUNA that the weather during the rest of today would be largely hot with the temperature forecast at 34-35 degrees, but will turn moderate at night.

Friday will see a tendency towards warmer temperatures, accompanied by some moisture in coastal areas. The forecast heat will range between 35 and 37 degrees. The weather at night will be moderate with some humidity.

On Saturday, it will be hot with temperatures ranging between 36 and 38 degrees and fall to 22-24 degrees at night.

Meanwhile, recent extreme weather conditions experienced by several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, notably Oman and the United Arab Emirates, have sparked discussions about the profound impact of climate change on life in the Arabian Gulf region, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This dialogue, facilitated by a symposium organized by the Cultural Committee in the Department of Psychology at Kuwait University in collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf, underscores the urgent need for developing an emergency system to address extreme weather phenomena such as heatwaves and heavy rainfall, which pose significant challenges and are notoriously difficult to predict.

The unprecedented rainfall witnessed in the region, resulting from a depression, may signify a transformative shift in the climate patterns of the Arabian Gulf. The occurrence of "rain bombs," equivalent to two years' worth of rainfall in a single day, highlights the potential long-term implications for the region's inhabitants, ranging from infrastructure damage to impacts on sanitation systems and city design.

Climate scientists have long warned about the dangers of global warming and its repercussions on various aspects of life, including food and water security, extreme weather events, and public health. The Paris Climate Agreement, adopted by 197 countries in 2015, aims to mitigate climate change and limit global temperature rise to within 2 degrees Celsius.

However, the challenges posed by climate change require a comprehensive and proactive response from GCC countries. This entails expanding scientific research efforts to better understand the severity and extent of climate change impacts, as well as developing adaptation strategies to safeguard public health, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Continued on Page 5

## 80% of imminent famine in Gaza: report

### Kuwait lauds UNRWA on Palestinian relief

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday welcomed a report released by a United Nations commission regarding the performance of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).



Guterres

The ministry, in a statement, acclaimed the results of the report that had been issued by the (UN) independent commission concerning UNRWA's performance, affirming its prime role in supporting the relief, humanitarian and development efforts for the brotherly Palestinian people.

It re-affirmed necessity of ensuring the sustainability of funding the international relief agency, stressing the State of Kuwait's stand that calls for providing all forms of backing for the refugees of the brotherly Palestinian people to alleviate their hardships, inflicted due to the Israeli occupation's continuous breaches of the international law and the international humanitarian law.

The official Kuwaiti statement alluded to the Independent Review Group on the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

East (UNRWA) that had been appointed by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, in consultation with the UNRWA Commissioner-General, on February 5, 2024.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also welcomed a report released by the UN Independent Review Group regarding performance of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The OIC said in a statement that the report showed the agency was committed to neutrality, relief and humanitarian efforts, unlike what the Israeli occupation forces claimed in an attempt to liquidate the Palestinian refugees' cause.

The Islamic organization expressed appreciation to the countries that are newly funding the international relief agency and urged the countries that have stopped their funding to reconsider their decision, in support of millions of Palestinian refugees.

It reaffirmed full support to the relief agency that was set up to help support and defend Palestinians in their time of need.

Nearly 282 million people in 59 countries and territories experienced high levels of acute hunger in 2023 - a worldwide increase of 24 million from the previous year, according to the latest Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC).

Continued on Page 5

## Iran rejects Kuwait-Jordan Durra field joint statement

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Iran has publicly rejected the terms outlined in the joint statement issued by Kuwait and Jordan concerning the Durra oilfield. According to Mehr News Agency, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani asserted Iran's rights in the field and dismissed the unilateral nature of the statement, stating that it does not secure any rights for the party making the claims, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Kanaani referenced prior discussions and consultations between Iran and Kuwait, emphasizing the importance of technical and legal negotiations over sensationalized media posturing. He urged Kuwait to refrain from such approaches and instead advocate for diplomatic dialogue, which he deemed the most constructive way to address the matter.

Continued on Page 5

## Abdullah Al-Salem University, IICO team up on scholarships

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): Abdullah Al-Salem University and the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) signed a cooperation agreement on supporting scholarship students in Kuwait and abroad in light of the joint strategic goals of the two institutions.

In a press statement, the Chairman of the Founding Board of Directors of Abdullah Al-

Salem University, Dr. Moudhi Al-Hamoud, said that the university is well-established in the scientific and academic fields and it is keen to establish scientific bridges with the Charitable Organization to provide real educational services by the framework of the understanding concluded between the two sides.

Continued on Page 5

## 2nd aid plane Sudan bound

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): Second Kuwaiti plane took off Thursday to Port Sudan carrying ten tons of relief items and blankets onboard as part of air bridge supporting displaced people within Sudan, stated Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

KRCS Director General Abdulrahman Al-Oun told KUNA that this comes as per the directions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as a show of Kuwaiti solidarity and support to afflicted Sudanese people.

Continued on Page 5



KRCS photo

The second Kuwaiti aircraft departed for Port Sudan, carrying ten tons of relief supplies and blankets as part of an airlift aiding displaced individuals within Sudan.



KUNA photo

Abdullah Al-Salem University Chairman of Board of Directors Dr. Moudhi Al-Hamoud and IICO Chairman of the Board of Directors Dr. Abdullah Al-Maoutouq during the signing of a cooperation agreement.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:48 Asr ..... 15:21  
 Sunrise .. 05:12 Maghrib .. 18:20  
 Zohr ..... 11:46 Isha ..... 19:42

# Local

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

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Rather hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

## Weather

**By Night:** Mild, partly cloudy to cloudy and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light southerly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	37	25		
Kuwait Airport	37	20		
Abdaly	37	22		
Jahra	38	23		
Salmiyah	34	26		
Nuwaisib	37	21		
Wafra	38	18		



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received Russian Ambassador to Kuwait, Vladimir Zheltov, accompanied by Third Secretary Ion Arishin. Sattam Al-Jarallah, Saud Al-Farhan and Mohammad Al-Farhan attended the meeting.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah discussed with the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov various topics of common concern during their meeting in the office.

## Editor-in-Chief receives Russian envoy

Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, recently welcomed the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait, Vladimir Zheltov, to his

office. Ambassador Zheltov was accompanied by Ion Arishin, the Third Secretary responsible for protocol affairs at the Russian Embassy.

During their meeting, they explored a range of topics of common interest. Also in attendance were Sattam Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Saud Al-Farhan, and Mohammad Al-Farhan.



Dr Amal Al-Saleh



Dr Fatima Al-Rashed



Dr Emar Bahman



Dr Fahad Al-Zumae



Dr Zaid Al-Marzouq

## KFAS honors young researchers with cash Jaber Al-Ahmad award

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced Tuesday winners of Jaber Al-Ahmad Prize for young researchers in its 34th edition. The award, a sum of KD 10,000 (approx. USD 33,000), is granted annually to Kuwaiti PhD holders.

KFAS released a statement detailing names of winners and their respective fields, starting with Dr. Zaid Al-Marzouq, a cardiologist and clinical researcher at Mas General Brigham and Harvard University's medical.

Dr. Al-Marzouq's research focuses on causal inference methods in treating cardiovascular diseases, with a special interest in modern cardiac devices.

The statement also mentioned that Dr. Al-Marzouq has been awarded with many prizes including the Richard Gorlin award.

The award for biological sciences was given out to Dr. Fatima Al-Rashed, a scientist specializing in immunology and microbiology at Dasman Institute for Diabetes for her renowned research and contributions to the field.

Dr. Al-Rashed, a pioneer in her field, attained her doctorate from Nottingham University, and was awarded many presti-

gious awards including UNESCO's L'oreal award for women in science.

Dr. Amar Mohammad Bahman, Assistant Professor of mechanical engineering at Kuwait University, was granted the award in field of engineering sciences. Dr. Bahman's expertise lies in air conditioning systems suitable for high temperature climates.

Bahman, whose research interest also includes, techno-economic analysis, exploration of substitute cooling methods and heat transfer, got his degree from American Purdue University.

As for field of social sciences and humanities, both Dr. Amal Al-Saleh of the educational planning and management department at KU and Dr. Fahad Al-Zumae, Associate Professor of Law were granted the award for their expertise and valuable research.

KFAS wished all recipients further success in future research endeavors, stating that this reflects the exceptional role of Kuwaiti researchers and their contributions to knowledge in its various fields.

The award was established back in 1988 as an initiative by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to encourage and honor PhD holders.

## Cassation Court upholds judicial oversight over admin decisions

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: In a significant judicial verdict, the Administrative Court of Cassation has affirmed that administrative decisions issued by government agencies cannot be immunized from judicial oversight, nor can the decision to refrain from appealing them be justified, as such actions raise suspicions about the constitutionality of laws establishing such immunization or exemption from judicial review, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a ruling issued by Counselor Mohamed Al-Rifai, the court addressed the government's defense concerning the finality of decisions made by medical committees responsible for assessing individuals with special needs, stating that these decisions are subject to judicial oversight and are appealable.

The court clarified that the term "persons with disabilities" as mentioned in the law encompasses individuals with long-term disabilities, whether physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory, which may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Specifically, the court determined that the visually impaired are considered persons with special needs. It emphasized that individuals with permanent, complete, or partial impairments that affect their physical, mental, or sensory abilities, thereby

hindering their full participation in society, are considered disabled.

Furthermore, the court highlighted the inadequacy of delegating authority solely to specialized medical committees to determine disability status without any opportunity for judicial review. It argued that such an approach undermines the constitutional right to litigation guaranteed by Article 166, depriving individuals of the opportunity to challenge administrative decisions that may affect their rights.

The court underscored the principle of equality before the law enshrined in Article 29 of the Constitution, emphasizing that depriving certain groups of their right to litigation violates this principle. It reiterated that the judiciary's role in adjudicating disputes is essential for upholding justice and ensuring equal protection of rights for all individuals.

Moreover, the court rejected the notion of absolute authority vested in medical committees, emphasizing the need for judicial oversight to prevent abuses of power and ensure adherence to legal principles. It stressed that the establishment of an administrative judiciary specialized in adjudicating administrative disputes, as outlined in Article 169 of the Constitution, is crucial for upholding the rule of law and protecting individual rights.

# Coral reef deterioration effects on marine life, beaches in focus

ROPME marks Regional Environment Day

**KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) celebrated the Regional Environment Day on April 24 under the patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environment, Dr. Imad Al-Ateeqi.**

During the event, they discussed the effects of the deterioration of coral reefs on marine life and beaches.

In his speech at the opening event, Dr. Al-Ateeqi said, "Today we celebrate the Regional Environment Day that marks the anniversary of the signing of the Kuwait Agreement of 1978, the results of which were the establishment of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment; something that the State of Kuwait is proud to host."

On this occasion, we commend the efforts of the organization, which contributed to strengthening the bonds of cooperation between the countries of the region to preserve their environment and draw up a clear general strategy to deal with it, especially in light of the geographical, strategic and economic importance that the maritime region represents.

This year, the organization adopted the slogan "The effects of coral reef degradation on marine life and beaches", as the excessive use of beaches for the purposes of uncontrolled human activities has led to a gradual deterioration of coral reef habitats.

This slogan confirms the importance of the role assigned to the organization in reducing the risks to the environment of the marine region and researching areas that work to develop policies related to the risks of this encroachment.

It is no secret to anyone about the coral reefs that Allah has given us in this region, with the beauty they add, the Creator's ability to innovate in His creation, and the great benefits that result from them, whether for humans or for the marine organisms that live in this region, whether from an economic or environmental standpoint.

These coral reefs are no longer what they were before they were destroyed and vandalized by human hands, in addition to other external factors, the most important of which is climate change.

It was and still is a habitat for a lot of biodiversity, including diverse living organisms and a safe place for crustaceans, fish, invertebrates, some sea turtles, plants and algae.

The excessive use of beaches for the purposes of uncontrolled human activities has led to the gradual deterioration of coral reef habitats, which work automatically to protect these beaches from the effects of storms and sea hurricanes.

These activities have become one of the most prominent manifestations of encroachment on marine life due to the plastic waste and solid objects they leave behind, which help break down and destroy these reefs.

### Climate change

Our loss of coral reefs in our marine area is due to natural factors such as climate change or various human means such as overfishing and marine pollution or due to deliberate destruction resulting from some boats and yachts anchoring on them.

All of these cases led to the destruction of coral reefs and thus to the loss of biodiversity of plants, which deprives future generations of enjoying what Allah has given us in terms of diverse aesthetic seascapes, tourist enjoyment, and neighborhoods.

We have confirmed that the disappearance of coral reefs will expose the beaches to the risk of erosion and the elimination of coastal systems, and various fishing industries will collapse. Consequently, the unemployment rate will increase, poverty will spread, and the loss of these coral reefs will lead to the cessation of medical studies and research because they hold the keys to new treatments for a group of diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and heart disease."

He concluded his speech by saying, "The responsibility for protecting coral reefs lies with governments, entities concerned with environmental protection, civil society institutions, and all individuals in the member states of the organization. These bodies must monitor all activities harmful to the safety of these reefs to avoid negative environmental impacts resulting from this encroachment. In the end, it is a collective responsibility. Everyone must contribute to reducing these behaviors to achieve sustainable development for the benefit of the peoples of this region and subsequent generations."

In addition, Dr. Mohammad, Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, said, "I am pleased to welcome you today to the Regional Environment Day ceremony, which marks the 45th anniversary of the countries overlooking the marine region signing the Kuwait Regional Agreement for Cooperation in Protecting the Marine Environment from Pollution in 1978."

It is an embodiment of the bonds of cooperation between the countries of the region in order to preserve the marine environment, protect the environment from degradation, and combat pollution, in order to achieve the sustainability of resources and preserve its unique biodiversity.

## Court Cases

### Check mental status of killer: court

## Expat, Kuwaiti officer 'acquitted' of forging, selling driving licenses

By Jaber Al-Hamoud  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Saleh Al-Muraishid, overturned the verdict issued by a lower court which sentenced an Egyptian expatriate and a Kuwaiti deputy officer to ten-year imprisonment each, followed by his dismissal from his position, and two Egyptian expatriates to five-year imprisonment. They were accused of being part of a network that forged Farwaniya traffic driving licenses at a rate of KD 300 each. The court instead refrained from pronouncing punishment for all of them. The court also canceled the four-year imprisonment sentence issued against eight Egyptians who paid bribes after failing the tests, and ruled to refrain from punishing them. It upheld and abstained from punishing three other defendants.

According to the case file, these defendants were accused of committing forgery and bribery for the illegal issuance of driving licenses at a fee of KD 300 for each license.

It was concluded that the defendants from the eighth to the fifteenth participated by agreement with the first defendant in the crime of forgery of the official document that was the subject of the first accusation of the second defendant before it occurred, by agreeing to falsify the forms related to the practical driving test with the intention of using them to obtain driving licenses, and the crime occurred based on that agreement as indicated in the investigations.

□ □ □

**Jail, fine for fashionista:** A prominent fashion influencer and a citizen were sentenced to two years of imprisonment with hard labor and a fine of 2,000 dinars in a case involving incitement to immorality, debauchery, and prostitution on social media platforms.

The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Osaimi, handed down the sentence against the influencer and the citizen following accusations

of promoting indecency, debauchery, and engaging in prostitution via social networking sites.

According to case details, the court confronted the accused with evidence showing that she had sent explicit images and video clips to the victim via WhatsApp, leading him to file a complaint against her.

□ □ □

### 'Check killer's mental status':

The Court of Appeals referred a man, who was accused of killing his wife, dismembering her body, and placing various parts in a number of garbage containers, to psychiatry to examine his mental abilities.

The Criminal Court had sentenced him to death by hanging, after the defense team representing the victim's family had demanded the maximum penalty against the accused, which was death.

They demanded adding the charge of possession of bladed weapons, namely a cleaver and a knife, which the accused had purchased to commit his crime.

The defense lawyer said, "My client is not the killer, and the murdered person was not my client's wife. She was his ex-wife and she was missing."

□ □ □

**Poll challenge waived:** A candidate from the Third Constituency waived the petition she submitted at the Constitutional Court for invalidating the elections due to the unconstitutionality of Law No. 94, which considers the children of naturalized citizens as inherently Kuwaiti.

The Constitutional Court, presided over by Judge Fouad Al-Zuwaid, reserved 11 electoral petitions for ruling on May 21.

It decided to assign judges to move to the National Assembly to open the ballot boxes and review the minutes of the electoral committees of the Fourth Constituency at the request of candidate Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi. The court postponed his petitions No. 10 and No. 11 to May 1 for pleading.

## Suspects admit charges

## 37 arrested in 21 drug-related cases

By Munif Naif  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Criminal Security Sector's Drug Control General Department (DCGD) arrested 37 people of different nationalities in 21 cases for the possession of about 43 kilograms of various narcotic substances such as synthetic hashish, crystal meth, marijuana and cocaine.

This comes in continuation of the Ministry of Interior's efforts to combat the scourge of drugs and psychotropic substances, and track down their dealers and smugglers, with direct follow-up from the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The DCGD officers also confiscated 160,700 pills of psychotropic substances, 15,200 kilograms of Lyrica powder, 707

liquor bottles, unlicensed firearms and ammunition, and sums of money resulting from the sale.

When the defendants were confronted with what was seized from them, they admitted that those items belonged to them for the purpose of trafficking and abuse. They were referred with the seized items to the concerned authorities to take all necessary legal measures.

The Ministry of Interior said security efforts are continuing to arrest anyone who gives in to the temptation of bringing narcotic substances and trading them, with the aim of protecting and preserving society.

It stressed the need for concerted efforts to eliminate the scourge of narcotics, and called on everyone to cooperate with security personnel and report any negative phenomena via the Emergency No. 112 and DCGD's Hotline No. 1884141.



## Unemployment is increasing and government is watching!

"IT CANNOT be denied that the employment file in Kuwait has become burdensome for the state. The flabby administrative apparatus, which has not been able to develop itself over the past decades, has received more employees than it can handle, to the point of creating the phenomenon of disguised unemployment. However, today we are facing an alarming situation of real unemployment that threatens our children," columnist **Asrar Johar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"While I consistently advocate for diversifying job opportunities beyond the government sector, emphasizing the need for specialized skills, recent realities force a sobering recognition. The government's inability to stimulate private sector interest among the youth and its cessation of support for initiatives over the past five years has created a stark scenario.



Asrar Hayat

"Presently, young individuals find themselves with limited options, often resorting to the centralized Civil Service Bureau for employment, only to be met with overwhelming competition. Reports from **Al-Rai** newspaper highlight around 13,000 citizens awaiting Civil Service Commission employment, a number likely to swell as the academic year concludes and more graduates enter the job market.

"This dilemma underscores a systemic issue. The government, constrained by altered appointment procedures and budgetary limitations, cannot absorb the influx of job seekers. Furthermore, long-standing failures in aligning university admission strategies with market demands have led to a surplus of graduates in fields without corresponding job opportunities.

"Consequently, there's an imbalance. While we still require foreign expertise in certain sectors like healthcare, mismanagement in university admissions and employment coordination pushes our youth towards obsolete fields, exacerbating unemployment.

"The remedy lies in strategic alignment -- steering young talent towards areas of genuine demand. This not only shields them from unemployment but also advances Kuwaitization objectives, leveraging national talent. The urgency of this situation cannot be overstated; 13,000 unemployed individuals demand immediate attention.

"If the government cannot provide alternatives to public sector employment, it must ensure fair access to those positions. Every Kuwaiti has the right to government employment, and it's incumbent upon the authorities to address this pressing issue, holding those responsible for this crisis to account."

### Also:

"Is what is currently happening in Kuwait cause for optimism or pessimism? Does the state of political instability that we are going through call us to look at tomorrow for a bright future or with sadness in our eyes?" columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Does the state of hesitation in assuming very important positions which has a great influence on the nature of the next stage, lead us to happiness or constant anxiety?"

"I do not know the real reason for the former Prime Minister, Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah's apology for forming the current ministry or accepting the position of Prime Minister, and I am not in a position to delve into what has been going on and around this issue, but what I can say is that the amount of optimism and the amount of happiness that overwhelmed after announcing him as Prime Minister, the Kuwaiti people's confidence in his qualities as a leader at this stage made us apply the brakes on this happiness suddenly and very quickly, which resulted in a backlash in the standstill event.

"The oscillation between optimism and pessimism is understandable in the face of the political instability gripping our nation. This prolonged period of uncertainty has left us teetering on the edge of stagnation, even regression.

"Enough dwelling in pessimism; it's time to confront the reality of our situation.

"The vacuum in leadership positions has halted numerous vital projects, exacerbating our paralysis. The anxiety pervading our society now borders on fear, especially as we face potential disruptions in essential services due to administrative lapses.

"Consider the imminent threat of an electricity crisis as summer approaches. The failure to establish new power stations, coupled with administrative delays, paints a grim picture of what lies ahead. Such challenges cast doubt on our present circumstances and raise questions about the duration of this impasse.

"What the Kuwaiti people yearn for above all is political stability -- an end to the anxiety and confusion clouding our collective outlook. We crave a revitalizing force to breathe life back into our nation, propelling us towards a brighter future.

"Optimism must not wane, for it is our lifeline amidst uncertainty. Yet, optimism alone is not enough. We demand tangible evidence of progress. As a people deserving of development and prosperity, we must prioritize the restoration of political stability by any means necessary.

"The path ahead may be arduous, but it is not insurmountable. Let us unite in our resolve to overcome the obstacles hindering our progress, for the Kuwaiti people are resilient, and together, we shall prevail."

"I liked a message I received commenting on our topic that said: 'Wasting more time is no longer acceptable.'"



"The role of governors in development... In my previous article entitled, 'Governors, Mukhtars and Cooperative Societies', I called for activating the role of governors in supervising and following up the work of 'mukhtars', and for the cooperatives to be involved in serving the governorate in terms of developing it under the direct supervision of the governor through a board of directors tasked to monitor the work in the governorate." columnist Major General **M. Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Today, after the appointment of new governors, first, we congratulate them for gaining the trust of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him. Secondly, we are hoping for a change in the previous approach, by granting them broader powers to support the government path, and seeking competition between the governorates in terms of addressing the needs of their residents.

"I believe this step is required for them to bear the societal responsibility to assist the Council of Ministers in its work, and also to activate the role of cooperative societies in granting financial and other forms of support. This could be done by allocating the profits of cooperatives for the services in the governorates to ease the financial burden of the State, and to have effective participation in community work as stipulated in the Cooperative Societies Law.

"This is my point of view, that is, if we want to change the role assigned to governors to enable them to perform their work through powers that help them provide everything for the renaissance of the governorate in all fields, including the development of services. Thus, the role of the governor is as important as the community services he can provide like supervising and monitoring. He shall be an agent of the government apparatus.

"We ask Allah to protect Kuwait and its people from all harm under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him. May Allah have mercy on our righteous martyrs."



"Ibrahim Al-Youssef passed away... Every soul will taste death. This is the year of life. Whoever lives dies, and everyone who lives perishes. This we receive, and the other we bid farewell," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Recently, our dear friend, the virtuous person, the one with a big heart and a thankful tongue, the great writer, poet and storyteller, the great journalist and presenter of the 'From the Desert' program on Riyadh Radio in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -- Ibrahim Al Youssef -- passed away from our world.

"The warm and compassionate voice, which was full of love, was extremely keen on preserving the popular heritage of the Arabian Peninsula by memorizing, narrating, researching and examining it. He did not offer anything he was not convinced of. He exerted tremendous efforts to study, research and scrutinize it. He memorized heritage, and narrated stories and poems from the oldest to the latest. No one else could have done so.

"He was a great symbol of popular literature in the Arabian Peninsula. His novels were cited. He set an example in diligence. No researcher would have searched after him, and no one would disagree on his narration.

"I had known Ibrahim Al-Youssef for a long time -- more than four decades. I knew him when he was working on the same program with the late Sheikh Mandil Al-Fahid, may Allah have mercy on him.

"Sheikh Mandil was the greatest, most knowledgeable and most truthful narrator in the entire Arabian Peninsula without a rival. He was considered a walking encyclopedia from which everyone had benefited. Nevertheless, his departure did not leave a void in the presence of his creative successor, Ibrahim Al-Youssef, who moved this important program to broader horizons. The personality of the creator, Ibrahim Al-Youssef, was reflected in the program with its new look. The listeners' attachment to the ancient Riyadh Radio grew through the warm voice flowing with love.

"Ibrahim Al-Youssef, may Allah forgive him, had the best knowledge. He was religious and a prayerful person, with religion and piety that made him keep the Almighty Creator in mind in every word he said. He feared God, shunned injustice, did not attribute poetry to anyone other than his family, and avoided everything that excites people. He was tolerant, loving and loved by everyone. He was generous in his home and was happy with guests. He was generous in all aspects of his life, not just in the media field, but his media personality overshadowed the other bright aspects of his life.

"My sincere condolences and sympathy to the media family at Radio Riyadh, and to his family that has the right to be proud of the late great personality. I console myself as a dear friend who passed away. I had the honor to be his colleague. It was a wonderful fellowship. We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return!"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Kuwait National Guard troops and blood center officials.



Lieutenant General Muhandes Hashem Al-Rifai looks on as a Guard donates blood.

## Kuwait National Guard inaugurates blood donation center

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): Kuwait National Guards on Thursday inaugurated a blood donation center at Al-Tahrir camp in a bid designed to enhance the resources at the Central Blood Bank.

Lieutenant General Muhandes Hashem Al-Rifai, the National Guards Undersecretary, said during the inauguration ceremony that the center was opened as a result of a signed cooperation protocol between the Guards and the Ministry of Health.

This step has been taken in line with directions by the National Guards Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and his

deputy Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and in implementation of the Guidance Document of the National Guards (protection and back-up 2025), stipulating significance of the Guards' social role and enhancement of the strategic blood reserves.

The National Guards will continue to back up the Central Blood Bank through donation campaigns at the camps where a significant number of personnel have shown up to donate their blood. "out of their belief that a drop of blood saves a life," he said. Aiding in the treatment of patients and saving

lives through the enhancement of the Central Blood Bank resources are humanitarian goals.

Meanwhile, the assistant undersecretary at the MoH, Dr. Abdullah Al-Fars, affirmed the National Guards' keenness on providing aid to the ministry to enrich the strategic resources at the Central Blood Bank.

Issam Issam, the administrative backup assistant at the Guards, affirmed that such a venture contributes to enhancing the Guards' strategic role, noting that it works round the clock to receive donors.



Waves brought in various kinds of dead fish at the Shuwaikh beach.

Al-Rai photo

## Dead fish on Shuwaikh shore elevates concern

'Pollution, red tide main cause'

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Authorities from the General Authority for Agriculture and the Environment Public Authority are closely monitoring a concerning situation at Shuwaikh Beach in Kuwait, where numerous dead fish have washed ashore.

The dead fish, predominantly jade fish, were found along the beach from the Petroleum Corporation building to the National Assembly building, brought in by the waves from Kuwait Bay.

Marzouq Al-Azmi, Deputy Director of the General Authority for Agriculture for the Fisheries Sector, acknowledged the presence of dead fish but noted that the numbers were relatively small, concentrated near Al-Salam Beach and Shuwaikh. He highlighted that fish mortality in this area often occurs around this time of year, possibly due to commercial and marine activities.

Al-Azmi explained to Al-Rai that various factors could be contributing to the fish deaths, including pollution from rainwater outlets, red tide events, and poor water quality resulting from harmful human activities.

He noted that the General Authority for Agriculture is coordinating with the Environment Public Authority to assess the situation and control the spread of dead fish. A Fish Mortality Committee meeting was convened to investigate the causes of the phenomenon and develop strategies to pre-

vent recurrence. Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, Deputy Director General of the Environment Public Authority for Technical Affairs, provided more details on the environmental factors contributing to the fish deaths. He mentioned that every year, around mid-April, fish mortality occurs due to coastal sewage discharge, which affects the chemical, physical, and microbial quality of the water. This, combined with rising temperatures, can lead to red tide events, which are known to cause fish deaths.

Al-Zaidan further explained that jade fish migrate from deeper waters to shallow coastal areas during this period to give birth, making them more susceptible to pollutants, red tide, and bacteria. The Environment Public Authority, in collaboration with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, is using satellite imagery to monitor chlorophyll levels, sea surface temperatures, and red tide concentrations to assess the health of the coastal environment.

Efforts to clean the beach and remove dead fish are ongoing, with coordination between various state agencies. Authorities are committed to addressing the sources of pollution and mitigating the impact on the marine environment, aiming to prevent further fish deaths and protect the biodiversity of Kuwait Bay.



Dr Al-Zaidan

### Building height row

## Minister voices objections to some Council decisions

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Municipality, has voiced objections to certain decisions made by the Municipal Council, particularly regarding building height regulations in private and model housing areas. In a letter addressed to the Council's President, she outlined her concerns and proposed revisions to the decisions, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.



Al-Mashaan

Al-Mashaan disagreed with the decision to increase the maximum building height to 20 meters, advocating instead for maintaining it at 15 meters as stipulated in Ministerial Resolution No. 206 of 2009 and its amendments.

Similarly, she contested the proposed basement height of 6 meters, suggesting it be reduced to 5 meters in alignment with the executive branch's proposal.

Additionally, she raised objections to the maximum height of parts attached to the main building, advocating for adherence to the established regulations without exceeding 5 meters.

She also highlighted discrepancies in the wording regarding honorary staircases and the inclusion of pergolas and awnings in the roof area allowance. Furthermore, Al-Mashaan emphasized the need for clarity in language regarding the connection of floors and units within the building design, proposing amendments to ensure alignment with established guidelines.

Overall, Al-Mashaan's objections aim to ensure compliance with existing regulations and promote clarity in decision-making within the Municipal Council.

### 'Threat to humanity'

## Call for global cooperation to fight human trafficking

By Khaled Al-Shemmari

RIYADH, April 25, (KUNA): The success or lack thereof in the fight against human trafficking largely hinges on the level of global cooperation against the scourge, a Kuwaiti official said on Wednesday.

Human trafficking represents one of the most perilous threats to humanity, Kuwaiti Justice Ministry Acting Undersecretary Hashem Al-Qallaf said in a statement to the press on the sidelines of a seminar on the matter, organized by Saudi Arabia's human rights committee.

Such initiatives are paramount to push forward international cooperation in a bid to clamp down on human trafficking, he underlined, saying that the seminar would also shed light on some of the measures Riyadh has taken to rid the world of the nefarious deed.

The Kuwaiti official hoped that more similar gatherings would follow suit to address the growing significance of the matter, emphasizing that information exchange was crucial for more knowledge on the scourge of human trafficking.

### 'Threat to humanity'

## Cybersecurity course ends for young 'entrepreneurs'

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) concluded Wednesday a cybersecurity training course for young entrepreneurs. Professional entrepreneur program aims to help youth acquire key skills to establish their own cybersecurity businesses, the authority's Acting Director General Nasser Al-Sheikh told KUNA during a ceremony to honor the trainees held today at Daiya youth center theater.

The authority is committed to holding training courses in leadership, technological and scientific domains throughout the year to unleash talented youth's innovation and creativity, he said.

Meanwhile, head of the professional entrepreneur program Loyal Al-Otaibi said 27 male and female college graduates participated in the seven-week training course.

It aimed at empowering youth to start their projects in cybersecurity at fewer risks, she noted.

Locally and internationally accredited trainers offered exercises and workshops as well as lectures to the trainees, she said.

She added the move would contribute to alluring promising young minds to invest in scientific fields badly needed by local labor market.

Mohammad Al-Shaya, a trainee, said the course was a chance to learn about the key rules of cybersecurity and means of protecting companies and corporations.

**Celebrate with Style**

A place to make unforgettable memories

**MUGHAL MAHAL FAHAHEEL**

**AL-RAYAN FAMILY LOUNGE & FUNCTION HALL**

Sea view | Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175 / 97644421

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

@mughalmahalkuwait

www.mughalmahal.com

Meeting covered illegal cultural property trade and coordinating positions at int'l arenas

# NCCAL affirms significance of Gulf museums undersecretaries meet



Officials during the 22nd meeting of undersecretaries of GCC member states' temples and museums.

KUNA photo

DOHA, April 25, (KUNA); The 22nd meeting of undersecretaries in charge of GCC member states' temples and museums was imperative as it discussed several topics and activities, Assistant Secretary General of museum and monuments sector at Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Mohammad bin Redha said Wednesday.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement while partaking in the gathering kicked off in the Qatari capital of Doha, bin Redha said the meeting covered illegal cultural property trade and coordinating positions at international arenas as well as international cooperation and enhancing museums.

The conferees further focused on means of boosting joint periodical exhibition of monuments, developing museums and monuments periodical bulletin as well as a proposal on a plan of action of museums and monuments committee for 2025-2030, he noted.

Coinciding with the meeting, Qatar Museums held an honoring ceremony for specialists and researchers in this field, and GCC private museums' owners.

Kuwait's Abdulaziz Behman and Omar Al-Dosari were honored at the ceremony.

## 'NNA and KUNA share similar ideologies'

### Lebanon's state-run news agency praises 'enduring' ties with Kuwait

BEIRUT, April 25, (KUNA); Lebanon's state-run news agency on Wednesday heaped praise on ties with its Kuwaiti counterpart, describing these relations as "enduring" and for the betterment of pan-Arab journalism.

The National News Agency (NNA) and Kuwait's state-run KUNA news agency share similar ideologies that promote the concept of "free journalism," albeit within established rules and regulations, NNA chief Ziyad Kharfash said as he paid a visit to KUNA's bureau in the Lebanese capital.

Cooperation within Arab news agencies has been on the rise as part of efforts to ensure "accuracy and trust" when providing information to the general public, which runs the gamut from reports covering health to tourism and the environment, he underlined.

On day-to-day operations at the Beirut-based news agency, he said staff there bear in mind the nation's "best interests" when covering news stories, in a country renowned for cultural, political and religious diversity, he added.

# MEW and Interior collaborate in bid to collect outstanding debts

Debts are allegedly being categorized into segments

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Reliable sources within the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy have disclosed that the ministry is determined to finalize all connection procedures with the Ministry of Interior for the retrieval of outstanding debts from citizens. These procedures, initiated approximately two weeks ago, are projected to conclude by mid-May as per the established plan.

According to insights shared with Al-Jari-

da, seamless coordination between the ministries of Electricity and Interior is ongoing to expedite the process, ensuring the collection of overdue debts during any transaction conducted by citizens with the Interior Ministry across its various sectors.

Furthermore, efforts are underway to collaborate with the Ministry of Justice to enforce debt repayment, emphasizing adherence to specified timelines without fail.

This strategic move aligns with the ministry's digital transformation initiatives and aims to address concerns surrounding debt collection practices. Notably, the Ministry of Electricity has already established connections with the Ministry of Public Works concerning treated water,

delivery services.

Debts are being categorized into segments, beginning from 500 dinars and above, with transactions below this threshold proceeding smoothly.

The ministry, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and Justice, is in the process of defining these segments. Moreover, the ministry has implemented various procedures for debt installment, accompanied by extensive customer service support to alleviate citizen burdens while ensuring timely payments for utilized water and electricity services.

The concerted efforts to facilitate debt collection underscore the ministry's commitment to serving the public interest, as these accumulated funds will contribute to alleviating financial strains on citizens. Appreciation is extended to all involved parties for their dedication to achieving these objectives through streamlined procedures.



A photo from the French Maritime Tour.

## 'French Maritime Tour'

### French maritime expertise anchors in United Arab Emirates and Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: A delegation of leading French maritime companies will set sail towards the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait from April 22 to April 24, embarking on a strategic venture during the "French Maritime Tour." This initiative, organized by Business France, the agency supporting the international development of the French economy, aims to navigate new projects and forge robust alliances in the port and maritime sectors of these dynamic regions.

The tour, marking its second edition, will feature strategic stops in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and an inaugural visit to Kuwait City. Tailored to facilitate direct B2B engagements, this mission will provide French enterprises a platform to pitch innovative solutions and engage in substantive discussions on topics critical to the maritime industry, including decarbonization, sustainable maritime solutions, digital transformation, and the security of maritime operations.

#### French innovative solutions meeting regional demand

The UAE, with its pivotal maritime hubs like Jebel Ali Port managed by DP World, one of the world's top port operators, is seeking advanced technologies to further its ambitious projects. To sustain its competitive advantage, the UAE is actively pursuing state-of-the-art solutions, especially in the development of 'Ports of the Future' and 'Green Ports.' These initiatives encompass a range of projects including the expansion and creation of new port facilities, the enlargement of Abu Dhabi Port, the construction of artificial islands, the enhancement of port security, and a firm commitment to sustainable practices. These efforts aim to ensure that port facilities, equipment, and operations are more environmentally conscious and sustainable.

Similarly, Kuwait showcases a notable increase in the export growth rate, pointing to a robust trade environment. Kuwait's national fleet has grown by 7.2% in 2022, indicating an investment in maritime transport capacity and in the maritime sector in general.

The development of the Silk City free trade zone in the north, as well as the Five Islands megaproject, at a total estimated cost of around \$2.3 billion, combined with Kuwait's strategic location, offer ample opportunities for further expansion and innovation in the maritime sector, particularly in transport services and fleet development as well as smart technologies to enhance operational efficiencies and environmental sustainability.

#### Building on a legacy of maritime excellence

France's rich maritime heritage and technological prowess position its maritime sector as a beacon of innovation and sustainability.

As the world's seventh-largest maritime power, France boasts the second largest maritime domain after the United States. Encompassing nearly 22,860 km of maritime borders shared with 30 states - more than any other country in the world - France is a dominant maritime nation. It is home to 66 maritime commercial ports, including 12 state maritime ports: 11 major maritime ports and one national interest port. As a global ocean player, France maintains a presence in all the world's oceans, supported

by an exclusive economic zone rich in biodiversity and brings to the table a profound commitment to advancing maritime technology and environmental stewardship, ensuring the sector's adaptability to the challenges of the 21st century.

The solutions showcased by the French delegation reflects France's commitment to preserving marine environments and promoting a sustainable maritime economy. These efforts underscore the pivotal role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in adapting maritime transport to the challenges of the 21st century.

Featured innovations include decision-making systems for maritime navigation, underwater exploration and mapping, as well as advanced technologies like multi-beam and single-beam bathymetry, marine geophysics, and 3D modeling of maritime structures. Additionally, the delegation is presenting solutions for the inspection and maintenance of maritime works, rescue equipment, laser scanning tools, measurement devices for pleasure boats, and intelligent systems for real-time collection and sharing of meteorological data.

#### A broader mission to foster bilateral ties

More than a commercial visit, this mission serves as a vital channel to enhance the long-established relationships between France and the Gulf countries.

The delegation was warmly welcomed at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure in Dubai, and engaged with local stakeholders who outlined Dubai's and the Northern Emirates' maritime ambitions.

On April 23, Maqta Gateway in Abu Dhabi was set to host the delegation for a comprehensive plenary session featuring presentations from local stakeholders, including Abu Dhabi Port, ADNOC L&S, and KEZAD with the presence of HE Nicolas Niemtchinow the Ambassador of France to the UAE. Additionally, B2B sessions are expected as well as pitches from French companies, and site visits across Abu Dhabi maritime infrastructures.

On the final day, the French delegation's itinerary culminates in Kuwait City. They will be welcomed by a breakfast organized by HE Claire LE FLECHER the Ambassador of France to Kuwait.

The schedule includes engagements with key local stakeholders like the Kuwait Ports Corporation or the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, opportunities for B2B dialogues with Kuwaiti firms, and concluding with a tour of Kuwait's newly established port.

If you would like to know more about the French delegation you can visit their website:

ACEBI; CMRGROUP; ECOCEAN; IADYS; ID OCEAN; LOUISDREYFUS Ports & Logistics; SEAOWL; TNPSFL TOUDGWARD; TRAFIC TRANSPORT SURETE; 3CMETAL; CAPEFRONT CONSULTING

For further information on the French Maritime Tour and opportunities within the French maritime sector, please contact:

Hajer Bchir - Communication advisor - hajer.bchir@businessfrance.fr

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

Promo period from 20<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

مدة العرض من ٢٠ أبريل حتى ٣٠ أبريل ٢٠٢٤

Terms & conditions apply\*

## 'Forum aims to cultivate innovation and excellence skills among youth'

# Youth Medical Forum gives valuable insights into healthcare specializations



The conference in session.

Al-Jarida photo

### Kuwaiti, Bosnian FM's in talks

## Move to enhance bilateral ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 25, (KUNA): Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received a phone call on Thursday from his counterpart

of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic, discussing bilateral relations and ways to enhance the ties.

### Gulf states

Continued from Page 1

While acknowledging the responsibility of oil-producing nations in addressing climate change, it is essential to approach the issue with professionalism and scientific rigor. This includes investing in research and innovation, enhancing collaboration between research institutions and private entities, and adopting sustainable practices to mitigate climate risks.

Furthermore, the discussion highlights the importance of prioritizing scientific research in GCC countries and increasing investment in this critical area. While some Gulf nations have made strides in scientific research spending, there is a need for sustained efforts to bolster research production and innovation indicators.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges of climate change requires a serious and decisive approach, characterized by robust research efforts, proactive policymaking, and international collaboration. By taking concerted action, Gulf nations can effectively mitigate the impacts of climate change and safeguard the well-being of their populations for generations to come.

### Iran rejects

Continued from Page 1

Furthermore, Kanaani reiterated Iran's willingness to engage in discussions within a framework that respects mutual interests. He underscored the importance of regional cooperation based on good faith and urged against the interference of third-party governments in the dispute. Kanaani expressed confidence in the ability of the involved governments to reach a satisfactory agreement through friendly collaboration, away from the distractions of media sensationalism.

### Abdullah Al-Salem

Continued from Page 1

For his part, the IICO Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Abdullah Al-Ma'atouq, affirmed that this agreement comes in light of the Charitable Organization's strategic plan for 2022-2026, which aims to provide educational opportunities with high-quality outcomes for the neediest students.

The agreement aims to nurture and qualify promising, effective and positively influential leaders in their societies, establishing a center for attracting talents in the specializations offered by the university and establishing specialized centers for the economic empowerment of individuals and institutions.

### Concerns rise

Continued from Page 1

He said whoever watches the video of Al-Qeraifa's speech will realize that he is very loyal to the political leadership and committed to the legitimacy of the ruling Al-Sabah Family.

He underscored the need to fully abide by the Constitution and protect personal and political freedoms. He said the government must be the first to support and protect freedom.

MP-elect Abdulkareem Al-Kandari stated it is unacceptable that remand is being turned into a form of punishment, especially since the address of Al-Qeraifa is known and he is not a flight risk.

Former MP Musalam Al-Barrak, who also attended the gathering, said the people expect hard times and the harsh manner of dealing with political activists; but this will not scare them.

He is worried that the current situation could be like the Byzantine argument on whether the angels are males or females, which led to the failure of the Byzantine Empire.

Meanwhile, two citizens have withdrawn their appeal to nullify the votes of those who acquired the Kuwaiti nationality based on the naturalization of their fathers.

### 2nd aid

Continued from Page 1

The Society is coordinating efforts with the Kuwaiti embassy in Sudan to provide urgent relief, commented Al-Oun thanking

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Youth Medical Forum, organized by the Scientific Center in collaboration with the WIN Academy, has provided high school students valuable insights into various healthcare specializations, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Mohammed Al-Sanousi, Deputy Director General of Visitor Experience at the Scientific Center, highlighted the forum's aim to educate students about healthcare disciplines and assist them in making informed decisions about their university majors.

Throughout the forum, workshops and interactive courses led

by healthcare professionals from the WIN Academy covered a range of specializations including pharmacy, dentistry, and allied medicine.



Al-Sanousi

These sessions, blending theory with practical application, offered participants a comprehensive educational experience. The integration of virtual reality technology fur-

ther enriched the learning process, enabling students to engage with medical specialties in a unique and immersive manner.

Additionally, the forum featured an interactive exhibition, organized in collaboration with leading entities and companies in the healthcare sector. Participants had the opportunity to access valuable services and receive gifts from exhibition contributors.

Al-Sanousi lauded the forum as a valuable opportunity for young individuals to deepen their understanding of healthcare and contribute to the advancement of Kuwait's healthcare sector. He

emphasized the forum's role in fostering communication between theoretical knowledge and practical application, enabling students to explore and define their career paths in healthcare.

Moreover, the forum aimed to cultivate innovation and excellence skills among youth, empowering them to make informed decisions about their professional futures. Al-Sanousi encouraged students and those interested in the medical field to participate in future educational activities and programs organized by the Scientific Center.

# Ministry alters regulations for 'Zakat' distribution by co-ops

Disbursement should be via a 'cheque' adhering to Sharia aspects

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Sheikh Firas Al-Malik, has issued a ministerial decision altering Article (80) of Ministerial Resolution No. 46/T of 2021, pertaining to the regulations governing cooperative work, specifically regarding the distribution of Zakat funds by cooperative societies, reports Al-Jarida daily.

As per the decision, if any cooperative society intends to allocate Zakat from its funds post the approval of the ordinary general assembly, it must be computed through the Zakat House.

The disbursement must be made via a "cheque" adhering to Sharia aspects and cannot be disbursed without ministry approval. Additionally, should the cooperative decide to cease Zakat payments, it requires the assent of its general assembly. Any conflicting text with the decision will be annulled, effective from the publication date in the Official Gazette.

Simultaneously, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Abdulaziz Sari, has issued an Administrative Resolution No. 1084 of 2024, concerning the restructuring of the ministry's sites inventory and follow-up committee.

The committee, chaired by the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development Sector Affairs, includes directors from charitable societies, foundations, and civil society organizations for planning and follow-up.

The committee's responsibilities, as outlined in the decision obtained by Al-Jarida, encompass inventorying and monitoring sites allocated to the ministry by Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. It also oversees receiving sites from relevant authorities and managing their utilization by the ministry's sectors.

Moreover, the committee is tasked with inventorying all ministry-owned buildings and facilities, tracking projects initiated by the Ministry of Works and Housing on allocated sites, and examining plans proposed by public benefit associations and affiliated sites.

Meetings of the committee are convened at the discretion of its chair or deputy, with decisions made by majority vote. In cases of tie votes, the chair's preference prevails.

The committee may engage experienced specialists to attend meetings without voting rights. The decision takes effect upon issuance and remains valid for one year, with competent authorities mandated to implement its provisions.

## 'Citizen is entitled to rent allowance'

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: A court ruling has affirmed that a citizen is entitled to rent allowance of KD150 per month starting from April 25, 2021, reports Al-Anba daily.

Attorney Dhuwayhi Al-Fadhli, who represented the citizen in court, pointed out that his client fulfilled all the conditions for the rental allowance entitlement. This led to the cancellation of all administrative decisions against his client and confirmed his right to receive the abovementioned allowance.



Top and above: Some photos from the celebration.

Photos by Leah Qurtal

## 'Both countries enjoy excellent bilateral cooperation'

# Bangladeshi ambassador marks Independence Day and 50 years of diplomatic ties with Kuwait

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Ambassador of the Republic of Bangladesh to the State of Kuwait Major General MD Ashiquzzaman affirmed that March 26 is the Independence Day and National Day of Bangladesh.

He explained that Bangladesh's independence was achieved through a long political struggle that lasted 23 years and ended with the War of Independence in 1971.

The ambassador said, "This year, we celebrate the 54th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence and National Day, as well as 50 years of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Kuwait."

During the celebration on the occasion of Bangladesh's Independence Day which was held the day before yesterday evening in the presence of the Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development Sheikh Firas Al-Malik, he said, "I would like to recall the deep and historical relationship of friendship and brotherhood between Bangladesh and the State of Kuwait."

### Grateful

The people of Bangladesh will remain grateful to Kuwait because Kuwait is the first Gulf country to recognize Bangladesh after its independence.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974, Bangladesh and Kuwait have enjoyed excellent bilateral cooperation in a wide range of fields including political, economic, export and import, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, tourism and defense sectors.

We also sincerely appreciate the support of the Kuwait Arab Development Fund in establishing several infrastructure projects that have had a significant impact on our social and economic developments."

The Bangladesh government is committed to continue strengthening the bilateral cooperation with Kuwait in all fields. For mutual benefit, the two countries pledged to identify new areas for mutual cooperation such as food security, health security, climate change, renewable energy, green technology, information and communications technology, digital transformation, etc.

The military cooperation between Bangladesh and the State of Kuwait is very special.

After the liberation of Kuwait from 1991 to date, the Bangladesh Military Contingent (BMC) has been operating here under the command of the Kuwait Armed Forces in a project called Operation Kuwait Punargathan (OKP).

At present, about 5,000 members



The ceremonial cake is being cut.



Some of the guests at the event.

of the Bangladesh Armed Forces are deployed with the Kuwait Armed Forces, as cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries shows the confidence of His Highness the Amir in Bangladesh.

At the turning point of the golden jubilee of diplomatic relations, we sincerely believe with firm confidence that our excellent relationship will be further strengthened through the wise and rational leadership of both countries in the coming days.

The Bangladesh government has been consistent in supporting our foreign policy of "friendship to all, hostility to none" as declared by the Father of the Nation.

### Humanitarian

Ladies and gentlemen, despite being a densely populated country, we have sheltered millions of Rohingyas, and forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals in Bangladesh, for humanitarian reasons only, as Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem."

The ambassador expressed his gratitude to the government of the State of Kuwait, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait and other organizations for their continued support in this humanitarian issue.

He said, "We call on the United Nations and the international community, including Myanmar, to take early and effective measures to find a lasting solution to this problem and return everyone to their homeland, Myanmar, in dignity, safety and security."

The ambassador condemned the killing of innocent civilians, including women and children, demanding an immediate end to Israeli atrocities in Palestine.

He said, "We firmly believe that the two-state solution is the only viable way to ensure lasting peace in the region. We reaffirm our firm support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people through the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state."

The ambassador extended his sincere appreciation to the Amir of the country, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the Deputy Amir and Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, and all previous leaders and the brotherly people of the State of Kuwait "for their continued support for us and our citizens residing in Kuwait over the past five decades."

He also stated that the volume of trade between the two countries by 2023 reached about two billion dollars.

## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Poland lays out gov't vision:** Poland's Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski told parliament on Thursday that the government wants to return to the group of countries which sets the agenda of the European Union, laying out the government's vision at a historically crucial moment with war across the border in Ukraine.

He warned that a Russian attack on NATO would end in defeat for Moscow, but NATO must increase its defenses.

Ahead of the speech, the foreign ministry said Sikorski's vision was closely aligned with that of French President Emmanuel Macron, who was also laying out his ambitions for Europe to be a more assertive global power in a speech on Thursday. Senior Polish officials have welcomed Macron's outspoken support for Ukraine but also want Paris to increase its deliveries of military aid.



Tusk

Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has waged a hybrid war against Poland, including with disinformation, Sikorski charged. He said Russia was lying when it falsely claimed that Poland seeks to annex parts of Western Ukraine around the city of Lviv that once belonged to Poland.

Speaking in Ukrainian, he said: "Lviv is Ukraine."

Sikorski's speech was devoted to describing the new direction of the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, which took office in December.

Sikorski sought to explain how Poland's priorities changed after Tusk's government replaced a national conservative party, led by the Law and Justice party, in respect to rule of law and international relations. (AP)

□ □ □

**Russia vetoes UN resolution:** Russia on Wednesday vetoed a UN resolution sponsored by the United States and Japan calling on all nations to prevent a dangerous nuclear arms race in outer space, calling it "a dirty spectacle" that cherry-picks weapons of mass destruction from all other weapons that should also be banned.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13 in favor, Russia opposed and China abstaining.

The resolution would have called on all countries not to develop or deploy nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction in space, as banned under a 1967 international treaty that included the US and Russia, and to agree to the need to verify compliance.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said after the vote that Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space.

"Today's veto begs the question: Why? Why, if you are following the rules, would you not support a resolution that reaffirms them? What could you possibly be hiding," she asked. "It's baffling. And it's a shame."

Putin was responding to White House confirmation in February that Russia has obtained a "troubling" anti-satellite weapon capability, although such a weapon is not operational yet. (AP)

□ □ □

**3rd man held in Russia major bribery case:** A third man has been detained in a bribery case involving one of Russia's most senior defense officials, Moscow's court service said Thursday.

It said businessman Alexander Fomin is suspected of paying bribes to Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov, who was detained on Wednesday, as well as Ivanov's associate, Sergei Borodin. All of the men are to remain in custody until at least June 23.

It is rare for such a high-ranking official to be accused of a crime in Russia. Ivanov, an ally of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, was jailed pending an investigation and trial on charges of bribery, court officials said in a statement. He was in charge of military construction projects and was previously accused of living a lavish lifestyle in anti-corruption investigations conducted by the team of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. It is unclear what sparked the decision to charge him with bribery.

Ivanov, 48, was sanctioned by both the United States and European Union in 2022 after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. (AP)

□ □ □

**'Ukraine uses missiles secretly provided by US':** Ukraine for the first time has begun using long-range ballistic missiles provided secretly by the United States, bombing a Russian military airfield in Crimea last week and Russian forces in another occupied area overnight, American officials said Wednesday.

Long sought by Ukrainian leaders, the new missiles give Ukraine nearly double the striking distance - up to 300 kilometers (190 miles) - that it had with the mid-range version of the weapon that it received from the US last October.

"We've already sent some, we will send more now that we have additional authority and money," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. The additional ATACMS were included in a new military aid package signed by President Joe Biden on Wednesday.

Biden approved delivery of the long-range Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, in February, and then in March the U.S. included a "significant" number of them in a \$300 million aid package announced, officials said. (AP)

□ □ □

**Spain's PM considers resigning:** Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez denied corruption allegations against his wife but said he will consider resigning after the launch Wednesday of a judicial investigation into accusations by a right-wing legal platform that she used her position to influence business deals.

Sánchez said in a letter posted on his X account that while the allegations against his wife Begoña Gómez are false, he is canceling his public agenda until Monday when he will announce whether he will continue or step down.

"I need to stop and reflect," Sánchez wrote. "I must answer the question if it is worth it to continue, given the mud pit the right and far right have made out of our politics, if I must continue at the helm of the government or renounce that highest of honors."

Sánchez, 52, has been Spain's prime minister since 2018. He was able to form a new left-wing coalition government in November to start another four-year term. He is one of Europe's longest serving Socialist leaders. (AP)

□ □ □

**2 military horses in serious condition:** Two military horses that bolted and ran miles through the streets of London after being spooked by construction noise and tossing their riders were in a serious condition and required operations, a British government official said Thursday.

The animals were among a group of four horses that broke free during routine exercises Wednesday near Buckingham Palace, tossing their riders and causing chaos as they galloped loose through central London streets during the morning rush hour. A fifth horse that tried to bolt had not been able to break free.

Two of the horses required operations and one was transferred to an equine hospital, the British Army said on X, the social media platform. (AP)

□ □ □

**Technical glitch temporarily closed Norway airspace:** A technical problem caused aviation authorities in Norway to temporarily close the airspace over the south of the country Thursday, leading to significant delays at Oslo airport, one of the largest in Scandinavia.

The airspace was gradually reopened after more than three hours, but delays would continue throughout the day, the state-owned airport operator said.

In a statement, Avinor said "the technical error was at the Oslo Control Center, which meant that the airspace in southern Norway had major restrictions." (AP)

□ □ □



US President Joe Biden speaks to the North America's Building Trade Union National Legislative Conference on April 24, 2024, in Washington. Biden picked up the endorsement of North America's Building Trades Unions at a Wednesday event where the president and his allies set out to dismantle Republican Donald Trump's reputation as a successful real estate developer. (AP)

## Politics

## US prez picks up another big union endorsement

## Biden signs \$95bn aid for Ukraine and Taiwan

WASHINGTON, April 25, (AP) — US President Joe Biden signed into law on Wednesday a \$95 billion war aid measure that includes aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan and that also has a provision that would force social media site TikTok to be sold or be banned in the US.

The announcement marks an end to the long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress over urgently needed assistance for Ukraine.

"We rose to the moment, we came together, and we got it done," Biden said at White House event to announce the signing. "Now we need to move fast, and we are."

## Recover

But significant damage has been done to the Biden administration's effort to help Ukraine repel Russia's invasion during the funding impasse that dates back to August, when the Democratic president made his first emergency spending request for Ukraine aid. Even with a burst of new weapons and ammunition, it's unlikely Ukraine will immediately recover after months of setbacks.

Biden approved immediately sending Ukraine \$1 billion in military assistance and said the shipment would begin arriving in the "next few hours" - the first tranche from about \$61 billion allocated for Ukraine. The package includes air defense capabilities, artillery rounds, armored vehicles and other weapons to shore up Ukrainian forces who have seen morale sink as Russian President Vladimir Putin has racked up win after win.

But longer term, it remains uncertain if Ukraine - after months of losses in Eastern Ukraine and sustaining massive damage to its infrastructure - can make enough progress to sustain American political support before burning through the latest influx of money.

"It's not going in the Ukrainians' favor in the Donbas, certainly not elsewhere in the country," said White House national security spokesman John Kirby, referring to the eastern industrial heartland where Ukraine has suffered setbacks. "Mr. Putin thinks he can play for time. So we've got to try to make up some of that time."

Tucked into the measure is a provision that gives TikTok's Beijing-based

## Ariz 'indicts' 18 in poll interference case, including Giuliani &amp; Meadows

PHOENIX, April 25, (AP) — An Arizona grand jury has indicted former US president Donald Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows, lawyer Rudy Giuliani and 16 others for their roles in an attempt to overturn Trump's loss to Joe Biden in the 2020 election.

The indictment released Wednesday names 11 Republicans who submitted a document to Congress falsely declaring that Trump won Arizona in 2020. They include the former state party chair, a 2022 U.S. Senate candidate and two sitting state lawmakers, who are charged with nine counts each of conspiracy, fraud and forgery.

The identities of seven other defendants, including Giuliani and Meadows, were not immediately released because they had not yet been served with the documents. They were readily identifiable based on descriptions of the defendants, however.

Trump himself was not charged but was referred to as an unindicted co-conspirator.

With the indictments, Arizona becomes the fourth state where allies

of the former president have been charged with using false or unproven claims about voter fraud related to the election.

## Also:

**WASHINGTON:** President Joe Biden has granted clemency to 16 people who were convicted of non-violent drug crimes, issuing pardons to 11 men and women and commuting the sentences of five other people in the latest use of his clemency power to address racial disparities in the justice system.

Biden said in a statement Wednesday that April is Second Chance Month and that many of the individuals getting clemency had received "disproportionately longer" sentences than they would have under current law.

The Democratic president is campaigning for reelection in November and is grappling with how to boost support from communities of color that heavily supported him over Republican Donald Trump in the 2020 election.

The two rivals are headed for a likely rematch in November.

parent company, ByteDance, nine months to sell it or face a nationwide prohibition in the United States. The president can grant a one-time extension of 90 days, bringing the timeline to sell to one year, if he certifies that there's a path to divestiture and "significant progress" toward executing it.

The administration and a bipartisan group of lawmakers have called the social media site a growing national security concern.

## Also:

**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden picked up the endorsement of North America's Building Trades Unions at a Wednesday event where the president and his allies set out to dismantle Republican Donald Trump's reputation as a successful real estate developer.

"Donald Trump is incapable of running anything," said Sean McGarvey, the organization's president. "God help us if he gets anywhere near the White House in the future."

The event, held in a Washington hotel ballroom with a boisterous crowd of union members, was another salvo in the battle for votes from blue collar workers. Trump has tried to chip away at Democrats' traditional advantage with organized labor, while Biden has been adding to his roster of endorsements and trying to fend off his predecessor's comeback bid.

Biden said unions would help him make Trump a "loser again," and he mocked Trump's inability to pass infrastructure legislation when he was president, saying "he never built a thing."

**'Convict former deputy':** Prosecutors on Wednesday urged jurors to convict a former Colorado sheriff's deputy of murder and other charges for shooting and

killing a 22-year-old man in distress after they say the deputy needlessly escalated a standoff with him.

The 2022 death of Christian Glass in a

small mountain community drew national attention and prompted calls for police reforms focused on crisis intervention. A second officer indicted in Glass' death previously pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor. Six other officers have been charged with failing to intervene.

In the closing arguments of Andrew Buen's trial, the defense argued that Buen shot Glass to protect a fellow officer, which made the shooting legally justified. (AP)

□ □ □

**Pilot reported fire on plane:** One of the two pilots of a vintage military plane that was delivering heating oil to a remote Alaska Native village reported a fire on board shortly before the aircraft crashed and burned outside Fairbanks, killing both of them and leaving debris over a wide area, a federal transportation official said Wednesday.

The pilot made radio contact about the in-flight emergency shortly after taking off Tuesday, said Clint Johnson, head of the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska regional office. They were attempting to return to Fairbanks International Airport when they lost contact, he said.

The C54D-DC airplane - a military version of the World War II-era Douglas DC-4 aircraft - crashed about 7 miles (11 kilometers) outside Fairbanks. (AP)



Smoke rises after a Douglas C-54 Skymaster plane crashed into the Tanana River outside Fairbanks, Alaska on April 23. One of the two pilots of a vintage military plane that was delivering heating oil to a remote Alaska Native village reported a fire on board shortly before the aircraft crashed and burned outside Fairbanks, killing both of them and leaving debris over a wide area, a federal transportation official said on April 24. (AP)



Bain



Biden

## America

**Jill Biden launches bike ride:** Jill Biden sounded a red horn to start the Wounded Warrior Project's annual Soldier Ride from the White House lawn, using the launch of the multiday bike ride to stress the importance of supporting service members.

"My husband often says that we have many obligations as a nation but only one sacred obligation: to support you and your families when we send you into harm's way and when you return," she said of President Joe Biden, who is up for reelection.

Jill Biden spoke about steps the administration has taken to expand veteran access to quality home health care, provide benefits and care for veterans harmed by toxins and prevent homelessness and suicide among veterans. She also talked about help for spouses of active-duty and retired servicemembers.

President Biden unexpectedly joined the first lady after signing a \$95 billion war aid bill and referred to the group of riders as the "spine of America." (AP)

□ □ □

**Man charged with murder:** The longtime boyfriend of a central Florida mother whose teenage daughter was reported missing in February was charged Wednesday with the 13-year-old girl's murder, officials said.

Stephan Sterns was charged with first-degree murder for the killing of Madeline Soto, according to court records filed in Osceola County on Wednesday.

Madeline Soto was reported missing Feb. 26 after her mother, Jennifer Soto, said she didn't find the teenager when she went to pick her up from school. Her body was found in a wooded area several days later.

State Attorney Andrew Bain said at a news conference that prosecutors haven't decided yet whether to seek the death penalty for Sterns. Bain wouldn't say whether the teenager's mother was suspected of wrongdoing, though Kissimmee Police Chief Betty Holland said that Jennifer Soto has cooperated with detectives throughout the investigation. (AP)

□ □ □



Denmark's King Frederick X, (center), speaks with student Helena Bak Holmlaender about Coded Design at the opening of Denmark's Media and Journalism School, in Copenhagen on April 24. (AP)

## Africa

## Togo targets media

## Burkina army killed 223 civilians – HRW

DAKAR, Senegal, April 25, (AP): Military forces in Burkina Faso killed 223 civilians, including babies and many children, in attacks on two villages accused of cooperating with militants, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report published Thursday.

The mass killings took place on Feb. 25 in the country's northern villages of Nondin and Soro, and some 56 children were among the dead, according to the report. The human rights organization called on the United Nations and the African Union to provide investigators and to support local efforts to bring those responsible to justice.

"The massacres in Nondin and Soro villages are just the latest mass killings of civilians by the Burkina Faso military in their counterinsurgency operations," Human Rights Watch Executive Director Tirana Hassan said in a statement. "International assistance is critical to support a credible investigation into possible crimes against humanity."



Hassan

The once-peaceful nation has been ravaged by violence that has pitted jihadis linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group against state-backed forces. Both sides have targeted civilians caught in the middle, displacing more than 2 million people, of which over half are children. Most attacks go unpunished and unreported in a nation run by a repressive leadership that silences perceived dissidents.

The HRW report provided a rare firsthand account of the killings by survivors amid a stark increase in civilian casualties by Burkina Faso's security forces as the junta struggles to beat back a growing jihadi insurgency and attacks residents under the guise of counterterrorism.

## Attack

Earlier in April, The Associated Press verified accounts of a Nov. 5 army attack on another village that killed at least 70 people. The details were similar - the army blamed the villagers for cooperating with militants and massacred them, even babies.

Witnesses and survivors told HRW that the Feb. 25 killings were believed to have been carried out in retaliation for an attack by Islamist fighters on a military camp near the provincial capital Ouahigouya, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) away.

The toll of civilian deaths was higher than first described by local officials. A public prosecutor previously said that his office was investigating the reported deaths of 170 people in attacks carried out on those villages.

A Burkina Faso government spokesperson didn't respond to requests for comment about the Feb. 25 attack. Officials previously denied killing civilians and said jihadi fighters often disguise themselves as soldiers.

More than 20,000 people have been killed in Burkina Faso since jihadi violence linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group first hit the West African nation nine years ago, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, a United States-based nonprofit.

**Togo cracking down on media:** Authorities in Togo have repressed the media and prevented civilians from gathering to protest peacefully, Amnesty International said in a report published Wednesday, ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled to take place at the end of this month.

Amnesty International said in its annual report on human rights around the world that two newspapers in Togo were forced to close for several months last year, while a number of journalists were arrested or hit with hefty fines after reporting on corruption.

Two journalists in Togo were sentenced to three years in prison after reporting about a minister's involvement in corruption, but both fled the country to avoid detention. The human rights organization said it had recorded instances in which detainees in prison were tortured or mistreated.

The report comes at a time of heightened tension in Togo, a country of about 8 million people that has been ruled by the same family for almost 60 years. Parliamentary elections have been pushed back until April 29, and the government have arrested opposition figures and quashed efforts to organize protests ahead of the vote.

**'No final decision on withdrawing troops':** There has been no final decision on whether or not all U.S. troops will leave Niger and Chad, two African countries that are integral to the military's efforts to counter violent extremist organizations across the Sahel region, a top U.S. military official told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Niger's ruling junta ended an agreement last month that allows U.S. troops to operate in the West African country. The State Department said Wednesday night that U.S. and Nigerian officials would meet Thursday in the capital, Niamey, "to initiate discussions on an orderly and responsible withdrawal of U.S. forces."

That meeting comes as the two countries have been "unable to reach an understanding" to continue cooperation "in a manner that addresses the needs and concerns of each side," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said.

The government of neighboring Chad in recent days also has questioned its agreement with the U.S., Joint Chiefs Vice Chairman Adm. Christopher Grady, the nation's second-highest-ranking military officer, said in an interview.

**'UK approached Botswana':** Botswana's foreign minister said his country had been approached by the UK to take some of what he called their "unwanted immigrants" but declined the request.

Lemogang Kwape's comments in a telephone interview with South African television channel Newzroom Afrika on Tuesday came hours after the British Parliament finally passed legislation allowing a contentious plan to send some migrants to Rwanda to move ahead. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the first flights to Rwanda in East Africa would now leave in July.

Kwape didn't say when the UK approached the southern African nation of Botswana. It struck its contentious deal with Rwanda in April 2022 and British media has reported that the U.K. government has since held talks with four countries - Armenia, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast and Botswana - over replicating the Rwanda plan.



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, visits an international logistics hub park in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality on April 22. Xi inspected southwest China's Chongqing Municipality from Monday to Tuesday. (Xinhua)

## Asia

## Taiwan's Lai appoints foreign, defense ministers

## China urges global efforts for multilateralism

## Police charge 5 teens

## Australia, New Zealand honor war dead

UNITED NATIONS, April 25, (Agencies): China on Wednesday urged the United Nations to take collective actions to promote multilateralism and create a shared future for mankind.

Speaking here at a special event commemorating the "International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace," Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, emphasized the critical need for genuine multilateralism in today's complex global landscape.

## Practice

"The only right path forward in the face of various global challenges is to uphold and practice true multilateralism," Geng said, highlighting the upcoming Summit of the Future and the 80th anniversary of the UN as pivotal moments to strengthen global unity under the UN's guidance.

Geng stressed the importance of adhering to the UN Charter, which he noted is not outdated but underutilized in its principles and purposes. "We face many challenges today, not because the Charter is outdated, but because its purposes and principles have not been effectively delivered," he said. "Our commitment to the authority and effectiveness of the Charter must be reflected in concrete actions."

Looking ahead to the Summit of the Future in September, Geng expressed his anticipation for a meeting that would "reaffirm our commitments to the UN Charter and reinvigorate our confidence in multilateralism." He stressed the importance of an international order based on international law, and opposed any unilateral actions that undermine this framework.

"In today's fluid and turbulent international landscape, we must always adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and handle international affairs in accordance with international law," Geng said. He criticized the so-called "rules-based international order" pushed by some countries, which often contradicts established international laws and norms. Highlighting the need for inclusivity in global governance, Geng called for a more democratic international system that allows all nations, regardless of size, to have an equal say in international affairs.

He noted the need for the upcoming Summit to address the demands of the international community, especially in

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 25, (AP): Hundreds of thousands of people gathered across Australia and New Zealand for dawn services and street marches Thursday to commemorate their war dead on Anzac Day.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon attended a dawn service in his country's largest city, Auckland, while Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese saw the sun rise at a World War II memorial in the wilds of Australia's nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea.

April 25 is the date in 1915 when the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the beaches of Gallipoli, in northwest Turkey, in an ill-fated campaign that was the soldiers' first combat of World War I.

Albanese trekked to the memorial in the town of Isurava over two days with Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape. Isurava was the site of a major battle where United States and Australian troops fought the Japanese in August 1942. In New Zealand, Luxon told the crowd that the country had its military personnel to thank for their freedom and democracy.

## Also:

**MELBOURNE, Australia:** Five teenagers accused of following a vi-

olent extremist ideology have been charged with a range of offenses in an investigation that began with the stabbing of a bishop in a Sydney church, police said Thursday.

The five, aged from 14 to 17, were among seven boys arrested across southwest Sydney on Wednesday in a major operation by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team. The team 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.

**MELBOURNE, Australia:** A Sydney bishop who was stabbed repeatedly in an alleged extremist attack blamed on a teenager has backed X Corp. owner Elon Musk's legal bid to overturn an Australian ban on sharing graphic video of the attack on social media.

A live stream of the knife attack on April 15 and subsequent social media posts quickly drew a crowd of 2,000 people to the Assyrian Orthodox church, sparking a riot in which 51 police officers were injured and 104 police vehicles were damaged.

**TAIPEI, Taiwan:** Taiwan's president-elect has appointed new foreign and defense ministers to join his incoming

administration as the island faces continuing military threats and diplomatic isolation from China.

**Lai Ching-te**, who assumes the presidency on May 20, announced Thursday that current Presidential Secretary General **Lin Chia-lung** will take over as foreign minister.

He said **Wellington Koo** will head the Defense Ministry at a time when Taiwan is upgrading its defenses against China with new ships, submarines, warplanes, missile systems and other land-based defenses.

Along with stepping up its threat to annex Taiwan by force, China has whittled down the number of Taiwan's formal diplomatic allies to just 12, while excluding it from the United Nations and most other international organizations.

Hundreds of collectives across Mexico are participating in search operations this weekend to draw attention to the work they are left to do without official help in a country with nearly 100,000 people registered as missing.

The groups participating this weekend decided to forgo government protection as a way to protest authorities' frequent indifference to disappearances.

"We feel abandoned by the state to respond to this situation, which is a real national emergency," some 250 collectives making up the National Unification of Searching Families said in a statement.

Juan Carlos Trujillo Herrera has been searching for four brothers who disappeared in Guerrero and Veracruz states more than a decade ago. He said uniting search collectives across Mexico raises consciousness.

In the work at the dump Friday, searchers used a backhoe as well shovels and picks to dig through debris. Metal rods were pushed into ground and then sniffed for the scent of death. (AP)



A couple march during the Anzac Day parade in the central business district of Sydney, Australia on April 25. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered across Australia and New Zealand for dawn services and street marches Thursday to commemorate their war dead on Anzac Day. (AP)



Lula



Bolsonaro

## Lat/Am

**12 alleged gold miners held:** An Indigenous group in Brazil said Wednesday its members detained 12 people for allegedly mining illegally in the Amazon and handed them over to police.

The non-profit Urihi Associação Yanomami said in a statement that the incident took place Tuesday in the northern state of Roraima, which borders Venezuela. The organization said its move was aimed at avoiding the risk of water contamination by mercury in mining.

Brazil's Indigenous Peoples Ministry confirmed that a dozen alleged miners, including 10 men and two women, were in police custody.

The Yanomami group filmed some of its members carrying bows and shotguns as they took the alleged miners to police. The detainees did not make comments in the video. The Associated Press could not find a spokesperson for them.

The Yanomami community is the Amazon's largest Indigenous tribe living in relative isolation, and many of its members are contaminated with mercury coming from widespread illegal gold mining, according to Brazil's top public health institute.

The Yanomami territory, which covers an area the size of Portugal and has a population of 27,000, has endured decades of illegal mining. Its problem with miners significantly expanded during the four-year term of far-right President **Jair Bolsonaro**, which ended in 2022.

The Yanomami group criticized the administration of President **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** over the continued presence of illegal miners.

Lula has promised to expel gold prospectors from Yanomami territory and improve health conditions, but Indigenous leaders say his administration has yet to deliver.

On April 10, Pope Francis met with a leader of Brazil's Yanomami people, who asked for papal backing for Lula's efforts to reverse decades of exploitation of the Amazon and better protect its Indigenous peoples. Francis told Yanomami leader David Kopenawa he would speak with Brazil's president about the issue.

The Amazon rainforest is a key buffer against climate change, and studies have said that Indigenous-controlled forests are the best-preserved in the region. (AP)

**Mexican families 'unite':** Dozens of women and men searched a garbage dump outside Mexico's capital looking for signs

of missing loved ones, working without the protection of authorities as part of a nationwide effort to raise the profile of

those who risk their lives to find others. Under a blazing sun and amid foul odors, they picked through the dump and



The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Kashiwazaki, Niigata prefecture, northern Japan pictured on April 2021. The operator of the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant said on April 15 that it has obtained permission from safety regulators to start loading atomic fuel into a reactor at its only operable plant in north-central Japan, which it is keen to restart for the first time since the 2011 disaster. A team of experts from the UN nuclear agency inspected the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on April 24 for a review of its discharge of treated radioactive wastewater into the Pacific. (AP)

## oil soars

Kuwait oil price went up 34 cents to reach USD 89.46 per barrel on Wednesday compared to USD 89.12 pb on Tuesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said in a statement on Thursday.

In international markets, the Brent Crude oil went down 40 cents to reach USD 88.02 per barrel, while the West Texas Intermediate went down 55 cents to reach USD 82.81 a barrel. (KUNA)

## Kuwait urges new oil media approach

Head of the Public Relations and Media Department at Kuwait's Ministry of Oil Sheikh Tamadher Khaled Al-Sabah said on Wednesday that the latest developments and changes in the oil and gas field call for developing a new oil media strategy. This was presented by Sheikh Tamader at the Oil and Gas Industry Basics Forum, which is held at the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) headquarters, ending on Thursday. She stated that oil media covers

news and information related to oil, including the production of oil and gas, reports, prices and other related topics, noting that it aims to provide accurate data to the public.

She also added that the Public Relations and Media Department at Kuwait's Ministry of Oil focuses on issuing publications that cover oil activities in Kuwait, noting that it aims to achieve high performance and digital transformation as well as provide a cooperative work environment. (KUNA)

## KOC unveils \$2.7 bln production projects

According to the MEED magazine report the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has unveiled plans to initiate three exploration and production projects totaling \$2.7 billion, eliciting optimism among contractors in the country's oil and gas sector, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the magazine, KOC has invited contractors to pre-qualify for three state-owned projects, outlining their estimated costs as follows: EF 3034, involving the Jurassic Light Oil Export Facility and the enhancement

of the existing export network, with an approximate cost of 175 million dinars (\$569 million).

Furthermore, the EF 2075 project focuses on the installation of the Separation Collection Center (SGC-I) and the water pumping station (WIP-I) in EK-1:333, with a projected cost of 333 million dinars (\$1 billion). Lastly, the EF 2076 project entails the installation of a separation collection center (SGC-II) and a water pumping station (WIP-II) in SK-1: 341, estimated at 341 million dinars (\$1.1 billion).

## Market Movements

25-04-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
DUBAI - DFMGI	+2.54	4,169.87	SAUDI - Tadawul	-101.16	12,254.53
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+2.13	6,574.88	JAPAN - Nikkei 225	-831.60	37,628.48
			EGYPT - EGX 30	-859.46	25,917.59
			PAKISTAN - KSE 100	-45.89	72,040.13

# Business

## Kuwait's Q1-2024 contract awards fall short, but big projects await

# GCC project awards surge despite geopolitical challenges

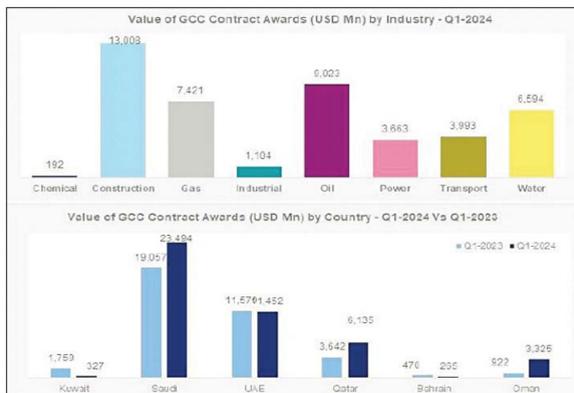
By KAMCO Invest

Defying regional and global geopolitical challenges, GCC project awards increased by 20.3% y-o-y during Q1-2024 to reach USD 45.0 Bn as compared to USD 37.4 Bn during Q1-2023. The trend also defies oil production cutbacks which have all weighed on economic growth in the region as seen from IMF's latest forecast that slashed GCC economic growth forecast for 2024 to 2.4% from its previous forecast of 3.7%. The consistent elevated trend in GCC contract awards underlines the entrenched resolve of GCC governments to see through their diversification projects, as well as state funding support.

Growth in GCC contract awards was evenly distributed during Q1-2024 as three out of the six countries in the GCC recorded y-o-y growth in their project's awards, including two of the largest projects markets in the region, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, while the remaining three countries witnessed declines. Saudi Arabia alone comprised more than half of the contracts awarded in the GCC region during Q1-2024 with aggregate awards of USD 23.5 Bn in Q1-2024 against USD 19.1 Bn in Q1-2023 shrugging off underwhelming GDP growth projections by the IMF and continuing its strong non-oil growth rate run.

Comparatively, total contracts awarded in the UAE witnessed a marginal dip of 1% y-o-y to reach USD 11.5 Bn during Q1-2024 as compared to USD 11.6 Bn in Q1-2023. On the other hand, aggregate value of contracts for Qatar jumped 68.5% y-o-y during Q1-2024 to reach USD 6.1 Bn against USD 3.6 Bn in Q1-2023.

In terms of sectors, Q1-2024 witnessed a jump in the value of projects awarded in the Gas and Oil sectors. Total GCC Gas Sector contracts awarded during the



quarter umped more than 19 times to reach USD 7.4 Bn as compared to USD 382 Mn during Q1-2023. On the other hand, the total value of contracts awarded in the

GCC Oil Sector increased nearly seven times to reach USD 9.0 Bn during the similar period, making the sector the biggest contributor in terms of absolute growth in value of contracts awarded in the GCC region during the quarter.

### Kuwait

Contract awards in Kuwait have been underwhelming during the first quarter of this year. According to MEED Projects, total projects awarded reached USD 327 Mn during Q1-2024 as compared to USD 1.8 Bn in Q1-2023. Despite the lackluster performance during the first three months of the year, contractors are currently preparing to bid for big-ticket projects, especially in the oil sector. According to MEED.com, seven companies have bought tender documents for the planned fuel depot project in Al Mutlaa region of Kuwait. The project which is being awarded by the state-owned downstream operator Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) is valued at USD 850 Mn.

One of the notable contracts that were awarded during Q1-2024 is the USD 100 Mn design contract to upgrade the Mina Al Ahmadi Refinery. The contract entails a project to overhaul an acid gas removal plant in the Mina Al Ahmadi Refinery and its scope includes consultancy work. Currently, MEED Projects estimates the value of upcoming projects for Kuwait to be around USD 105.5 Bn of which 58.1% are in the study stage while 11.2% are in the design stage. In terms of sector proportion of upcoming projects, the Power Sector is expected to receive 27.2% or USD 28.7 Bn topping the list as the largest sector in terms of upcoming contracts in the country followed by the Transport Sector with USD 27.6 Bn worth of upcoming contracts in the pipeline.

# Kuwait Innovation Forum showcases evolutionary potential of technology

## KFH CEO affirms commitment to innovation

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Kuwait Innovation Forum, jointly hosted by the Business Year and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, marked the unveiling of the group's seventh annual publication on Kuwait's economy, reports Al-Qabas daily.

KDIPA, a key player in Kuwait's economic development, played a pivotal role in the event, convening over 240 prominent economic leaders from Kuwait's public and private sectors to explore the transformative potential of technology and innovation.

Khaled Al-Shamlan, CEO of Kuwait Finance House Group, expressed his enthusiasm for participating in the forum, emphasizing KFH's significant contributions to Kuwait's innovation journey.

As the largest bank in Kuwait and the second largest Islamic bank globally, KFH has been instrumental in driving innovation and shaping the future of the local economy. Al-Shamlan highlighted KFH's innovative initiatives, underscoring their positive impact on the Kuwaiti economy amidst challenges, and reiterated the bank's commitment to furthering innovation efforts.

He emphasized the forum's role in showcasing the achievements of KFH and other leading institutions, offering a platform for meaningful discussions, expert insights, and inspiring success stories. Al-Shamlan underscored the importance of leveraging innovation to



Photo from the event

surmount obstacles and foster a prosperous future for Kuwait's economy.

Walid Al-Khashti, CEO of Corporate Relations and Affairs at Zain - Kuwait, expressed his satisfaction with the ongoing partnership between Zain and The Business Year, emphasizing the importance of such collaborations in fostering dialogue and facilitating innovation across various sectors. He commended the Direct Investment Promotion Authority for its significant contributions to enhancing Kuwait's business environment and positioning the country as a global financial hub.

Al-Khashti highlighted the pivotal role of innovation in Kuwait's business sector, underscoring its importance across all vital industries. He stressed that sustainable growth is unattainable without embracing innovation, particularly in highly competitive fields like communications and information technology, where digital transformation plays a central role.

Furthermore, Al-Khashti emphasized the transformative power of

technology in driving innovation, citing examples such as artificial intelligence and its impact on communication and daily workflows. He highlighted Zain's evolution from a traditional telecommunications company to a leader in providing comprehensive digital services, leveraging technologies like 5G networks, artificial intelligence, drones, and cloud computing to enable organizations and government agencies to enhance operations, efficiency, and growth opportunities through comprehensive digital transformation initiatives.

Al-Khashti emphasized the importance of collaboration between public and private sector institutions to create a supportive environment for entrepreneurship, providing essential assistance to emerging companies and entrepreneurs in the local market. He highlighted Kuwait's success stories in this regard and welcomed the participation of initiators who shared their expertise and experiences at the forum.

The forum comprised two sessions,

with the first focusing on the development landscape in Kuwait, covering real estate, infrastructure, and innovation. Key speakers included Mazen Hawa, Vice Chairman and CEO of the United Real Estate Company Group, Ahmed Al-Shorbaji, Head of the International Projects and Dispute Resolution Department at Al-Yaqout and Al-Fawzan Legal Group, and Abdullah Al-Saleh, CEO of Sakan. The session was moderated by Nasser Khuraibet from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

The second session addressed the digital transformation landscape and featured prominent figures such as Sheikh Ahmed Duaij Jaber Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Banking Association and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, David Rutter, CEO of R3 Company, Faisal Al-Haroun, General Manager of TAP Payments Company Kuwait, and Dalal Al-Rayes, CEO and co-founder of Spear. The discussion was moderated by Alex Krunic, Senior Advisor at Commercial Bank of Kuwait.

The forum, organized by The Business Year and the Direct Investment Promotion Authority, saw participation from various national institutions, including Kuwait Finance House, Zain Company, United Real Estate Company, Bayut Investment Holding Group, Sakan, Commercial Bank of Kuwait (Al-Tijari), Warba Bank, TAP Payments Company Kuwait, Kuwait Banks Association, Al-Yaqout and Al-Fawzan Legal Group, MR2 Group, Al-Qabas, Al-Mulla Leasing and Leasing, the American Chamber of Commerce in Kuwait, the German Business Council in Kuwait, and IITL International Travel and Tourism Company.

## US dollar settles at KD 0.307

KUWAIT CITY, April 25. (KUNA): The exchange rate of the US dollar on Thursday settled at KD 0.307 and the euro firmed at the level of KD 0.329 compared to Wednesday's rates, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said.

The CBK reported, in its daily bulletin, that the sterling pound steadied at KD 0.383, the Swiss franc edged down by 0.32 percent trading at KD 0.336 and the Japanese yen remained steady at KD 0.002.

Exchange prices, declared by the CBK, reflect average rates and not the transactions' actual ones.

## CMA plays key role in regulation

## Bursa Kuwait enhances transparency practices, garnering investor approval

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Bursa Kuwait has made significant strides towards enhancing transparency and disclosure practices, a move applauded by investors and regulatory bodies alike, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) has played a pivotal role in regulating the dissemination of information, aiming to empower investors and bolster confidence in the market, thereby attracting both local and foreign investments.

International academic studies underscore the importance of transparency and corporate governance in attracting foreign investments and bolstering local investor confidence. Increased transparency leads to more efficient financial markets, where stock prices closely reflect their true, fair value.

The market catalysts, such as the disclosure of new products, contracts, partnerships, or mergers, drive stock movements, highlighting the significance of timely and comprehensive disclosures.

However, some companies fail to provide adequate disclosure, leading to ambiguity and leaving investors with unanswered questions. It is imperative for companies to provide detailed information about the impact of significant events, such as contract wins or acquisitions, on future revenues and profits. This includes disclosing profit margins, contract durations, and expected earnings per share

impacts. To address this issue, companies should be encouraged to provide additional clarification through their Investor Relations Departments. Establishing electronic channels for investors to ask questions and receive responses publicly would facilitate better understanding and analysis of disclosures by analysts and investors alike.

The regulatory authorities must also play a proactive role in enforcing disclosure standards and ensuring companies disclose quarterly and annual financial impacts transparently. Clear standards and guidelines should be established to govern the disclosure of information relevant to investors' interests.

Furthermore, companies themselves should take the initiative to enhance the quality of their disclosures and provide investors with comprehensive and accurate information. This collaborative effort between regulatory bodies, companies, and investors will contribute to the overall efficiency and integrity of the Kuwait Stock Exchange, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders involved.

As an Associate Professor in the Department of Finance and Financial Institutions at Kuwait University, I emphasize the importance of ongoing development and improvement in disclosure practices to foster a more transparent and investor-friendly market environment.

# Egypt implements bold macroeconomic reforms with currency devaluation & interest rate hike

By National Bank of Kuwait

Egypt finally embarked on long-awaited macroeconomic reforms in March, devaluing the currency and raising interest rates sharply. The bold moves came soon after the government managed to secure a major FX buffer via a \$35 billion mega-investment deal with the UAE over the Ras Al Hekma area. Since then, the string of positive news has continued with the IMF approving an expanded loan of \$8bn (from \$3bn), the World Bank approving a new loan of \$6bn, and the EU providing \$8bn of loans and investments. The combined agreements have diminished market fears of a credit event for Egypt, with external risk metrics improving reflecting a more positive outlook among investors.

In the near term, the economy will inevitably face more headwinds as the devaluation keeps inflation and interest rates high and household and business spending compressed. But the following few months will also be important for Egypt to regain financial and macro stability and restore market confidence, laying the foundation for a sustainable economic recovery in 2025.

We believe that for economic growth to reach levels of 6%+ on a sustained basis, the government will need to commit to and make progress on other key structural reforms, including limiting public investments (from both government and quasi-government entities), and giving more space for the private sector to drive growth. A good start could include the appointment of more technocrats in any forthcoming cabinet reshuffle, following the start of President Sisi's third term in office in April that will last until 2030.

### Growth at lowest levels in the past 3 years

Economic growth, as expected, has continued its downward path in FY23/24 (ending June 2024) with growth decelerating sharply to 2.5% in H1 compared to 4.2% for H1 the previous year. Growth for the full year FY23/24 could come in close to 2.5%, which is lower than both the government's forecast of 3.5% and our initial forecast of 3% as well.

Elevated costs, import restrictions and general uncertainty continued at a strong rate into FY23/24, taking a toll on private consumption. The available breakdown up to Q1 FY23/24 show private consumption flat at 0% y/y versus 3.3% in the previous quarter, though the high base from the same quarter in the previous year (growth was at 5%) played a role. The biggest contributor to growth in the quarter was net exports, which recorded a positive balance of EGP5bn versus EGP-70bn a year earlier. However, import restrictions were the main driver of this change, and once imports start to recover in the coming period, the positive net export balance will likely fade away. Government consumption grew by 11% y/y while investments contracted by 16%.

Reflecting the tough macro-economic conditions, the PMI activity indicator dropped in Q3 (Jan-Mar 2024) to 47.6 versus 48.2 for Q2 thus remaining signifi-

cantly below the 50 'no change' level with firms reporting weak sales, difficulties sourcing raw materials from abroad and rapid price rises. Looking ahead, businesses should start getting access to FX allowing for a smoother import process and an improved production cycle - though the anticipated recovery in orders and demand could take a few months as inflation is expected to remain high in the near term following the currency devaluation.

In our opinion, growth should bottom out this year at around 2.5-3.0% with elevated price pressures and the rise in interest rates keeping demand subdued. But as some of these pressures fade, growth will start recovering next year (FY24/25) towards 3.5-4.0%.

### Current account deficit narrows as imports drop

The goods trade deficit narrowed by \$1.2bn in Q1 FY23/24 to \$8bn (1.9% of GDP), mainly driven by a 15% y/y drop in imports. Meanwhile, the services surplus widened by 28% to \$5.2bn on the back of higher tourism and Suez Canal revenues during that period (Suez Canal disruptions only started more recently). Overall, the current account deficit narrowed by 12% y/y to stand at \$2.8bn in the quarter. We expect similar trends through Q2 and Q3 with FX pressures limiting remittance and portfolio inflows into the LCY debt market, as well as exports. We expect the current account deficit to end the full year at \$11.5bn (3.2% of GDP).

For FY24/25, we forecast the current account deficit to remain within a similar range at \$12bn (2.6% of GDP). We expect imports to pick up by 15-20% but the impact on the deficit to be offset by a strong recovery in remittances, continued strong tourism proceeds, and the maintenance of a more flexible exchange rate that keeps the pound in line with its fair value.

### External finances to improve significantly

More broadly, the external financing picture for the next 2-3 years has been transformed positively by the policy changes and financing agreements made in recent weeks. The latter are worth a combined \$59bn (\$48bn excluding the UAE deposits at the CBE which have been converted into FDI) over the coming years (until FY25/26), with the majority skewed towards the current year. The Ras El Hekma deal with the UAE (\$35bn) is due to be delivered in the current fiscal year with \$22bn already delivered and the remainder in May 2024. The rest of the agreements - from World Bank, IMF and EU - will be disbursed over the coming 3 years (\$7-8bn a year on average). As well as financing regular trade flows, this will be used to remove the import backlog, pay down dues to international energy firms, reduce net foreign liabilities in the banking system, pay off any maturing external debt and potentially lift official reserves.

Given the above, we project a net cumulative financing gap of \$10bn over the coming 2 years until the end of FY25/26. This gap could be covered through Eurobond issuance at a pace of \$3-4bn per year, in addition to possible debt restruc-

turing, over and above the agreed loans, from some of the multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, and others. An additional upside could be strong portfolio inflows linked to the carry trade given high domestic interest rates.

Financial markets and rating agencies have applauded the developments. Yields on Egypt's 5yr-Eurobond have fallen significantly to below 10% from 15% in February and 5-yr CDS levels (a measure of default risk) improved to around 550bps from 1100 bps and above. The 12M currency forward rate is currently trading at EGP54/\$, 12% weaker than the official rate. Moody's & S&P have upgraded Egypt credit outlook to positive from negative and stable, respectively. Finally, investors poured a net total of \$12.5bn into LCY debt and now represent 25% of the total versus 9% in February and remittances have risen up since the exchange rate unification.

### Inflation to remain above 35% for most of the year

Inflation slowed to 33.3% y/y in March after jumping to 35.3% (and 11% m/m) in February. February's spike was likely due to the extreme weakness of the EGP in the parallel market to all-time highs of EGP70/\$, which was subsequently reversed following the devaluation in March given improved dollar availability. Inflation averaged 4.9% m/m during January-March, significantly higher than 1.2% m/m in the previous quarter.

We saw in March the first-round effects of the EGP devaluation but second-round effects could persist for 2-3 months (April-June). These would include further product repricing by companies and higher utility prices (petroleum, electricity). This in addition to an unfavorable base effect from last year could cause inflation to head back towards 40% in the current quarter, before starting to decelerate from July and ending the year below 35%. This will still be far from the central bank's target set for Q4 2024 (CY) of 7% +/-2% which we expect to be revised.

### Policy rates are close to peak but could rise further

The central bank hiked policy rates by a total of 8% during Q1 CY2024 (2% in February then 6% in March) taking the discount rate to 27.75, while average 1-year treasury bill yields reached an all-time high of 32% in the first week of March, before dropping back to 25.5% on huge demand for LCY debt from foreign investors. The 6% policy rate hike exceeded expectations but was not enough to offer a positive real yield in the short term. Real yields - using the discount rate - stood at -6% in March and will remain negative though improve towards the end of the year. As we expect inflation to remain high in the coming months, we do not rule out the possibility that the CBE might raise policy rates again even though the magnitude of the hike would be significantly smaller (1-2%) than the previous one. However, as the devaluation pass through fades and inflationary pressures show signs of easing, we think that the bank may have a window to cut rates by the end of this year.

## BUSINESS

## US dollar hits 34-yr high in mid-JPY 155 level

The US dollar hit a fresh 34-year high against the Japanese yen into the mid-JPY 155 range in Tokyo on Thursday after release of strong US economic data.

The dollar rose to JPY 141.30-32 at one point in the afternoon, its highest level since November. At 4:00 p.m. (7:00 GMT), the greenback fetched JPY 155.64-65, its highest level since June 1990, and strengthened from JPY 155.28-38 in New York and

JPY 154.89-91 in Tokyo at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday.

Market watchers believe the interest rate gap between the US and Japan is likely to remain, prompting a move to the higher-yielding dollar, public broadcaster NHK reported.

They are factoring in the view that the Federal Reserve will push back rate cuts, while betting the Bank of Japan will not be hiking rates in the near future,

NHK said.

It added that investors are watching the pair closely as the Bank of Japan began its two-day policy meeting on Thursday. Traders have been also dumping the yen and scooping up the dollar on a robust US economy.

Reporters asked the Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki about the falling yen on Thursday, but he declined to comment, it noted. (KUNA)

## Asia-Pacific countries vow to embrace digitalization

Government leaders and policymakers from Asia-Pacific countries assembling here on Monday pledged to embrace digital opportunities and tap into emerging technologies and digital innovation for sustainable development.

The prime ministers of Thailand and Cambodia, and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Xiaoxu were among the some 800 participants of the 80th ses-

sion of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened to deliberate on digital pathways to accelerate the region's sustainable development.

"Intelligently deployed and properly governed digital solutions, based on a common understanding, shared approaches and collaborative governance, form the foundations for the collective push

necessary for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, executive secretary of ESCAP, said in her opening speech.

Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin noted that for many agriculture-based countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Thailand, digital transformation is critical to ensuring food security for all. (Xinhua)

## Earnings per share reach 2.17 fils, a growth of 10.15%

## Warba grows its profits by 10.30% to KD4.74million in Q1 of 2024

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Warba Bank announced the achievement of financial results for the first three months of the current year ending on March 31, 2024. The results showed that the Bank achieved net profits amounting to KD 4.7 million, equivalent to 2.17 fils earnings per share, compared to profits amounting to KD 4.3 million, equivalent to 1.97 fils earnings per share, in the same period in 2023, with a growth rate of 10.3% and 10.2%, respectively.

All of the Bank's main financial indicators witnessed an upward trajectory and remarkable growth, as the total equity of the Bank's shareholders reached KD 318.8 million, as of the end of March of the current year, 2024, compared to KD 315.4 million, at the end of the previous year, 2023. The Bank's total assets amounted to KD 4.9 billion, while the total financing portfolio amounted to KD 3.6 billion, compared to KD 3.5 billion, at the end of the previous year, 2023, with a growth rate of 3.9%. The total depositors' accounts reached KD 2.9 billion as of March 31, 2024.

With regard to profitability indicators, net financing income grew in the first quarter of this year by 46.5%, reaching KD13.2 million. Net operating income also amounted to KD18.4 million for the first three months of this year, with a growth rate of 21.5%, compared to the same period of the previous year, and the cost to revenue ratio decreased to 53% compared to 56% in the first quarter of the previous year.

Chairman of Warba Bank, Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, said that the results of the first quarter of 2024 indicate Warba Bank's positive performance and its steady progress on the path of sustainable growth. This positive performance is due to the Bank's strategic growth plans, which are based primarily on providing a distinguished banking experience by providing the best solutions and banking services with the highest standards. Pointing out that the good financial results achieved by Warba Bank confirm the flexibility of the Bank's business model, its ability to adapt to various circumstances, and the

## Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer

■ Our results in the first quarter are a strong reflection of "Warba's" positive performance and its steady movement on the path to sustainable growth

■ The growth of all the Bank's financial indicators shows the continued success in implementing the strategic transformation plan and growing its market shares

■ The Bank continues to strengthen its position as a major and essential player in the banking sector and is keen to constantly develop the capabilities of its employees

■ "Warba" made progress in its comprehensive digital development plan aimed at automating its products, services, and operations.

■ The Bank continues its efforts to attract the best banking talent and provide support to its human resources through an attractive work environment capable of business development.

■ We continue our efforts to maintain the highest levels of corporate and risk governance while maintaining a strong capital base

unique position it enjoys among its clients and shareholders, which emphasizes its superior ability to continue and overcome difficulties, having the greatest credit for the Bank's sustainable growth.

He continued, saying: "The growth in all Warba Bank's financial indicators shows the continued success in implementing the strategic transformation plan, which it continues to develop continuously, and the growth of its market shares at the level of all client segments, both individuals and companies. Adding



Hamad Al Sayer - Chariman



Mr. Shaheen Al Ghanem CEO

that the Bank continues to strengthen its position as a major and essential factor in the financial and banking sector in Kuwait, and its keenness to constantly develop the capabilities of employees by organizing training courses in partnership and cooperation with many leading specialized agencies and institutions at the local and regional levels.

Al-Sayer stated that the financial indicators achieved by the Bank confirm the efficiency and flexibility of the executive policies and procedures that helped the Bank develop its operations, confront the strong competition in the Kuwaiti banking market, and benefit from the opportunities available therein. They also reflect the strength and stability of the banking sector in Kuwait, and the strength of the Kuwaiti economy in general.

Al-Sayer said that Warba Bank has made progress in its comprehensive plan for digital development, which aims to automate the Bank's products, services, and operations, by relying on infrastructure and technical expertise characterized by knowledge and creativity. The bank is continuing to develop its business through a high-quality technology environment with a focus on keeping pace with the rapid and growing development in the field of

digital revolution.

Al-Sayer stated that Warba Bank continues its efforts to attract the best banking staff and provide all means of support to its human resources through an attractive work environment capable of business development, stressing that Warba Bank continues its efforts to maintain the highest levels of corporate governance and risk governance while maintaining a strong capital base and achieving maximum returns for shareholders on a sustainable basis.

At the conclusion of his statement, Al-Sayer thanked the Bank's shareholders for the support they provided to the Bank. He also thanked the Bank's valued clients for their constant loyalty, trust, and interaction with the services that the Bank provides to them and are more appropriate to life's changes, especially digital banking services, with their ability and flexibility to meet their needs and aspirations.

He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Bank's executive management and all its employees for the sincerity and dedication they showed in their work, stressing Warba Bank's pride in its human capital, which it considers the basic foundation for the Bank's continued success and progress.

For his part, Warba Bank's CEO,

## Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem

■ We ended the first quarter with good financial results and benefited from our diversified business and our strategic investments in talents and technology

■ Data indicates that "Warba" will continue to improve in profitability rates during 2024, supported by an increase in business volume.

■ "Warba" enjoys creditworthiness, high liquidity ratios, and a diversified financing portfolio that increases its financing and investment capabilities.

■ We have a proven track record of sustainable performance, and our focus is always on improving operational efficiency and working to manage capital levels

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, said: "We ended the first quarter of this year 2024 with good financial results, as we achieved strong growth in revenues and profits. The positive operating performance of our business as we continue utilizing from the benefits of our diversified business mix and our strategic investments in talent and technology.

Al-Ghanem pointed out that the operating environment in Kuwait continued to be stable in the first quarter of 2024, stressing that the Bank's main business sectors achieved good performance in this quarter, in addition to recording more momentum in strategic areas that include wealth management. Pointing out that the Bank's performance is based on prudent risk management and high credit quality, as it will benefit from these strengths throughout the fiscal year 2024 to create added value for its shareholders.

He stated that Warba Bank continues to invest in the future, enhanced its digital capabilities to better serve its

customers, and has also launched innovative products and solutions that will help its clients meet their banking needs more easily.

Al-Ghanem said: "We have a proven track record of sustainable performance, and our focus is always on improving operational efficiency and working to manage capital levels prudently so that we are adequately prepared for any scenarios facing the global economy."

Al-Ghanem stressed that the data indicate that Warba will continue to improve in profitability rates during the year 2024, supported by the increase in business volume, explaining that Warba Bank has creditworthiness, high liquidity ratios, and a diversified financing portfolio, which supports business growth and increases the Bank's financing and investment capabilities.

Al-Ghanem noted that Warba Bank is continuing its advanced steps in implementing its flexible strategy in its quest to provide a distinctive banking experience that keeps pace with evolving market trends and achieves higher response rates commensurate with customers' aspirations and growing requirements. In addition, Warba has not stopped investing in its digital infrastructure and adopting the latest banking technologies, as part of the efforts aimed at building a more advanced and sophisticated business model. These efforts resulted in the launch and adoption of new solutions that include innovative digital technologies that are in line with the rapid and successive changes in the local market and regional markets alike.

Significant numbers

■ KD 13.2 million net financing income... a growth rate of 46.5%

■ KD 18.4 million net operating income, a growth rate of 21.5%

■ KD 4.7 million net profit for the period, a growth rate of 10.3%

■ Finance receivables balances amounted to KD 3.6 billion.

■ Depositors' accounts amounted to KD 2.9 billion.

■ Total assets amounted to KD 4.9 billion.

## Recent AI deals in focus

## Microsoft, Amazon face scrutiny from UK competition watchdog

LONDON, April 25 (AP): British competition regulators said Wednesday they'll scrutinize recent artificial intelligence deals by Microsoft and Amazon over concerns that the moves could thwart competition in the AI industry.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it's looking into Microsoft's partnership with France's Mistral AI and the company's hiring of key staff from another startup, Inflection AI. The watchdog also separately announced that it's investigating Amazon's \$4 billion investment in San Francisco-based Anthropic.

Big Tech companies have been pouring money into generative AI startups amid growing public and business interest in the technology, but the investments have also drawn attention from antitrust authorities. The U.K. watchdog said it was seeking comments from "interested third parties," before deciding whether to carry out an in-depth antitrust investigation.

"We will assess, objectively and impartially, whether each of these deals fall within U.K. merger rules and, if they do, whether they have any impact on competition in the U.K.," the watchdog's executive director of mergers, Joel Bamford, said in a statement.

Microsoft said it will provide the watchdog with the information it needs to carry out its inquiries.

"We remain confident that common business practices such as the hiring of talent or making a fractional invest-

ment in an AI start-up promote competition and are not the same as a merger, the company said.

Microsoft last month hired Mustafa Suleyman, who co-founded Google's DeepMind AI research lab, to head up its consumer artificial intelligence business, along with the chief scientist and several top engineers and researchers from Inflection, his AI startup.

Microsoft also teamed up earlier this year with Mistral, which has become France's AI darling after being founded only last year. That followed Microsoft's previous existing partnership with ChatGPT maker OpenAI, which is also facing scrutiny from the CMA.

Mistral said it's "fully committed to cooperating with the CMA throughout this process to ensure that our long-term independence and access to the market are upheld." Amazon, meanwhile, has spent billions for a minority stake in Anthropic. The two companies are collaborating to develop so-called foundation models, which underpin the generative AI systems that have captured global attention.

"It's unprecedented for the CMA to review a collaboration of this type," Amazon said in a statement. "Unlike partnerships between other AI startups and large technology companies, our collaboration with Anthropic includes a limited investment, doesn't give Amazon a board director or observer role, and continues to have Anthropic running its models on multiple cloud providers."

## Colombia rolls out incentives to cut electricity consumption

BOGOTÁ, Colombia, April 25, (AP): Colombia's government has rolled out new incentives to reduce electricity consumption in the South American nation, which has been hit by a severe drought that has diminished the capacity of local hydroelectric plants and brought officials close to imposing power cuts.

The ministry of mines and energy said that in the following weeks homes and businesses that exceed their average monthly electrical consumption will be charged additional fees for every extra kilowatt-hour used, while those who use less electricity than usual will be rewarded with discounts.

Officials in Colombia hope the measures will help to reduce consumption and help local reservoirs recover.

"We want to stop the waste of electricity, especially among large consumers," Andrés Camacho, Colombia's mines and energy minister, wrote on X. He added that a decision to shut down government offices last Friday and a recent uptick in rain raised the

level of local reservoirs by about 2% over the weekend.

Colombia usually gets 70% of its electricity from dams, but a prolonged dry season, caused by the El Niño weather pattern, has boosted imports of fossil fuels and made the country more dependent on power plants that run with natural gas and currently supply 50% of the nation's electrical needs.

The dry season, which began at the end of last year, has also threatened supplies of tap water.

Officials in Colombia's capital, Bogotá, began rationing water last week by dividing the city into nine districts that are being cut off from the water supply for 24 hours, on a rotating basis.

Mayor Carlos Fernando Galán last week said the city will impose fines on people who wash their cars on the streets and conduct other activities that are deemed to be wasteful. He also asked residents to refrain from taking daily showers as is customary in Colombia, especially on days when they're not going to leave their homes.

## Electric cars, digital connectivity 'dominate' at Beijing auto show



People visit the 2024 Beijing International Automotive Exhibition in Shunyi District, Beijing, capital of China, April 25, 2024. The exhibition opened here on Thursday and will last till May 4. (Xinhua)

## Toyota and Nissan announce tie-ups

BEIJING, April 25, (AP): Global automakers and EV startups unveiled new models and concept cars at China's largest auto show on Thursday, with a focus on the nation's transformation into a major market and production base for digitally connected, new-energy vehicles.

Toyota and Nissan both announced tie-ups with major Chinese technology companies as they strive to meet customer demand for AI-enabled online connectivity in cars, from social media apps to autonomous driving features.

Electric vehicles accounted for about a quarter of all auto sales in China last year. Hybrids, which have trailed EVs, are expected to be a growing segment going forward.

China's largest EV maker, BYD, showed off two "dual-mode" plug-in cars that can run either solely on electricity or as hybrids. The other is a hybrid off-road SUV from its luxury Yangwang brand in the 1 million yuan-plus (\$140,000) range.

"China's EVs, represented by (BYD)'s

## Blinken raises Chinese trade practices in meetings with top officials in the financial hub of Shanghai

SHANGHAI, April 25, (AP): U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised what the U.S. describes as unfair Chinese trade practices during his first full day of meetings in China on Thursday with local government officials in the financial hub of Shanghai.

Blinken met with the city's top official, Communist Party Secretary Chen Jining, and "raised concerns about (Chinese) trade policies and non-market economic practices," the State Department said in a statement.

It said he stressed that the United States seeks healthy economic competition with China and "a level playing field for U.S. workers and firms operating in China."

"The two sides reaffirmed the importance of ties between the people

of the United States and (China), including the expansion of exchanges between students, scholars, and business," it said.

China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the U.S. along with accusations of intellectual property theft and other practices seen as discriminating against U.S. businesses in China have long been a source of friction in relations.

China, for its part, has objected strongly to U.S. accusations of human rights abuses and Washington's support for Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing considers its own territory and warns could be annexed by force.

Blinken also spoke with students and business leaders before flying to

Beijing for what are expected to be contentious talks with national officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi and possibly President Xi Jinping.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday shortly before U.S. President Joe Biden signed a \$95 billion foreign aid package that has several elements likely to anger Beijing, including \$8 billion to counter China's growing aggressiveness toward Taiwan and in the South China Sea. It also seeks to force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform.

China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan and immediately condemned the aid as a dangerous provocation.

moderate perspective. Li Xueyong, a deputy general manager, said they envision a future of 40% fuel vehicles, 30% hybrids and 30% electric. The company plans to develop both fuel-powered and new-energy cars.

BYD has been expanding rapidly into overseas markets, launching its

low-priced Dolphin Mini, sold as the Seagull in China, in Latin American markets this year. It's building a factory in Brazil on the site of a former Ford plant that closed when the U.S. maker left the country. Two other Chinese automakers including Chery already have factories in Brazil.

# What's On



## LuLu Hypermarket launches 22nd anniversary celebrations in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: LuLu Hypermarket, the retail major in the region, marked its 22nd anniversary of operations in Kuwait with a mega celebration on 24 April at the AlRai outlet of the brand.

Top management of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait cut the ceremonial cake in the presence of a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers who had gathered to congratulate the brand for its more than two decades of successful operations in Kuwait.

The event also launched a week-long 'anniversary-sale' promotion that offers up to 70 percent discount on items across all categories in the hypermarket. A highlight of

the anniversary shopping extravaganza, which is slated to run from 24 – 30 April across all outlets in the country, is that 22 exclusive and amazing products from various categories are offered daily at incredible discounts.

In a statement on the occasion, top LuLu Kuwait management expressed their thanks to all their patrons in the country for their continued love, trust, support and encouragement of the LuLu brand over the past 22 years. They also renewed their commitment to bring world-class products at the most competitive prices to customers in Kuwait, and to exert all efforts to further enhance their shopping experience at LuLu Hypermarket.



Photos from the event.



Group photo during the workshop.

### Bank promotes financial literacy

## NBK hosts series of 'workshops' for employees of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: In line with its strategic partnership and solid relationships with many public and private sector entities, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a series of workshops for the employees of Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

This cooperation between NBK and KFAED aims to promote financial awareness and to deepen the understanding of KFAED's mission, and offering valuable insights into treasury and treasury operations, funds transfer processes, and trade finance activities.

Held at NBK Headquarters over two days, 21 and 22 April 2024, and attended by 9 participants from KFAED's employees, these sessions

covered crucial areas related to the Fund's activities and included interactive discussions and knowledge sharing to foster a stronger connection between KFAED and NBK, and ensure continued support for its vital contributions and strategic initiatives in global economic development. The Fund plays an active role in the international development efforts by providing technical assistance, as well as loans on concessionary terms to finance development projects in many developing countries.

Speaking on this, Ghena Ben-Ghareeb, Head of HR Strategic Business Partners, Group Human Resources at National bank of Kuwait said, "At NBK, we are committed to deliver our social responsibility towards all companies and entities, especially in government sector, as we are the main banking partner for the public sector, with close relationships across its different sectors."

"We are constantly working in partnership with state entities to develop human resources being a crucial factor

to ensure continued success and one of the enablers of a sustainable economy in Kuwait. The national cadre training plans come within NBK's effective contribution in preparing a national workforce that stands out as highly competitive and productive," she added.

"NBK is always keen to host various kinds of training activities including workshops, awareness sessions, and open discussion panels, reflecting its belief in the powerful impact of these programs, which primarily aim to serve the community and upskill national talent, while also demonstrating NBK's leading role in supporting state entities for many decades," she noted.

"Underscoring its commitment to supporting national economy and serving the country's strategic agenda, NBK always strives to extend all means of support to familiarize public sector employees with the banking business as per the latest international standards, thus helping strengthen trust in national economy and boost Kuwait's credit ratings," she emphasized.

### Forum bridges government & private sectors

## KIB organizes first-ever Partners and Suppliers' Forum in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the organization of the first-ever Partners and Suppliers Forum in Kuwait, dedicated to its local partners and suppliers. This initiative reflects the Bank's commitment to continuing the journey of achievements and successes that began earlier this year. It is also part of the KIB's comprehensive business strategy, aimed at enhancing the level of banking services and products it provides to customers from all segments, aligning with their aspirations, expectations, and lifestyles.

Commenting on the forum, Nasser Al-Osaimi – Head of Procurement said: "KIB has always been a pioneer in showing appreciation to its partners and strengthening its relationships with them. This vital event serves to embody the Bank's stance in this regard. The forum acts as a platform that brings together partners and suppliers from all sectors, including large institutions, as well as small and medium enterprises. Additionally, it represents a new starting point and a motivation for more local companies and entrepreneurs to adopt fundamental principles, primarily quality, innovation, and sustainability, with the goal of moving towards a more prosperous future full of growth."

From her side, Moudhi Al-Abduljader, Assistant Manager of Procurement, said: "Through this forum, KIB has presented all the influential factors in the banking industry. There was a significant focus on the impor-



Nasser Al-Osaimi, Head of Procurement at KIB

tance of continuing work and exerting more efforts to achieve positive results before the end of the current year, and to transition more robustly into the coming years. The Bank also unveiled the best-performing supplier for 2023, setting an example for the expanding network of partners and suppliers." She added that "the event was an exceptional opportunity that brought together major companies and institutions from both the governmental and private sectors with small and medium enterprise owners and service providers from various fields. This included the introduction of diverse products and solutions from

both sides, exchanging expertise, and exploring business opportunities and potential partnerships."

The forum witnessed distinguished participation from KIB's partners, representing a wide range of vital sectors in Kuwait. These included marketing and advertising, design, photography studios, accounting firms, feasibility study offices, consultancy services, interior and exterior design, digital application and website development, financial technology and payments, delivery and logistics, international shipping, storage, packing and packaging, printing, office and shop leasing, business incubators, employment and human resources, food supply, and clothing manufacturing.

It is worth noting that KIB continues to develop its strategic approach and strengthen its local partnerships, supported by various means, most notably through its subsidiary, the KIB Mubader Center. This center was established to work alongside Kuwaiti entrepreneurs who own small and medium-sized enterprises, functioning as both an incubator and a business accelerator within a comprehensive qualification system.

Furthermore, the Bank continues to provide necessary support at every stage of the young entrepreneur's project, offering multi-level training and professional packages, along with a series of services that meet the needs of the local entrepreneurial environment on a broad scale.

### Fond memories shared at condolence meeting

## IMWA holds annual picnic and commemorated Dr. Mirza Beg

KUWAIT CITY, April 25: The Indian Muslim Welfare Association (IMWA) hosted its highly awaited annual picnic at Al Rawda Garden in Kuwait on Friday, April 19, 2024. This joyous event brought together over 240 members of the IMWA community, including men, women, and children, for a day of celebration, remembrance, and fellowship.

The important feature of the event was a solemn condolence meeting held by IMWA to honor the memory of Dr. Mirza Umair Beg, one of its esteemed founder members. Dr. Beg, a distinguished scientist, started his remarkable career with CSIR in India, where he served as Senior Assistant Director at ITRC, a prominent CSIR Lab located in Lucknow, India. During his tenure with CSIR, he was selected as a fellow and was deputed to the World Health Organization (WHO) in the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Switzerland,

Finland, and USSR, contributing his expertise to various projects of international significance. He was also deputed to Dubai, as a founder director of Dubai Institute of Environmental Sciences and Dubai Pharmacy College. Later he worked as Senior Scientist in KISR- Kuwait for 28 years. He was also an articulate writer, a captivating speaker, an admired & adored figure among all age groups of people within Indian community in Kuwait. His sudden passing on April 15, 2024, in his hometown of Lucknow, India, left a profound void in the hearts of IMWA members.

During the condolence meeting,



Photo from the event

more than 40 members shared their cherished memories and heartfelt tributes to Dr. Umair Beg. Many attendees expressed deep sorrow while reflecting on his significant contributions to the welfare of the Indian community in Kuwait. The meeting concluded with prayers for Dr. Umair Beg's forgiveness and elevation to Jannat Al Firdous, the highest level of paradise, as per Islamic tradition.

Despite the somber tone of the condolence meeting, the IMWA annual picnic continued with enthusiasm and spirit. The day began with a hearty breakfast and featured an array of engaging activities for both children and adults, including games, Islamic and

General Knowledge Quiz, Housie, and a Raffle Draw. These activities brought laughter and joy to the entire IMWA family, fostering bonds of friendship and camaraderie.

Dr. Mohammad Naemuddin, President of IMWA, expressed his gratitude to all members for their participation in this memorable event. He remarked, "Dr. Mirza Umair Beg's legacy will forever remain in our hearts, and his contributions to our community will continue to inspire us. Today, as we gather in his honor, we also celebrate the strength of our IMWA family and the enduring spirit of unity and compassion that defines us."



Photo of FAIPS-DPS students

### FAIPS-DPS learners engage in inclusive education at Hope School

On April 17, 2024, a group of students from FAIPS-DPS' Psychology Department had the opportunity to engage with inclusive education by visiting Hope School for Special Needs in Kuwait City. The purpose of their visit was to gain a firsthand understanding of working with children with diverse learning needs.

Upon their arrival, the psychology students and teachers were greeted with a warm welcome from Mrs. Shoug Ahmed, the Vice Princi-

pal, and her team at Hope School. The Vice Principal provided a brief introduction of the school and its activities and also guided the FAIPS students on how to appropriately interact with the children at Hope School.

During their visit, the students of FAIPS engaged in active interaction with their peers from Hope School and took part in various classroom activities, gaining firsthand experience of the challenges and suc-

cesses of these interactions. They observed the diverse range of abilities and challenges faced by each student at the school and were impressed by the patience and empathy demonstrated by the educators in addressing the unique needs of each child. The psychology students had the opportunity to have their doubts clarified during an interactive session with the resident psychologist and Vice Principal of Hope School.

# Hollywood charts a new course after Barbenheimer, strikes

LOS ANGELES, April 25, (AP): "Barbenheimer" is a hard act to follow.

The summer of 2023 brought a new enthusiasm for moviegoing, with the fortuitous counterprogramming of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," and surprise hits like "Sound of Freedom," helping the season's box office crack \$4 billion for the first time since 2019. But before the industry could take a victory lap, there was another crisis looming with the dual Hollywood strikes, which shuttered most productions for months.

In the fallout, theaters lost big titles like "Mission: Impossible 8" and "Captain America: Brave New World" to 2025. But they gained a gem in Jeff Nichols' "The Bikeriders" (June 21), about a 1960s Midwestern motorcycle club, as studios moved films around on the summer chessboard. "Deadpool & Wolverine," once set to kick off the summer season on May 3 like many Marvel movies before it, is now opening July 26, patiently waiting to dominate the summer charts.

The kickoff weekend instead belongs to an original film about a different kind of superhero: The stunt performer. "The Fall Guy," starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, is an earnest crowd-pleaser that could jumpstart a season that feels like a throwback, with full-throttle spectacle ("Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," "Twisters"), comedies ("Babes"), IMAX wonder ("The Blue Angels") and even a Kevin Costner Western.

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer has seen the highs and lows of summer movies over the decades. This season, he has three very different offerings on the calendar, two are fourth installments in popular franchises - "Beverly Hills Cop" (July 3, Netflix) and "Bad Boys" (June 7, theaters) - and one was planned for streaming but tested so well that it's getting a theatrical rollout ("Young Woman and the Sea," May 31).

"People just want to be entertained," Bruckheimer said. "It really

comes down to us to make the right movies that they want to go see."

"The Bikeriders" could be one of those. It already has stellar reviews from last fall's Telluride Film Festival hailing star turns for Austin Butler and Jodie Comer and was originally planned for December but pushed when it became clear that the strikes weren't going to resolve in time for a press tour.

## Cannes

"It was kind of like walking on frozen glass for three months," Nichols said. "I was touring around doing press and trying to build this energy on my own. Let me tell you, it's not the same as Austin Butler."

Later in June, after a splashy Cannes debut, Kevin Costner will begin rolling out his two-part Western epic "Horizon: An American Saga," set during the Civil War. And as always there are a slew of Sundance breakouts peppered throughout the summer, from "I Saw the TV Glow" and "Didi" to "Thelma" and "Good One."

Family films also go into hyperdrive in the summer, capitalizing on long days out of school. This year has plenty, like "The Garfield Movie" and "Despicable Me 4." But perhaps none has more anticipation behind it than "Inside Out 2" (June 14, theaters), which meets up with Riley as she enters her teenage years as a new group of emotions crash Joy's party, including Anxiety, Envy, Ennui and Embarrassment. "That age gives us everything we need and love for a Pixar film," director Kelsey Mann said.

John Krasinski is also delving into the inner world of children with his ambitious live-action hybrid "IF" (May 17, theaters) about the imaginary friends that get left behind and two humans (Ryan Reynolds and Cailey Fleming) who can still see them.

Audiences seeking the adrenaline rush of horrors and thrillers have an array of options, including "MaXXXine," the conclusion to Ti West's accidental Mia Goth trilogy ("X" and "Pearl") that debuts around the fourth of July.

Goth's aspiring actress has made her way to Hollywood where a killer is stalking Hollywood starlets around the time of the home video boom of the 1980s. "We recreated the sleazy side of Hollywood in a hopefully charming way," West said. "It's definitely a pretty wild night at the movies."

On June 26, audiences can also delve into the beginnings of "A Quiet Place" with a prequel set on "Day One" starring Lupita Nyong'o and "Stranger Things" Joseph Quinn. Later, Fele Álvarez brings his horror acumen to "Alien: Romulus" (Aug. 16), set between the first two.

M. Night Shyamalan is back as well with a thriller set at a pop concert ("Trap," Aug. 9) and his daughter, Ishana Night Shyamalan, makes her directorial debut with the spooky, Ireland-set "The Watchers" (June 14) with Dakota Fanning.

"It's very suspenseful and unexpected," Ishana said. "And it's very much built for the experience of being in a theater."

The streamers have movie stars and spectacle, too, with the festival favorite "Hit Man," the Anne Hathaway romance "The Idea of You," Jerry Seinfeld's starchy pop-tart movie "Unfrosted" and a Mark Wahlberg/Halle Berry action comedy "The Union."

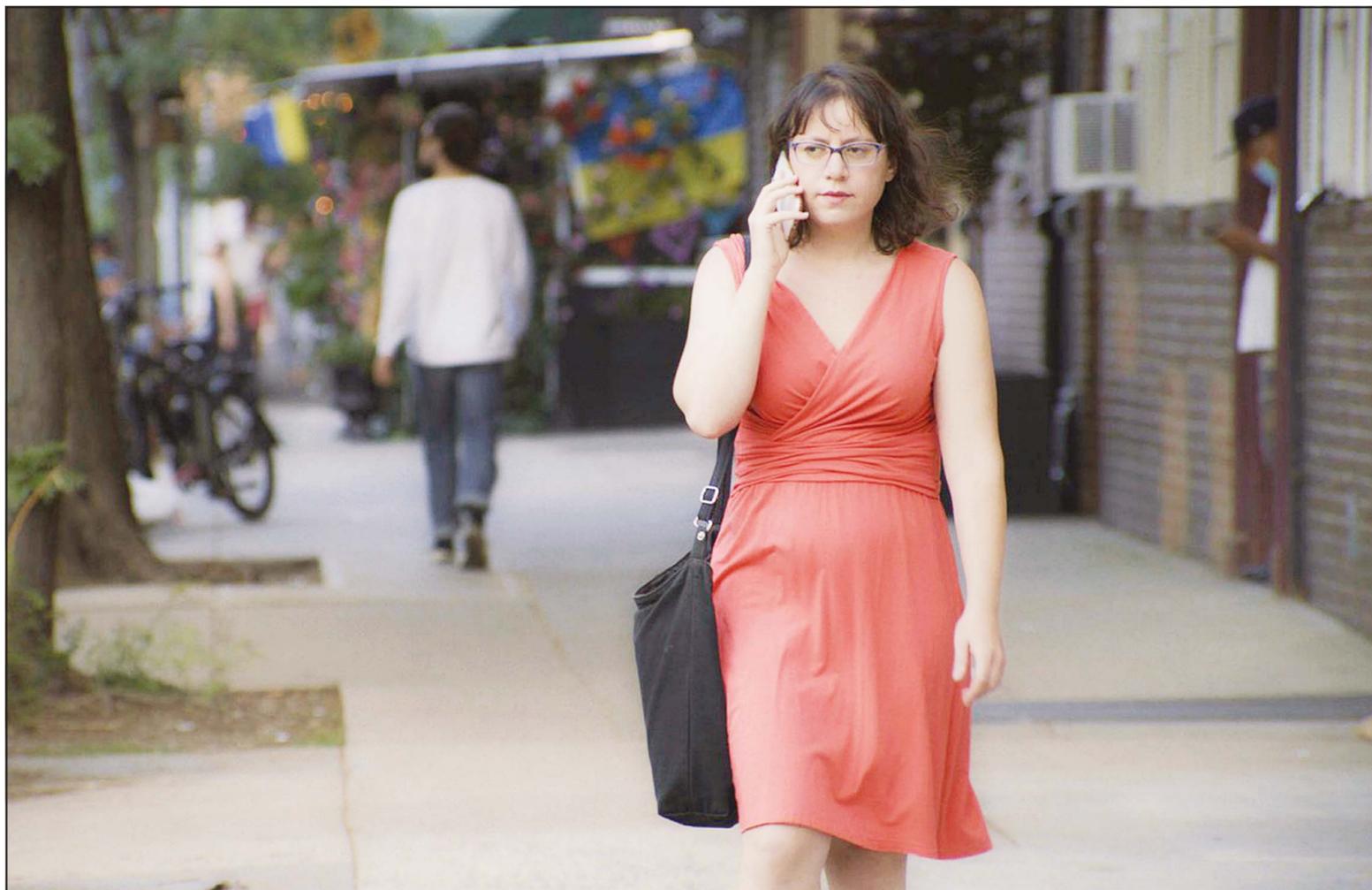
There are even franchises, like "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F.," in which Eddie Murphy's Axel Foley reunites with his estranged daughter (Taylor Paige). It also sees the return of Judge Reinhold, John Ashton, Paul Reiser and Bronson Pinchot and adds Kevin Bacon and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

## Variety

# Features

## ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, APRIL 26-27, 2024



This image released by Magnolia Pictures shows Joanna Arnow in a scene from 'The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed.' (AP)

## Film

Arnow's film announces an exciting new voice

# Life, love and laughter drive 'The Feeling'

By Jake Coyle

In writer-director-star Joanna Arnow's "The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed," Ann (Arnow), a 30-something New Yorker, lies in bed with an older man, Allen (Scott Cohen), with whom she has a yearslong BDSM relationship. She tells him she's grateful he only cares about his own pleasure.

"It's like I don't even exist," she says. Much is just out of reach in Arnow's shrewdly perceptive and very funny new film. Love, certainly, is nowhere near Ann's life despite a series of romantic encounters. Music is talked about - from Andrew Lloyd Webber showtunes to the team cheer from "A League of Their Own" - but seldom heard. In one scene during a tryst with a composer, Ann says her favorite soundtrack is "In the Act of Wishing for Love," but she means "In the Mood for Love."

Even Ann's existential crisis doesn't quite materialize in this unwaveringly sardonic portrait of millennial malaise. Her life plays out in a series of brief, crispy edited vignettes that jump between her drab work life and her extreme but equally drab sex life.

Obedience is pushed on her in both places, as are labels, most of which Ann quietly but not necessarily apathetically accepts. One partner (Parish Bradley) who instructs her to communicate in "a series of ..." writes the lewd name he's given her across her belly in marker. At work, an unseen HR gives her a new job title: "Clinical Media E-learning Specialist." Which is worse is hard to say. After three years on the job, she's given a one-year anniversary trophy.

How Ann feels about all of this isn't always obvious, possibly even to her. Arnow portrays her much as she directs and edits the film, with a detached deadpan. Sometimes Ann pushes back. She tells her older lover that she's not an Internet window he can open and close. But there's also something in Ann that recoils against more sentimental encounters. Later in the film, she begins dating someone sweetly if naively romantic (Babak Tafti) who's unfamiliar with the kind of bondage role-playing Ann is accustomed to. But his sweetness is more of a strike against him. Ann may be a victim of her modern, alienating environment, but she's also a product of it.

Arnow, who also made the 2013 film "I hate myself," has often been compared to Lena Dunham as a generation-representing voice, for her willingness to bear all on screen and for her proclivity for autobiography. (Ann's parents in the film are played by Arnow's real-life mother and father, Barbara Weiserbs and David Arnow.)

But Arnow's sensibility is much dryer and more satirical. Whether Ann can free herself of her circumstance is one thing, but Arnow, as a keenly insightful filmmaker, proves again and again that she has. How else can you explain the trenchant absurdity of the poem-worthy dialogue that runs through the film? A sexual partner whose first line is: "Thank you for forgiving me for mansplaining about L.A." A boss who announces: "If you're not on Spotify, you're behind the times." And Ann, who after debasing herself with her older lover, says, "The candles were nice," only for him to reply: "There was just one candle."

In so many ways, **TJ Ballantyne** is a classic **Ken Loach** hero: a working-class, middle-aged man trying to simply eke out a dignified living, but meeting obstacles at each turn - a victim of unforgiving social realities that leave people like him in the dust.

Like many of these Loach protagonists, TJ can't get a break - even from gravity, as when he tries to fix the dilapidated pub he runs in a former mining town that's been in decline for decades. Talk about decline: That letter keeps tilting downward, even when TJ fixes it with a broomstick. He turns away and it simply falls again.

Loach has never been subtle with his messaging, and why should he start now, at the apparent end of his filmmaking career? The 87-year-old director, who's made nearly 30 features, has said "The Old Oak" is likely the last. He's said that before, but assuming it's true, the film is a poignant and moving coda to a career spent chronicling personal indignities amid broader social ills like poverty and unemployment.

And now, the migrant crisis. Loach and screenwriter **Paul Laverty** address this through an unusual friendship between TJ and Yara, a young Syrian woman and refugee who ends up, with her family, in the town, to

the hostility of many. For once, a man like TJ and his fellow villagers, all struggling, are not the neediest in the story. There are others who need even more help. In this story of two communities at odds, Loach seeks to end a trilogy of films set in northeastern England on a message of conciliation and hope.

We begin somewhere near Durham, in 2016. Syrian war refugees have been arriving in Britain as they have elsewhere in Europe, and it's no surprise that some have been sent to a desolate former mining town where housing is dirt cheap.

Some of the locals are furious about the intrusion. In a devastating pre-credits sequence, the busload of refugees arrives to taunts from the townspeople, who say they weren't even warned.

Yara (**Ebla Mari**), who's in her early 20s, has arrived with her mother. Her father, who is either imprisoned in Syria or dead, had gifted her with a camera, and she's using it to document her arrival (the sequence is shown through her photos). An angry man in a football jersey tussles with her and her camera drops to the ground, broken.

During their research, Loach and Laverty noticed that many pubs in former mining towns were now shuttered. In their story, the Old Oak is the last remaining pub, and moreover the only gathering space left in town. Over pints poured by TJ, men he grew up with - Charlie, for example, whose wife is ailing and whose house has plummeted in value, and Vic and Eddy, the angriest of the bunch, complain about the interlopers. "We can't even take care of our own kids," they say.

The transition is ugly. Young boys are bullied at school. When a local girl falls ill, Yara tries to help by accompanying her home to rest; the mother arrives home and throws the young Syrian violently out of the house.

For TJ, whose marriage has failed and who's estranged from his son, things go from bad to worse. His only companion is a beloved former stray dog who appeared in his life at his darkest moment; she is constantly threatened by nasty dogs owned by thugs. A former miner himself, he's holding onto his pub by the skin of his teeth. And now, some of the locals want to use his empty back room to hold a meeting and air grievances about the migrants. He makes excuses. (AP)

Anticipation for the Stones' performance is palpable, Davis said. "All I'm hearing is 'How can I get a ticket?'" he said of fans trying to see the marquee performance. "Unfortunately for some, that day sold out in like a day-and-a-half after tickets went on sale. I think people have just waited so long for this." (AP)

**NEW ORLEANS:** The man who fatally shot retired NFL star **Will Smith** during a confrontation following a car crash in 2016 is scheduled for sentencing Thursday in a New Orleans courtroom.

It's the second time **Cardell Hayes**, 36, has faced sentencing in Smith's death. He was convicted of manslaughter in December 2016 and later sentenced to 25 years. But the jury vote had been 10-2 and the conviction was later tossed after the US Supreme Court outlawed such non-unanimous verdicts.



Jagger



Batiste

Hayes was released on bond after having served more than four years of the original sentence. He remained free during multiple retrial delays, some due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But he was taken back into custody following the unanimous Jan. 27 verdict and has been awaiting sentencing at the New Orleans jail.

Smith was shot eight times - seven times in the back - during a confrontation with Hayes that happened after Hayes' SUV struck the rear of Smith's vehicle. Hayes has long said he fired in self-defense. He said he fired only because he believed a drunken and belligerent Smith had retrieved a gun from his SUV. He insisted

on the stand that he heard a "pop" before he started shooting and that he did not shoot at Smith's wife, **Racquel**, who was hit in the legs. Evidence showed Smith was intoxicated at the time of the confrontation. But there was no witness or forensic evidence to back up Hayes' claim that Smith had welded or fired a weapon. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Melodic narrative

## Taylor Swift delivers a meditative theater

LOS ANGELES, April 25, (AP): Who knew what Taylor Swift's latest era would bring? Or even what it would sound like? Would it build off the moodiness of "Midnights" or the folk of "evermore"? The country or the '80s pop of her latest re-records? Or its two predecessors in black-and-white covers: the revenge-pop of "Reputation" and the literary Americana of "folklore"?

"The Tortured Poets Department," is an amalgamation of all of the above, reflecting the artist who - at the peak of her powers - has spent the last few years re-recording her life's work and touring its material, filtered through synth-pop anthems, breakup ballads, provocative and matured considerations.

In moments, her 11th album feels like a bloodletting: A cathartic purge after a major heartbreak delivered through an ascendant vocal run, an elegiac verse, or mobile, synthesized productions that underscore the powers of Swift's storytelling.

And there are surprises. The lead single and opener "Fortnight" is "1989" grown up - and features Post Malone. It might seem like a funny pairing, but it's a long time coming: Since at least 2018, Swift's fans have known of her love for Malone's "Better Now."

"But Daddy I Love Him" is the return of country Taylor, in some ways - fairytale songwriting, a full band chorus, a plucky acoustic guitar riff, and a cheeky lyrical reversal: "But Daddy I love him / I'm having his baby / No, I'm not / But you should see your faces." (Babies appear on "Florida!!!" and the bonus track "The Manuscript" as well.)

The fictitious "Fresh Out The Slammer" begins with a really pretty psych guitar tone that disappears beneath wind-blown production; the new wave-adjacent "My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys" brings back "Barbie": "I felt more when we played pretend than with all the Kens / 'Cause he took me out of my box."

## Relationship

Even before Florence Welch kicks off her verse in "Florida!!!" the chorus' explosive repetition of the song title hits hard with nostalgic 2010s indie rock, perhaps an alt-universe Swiftian take on Sufjan Stevens' "Illinois."

As another title states, "So Long, London," indeed. It would be a disservice to read Swift's songs as purely diaristic, but that track - the fifth on this album, which her fans typically peg as the most devastating slot on each album - evokes striking parallels to her relationship with a certain English actor she split with in 2023. Place it next to a sleepy love ode like "The Alchemy," with its references to "touch-down" and cutting someone "from the team" and well ... art imitates life.

Revenge is still a pervasive theme. But where the reprisal anthems on "Midnights" were vindictive, on "The Tortured Poets Department," there are new complexities: "Who's Afraid of Little Old Me?" combines the musical ambitiousness of "evermore" and "folklore" - and adds a resounding bass on the bridge - with sensibilities ripped from the weapons-drawn, obstinate "Reputation." But here, Swift mostly trades victimhood for self-assurance, warts and all.

"Who's afraid of little old me?" she sings. "You should be," she responds.

And yet, "The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived" may be her most biting song to date: "You didn't measure up in any measure of a man," she sings atop propulsive piano. "I'll forget you, but I won't ever forgive," she describes her target, likely the same "tattooed golden retriever," a jejune description, mentioned in the title track.

Missteps are few, found in other mawkish lyrics and songs like "Down Bad" and "Guilty as Sin?" that falter when placed next to the album's more meditative pop moments.

Elsewhere, Swift holds up a mirror to her melodrama and melancholy - she's crying at the gym, don't tell her about "sad," is she allowed to cry? She died inside, she thinks you might want her dead; she thinks she might just die. She listens to the voices that tell her "Lights, camera, bitch, smile / Even when you want to die," as she sings on "I Can Do It with a Broken Heart," a song about her own performances - onstage and as a public figure.

"I'm miserable and nobody even knows!" she laughs at the end of the song before sighing, "Try and come for my job."



Swift



In this image provided by the Met Opera, soprano Asmik Grigorian prepares for her Metropolitan Opera debut during a rehearsal for Puccini's 'Madame Butterfly.' (AP)

## Opera

## Lithuanian soprano's journey of vocal redemption

## Asmik Grigorian, Met's newest sensation

NEW YORK, April 25, (AP): Asmik Grigorian laughs when she recalls that she had been singing professionally for more than a decade when the International Opera Awards proclaimed her the "best young female singer" of 2016.

"So for 12 years I was nothing, and then I immediately became the best!" the Lithuanian soprano joked in an interview.

Now at the peak of her career and seemingly able to sing just about any role she chooses, from Dvorak's lyrical "Rusalka" to Puccini's dramatic "Turandot," Grigorian is about to make her Metropolitan Opera debut in another Puccini classic, "Madame Butterfly."

"My only regret is not having booked her sooner," said Met general manager Peter Gelb. "Asmik is an operatic force of nature, one of the greatest and most complete vocal and acting packages in recent operatic history."

Growing up in Vilnius she had plenty of exposure to opera. Both her parents, tenor Gegam Grigorian and soprano Irena Milkeviute, were opera singers and both appeared at the Met, where Asmik traveled with them while a young girl.

When she launched her own career, she took pains not to trade on the family fame.

"I was pretty successful in that," Grigorian said, "because even now many people say, 'Oh you have the same name, you know he was a great tenor,' and I say 'Yeah, I know, he was my father.'"

It took her many years from her 2004 debut in Norway at age 23 as Donna Anna in Mozart's

"Don Giovanni" to achieve the combination of dramatic intensity and seamless vocalism that have opera houses around the world competing for her talents.

"In the beginning I always had a reputation as a pure stage animal who is not really 100% able to control my voice," she said. "It was true."

"I was too young," she added. "Control demands experience, so of course I failed a thousand, million times and this is an amazing thing to do. I think it's the biggest sadness of the generation now because we are so visible and people are not allowing themselves to fail anymore, and how can you develop without failing?"

## Triumph

Eventually the lack of a dependable vocal technique caught up with her. "You come to the age where you can't just rely on nature," she said. "I hurt my voice, I hurt my body, I hurt everything."

By 2012, she said, "I could not sing anything any more. And I decided, OK I have two choices: I can continue killing myself, or I start from the beginning."

Grigorian worked hard for years to build her technique and knew she had succeeded when a critic said "she is perfect technically, and it's so boring because she is not so interesting as an actress."

"Then I thought, now I did it!" Grigorian, 42, said. "But when you are so focused on technique it's a bit too cold." Finding she could trust her voice allowed her to flourish again as a per-

former "and a different type of magic" started to happen.

Triumph after triumph followed. Of her 2018 Salzburg role debut as Salome in the Richard Strauss opera, Financial Times critic Shirley Apherov raved that "hers is a Salome to end all Salomes ... Grigorian's charisma sweeps it all in her wake."

Three years later when she made her debut at the Wagner shrine in Bayreuth, Germany, as Senta in "The Flying Dutchman." Joshua Barone in The New York Times called her performance "luxuriously lyrical" and noted she was "met with a roaring ovation."

Acclaim also greeted her last year when she took on two parts many thought would be too taxing for her voice: Verdi's Lady Macbeth in Salzburg and Turandot in Vienna.

Her fellow singers seem as enthusiastic about her as critics and audiences.

"She is the best partner I've ever had on stage. End of discussion," said tenor Joshua Guerrero, who recently sang opposite her in "Madame Butterfly" at London's Royal Opera House. He cited in particular "her willingness to remove ego and to put the other person forward when they are singing their part."

As Butterfly, Guerrero said she brought to the role "a beautiful stillness ... She played it very naively, with a childlike approach."

Grigorian explains: "I like to hear a lyrical sound with very tender colors because she's a 15-year-old girl."

## Variety

NEW YORK: The former Instagram influencer known as "Jay Mazini" who swindled millions of dollars from online followers and a network of Muslims during the pandemic was sentenced to seven years in prison on Wednesday, prosecutors said.

Jebara Igbara, 28, of New Jersey, had pleaded guilty to fraud charges, admitting that he created a Ponzi scheme that involved cryptocurrency frauds netting around \$8 million. Prosecutors say the money funded a decadent lifestyle that included luxury cars and a lot of gambling.

Exploiting the economic chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, Igbara leveraged connections in the Muslim community to gather investments for his firm Hallal Capital LLC, saying it would earn returns on stocks, and the reselling of electronics and personal protective equipment.

"Shamefully, he targeted his own religious community, taking advantage of their trust in him so he could spend and gamble their hard-earned money," said Breon Peace, US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, in a statement.

As he networked with high-value investors locally, Igbara amplified his online persona, reaching around 1 million Instagram followers, prosecutors said.

He built a following in part by filming cash giveaways, often handing stacks of money to fast food workers or everyday people checking out at Walmart. In at least one video, he handed out cash alongside rapper 50 Cent. (AP)



Igbara

CINCINNATI: Cristian Macelararu was hired Wednesday as music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra starting in the 2025-26 season.

The 44-year-old will be music director designate in the 2024-25 season and then will have a four-year term.

Macelararu will succeed Louis Langrée, who leaves at the end of this season after serving as music director since 2013-14.

Macelararu has been music director of the Orchestre National de France since the 2021-22 season and holds that job through 2026-27. He has been chief conductor of the WDR Sinfonie-Orchester in Cologne, Germany, since 2019-20 and is scheduled to step down after the 2024-25 season. (AP)

HOUSTON: A judge has declined to dismiss hundreds of lawsuits filed against rap star Travis Scott over his role in the deadly 2021 Astroworld festival in which 10 people were killed in a crowd surge.

State District Judge Kristen Hawkins issued a one-page order denying Scott's request that he and his touring and production company, XX Global, should be dropped from the case. The order was signed on Tuesday but made public on Wednesday.

Scott's attorneys had argued during an April 15 hearing that he was not responsible for safety planning and watching for possible dangers at the concert on Nov. 5, 2021.

They argued Scott's duties and responsibilities related to the festival only dealt with creative aspects, including performing and marketing.

However, Noah Wexler, an attorney for the family of Madison Dubiski, 23, one of the 10 people killed, said Scott, whose real name is Jacques Bermon Webster II, had a "conscious disregard for safety" at the sold-out festival. (AP)

## MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



## RECALL VEHICLES



TOYOTA LC 300 (MY 2023 &amp; 2024)

VIN: JTMAA7BJON4001309 TO JTMABBBJXR4132494

## RECALL REASON

Due to a software issue, the transmission control module may not operate as intended. If this occurs, the automatic transmission may continue to transfer engine power to the wheels when shifted to the neutral position. If the brake pedal or parking brake are not applied, it may result in unintended vehicle movement if the shift lever is not moved to Park position.

## REMEDY

Owners of affected vehicles will be contacted by Al Sayer and are asked to make an appointment to update the transmission control module software, free of charge.

## CONTACT

MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & SONS EST. CO.W.L.L.  
HOTLINE: 1803803  
WWW.TOYOTA.COM.KW  
Please book an appointment to serve you better

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48) of no. (27/2015) issuing the executive bylaws of law no. (39/2014) on Consumer Protection

## MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



## RECALL VEHICLES



LEXUS LX600 (MY 2022, 2023 &amp; 2024)

VIN: JTPB7CXON4000393 TO JTPBBCXP4030846

## RECALL REASON

Due to a software issue, the transmission control module may not operate as intended. If this occurs, the automatic transmission may continue to transfer engine power to the wheels when shifted to the neutral position. If the brake pedal or parking brake are not applied, it may result in unintended vehicle movement if the shift lever is not moved to Park position.

## REMEDY

Owners of affected vehicles will be contacted by Al Sayer and are asked to make an appointment to update the transmission control module software, free of charge.

## CONTACT

MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & SONS EST. CO.W.L.L.  
HOTLINE: 1830030  
WWW.LEXUS.COM.KW  
Please book an appointment to serve you better

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48) of no. (27/2015) issuing the executive bylaws of law no. (39/2014) on Consumer Protection

## Half of world's population at risk of parasitic disease

## Hope of vaccine to eradicate malaria from the world

By Dr Ali Sher

World Malaria Day, marked each year on 25 April, brings together the global malaria community to highlight global efforts to end malaria, the need for sustained political commitment, and continued investment in malaria control and elimination.

The 2024 World Malaria Day theme: "Health Equity, Gender and Human Rights"

The 2024 theme highlights the need for urgent action and further investment to ensure to deliver maximum impact in the fight to end malaria. On this World Malaria Day, the global malaria community will come together to celebrate the progress and call on countries and partners around the world to:



Dr Ali Sher

Invest in malaria programs, delivering bold investments in malaria control and elimination to bridge critical funding gaps and accelerate progress.

Innovate to deliver transformative and improved solutions to end malaria that are tailored to those who need them most.

Implement national strategies to accelerate progress against this age-old disease by demonstrating leadership, adopting innovative and sustainable approaches, and scaling up national malaria programs to deliver lifesaving tools to those at the highest risk.

## Malaria History

Half of the world population (4.1 billion people) in 87 countries and territories is still at risk of malaria (WHO 2022). Despite the widespread control and elimination efforts, malaria still continues to be the most important parasitic disease worldwide, affecting 249 million people and causing 608,000 deaths in 2022, mostly in tropical and subtropical countries. The WHO African Region carries a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden. In 2021, the Region was home to 95% (234 million) of malaria cases and 96% (593,000) of malaria deaths. Nearly 80% of malaria deaths in the African Region were among children under the age of 5. In Kuwait only 93 cases of malaria was reported among expatriates in 2022.

## Definition of vaccine

A vaccine is a biological preparation that provides active acquired immunity to protect against a specific infectious disease. Usually, vaccines contain a weakened or killed form of the disease-causing agent, its surface proteins or its toxins. When this preparation is introduced into the human body, the immune system is able to recognize the threat and destroy it. Moreover, the body will "remember" the threat and can initiate an appropriate response if encountered in the future.

The process of administering the vaccine is called vaccination or immunization. It is responsible for the eradication of many diseases. The term "vaccine" is derived from the Latin word for cow, vacca.

An ideal vaccine would be: safe, easy to manufacture, easy to administer and when administered in infancy, confer life-long immunity against all forms of the disease

## Number of malaria vaccines available

More than a dozen vaccine candidates are now in clinical development, and only these are available against P. falciparum now:

1. Mosquirix, GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, RTS,S/AS01 – used as vaccine in three countries, Kenya, Ghana and Malawisince 2019.

2. R21/MM (in adjuvant Matrix-MTMor control rabies vaccine) – ready for use. It is safe and very im-

munogenic in children 5-17 months of age in Burkina Faso and demonstrates high-level efficacy.

3. PISPZvaccine – whole sporozoite

4. Transmission-blocking vaccines

5. mRNA vaccine against malaria

6. SPI66 - synthetic peptide

7. NYVAC-Pf7- multi-stage vaccine

8. [NANP]19-5.1-sporozoite&schizont protein

**Mosquirix, GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, RTS,S/AS01**

RTS,S/AS01 (RTS,S), trade name Mosquirix, is the world's first malaria vaccine and the first approved vaccine to combat a human parasitic disease. This is the only malaria vaccine is recommended and prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO). The RTS,S vaccine is a recombinant protein that fuses a part of the Plasmodium falciparum circumsporozoite (CS) surface protein with the hepatitis B surface antigen expressed in yeast. When RTS,S is mixed with the adjuvant AS01 the vaccine becomes highly immunogenic and confers protection against P. falciparum sporozoites infection as soon as it enters in the blood stream of the human host. It requires at least three doses in infants by age 2, with a fourth dose extending the protection for another 1-2 years. The vaccine reduces hospital admissions from severe malaria by around 30%.

In October 2013, preliminary results of a phase III clinical trial indicated that RTS,S/AS01 reduced the number of cases among young children by almost 50 percent and among infants by around 25 percent. The effects of a booster dose were positive but wane with time. After four years, reductions were 36 percent for children who received three shots and a booster dose. Missing the booster dose reduced the efficacy against severe malaria to a negligible effect. The vaccine was shown to be less effective for infants. Three doses of vaccine plus a booster reduced the risk of clinical episodes by 36% over three years and 23% in severe malaria.

The Phase 3 efficacy and safety trial, conducted between 2009 and 2014, involved 15,459 infants and young children and was conducted by 11 clinical research centers in seven African countries (Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania). The children were divided into three groups; two had the vaccine, but with either a low or high dose of adjuvant, while the third group were given a rabies vaccine as a control. The children had three doses of Mosquirix vaccine and a booster dose.

In July 2015, Mosquirix received a positive scientific opinion from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on the proposal for the vaccine to be used to vaccinate children aged 6 weeks to 17 months outside the European Union. A pilot project for vaccination was launched on 23 April 2019 in Malawi, on 30 April 2019 in Ghana, and on 13 September 2019 in Kenya.

As of April 2022, 1 million children in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi have received at least one shot of the vaccine. The first results of vaccination showed that hospitalizations from severe malaria have decreased by about 30%. Despite a low protection of 28-36%, the vaccine has raised hopes that more than 400,000 children who die annually from malaria can be saved.

In August 2022, UNICEF awarded a contract to GSK to purchase 18 million doses of the RTS,S vaccine over three years. More than 30 countries have areas with moderate to high malaria transmission where the vaccine is expected to be useful.

In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the malaria vaccine RTS,S/AS01, which was developed by GlaxoSmithKline, for wide use. In the approval study, this vaccine demonstrated a vaccine efficacy of 56%..

To be continued

UK provides \$9.25m to treat malaria in Africa

## Climate change bringing malaria to new areas

LAGOS, Nigeria, April 25, (Agencies): When a small number of cases of locally transmitted malaria were found in the United States last year, it was a reminder that climate change is reviving or migrating the threat of some diseases. But across the African continent malaria has never left, killing or sickening millions of people.

Take Funmilayo Kotun, a 66-year-old resident of Makoko, an informal neighborhood in Nigeria's Lagos city. Its ponds of dirty water provide favorable breeding conditions for malaria-spreading mosquitoes. Kotun can't afford insecticide-treated bed nets that cost between \$7 and \$21 each, much less antimalarial medications or treatment.

**For World Malaria Day on Thursday, here is what you need to know about the situation in Africa:**

The malaria parasite mostly spreads to people via infected mosquitoes and can cause symptoms including fever, headaches and chills. It mostly affects children under 5 and pregnant women. Vaccine efforts are still in early stages: Cameroon this year became the first country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine, which is only about 30% effective and doesn't stop

transmission. A second vaccine was recently approved.

Cases of resistance to antimalarial drugs and insecticides are increasing, while funding by governments and donors for innovation is slowing.

Living conditions play a role, with crowded neighborhoods, stagnant water, poor sanitation and lack of access to treatment and prevention materials all issues in many areas. And an invasive species of mosquito previously seen mostly in India and the Persian Gulf is a new concern.

Globally, malaria cases are on the rise. Infections increased from 233 million in 2019 to 249 million in 85 countries in 2022. Malaria deaths rose from 576,000 in 2019 to 608,000 in 2022, according to the World Health Organization.

Of the 12 countries that carry about 70% of the global burden of malaria, 11 are in Africa and the other is India. Children under 5 constituted 80% of the 580,000 malaria deaths recorded in Africa in 2022.

The fight against malaria saw some progress in areas such as rapid diagnostic tests, vaccines and new bed nets meant to counter insecticide resistance, but the COVID-19 pandemic

and a shift in focus and funding set back efforts.

A study published in Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease last year said COVID-19-induced lockdowns led to disruptions at 30% of rural community health service points across Africa. Malaria cases started spiking again, breaking a downward trend between 2000 and 2019.

**That downward trend could soon return, according to the WHO.**

Africa is "at the sharp end of climate change," and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events causes havoc in efforts to combat malaria in low- and middle-income regions, Peter Sands, the executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, warned in December.

In 2023, the WHO's World Malaria Report included a chapter on the link between malaria and climate change for the first time, highlighting its significance as a potential risk multiplier. Scientists worry that people living in areas once inhospitable to mosquitoes, including the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro and the mountains of eastern Ethiopia, could be exposed.

In Zimbabwe, which has recorded

some of its hottest days in decades, malaria transmission periods have extended in some districts, "and this shift has been attributed to climate change," said Dr. Precious Andifasi, a WHO technical officer for malaria in Zimbabwe.

## Also:

**LONDON:** The UK government announced on Thursday funding the treatment of malaria with USD 9.25 million in sub-Saharan Africa.

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said in a statement that the funding will allow MedAccess to use the UK-Indian developed RTS,S vaccine, which will help one million people access new diagnostic tests and 120 million patients to receive anti-malarial treatments.

The statement also said that RTS,S have been used in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, with two million children vaccinated since 2019, and in January, Cameroon became the first country to give the vaccines to children routinely.

More than 600,000 people worldwide die every year from malaria, which is preventable and treatable, it added.

## Study reveals early development insights

## China builds 3D model of 3-week human embryo

BEIJING, April 25, (Xinhua): Chinese scientists reconstructed a 3D model of a human embryo within two to three weeks after fertilization, which opens a new door into very early human embryonic development.

Out of ethical concerns, in-vitro culture of human embryos is limited to 14 days, and therefore, the human embryo growth between 14 and 21 days after fertilization is usually considered a "black box."

The researchers from the Institute of Zoology, at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and China Agricultural University conducted high-resolution profiling on 38,562 gene spots of a human embryo and then constructed its 3D model by integrating gene expression patterns and spatial information.

Also, they have investigated the dynamic activity of signaling pathways along the embryonic body axis, according to the study published this week in the journal Cell.

The study has far-reaching clinical implications for understanding the miscarriages and fetal disorders in early embryonic development, said the researchers.



(Pic A) Journalists interact with a bionic humanoid robot at the Zhongguancun International Innovation Center, new venue for Zhongguancun Forum (ZGC Forum), in Beijing, capital of China, April 24. Themed 'Innovation: Building a Better World,' this year's ZGC Forum is to be held at Zhongguancun International Innovation Center for the first time from April 25 to 29. (Xinhua)

## Scientists warn of virus mutation for human transmission

## US ramps up testing for bird flu in dairy cows

NEW YORK, April 25, (AP): US health and agriculture officials are ramping up testing and tracking of bird flu in dairy cows in an urgent effort to understand and stop - the growing outbreak.

So far, the risk to humans remains low, officials said, but scientists are wary that the virus could change to spread more easily among people.

The virus, known as Type A H5N1, has been detected in nearly three dozen dairy herds in eight states. Inactive viral remnants have been found in grocery store milk. Tests also show the virus is spreading between cows, including those that don't show symp-

toms, and between cows and birds, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Starting Monday, hundreds of thousands of lactating dairy cows in the U.S. will have to be tested - with negative results - before they can be moved between states, under terms of a new federal order.

Here's what you need to know about the ongoing bird flu investigation:

This strain of what's known as highly pathogenic avian influenza has been circulating in wild birds for decades. In recent years, it has been detected in scores of mammals around the world. Most have been wild animals, such as

foxes and bears, that ate sick or dying birds. But it's also appeared in farmed minks. It's shown up in aquatic mammals, such as harbor seals and porpoises, too. The virus was even found in a polar bear in northern Alaska.

The virus was discovered in ruminants - goats and then dairy cows - in the U.S. this spring, surprising many scientists who have studied it for years. "When we think of influenza A, cows are not typically in that conversation," said Richard Webby, an influenza expert at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Flu viruses are notorious for adapt-

ing to spread among new species, so detection in dairy cows raises concerns it could spread to people, Webby said.

Scientists confirmed the virus in cows in March after weeks of reports from dairy farms that the animals were falling ill. Symptoms included lethargy, sharply reduced milk supply and changes to the milk, which became thick and yellow.

Finding remnants of the virus in milk on the market "suggests that this has been going on longer, and is more widespread, than we have previously recognized," said Matthew Aliota, a veterinary medicine researcher at the University of Minnesota.

## MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

**For your ads on this page**

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

[www.arabtimesonline.com](http://www.arabtimesonline.com)

**مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي**  
**SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE**  
الفروانية FARWANIYA

**DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT**

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

**Dr. Shajahan V.M**  
BDS, MDS  
Dental Surgeon

**Dr. Ayham Askar**  
BDS  
Dental Surgeon

**Dr. Raina Fernandes**  
BDS  
Dental Surgeon

**Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm**  
**Ph: 24 734 000**

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya  
[www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw](http://www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw)

**'It means something for us because that's never happened before'**

## Leverkusen's Tah looks to finish historic season unbeaten and with more trophies

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, April 25, (AP): Jonathan Tah is already a German champion with Bayer Leverkusen. He's hungry for more titles.

Tah could yet complete a treble this season in the Europa League - where Leverkusen plays Roma in the semifinals next week - and in the German Cup. Then there's the European Championship with Germany, for which Tah has become a regular starter in central defense alongside Real Madrid's Antonio Rüdiger.

### SOCCER

Leverkusen's players and coach Xabi Alonso - who Tah showered with beer during their title celebrations - aren't satisfied just with bringing the long-awaited first league title to a club once derided as "Neverkusen" for its near misses. "This trophy gave us so much

positive energy. To have that feeling to win a trophy, the hunger gets even bigger and that's why we keep our level high," Tah tells The Associated Press. "One trophy is nice but there's still more to achieve, so that's why we keep pushing ourselves."

Including the home game with Stuttgart on Saturday, Leverkusen is four games away from being the first German team to go unbeaten all season in the Bundesliga.

Tah and the rest of the defense have conceded in 30 league games just 20 goals - 17 fewer than Bayern Munich - and going unbeaten would be their crowning achievement.

"That means something for us because that's never happened before," Tah said. "We are racing ourselves because we are already Bundesliga champions. But that's our own challenge now that we are playing for, and that's why we want to keep that momentum and keep winning."

Tah has been with Leverkusen

since 2015 and is the club's second longest serving player. In that time, "the expectations of the club evolved" and Alonso has forged a competitive mindset, even in training, and rock-solid team spirit, Tah said.

"He's expecting to win every game, no matter against who we play. He's never scared. He always wants to win games and that's his mindset," Tah said of Alonso. Having a coach who won the World Cup and Champions League as a player opens up new possibilities in training. Clips from Alonso's sessions with Leverkusen have often gone viral as the coach casually plays pinpoint long passes or shows off his skills.

"He can show you what he wants to see from you and actually sometimes it's really impressive how good his level still is," Tah said. "I don't want to take away (from) his tactical understanding and explaining the team on the (tactics) board

and stuff like that, because he's good at that as well, but of course he's Xabi Alonso. He was a big player. He won everything. And if he explains something to you and shows it to you, it is different than a coach who has never played for a club before."

Leverkusen's historic season will end with the German Cup final against Kaiserslautern on May 25 in Berlin. That comes three days after a potential Europa League final against Atalanta or Marseille in Dublin.

Tah's unlikely to get much rest after that. His performances with Leverkusen have helped to kick-start what had been a stop-start career with Germany. He's played every minute of Germany's last seven games, including every game since Julian Nagelsmann was appointed coach.

Tah believes Leverkusen's winning mindset could help Germany, too.



Leverkusen's Florian Wirtz (right) celebrates with teammates Jonathan Tah (top), Victor Boniface (left), and Granit Xhaka during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Dortmund at the BayArena in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

"That's my part," he said, "to bring that energy and that mindset that we have here in Leverkusen right now to the national team and try to do my best to support the team, so that we can be successful."

## Delhi survives Rashid's onslaught to beat Gujarat by four runs in IPL

Pant returns to competitive cricket after car accident



Delhi Capitals' Axar Patel plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Titans in New Delhi, India. (AP)

**NEW DELHI, April 25, (AP): Delhi Capitals survived Rashid Khan's onslaught in the last over to register an exhilarating four-run victory over Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League.**

Needing 19 off fast bowler Mukesh Kumar's final six balls, Rashid (21 not out) clubbed back-to-back boundaries off the first two balls and then a six off the penultimate ball before Gujarat finished at 220-8 in yet another high-scoring thriller in IPL this season.

Captain Rishabh Pant, returning to competitive cricket after his car accident in late December, staked his T20 World Cup claims with a robust unbeaten 88 off 43 balls which propelled Delhi to 224-4 after Gujarat won the toss and chose to field first.

Pant provided a perfect finish to Delhi's innings when he smashed Mohit Sharma for 31 runs in the last over as the Gujarat fast bowler registered most expensive bowling figures in IPL history with 0-73.

Tristan Stubbs scored a rapid 26 off seven balls and Delhi's 53 runs off the final two overs were also the most scored by a team in the IPL off the last 12 balls of the innings.

Gujarat skipper Shubman Gill (6) sliced a catch at mid-off off Anrich Nortje's third ball and got dismissed cheaply in his 100th IPL game before impact player Sai Sudharsan (65) and Wriddhiman Saha (39) brought the chase back on track with a 82-run second-wicket stand.

### CRICKET

Delhi came back through spinners Kuldeep Yadav (2-29) and Axar Patel (1-28) in the middle overs before David Miller (55) hit a 21-ball half-century and swung the momentum in Gujarat's favor.

Miller, who hit three sixes and six boundaries, holed out in the 18th over but Rashid, who escaped a dropped catch before he had scored, countercharged in the last over but just fell short to get Gujarat over the line.

Earlier, Axar Patel's (66) elevation to No. 3 proved a perfect play for Delhi after fast bowler Sandeep Warrier (3-15) had struck thrice in the batting power play and restricted them to 44-3.

Patel and Pant shared 113-run fourth-wicket stand before Patel holed out at long-on after scoring his personal best in the IPL that featured four sixes and five boundaries.

Stubbs then clubbed two sixes and two boundaries off Sai Kishore's 22-run penultimate over before Pant provided a perfect finish against Sharma in the final over.

Delhi rose to No. 6 with its fourth win in nine games, while Gujarat slipped to No. 7 on inferior net run-rate after losing its fifth game in nine matches.

## Playoff hopes fading for troubled Crusaders in Super Rugby Pacific

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, April 25, (AP): After dominating Super Rugby for more than two decades, the Christchurch-based Crusaders have fallen into a funk this season from which they seem unable to extract themselves.

The Crusaders are in last place after nine rounds of the current Super Rugby Pacific season with only one win. They face the fourth-place Melbourne Rebels in the 10th round on Saturday.

The Crusaders' sudden fall from grace has come with the usual baggage: fan anger and resentment, bitter recriminations from former players and calls for current head coach Rob Penney to go.

The Crusaders' management have pushed back strongly against critics and pointed out with justification that Penney can't be expected to carry the can. There are many issues contributing to the Crusaders' decline and sacking the coach likely won't turn things around.

"There's a real opportunity to be thoughtful and logical and just make sure to get the best out of the group and give them all the support you can," Crusaders chief executive Colin Mainsbridge said. "When you think logically about it, what are your options?"

Sacking the coach is "not a very clever option, no matter how bad things get," Mainsbridge said. "Unless there's toxicity or a complete breakdown in

trust between players and coaching staff and that's not the case."

The Crusaders were Super Rugby champions for seven years in a row until their previous head coach Scott Robertson left after the 2023 season to become All Blacks' head coach. At the same time a number of their senior players or All Blacks left to take up contracts in Japan or France.

### RUGBY

That hollowing out of a championship team has been exacerbated by long-term injuries to All Black Will Jordan and former Wales international Leigh Halfpenny among others.

Others such as captain Scott Barrett, All Blacks Tamaiti Williams, Braydon Ennor and David Havili have been sidelined for shorter periods. Barrett and Havili are due to return against the Rebels.

Departures have left the Crusaders to depend on a much less experienced squad than usual. They have struggled particularly to replace All Blacks fly-half Richie Mo'unga who now is playing in Japan. Rivez Reihana and Riley Hohepa have played in the No. 10 jersey this season.

The 35-year-old former All Blacks flyhalf Aaron Cruden revealed this week he was approached by the Crusaders before the season began but he rebuffed them. "I'm not sure if I could have helped down there

right now anyway," Cruden said. "Maybe a little bit of experience. But those young guys getting that exposure, I think they'll certainly be better for it in that Crusaders 10 jersey."

Mainsbridge agrees that as tough as this season may be, it is building the experience of a new group of Crusaders players.

"People forget that a lot of the great players often have inauspicious starts," he said. "No journey is ever a straight line from new to greatness. For every player to reach their full potential is the same issue. We are absolutely cognizant of that issue and how we build depth and capability there."

Penney has remained optimistic throughout, even after the loss to the Force which was a low point of the season.

"There's a lot of good stuff happening in behind the scenes and I know it doesn't always appear that way when we've had such a topsy-turvy sort of performance and outcome," he said. "There's probably three of those games on reflection and possibly four that we could easily have won."

Every game in round 10 will bear to some extent on the playoffs, notably matches between the Wellington-based Hurricanes and ACT Brumbies, the Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika and the Queensland Reds and Auckland-based Blues.

### Push-to-pass system manipulation cited

## Newgarden stripped of season-opening I victory

WASHINGTON, April 25, (AP): Team Penske was dealt a humiliating disqualification Wednesday when reigning Indianapolis 500 winner Josef Newgarden was stripped of his victory in the IndyCar season-opening race for manipulating his push-to-pass system.

Penske teammate Scott McLaughlin, who finished third in the opener on the downtown streets of St. Petersburg, Florida, was also disqualified. Will Power, who finished fourth at St. Pete, was not disqualified, but docked 10 points.

Additionally, all three Penske entries were fined \$25,000 and forfeited all prize money associated with the race. Power has not been accused of any wrongdoing.

### CAR RACING

Roger Penske owns the race team, the IndyCar Series and Indianapolis Motor Speedway, host of the Indy 500.

"Very disappointing," Penske said in a text message to The Associated Press. "I am embarrassed."

The reverberations were immediate throughout the paddock.

"I've emulated Roger Penske for many years on and off the track, so today's news is quite a disappointment for me," rival team owner Chip Ganassi told the AP. "This is a blemish on his team, their organization, and the series. Very disappointing as a fellow owner and competitor in the series."

The disqualifications gave the victory to Pato O'Ward, who finished second. It is the first win for McLaren's IndyCar team since 2022.

Although Newgarden is accused of cheating in the March 10 opener, IndyCar said the manipulation wasn't discovered until Sunday morning's warmup in Long Beach, California - nearly two months later.

"The integrity of the IndyCar Series championship is critical to everything we do," IndyCar President Jay Frye said. "While the violation went undetected at St. Petersburg, IndyCar discovered the manipulation during Sunday's warmup in Long Beach and immediately addressed it ensuring all cars were compliant for the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach."

"Beginning with this week's race at Barber Motorsports Park, new technical inspection procedures will be in place to deter this



Team Penske driver Josef Newgarden, center, celebrates his first place finish along with second place finisher Arrow McLaren driver Pato O'Ward of Mexico, left, and third place finisher Team Penske driver Scott McLaughlin of New Zealand in the IndyCar Grand Prix of St. Petersburg auto race in St. Petersburg, Fla. (AP)

violation."

A review of the data from the St. Petersburg race showed that Team Penske manipulated the overtake system so the three Penske drivers could use push-to-pass on starts and restarts. According to IndyCar rules, the use of the overtake isn't available until the car reaches the alternate start-finish line.

Team Penske President Tim Cindric said in a statement that the "push-to-pass software was not removed as it should have been, following recently completed hybrid testing in the Team Penske Indy cars."

"This software allowed for push-to-pass to be deployed during restarts at the St. Petersburg Grand Prix race, when it should not have been permitted," Cindric continued. "The No. 2 car driven by Josef Newgarden and the No. 3 car driven by Scott McLaughlin, both deployed push-to-pass on a restart, which violated IndyCar rules. Team Penske accepts the penalties applied by IndyCar."

Newgarden, a two-time IndyCar champion and reigning Indianapolis 500 winner who is in a contract year with Penske, fell from first in points to 11th with the disqualification. Ganassi driver Scott Dixon, winner Sunday at Long Beach, is now the points leader headed into Sunday's race at Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama.

## The French Open to inaugurate second retractable roof court at Roland Garros

PARIS, April 25, (AP): The second retractable roof at Roland Garros will be inaugurated on the opening day of the French Open next month, organizers said on Thursday about a project planned with the Paris Olympics in mind.

A ceremony for the roof over the 10,000-seat Suzanne Lenglen court will be held on May 26 when play starts in the main draws, tournament director Amelie Mauresmo said at a news conference.

Even before the inauguration for the two-week tournament, the roof can be closed if rain comes during qualifying rounds on the six previous days.

The main 15,000-seat Philippe Chatrier court has had a retractable roof since 2020.

"It is a court that will help us a lot," Mauresmo said, calling it the "most visible new feature" of the 2024 tournament.

Mauresmo praised the new roof as giving more flexibility in scheduling matches and ensuring play for 25,000 fans on the grounds and TV viewers worldwide.

The two roofed courts will help keep the Olympic tournament on schedule from July 27-Aug. 4 at the Paris Games. At the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, matches in open-air courts were disrupted by searing heat and humidity.

Rafael Nadal, the record 14-time men's singles champion at the clay-court Grand Slam, doubted on Wednesday he will be ready for Roland Garros as he's dealing with injuries at age 37.

"We cross our fingers for him and for us. He's at home and he knows it," Mauresmo said, hours before Nadal was due on court at the Madrid Open. "We are waiting to see what happens and we will follow his desires."

Even though Nadal is the all-time greatest player at Roland Garros, Mauresmo is not yet prepared to make a special case for him to be seeded as his ranking has dropped to No. 512. Wimbledon has given preferred seeding to grass-court specialist players.

"We have also seen that it brought some benefits but it has also brought some drawbacks," Mauresmo said about seeding according to a player's history instead of current ranking. "So that is not a subject on the table yet."

### TENNIS

If Nadal is unseeded, he could be drawn to face any other player in the first round, including long-time rival and defending champion Novak Djokovic or two-time major champion Carlos Alcaraz.

Nadal, an Olympic gold medalist in singles and doubles, is expected at Roland Garros for the Summer Games, and could play doubles with Alcaraz, French Tennis Federation official Stéphane Morel suggested.

Roland Garros also stages boxing finals in the second week of the Olympics. Mauresmo said the extra attractions had only a positive effect on demand for the French Open.

A Reputed Indian School in Salmiya with International standards is looking for

1. ECONOMICS -PGT (M.com, B.Ed.)
2. MATHS-PGT (M.sc, B.Ed.)
3. SOCIAL SCIENCE-TGT (M. A, B.Ed.)
4. STORE KEEPER (Indian)
5. NURSE (Indian)

Qualified & experienced candidates are requested to apply by email to: [amal\\_ind@hotmail.com](mailto:amal_ind@hotmail.com) or [principal@aaisk.com](mailto:principal@aaisk.com)  
Walk in interviews on working days between 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

Contact No. : 25712971 / 2

**Required**  
**a female**  
**Indian cook**  
with experience  
Full-time  
to work for Kuwaiti family  
**50344227**

## Pakistan's Maroof retires from international cricket

LAHORE, Pakistan, April 25, (AP): Former Pakistan women's captain Bismah Maroof retired from international cricket on Thursday after 276 games in an 18-year career.

"I have decided to retire from the game I love the most," the 32-year-old Maroof said in a statement on Thursday. "It has been an incredible journey, filled

with challenges, victories, and unforgettable memories."

Maroof, an allrounder, batted left-handed and scored 6,262 runs including 33 half-centuries - three ODI scores in the 90s - and bowled right arm leg break and bagged 80 wickets.

She was 15 when she debuted for Pakistan in 2006 in a one-day international against India, and

three years later played her first Twenty20 against Ireland.

Maroof took a break in 2021 to give birth to her first child and said she was grateful for a parental policy that extended her career.

"The support from the PCB has been invaluable, particularly in implementing the first ever parental policy for me, which enabled

me to represent my country at the highest level while being a mother," Maroof said.

Maroof captained Pakistan in 96 internationals, including at her fourth Women's World Cup in 2022 in New Zealand.

She also played in all eight Women's T20 World Cups, and was captain in the last two in 2020 and 2023.





Manchester United's Rasmus Hojlund (second from right), scores his side's fourth goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Sheffield at the Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

# Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

## Kuwaitis shine brightly at Gulf Youth Games

Medal haul surges to 63 as boxers dominate

**DUBAI, April 25:** Kuwait's medal tally soared at the first Gulf Youth Games hosted by the UAE, reaching a total of 63 medals, including 15 gold, 25 silver, and 23 bronze, as the champions of the boxing, table tennis, and volleyball teams added six new medals to the nation's collection.

At the Mubadala Arena in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait's national boxing team shone brightly. Yaqoub Al-Shaheen clinched the gold medal in the 60 kg weight category, while Saud Farhan (80 kg), Yasser Hassan (71 kg), and Abdulaziz Buhaimeed (67 kg) secured silver medals. Adel Al-Zuwair, a member of the Boxing Federation's Board of Directors, commended the team's performance, highlighting their spirit and determination despite late preparations.

He expressed confidence in Kuwait's boxing talents, foreseeing success in future competitions with enhanced focus and development.

In table tennis, the Kuwaiti women's team at-

tained the silver medal at the Shabab Al-Ahli Club hall in Dubai. Players Rayan Al-Eidan, Khadija Al-Halwaji, Maryam Al-Halwaji, Jana Al-Eidan, and Fatima Al-Shammari demonstrated exceptional technical prowess, earning praise from Eid Al-Owaihian, a member of the Table Tennis Board of Directors.

Al-Owaihian commended the competitive spirit displayed by Gulf teams and expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee for facilitating the participation of both male and female national teams.

### GULF YOUTH GAMES

At the Al-Nasr Club hall in Dubai, Kuwait's youth volleyball team secured the bronze medal, despite a defeat to the Saudi team.

Jaber Al-Marri, President of the Kuwaiti Volleyball Federation, commended the team's performance and expressed optimism for future endeavors.

Al-Marri applauded the players' high spirits and their ability to proudly represent Kuwait on the podium, anticipating even greater success in upcoming tournaments.



Yaqoub Al-Shaheen celebrates after winning boxing gold.



Kuwait table tennis silver medalists pose with officials.

Man United survive another scare

## Liverpool Premier League title hopes hit by loss to Everton

**LIVERPOOL, England, April 25, (AP):** Jurgen Klopp's hopes of a dream send-off were left in tatters after a 2-0 loss at Everton dealt a major blow to Liverpool's Premier League title bid.

Goals from Jarrad Branthwaite and Dominic Calvert-Lewin at Goodison Park meant Klopp tasted a bitter defeat in his last Merseyside derby before standing down at the end of the season.

"I can only apologize for today to the people. We should have done better and we didn't and that's why we lost," Klopp said.

The loss keeps Liverpool three points behind league leader Arsenal.

Klopp had spoken last week of needing perfection to win his second title at the club. But this was the latest setback for his team, which has lost two of its last three games in the league.

While the result hurt Liverpool's title chances, it delivered a boost to Everton's survival bid, with the win moving Sean Dyche's team eight points above the relegation zone.

### SOCCER

That fact seemed to be of less concern to the home fans, who were too busy reveling in the damage caused to Liverpool's season.

"You lost the league at Goodison Park," they chanted as the final whistle approached and the majority of the 39,000 crowd remained inside the stadium to drink in the atmosphere as the players celebrated on the field.

"I'm very disappointed. We let it happen exactly the game that Everton

wanted," Klopp said. Klopp had dominated this fixture since taking over at Anfield in 2015, winning nine of the past 16 derbies before Wednesday's match.

It was a different story on what could be his last visit to Goodison Park as an opposition manager as Everton produced a high-octane performance that Liverpool struggled to contain from the start.

Statistics showed Everton won 75% of all duels in the opening half hour.

After just six minutes, Liverpool was grateful for VAR as it escaped an early penalty when Alisson brought down Calvert-Lewin in the box and referee Andrew Madley pointed to



Everton's Jarrad Branthwaite (right), scores their side's first goal of the game during a Premier League soccer match against Liverpool at Goodison Park in Liverpool. (AP)

the spot. The decision was overturned because of an offside in the build up.

Everton's pressure was made to count when it took the lead in the 27th. Liverpool's defenders repeatedly failed to clear the danger from a free kick and Branthwaite's shot squirmed through the hands of Alisson and off the post before crossing the line.

Again there was an agonizing wait for a VAR check, but on this occasion there was no reprieve for Liverpool.

Luis Diaz had the chance to level before the break, but was denied by the legs of Jordan Pickford from close range.

Liverpool came out with more intent for the second half without forc-

ing Pickford into serious action before conceding a second goal.

Again the visitors failed to deal with a set piece when Dwight McNeil swung a deep corner to the far post and Calvert-Lewin rose unmarked to head home.

Liverpool came close to pulling one back in the 69th, but Diaz's effort came back off the post.

Manchester United survived another scare - twice coming from behind to beat last-place Sheffield United 4-2.

Having been taken to the wire by second-tier Coventry in the FA Cup semifinals on Sunday, Erik ten Hag's team looked in danger of dropping points in its bid qualify for Europe.

Sheffield United led 1-0 and then 2-1 through goals from Jayden Bogle and Ben Brereton Diaz in each half at Old Trafford. But Harry Maguire and Bruno Fernandes on the penalty spot leveled on each occasion.

Fernandes put United ahead in the 81st and Rasmus Hojlund sealed the points four minutes later.

United is up to sixth in the standings, 13 points behind fourth-place Aston Villa.

Crystal Palace ensured top flight safety after Jean-Philippe Mateta struck twice in a 2-0 win against Newcastle.

Palace is on 39 points - 14 clear of 18th-place Luton, which can only pick up a maximum of 37 if it wins its last four games of the season.

It was Palace's third-straight win to erase fears of being relegated. Defeat saw Newcastle drop to seventh.

Bournemouth beat Wolves 1-0 at Molineux through Antoine Semenyo's first-half strike.

## Al-Qadisiya & Kazma face off in 'decisive' basketball showdown

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 25:** The Al-Qadisiya and Kazma basketball teams will face off in the decisive match of the league final at 8:00 PM in Al-Itihad Hall, located within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex. This match marks the critical third encounter in the semifinals.

### BASKETBALL

Kuwait Club secured its spot in the final, following the format of three potential matches, by defeating Al-Arabi. In the initial round, Kuwait Club triumphed 104-100, while Al-Arabi withdrew from the second match in protest against the refereeing.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadisiya bested Kazma 85-81, but Kazma retaliated with an 83-79 win in the second match, leading to this decisive showdown.

Expectations run high for an intense and competitive match between the "Yellow" and "Orange" teams. Notably, Al-Qadisiya has dominated their encounters this season, winning five out of six matches against Kazma, who clinched only one victory.

Kazma enters the match buoyed by their recent success in securing third place in the West Asian Championship for the Gulf region, earning them a spot in the West and Central Continent finals.

Al-Qadisiya, absent from the league



A file photo of players in action.

finals since 2018, aims to surpass its opponent and advance to the final. Meanwhile, Kazma seeks to demonstrate its status as Kuwait's foremost challenger, aiming to dethrone Kuwait Club, the defending champion of the last five editions.

Under the guidance of American coach Anthony Stebbing, Al-Qadisiya relies on the skills of their American professionals Robert, Teran, and Tilmou, alongside Muhammad Ashkanani, Rashid Al-Rabah, and Abdul Mohsen Murtada. Kazma, led by Slovenian coach Bojan Lazic, looks to their American players Chapman, Leslie, and Love, supported by the experience of Ahmed Al-Balushi, Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi, and Youssef Bourahma.

## Mbappe nets twice in win over Lorient but PSG's title party delayed by Monaco victory

**LORIENT, France, April 25, (AP):** Paris Saint-Germain will have to wait at least a few more days to try to clinch the French league title.

Kylian Mbappé scored twice and provided an assist in a 4-1 win over Lorient, but there were no celebrations because second-place Monaco beat Lille 1-0 later in the evening.

The lead atop the standings is 11 points with four games remaining. Defending champion PSG can clinch its record-extending 12th French league title at home on Saturday against Le Havre.

PSG remains on course for a treble of trophies in Mbappé's final season with the club, as it will play Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League semifinals and face Lyon in the French Cup final next month.

In a match between the most prolific attack and the most porous defense in the league, PSG winger Ousmane Dembélé opened the scoring in the 19th minute in Lorient, a sleepy seaport in Brittany.

Mbappé doubled the lead by nonchalantly flicking a cross from Nuno Mendes into the far corner in the 22nd.

The France forward set up the third goal by dribbling past Nathaniel Adjei to square the ball back to Dembélé, who tapped into an empty net.

Mbappé sealed the win in the 90th with a curler into the far corner to solidify his spot as the top scorer in the league by raising his tally to 26 goals.

"We had a good game, we were serious, we deserve the three points," Dembélé told Amazon Prime. "Now we must finish the job to be champions as quickly as possible."

Relegation-threatened Lorient scored a consolation goal with a powerful header from Mohamed Bamba off a cross from Benjamin Mendy in the 73rd.

Gianluigi Donnarumma prevented a nifty finish by saving a low strike from Lorient substitute Panos Katsaris in the 80th.

### SOCCER

PSG coach Luis Enrique fielded a makeshift team that included academy players Senny Mayulu and Yoram Zague. Managing his players' minutes, Luis Enrique even left Marquinhos, Achraf Hakimi, Vitinha, Bradley Barcola and Warren Zaire-Emery out of the matchday squad.

PSG has only lost one league game this season, and that was in September.

Monaco won a fourth straight game to go six points clear of fourth-place Lille and move closer to an automatic Champions League spot.

France midfielder Youssouf Fofana won the ball in midfield and scored the lone goal with a low drive from the edge of the box in the 61st.

Lille trails third-place Brest by a point and still occupies the spot for the third qualifying round of the Champions League.

Marseille's European hopes took a hit after a 2-2 draw with fifth-place Nice.

Nigeria forward Terem Moffi put Nice ahead in the 13th after goalkeeper Pau Lopez came off his line and missed the ball.



Mbappe