



Scan the QR code to access
the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM IN RIYADH TO TACKLE CHALLENGES

Amir heads Kuwait delegation at WEF

Opinion

Why invest our money at the ends of the earth?

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

IN 1976 when the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad launched the Tourism Enterprises Company, I remember meeting him and asking, "What is the benefit of this company?"

He replied, "We have an aging generation that does not enjoy the facilities of their country, and misses out on entertainment projects. Therefore, this company will lay the foundation for an entertainment structure that will serve the citizens and residents, and encourage them to spend their money in Kuwait instead of spending it abroad."

Within a few years, this company worked on several projects in the country. This advanced investment vision served as the foundation upon which we can now build, that is if Kuwait wants to rise from its decline that has been ongoing from the post-liberation time until today.

On the other hand, all other Gulf countries followed their path towards sustainable development, especially in comprehensive infrastructure, starting from the smallest projects to the biggest, and worked on human development along with reconstruction. This is because the equation cannot be achieved unless it is coupled with a national effort.

Therefore, Kuwait is today urged to keep pace with this developmental momentum by initiating the huge projects outlined in its plans. These projects encompass road infrastructure improvements, including toll stations on highways, Kuwaiti islands, and the northern economic region. Additionally, Kuwait should establish free zones across the country and focus on advancing its industrial infrastructure. All of this requires investments, as in the end, it enhances the national product and becomes a source of income for the country.

Instead of investing in the farthest ends of the earth, why not invest our money in our country like the Gulf countries? These countries have today become entertainment and industrial destinations not only for the people of those countries but also for tourists from different parts of the world, which is what Kuwait must work on.

The objective behind this is - instead of the citizens and residents spending their money abroad, they spend it at home. In fact, when an expatriate sees these facilities, he can invite his relatives to visit Kuwait and enjoy the benefits available in the entertainment places.

When we invest sovereign funds at home, we reduce many of the risks associated with foreign investments, the percentage of losses in which we witnessed in the 2008 crisis.

Likewise, we will not remain at the mercy of the fluctuations in oil prices, but we instead will have great freedom of commercial, industrial, and recreational movement.

We can also reduce our rate of disguised unemployment so that the state is not forced to spend on the unemployed, who take up a significant percentage of public finances as a result of supporting employment.

In the Gulf countries, there is an industrial base that has become advanced and competes with its counterparts in developed countries. There is also a weapons and heavy equipment industry.

Saudi Arabia employs national workers like Bahrain and the Emirates, while in Oman, the percentage of national labor is about 65 percent. These countries worked on all this through a vision that was born in Kuwait, but we let others benefit from it. We set "pioneers" aside and were preoccupied with absurd conflicts between the Cabinets and the parliamentarians.

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Arab FMs urge immediate ceasefire

Riyadh to host meeting on Gaza

RIYADH, April 28, (Agencies): President of the World Economic Forum Borge Brende said Saturday that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and several international leaders will meet in Riyadh this week to discuss the effort to restore peace in Gaza Strip.

The meeting will be held on the sidelines of World Economic Forum meetings, he said at a press conference Saturday.

"Key regional and international players are now in Riyadh," he said, voicing hope that the discussions would lead into a process towards reconciliation and peace.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza will feature prominently on the agenda of the meeting, Brende added.

Besides President Abbas, the meeting will gather US Secretary of State and Crown Prince of Oman, as well as the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar.

Continued on Page 5



Mourners pray over the bodies of Palestinians who were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Nuseirat, at the Al Aqsa hospital in Deir al Balah Gaza Strip, Saturday, April 27, 2024. (AP)

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is scheduled to sponsor and attend the honoring ceremony of distinguished teachers and schools marking the World Teachers' Day for the scholastic year 2022-2023 early on Monday.

The ceremony will be held at the Theater of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Abdullah Al-Salem University in Shuwaikh district. (KUNA)

JEDDAH: The State of Kuwait will participate in the coming Islamic Summit due to be organized by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the Gambia, said the State of Kuwait's Permanent Delegate at the OIC Mohammad Al-Mutairi.

Al-Mutairi, also the State of Kuwait General Consul in the City of Jeddah, said in a statement to KUNA that Kuwait has always sought to activate resolutions of the Islamic summits and ministerial meetings.

He was speaking to KUNA on holding the 15th OIC session of the Islamic Summit in the Gambian capital on May 4-5. (KUNA)



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by an official delegation, arrives in Saudi Arabia on April 28, to participate in the Riyadh-hosted World Economic Forum.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

Cooperation sought

RIYADH, April 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah chaired on Sunday Kuwait's delegation participating in the World Economic Forum (WEF) hosted by Riyadh.

The meeting will discuss strengthening international cooperation in light of the increasing geopolitical tensions, humanitarian efforts, and dialogue to contain the ripple effects resulting from instability, in addition to discussing how to build a more resilient global economy by strengthening cooperation between the global North and South.

The meeting also seeks to find solutions to increase clean energy while ensuring equitable growth, especially at a time when the world faces a potential rise in temperatures by 2.9 degrees Celsius and significant disparities in access to energy sources.

His Highness the Amir is accompanied by a delegation of officials including Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investments Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Al-Yahya and ranking officials at the Amiri Diwan.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with an accompanying official delegation, arrived on Sunday in Saudi Arabia to partake in the World Economic Forum hosted by Riyadh.

His Highness the Amir was received at the airport by Prince Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Deputy Governor of the Riyadh Region, GCC Secretary-General, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, the Ambassador of Kuwait to Saudi Arabia,

Continued on Page 5

Al-Qeraifa court hearing May 1st

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Public Prosecution has referred Musaed Al-Qeraifa, who contested the 2024 National Assembly Election (Fourth Constituency), to the Criminal Court for the political views he expressed during the campaign period.

The court will start hearing the case on May 1, 2024.

Al-Qeraifa was previously referred to the Central Jail to serve the 21-day remand detention. His Media Committee issued a statement that "the Ministry of Interior detained him and prevented him from contacting his relatives."

Continued on Page 5

Sentences overturned

Court clears former MP and brother in vote-buying case

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Court of Appeals refrained from pronouncing punishment against the former MP Mubarak Al-Aro and his brother who were accused of buying votes in the 2022 National Assembly elections.

The court also canceled the one-year imprisonment sentence issued against an accused who assaulted security personnel. It canceled the KD 2,000 fine imposed on an individual who sold his vote, and refrained from punishing the rest of

the accused.

Earlier, the Criminal Court had ruled that former MP Mubarak Al-Aro be imprisoned for two years with hard labor, in the case of buying votes for the 2022 National Assembly elections in the Third Constituency.

The court also ruled to imprison the second and third defendants who worked in Al-Aro's electoral campaign, for one year with hard work, and imposed a fine of KD 2,000 each on the fourth and fifth defendants.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait condemns Iraq drone attack

KUWAIT CITY, April 28, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait on Sunday condemned the terrorist attack that targeted a gas field in the Iraq's Kurdistan region using drones, which left a number of casualties.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Kuwait's rejection of all forms of terrorism and stressed its solidarity with the Iraqi government in taking all measures to preserve Iraq's security and stability.

The Ministry also called on the international community to unite and cooperate to refute aspects of terrorism and violence.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Ambassador to France, Mohammad Al-Judai, has honored a group of French Gulf War veterans with an honorary order in recognition of their contributions to Kuwait's liberation from the Iraqi invasion. — See Page 5

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:44	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:09	Maghrib ..	18:22
Zohr	11:46	Isha	19:45

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot, relatively humid over coastal areas and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northeasterly wind to light southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Weather	Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
times.	Kuwait City	36	27
By Night: Mild, relatively humid especially over coastal areas and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.	Kuwait Airport	36	22
	Abdaly	37	22
	Jahra	37	24
	Salmiyah	29	25
	Nuwaisib	36	22
	Wafra	37	22

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

Training program on podcast launched

QPC chief lauds KUNA's development, credibility

DOHA, April 28, (KUNA): The Chairman of the Boards of Directors of Qatar Press Center (QPC) Saad Al-Rumaihi praised on Sunday the professionalism, development and credibility of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) in reporting news during recent years.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Rumaihi said that Kuwait News Agency enjoys high professional standards in terms of the diversity of written and visual materials and transmitting news, adding that KUNA has its own journalistic exclusivity and has a long-standing audience at the Arab and international levels.

He stressed that the presence of KUNA to cover continental events such as the AFC Under-23 Football Championship is evidence of its interest in covering continental and interna-

tional sporting events and others.

He expressed his county's pride of the presence of Arab media outlets of all kinds to cover the events taking place on its soil, pointing to the Qatari leadership's interest in the media as a platform for spreading everything that is good in the world.

Al-Rumaihi also pointed out that KUNA has maintained its distinction with all the leaders who ran the agency and had a clear mark on its brilliance. He also expressed his pride in the "creative media and journalistic" Kuwaiti youth cadres in KUNA.

He praised the training programs enjoyed by Kuwaiti youth cadres in KUNA, "in addition to their great potential", which makes them able to be the focus of the world's attention."

On the other hand, Al-Rumaihi praised Kuwait's long history in journalism, since the issuance of Kuwait magazine headed by Abdulaziz Al-Rashid in the 1920s to Al-Arabi magazine, the ambassador of Kuwaiti culture in the Arab world.

Training program on podcasts
KUNA Center for Media Skills Development kicked off on Sunday its training program on podcast, dubbing and voice-over skills.

The course saw the participation of KUNA employees and counterparts from the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Nazaha Anti-Corruption Authority and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

The program, presented by Dr. Bassam Al-Jazzaf, covers various media topics including the difference between conventional radio and podcasts, types of voice-overs, understand and use dubbing, and how to add audio on pictures.

KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills was established in 1995 to train media personnel and elevate their skills.



PM Diwan photo
HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah meets the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmad Al-Zeyoudi.

PM receives UAE trade minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace, Sunday, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmad Al-Zeyoudi and his accompanying delegation, on his visit to

the country.
Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Joan and Head of the Prime Minister Diwan Abdulaziz Dakheel Al-Dakheel attended the meeting. (KUNA)

Saudis reject request to hike quota

Hajj pilgrimage cost ranges from KD 1,590 to KD 12,000 per room

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Preparations for the Hajj season have reached their final stages, with the focus on readying buildings in Mina and Arafat for the departure of Kuwaiti Hajj groups from the Holy Lands, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Setting up tents, headquarters, and cleaning designated areas for the Kuwaiti Hajj delegation has commenced, with officials from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs supervising the process and taking note of lessons learned from the previous year to ensure a smoother Hajj season this year.

An official source from the Ministry confirmed that residential buildings such as hotels and other accommodations are ready to receive pilgrims for this season. Transportation and other contracts for Kuwaiti Hajj caravans and companies have also been finalized, along with the handover of camps in Mina and Arafat.

In the event of cancellations, an alternative batch has been prepared, especially for those who canceled their Hajj this season. If an elderly person cancels his Hajj, the accompanying family's acceptance will also be canceled, as their

acceptance was contingent upon the elderly person's Hajj.

Approval for increasing the quota for Kuwaiti pilgrims has not been granted by Saudi authorities yet, and three caravans have withdrawn from participating in this year's Hajj season.

Hajj prices for caravans this year vary depending on the room type, starting at 1,590 dinars for a quadruple room and reaching up to 12,000 dinars for a single VIP room. The source emphasized the importance of avoiding fake caravans offering reduced prices, as they expose pilgrims to legal accountability and may hinder their ability to perform Hajj.

Religious guides will be instructed to educate pilgrims about national unity and discourage the spread of rumors, tribalism, and sectarianism.

In other news, the number of Umrah pilgrims since the beginning of the season has reached 24,000, with 416 land trips recorded. The Ministry of Interior and those in charge of the Salmi border center have been praised for their efforts and cooperation in facilitating pilgrims' trips through the port.



Haila Al-Mukaimi

Lulwa Al-Mulla

Abrar Al-Hammad

Other Voices

Benefits of the 'wonder drug'

By Ahmad alsarraf

As reported in The New York Times: Next time when you go for a check-up, don't be surprised if your doctor prescribes walking. Yes, this simple activity, which you've been doing since you were about a year old, is now being described as "the closest thing we have as a wonder drug," said Dr. Thomas Frieden, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Harvard University has also published a training course on "Walking for Better Health," and there is a booklet available online detailing this course, in which university experts explore simple and surprisingly effective ways to maximize the benefits of walking, through enhanced exercises that help build endurance, and even improve your mood which is as effective as the medicine. This great course is packed with practical tools you need to help you build strength, lose weight, improve your balance, improve your mood, and more.

Any physical activity, including walking, is a boon to your overall health. But walking in particular comes with a host of benefits. Here's a list of five that might surprise you.

1. Resists the effects of genes that cause weight: Harvard researchers examined 32 genes that promote obesity in more than 12,000 people, to determine how much these genes actually contribute to body weight. Among study participants who walked briskly for about an hour a day, the effect of those genes was halved.

2. Helps tame a sweet tooth: Two studies from the University of Exeter found that a 15-minute walk can curb

chocolate cravings, and even reduce the amount of chocolate you eat in stressful situations. The latest research confirms that walking can reduce cravings for a variety of sugary snacks.

3. Reduces the risk of breast cancer: Researchers already know that any type of physical activity reduces the risk of breast cancer. But a study conducted by the American Cancer Society focused on walking, and found that women who walked seven or more hours per week had a 14 percent lower risk of developing breast cancer, compared to those who walked three or fewer hours per week. Walking provided this protection even for women with breast cancer risk factors, such as being overweight or using supplemental hormones.

4. Walking relieves joint pain: Several studies have found that walking reduces pain associated with arthritis, and that walking five to six miles per week can prevent arthritis from developing in the first place. Walking protects the joints, especially the knees and hips, which are most susceptible to osteoarthritis, by lubricating them and strengthening the muscles that support them.

5. Boosts immune function: Walking can help protect you during cold and flu season. A study of more than 1,000 men and women found that those who walked for at least 20 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week, had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less. If they were sick, it was for a shorter duration and their symptoms were milder.

Note: In reference to our article yesterday, regarding the arbitrariness in the arrest of the candidate "Al-Qarifa", legal sources reported that the method of the Ministry of Interior in arresting the accused was correct, and it acted by an order of the Public Prosecution, in the "state security" case, so it is necessary to note.

□ □ □

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

KUWAIT CITY, April 28, (KUNA): The forum (Women Against Corruption), which kicked off Sunday, in cooperation between Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority Corruption (Nazaha) and Women's Cultural and Social Society, shed light on women's role in combating corruption and preventing it.

The forum, hosted by the National Library of Kuwait and attended by a branch of the UN in Kuwait, several Kuwaiti public benefit associations, and teaching staff members from various educational institutions, was inaugurated by the Assistant Secretary General for the Prevention Sector at Nazaha Abrar Al-Hammad.

Al-Hammad said that this forum aims to increase awareness towards corruption issues, prevention methods, and highlighting the role of women in enhancing integrity and combating corruption, and clarifying everything that can protect them from corruption.

She stated that based on global studies, the more women are present in decision-making circles and leadership positions, the less corruption, and ethical behavior increases.

She noted that in Kuwait, women constitute 63% of the workforce in the government sector and 51% of the total workforce, meaning that focusing efforts on increasing awareness and social integrity among them will have positive effects on society.

Regarding the forum's objectives, it aims to establish a network of women supporting anti-corruption efforts, enhancing societal integrity by following international preventive measures, activating local legislation, and reviewing the main obstacles that may hinder their empowerment to play this important role in society.

On her part, the Chairperson of Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Mulla, stated that corruption has become a complex social, political, and economic phenomenon affecting all countries, undermining democratic institutions and slowing down economic development, thus contributing to government instability.

She emphasized that increasing women's contribution to decision-making positions and providing them with necessary skills promotes integrity, leading to renaissance and progress in the country.

Importance

Al-Mulla emphasized the importance of women's role in society in general and the importance of empowering them in various fields, especially in promoting societal integrity, combating corruption, raising awareness about its risks, and preventive measures, expressing hope that this forum and its outcomes will contribute to addressing the root causes and reaching safety.

The UN Secretary General's Representative and the Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Dr. Ghada Al-Taher referred to the fifth goal out of 17 within the UN Sustainable Development Plan by 2030.

The UN sustainable Development Plan calls for gender equality, explaining that this goal is integral to achieving all the goals agreed upon by all UN members in September 2015, outlining a general plan for sustainable development worldwide.

Dr. Al-Taher stated that the world moved beyond recognizing that women's rights are human rights to realizing the active and fundamental role of women in life, adding that the world is now fully aware of the role of women in social, political, economic, and other fields.

She said that despite significant progress made in this regard, it is still far from the ideal state, citing as an example the gender pay gap in some advanced countries, where women receive 77% of what men earn for the same work or position.

On the other hand, the Acting Head of the Political Science Department at Kuwait University, Dr. Haila Al-Mukaimi, affirmed that the Kuwaiti women achievements in the field of combating corruption, need to be monitored and documented to positively reflect in all reports that highlight the role of women.

Dr. Al-Mukaimi stressed the importance of holding such forums, discussion sessions, and exchanging experiences to strengthen a network of joint efforts, especially among women, to empower and enhance their capabilities.

She also referred to several important studies from the World Bank and prestigious international universities considered as scientific and academic references, which found that empowering women significantly helps in combating corruption.

She added that because women are considered a political minority, their presence anywhere or in any position requires them to prove their capabilities more, thus being more accurate and proficient in their work, which positively reflects on transparency principles and combating corruption.

Ceremony held

Course on radiology

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC), in cooperation with the National Guard, recently organized a graduation ceremony for those who completed the 'Principles of Initial Use of Radiological Scanning Devices' Course, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Eng. Hashim Al-Rifai and KGAC Director Abdullah Al-Sharhan attended the graduation ceremony.

30 yrs or more at job face CSC sack

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is in the process of referring employees, who have been in service for 30 years or more, for retirement; as per the decisions of the Council of Ministers in this regard and the relevant circulars that the commission previously issued to government agencies, reports Al-Rai daily quoting reliable sources.

Sources told the daily that this will pave the way for the CSC to appoint new employees and promote eligible employees to the leadership positions that will be vacated by those who will be referred for retirement. They stressed "the importance of pumping new blood into the commission to bear responsibility in the coming years."

Blogger's jail-term cut: The Court of Cassation has upheld the two-year prison sentence with hard labor for a Kuwaiti tweeter convicted of insulting the authority of the country. The court ruled that his schizophrenia, caused by drug abuse, does not exempt him from legal responsibility.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Stay away from what is bad for you ... shortest way to comfort!

"I DO not claim to be the author of the beautiful sayings, but I can never deny that I firmly believe in them, and I practice them in my life. I have found in them comfort and I distance myself as much as possible from any internal distress or external anxiety," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"One of the highest levels of psychological balance is that you do not seek to correct your opinion. Personally, I consider this a waste of time and energy and a loss of one's self-confidence.



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"If someone belittles you stay away from that person as much as possible, and set boundaries and distance yourself, for that is the shortest way to psychological comfort, and staying far away from anything that spoils your mood but rather kicks a dust of suspicions to the extent it takes you to the brink of self-confidence ... no matter how high and well-established it is.

"You are sometimes misunderstood among people, and they create different descriptions for you. You may be an angel to some people, and you may be a devil in the eyes of others."

"This is a 100% true statement. As long as we live among people, we mix with them and deal with them, for our necessary and unnecessary needs, everyone puts you in the place they think you fit in, based on their evaluation of others. No one knows the soul except someone like its owner, so use a balance for yourself in evaluating it.

"Unfortunately, there are people who hesitate in their self-confidence. Any untruthful word destroys them, and any blame or disdain from others stumbles upon them, even though they know with certainty... that they are standing in the white half of this life, a large part of which is unfortunately polluted... because of others, their morals, and their dealings. And mistrust, for many reasons that we all know.

"It is not wrong not to pay attention to these matters in our lives and at certain stages of them, but it is wrong not to benefit from our experiences in all stages of our lives, and through our dealings with different segments and types of people. There are those to whom you were once close, but you moved away from them, and it was your choice, by your conviction, and for your happiness, and there are those who were far from you, today they are much closer than you ever expected.

"The continuity of the situation is an impossibility and there are lessons you need to learn from life's experiences given the highest level of psychological balance and benefit from all these lessons, and choose from them what is beneficial to you and elevate you in the area of psychological comfort in your dealings with others and in the dealings of others with you."

Also:

"The private sector is one of the most important sectors of the state, an integral part of its economy, and an influential factor in strengthening and raising the economy. Unfortunately, in Kuwait, most of the services provided to the people are by the government sector, which do not benefit the government and there are no financial returns," **Ali Hussein Al-Nasser** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This matter does not encourage the government to develop services and facilities, nor does it encourage the state to increase income and salaries for workers in the government sector, due to the lack of any revenues or any financial returns flowing into the state treasury.

"But if the country follows a policy of privatization (the process of completely or partially transferring ownership of the capital of institutions, companies, or public ministries to the private sector) and freeing all economic and financial sectors in the country from government monopoly, we will find major changes, and the first beneficiaries will be: the government, the private sector, and the people.

"According to these procedures, the government will have revenues by selling its shares and leasing state institutions to the private sector, which for its part will benefit by increasing the work productivity of employees, in addition to listing its companies on the stock exchange market.

"The citizen will benefit by increasing job opportunities and increasing the national income of the individual and society through the policy of increases and bonuses pursued by the private sectors, and also by increasing the quality of services provided by hospitals, schools and buildings because they are implemented through adherence to the conditions, specifications and standards that were set by the private sector. And the state.

"If the government follows a policy of privatization, the financial burdens and obligations on the state will be reduced, government productive institutions will be released from political interference and social norms prevailing in the country, and the private sector will be involved in pushing the wheel of development and raising the state's economy, and if the government thinks about implementing these plans and policies, certainly we will be better off and move forward since every beginning has an end."

□ □ □

"Save the homeland and the future of our families and children ... In fact, I

do not know how fellow writer Hussein Ahmad Qabazard thinks. He wrote an article entitled, 'Youth of Gaza ... and Work in the Gulf,' in which he suggested they enter the Gulf region. My brother, do not get carried away by emotion. Think about the interest of your country," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawaas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"First, have you forgotten the shameful position of the Palestinians against Kuwait, and their support for Saddam during the Iraqi occupation? Second, if these people stay with us, they will participate in Palestinian events. They may come out from the streets of Kuwait denouncing. Instead of just one arena of 'foolishness', there will be several arenas of foolishness and harm. Police and securitymen will disperse the crowd in these arenas. Then, there will be terrible pressure on the shoulders of the security personnel, and a threat to the country's safe and stable situation.

"Palestinians were in Jordan and participated in the 'Black September' event in 1970. They entered Lebanon and ignited the Lebanese civil war in 1975, yet Kuwait wants them to come here? If they do not disrupt our safe and stable situation, they will reproduce in an unnatural abundance.

"Don't you look at the interest of your country? Why don't you say: Let Jordan take the youths of Gaza, as they are geographically close and have more kinship ties than us?

"Yes, we give them money, but far from us, there in their country, and Kuwait will certainly participate in the reconstruction of Gaza. They and their leaders are destroying their country, and we pay the money, while it is better for this money to be spent on the citizens, the affected people of the country.

"My brother, we can hardly bear the problems of the communities, among whom crimes like theft, counterfeiting and drug trading are widespread. Do you ask for more than this to allow the entry of those who betrayed Kuwait, to threaten our safe and stable situation, or for them to increase excessively to put pressure on all services and raise problems that we do not need?

"They hurt us with their words. They called us 'Dashdish Arabs', claiming 'we are your masters.' He comes to Kuwait as an immigrant carrying worries on his shoulders and the country allows him to work as a car driver, open a grocery store or sell rags. Then, he asks: Are we your masters?

"A hundred years ago, Kuwait was sending weapons to Palestine via Al-Zubair. When we were young, at the age of 10, we used to go to the cinema and pay a tax for Algeria's struggle. In the years 1959 to 1963, Kuwaitis were in a state of poverty. After Algeria's independence, we began paying that tax to the Palestine Liberation Organization for the struggle of its people. That is, about a hundred years, and Kuwait has been defending and paying the Palestinians.

"When Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990, the Palestinians rejoiced, insulted us abroad, mocked us, and stood by the aggressor. There are many examples, while our hearts were breaking with pain over the loss of the homeland, yet Kuwait continued to help the Palestinians financially and support them politically until today. We ask the officials not to pay attention to this proposal, because of its extreme danger to the country. If their presence in Kuwait happens, it will be a disaster that will destroy the country. Enough is enough ... Enough is enough of what happened to Kuwait. Save Kuwait ... save the homeland, and the future of our people and our families."

□ □ □

"No achievement without risks ... It seems the political crisis that has been going on for at least more than a decade is still casting a shadow on the local scene. The results of the recent election were not able to get the country out of this crisis, as the government or those in charge of it have expected. Rather, such results may have made matters worse, as it is said: When agendas are mixed with lack of experience, the next stage may reveal the truth," columnist **Nasser Al-Abdalli** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The popular consensus is that the cause of this crisis is not the Constitution and democracy, which have been the basis of stability for this beautiful country since its independence until today. The active political forces on the scene expressed this in a joint statement, during which they were keen to confirm a number of facts, such as the solution to this crisis is related to distancing the State's constitutional institutions from any dispute or conflict in any other sectors.

"This fact requires keeping the main joints in the institutions away from the atmosphere of conflict and disagreement by making sure that neutral national figures occupy them. These figures should be working as much as possible to give full opportunity to people within the institutions, especially with regard to the executive authority. As for the legislative authority, they must focus on personalities who were able to distance the parliamentary institution from any dispute or conflict outside it, so they were reflected within, not the people who were a party to its use.

"There is intense popular dissatisfaction with the reflection of these conflicts and differences on the performance of the two authorities. Had it not been for the rumors about political money and sub-settlements in some electoral districts, the expression of such dissatisfaction would have been intense and clear. Unfortunately, the electoral arena was not free of impurities.

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Ongoing maintenace work repairs on the Fourth Ring Road.

PART initiates bridge repair on Fourth Ring Road

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: In compliance with the directives from the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport has undertaken the repair of extension joints on bridges on the Fourth Ring Road, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

This task was executed under the oversight of Engineer Khaled Al-Osaimi, the Director General of the Authority.

Eng. Ahmed Al-Saleh, the spokesman for the Ministry of Works and the PART, said in a statement that repairing extension joints on

bridges across different regions of the country is part of the Authority's comprehensive efforts to maintain highways nationwide.

Al-Saleh emphasized that the MPW and PART are awaiting the conclusion of various maintenance contracts through central tenders to commence essential maintenance work on highways and roads in various governorates.

The repair of extension joints on the Fourth Ring Road bridges was initiated due to the critical importance of addressing these joints and their direct impact on road users.

Furthermore, repairs have been conducted on various roads, including the Jahra Expressway.

The repair process employs technical methods supervised by skilled national workers within MPW who possess extensive experience in overseeing such repairs.

This involves the removal and replacement of damaged extension joints through multiple repair operations. Al-Saleh underscored that PART, through its diverse teams, has conducted a comprehensive survey of these roads and dividers.

They are being managed with appropriate measures until the commencement of fundamental maintenance work, ensuring their permanent resolution.

'Strict steps taken'

66 incidents of cable thefts in three years

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Sources within the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy have disclosed that there were 66 instances of electrical cable theft in the northern region over the past three years, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

However, it was revealed that a recent incident involving the arrest of Asians, who were caught stealing cables and subsequently referred to the prosecution, did not involve cables belonging to the ministry. The ministry clarified that they do not possess cables susceptible to theft.

The ministry has implemented various measures to combat these thefts, resulting in a reduction in occurrences in recent years.

Among these measures are regular patrols conducted by emergency teams along roads where ministry-affiliated lines are located, minimizing vulnerability to theft.

Earlier, the ministry faced theft of electrical lines on wooden poles, but collaboration with the Ministry of Interior effectively curtailed these incidents. Continuous coordination with the Ministry of Interior, facilitated by specialized teams, ensures ongoing surveillance and security of these lines.

While some thefts occurred in remote areas near border farms, swift action was taken to address them. The ministry commends the vigilance of monitoring teams and citizens in reporting such isolated incidents occurring at distant intervals. Recognizing the significant impact of cable theft on the electrical network and service distribution to citizens, the ministry is committed to tackling the issue decisively.

Effective solutions to this problem involve raising awareness about the consequences of these illegal actions, tightening control measures, and enforcing penalties against perpetrators. The Electricity Company has already taken action by referring cable thieves to the Public Prosecution for legal proceedings.

□ □ □

35 kid drivers probed: Over the past week, the General Traffic Department has taken significant actions against traffic violations. According to the department, 35 juveniles were referred to the prosecution, and 36 individuals were placed in precautionary detention.

Statistics from the General Traffic Department, covering the period from April 20 to April 25, indicate that a total of 23,744 traffic violations were recorded. In addition, 106 vehicles and 94 motorcycles were impounded and placed in a traffic detention garage.

Beyond the traffic violations, the report highlights other incidents requiring police attention. A total of 248 injury-related accidents and 1,394 minor collisions were referred to local police stations. Additionally, the department detained 7 people without proof of identity, 14 individuals along with 37 vehicles wanted by judicial authorities, and 3 people for possession of suspected narcotics.

The detained individuals, impounded vehicles, and seized items have all been referred to the appropriate authorities for further investigation and legal proceedings.

The General Traffic Department continues its efforts to maintain road safety and enforce traffic laws in the area.

Probe continues

DGFD says no officers selling leave balances

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) has refuted claims circulating on social media alleging that three force officers were referred to the Prosecution for selling their leave balance for 300,000 dinars, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Clarifying the situation, the DGFD stated that an investigation is indeed ongoing regarding the modification of regulations and conditions pertaining to the sale of leave balances for several firefighters.

This investigation was initiated following the discovery made by the relevant department within the DGFD. Its purpose is to ensure that no previous violations occurred in prior years, whether involving locals or others.

As a result of administrative action taken by the head of the force, approximately 93,000 dinars, representing the value of leave balances under scrutiny, have been recovered.

The DGFD urges individuals to refrain from disseminating inaccurate news and emphasizes the importance of verifying information from reliable sources before sharing it, particularly on official platforms associated with the force. Additionally, the force warns that legal measures will be pursued against individuals found to be spreading false information on this matter.

Blogger held, freed on bail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Criminal Court has decided to release on bail of KD 500 a Snapchat celebrity, who was accused of broadcasting false news, leaking Cabinet's decisions, insulting a minister on all of his accounts, and broadcasting government news without obtaining a license to do so.

He was arrested after he returned to Kuwait from overseas via Kuwait International Airport.

During the course of the hearing, he denied before the court all the charges against him in the report submitted by the State Security Department regarding his broadcasting of false news.

Trigger-happy man sought

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Al-Jahra police officers are looking for unidentified person who allegedly escape after shooting at two young men, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The daily added, the incident happened in a desert area in Kabad.

The daily added, the suspect after his arrest is expected to be charged with attempted murder and possession of a firearm without a license.

The reasons behind the crime are not known.

According to a security source, the complaint has been filed by two young bedoun, the first born in 2002, and the second who is 30 years old (cousins) and residing in the Al-Naseem area.

They said the suspects fired five shots at them from a Kalashnikov rifle but the bullets did not hit them.

Deportation for expat inciting 'child murder'

Cars stolen at knife point, gunpoint

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Kuwaiti authorities have arrested an expatriate juvenile after receiving a report from an Arab country alleging that the juvenile had incited a citizen from his home country to murder a child. The crime, which was documented in a video clip, was discovered along with a photograph in the possession of the juvenile residing in Kuwait, reports Al-Anba.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior was notified by officials from the Arab country that their investigation into the child's murder led them to the expatriate juvenile living in Kuwait. The perpetrator of the crime had confessed to authorities that the juvenile encouraged him to commit the murder, promising him 30,000 dinars in return. The juvenile was arrested at his family's home in the Salmiya area and will be deported to his home country to face further investigation into the matter.

□ □ □

Cars stolen by force: A car belonging to an expatriate was stolen under the threat of a knife in the Saad Al-Abdullah area.

According to the police report, the victim, born in 1973, was near a camp when he was accosted by an unknown individual wielding a knife.

The assailant demanded the victim exit his vehicle, then proceeded to search him, taking 50 Kuwaiti dinars from his wallet. The thief then fled the scene in the victim's car.

The Jahra Police Station registered the case as a felony under the category of theft, with case number 27/2024, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Following the incident, police officers conducted the description of the stolen Japanese vehicle to all patrols in the area. They are currently working to locate the car and

apprehend the suspect.

In a separate incident, officers from the Criminal Investigation Department apprehended a suspect with a criminal record who had allegedly stolen a citizen's car at gunpoint in the Subbiya district.

According to a security source speaking to **Al-Anba**, the victim was approached by the suspect, who pulled out a firearm and ordered him to get out of his vehicle. The suspect then drove off with the car.

The police managed to capture the suspect during an ambush in the Hawalli area.

The authorities are investigating further to determine if this individual is connected to other crimes in the region.

These incidents highlight the ongoing efforts by Kuwaiti police to tackle vehicle-related crimes and bring those responsible to justice. Authorities urge the public to report any suspicious activity and take precautions to stay safe.

□ □ □

1,542 accidents recorded: According to the latest statistics issued by the General Traffic Department from April 20 to April 26, a total of 1,542 traffic accidents were recorded, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Among these accidents, 248 were classified as serious, while the remaining 1,394 were minor incidents that did not result in injuries or fatalities.

In addition to the accident data, the weekly report revealed that a total of 23,744 traffic violations were issued during this period; 35 juveniles were arrested for driving without valid licenses, and 36 individuals were detained for committing serious traffic infractions.

As part of ongoing enforcement efforts, traffic police conducted campaigns across all six governorates of Kuwait, resulting in the referral of 200 vehicles and motorcycles to the impound garage.

Meanwhile, a collision occurred yesterday on the Fahaaheel Expressway involving two vehicles, resulting in injuries to two individuals.

Both injured parties were promptly transported to Al-Adan Hospital, with sources confirming that their condition remains critical.



CELEBRATE

with Style

A place to make unforgattable 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



albander
hotel & resort

أبريل عروض الغرف

APRIL

ROOM PROMOTION



أيام الأسبوع (من السبت إلى الأربعاء)	
إقامة ليلة واحدة في شاليه لغرفتين مع الإفطار لأربعة أشخاص.	إقامة ليلة واحدة في كابانا كوين مع الإفطار لشخصين.
الآن	الآن
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 20th – 30th April 2024

مدة العرض من ٢٠ أبريل حتى ٣٠ أبريل ٢٠٢٤

Terms & conditions apply*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351

Email: reservation@albander.com

www.albander.com

  @albanderhotelandresort

‘A significant advancement in publishing for Kuwait and region’

Union of Investment Cos launches AI-powered magazine



KUNA photo
The Ambassador of Kuwait to France and the Kuwaiti Military Attaché at the ceremony of awarding the medal to the flag of the French League.

Kuwait grants French Gulf war vets honorary order

Kuwait has bestowed upon a group of French Gulf war veterans an honorary order in recognition of its contributions towards liberation from Iraqi invasion, its embassy in Paris said on Sunday.

Amid a lavish ceremony in France's northernmost region of Hauts-de-France, Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Mohamad Al-Judai attached an emblem of Ku-

wait's "Liberation order" to the group's flag in a gesture of appreciation for France's "immense role" in liberating Kuwait, the statement underlined.

The move is also emblematic of the "depth of bilateral relations," added the statement, in addition to France's unflinching support for Kuwaiti liberation and independence, it said. (KUNA)

Why invest

Continued from Page 1

That is why it is necessary today to have a working cell that would perhaps be headed by the head of state or the prime minister in order to work on achieving these long-awaited projects.

The agreements concluded with China and others will also come into effect, because when we take charge of navigating our country with all our capabilities, we will no doubt know where we will dock.

Court clears

Continued from Page 1

After receiving information confirming the existence of a vote-buying operation on behalf of Mubarak Al-Aro, the concerned authorities began monitoring and following up the home of Al-Aro - a candidate from the Third Constituency.

The raid was carried out, after obtaining permission from the Public Prosecution, and a number of aides were arrested and referred to the Public Prosecution.

Al-Qeraifa

Continued from Page 1

He was referred to the Public Prosecution in handcuffs and prison uniform before the issuance of the remand decision. The abusive measures taken by the ministry does not really target Al-Qeraifa, as such action is aimed at conveying a message about depriving citizens of their constitutional rights related to freedom of speech."

In addition, MP-elect Musaed Al-Mutairi, one of his relatives and two other individuals were previously referred to the Criminal Court as per the decision of the prosecution that charged them with buying votes during the 2023 parliamentary election.

The prosecution also summoned Al-Mutairi for another charge in relation to the 2024 parliamentary election.

In another development, constitutional expert Professor Mohammad Al-Fili clarified that in case the new government is not formed by May 14 — the date specified for the inaugural session of the newly elected National Assembly as per the Amiri Decree, HH the interim Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah and his ministers will attend the session.

Al-Fili said the other option is the issuance of a decree to dissolve the Assembly and call for fresh elections. He added that HH the Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah cannot exercise his authority before forming the new government.

Meanwhile, MP-elect Falah Al-Hajri revealed that Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Faisal Al-Ghareeb informed him that the latter asked the undersecretary of the ministry to provide him with details on the salary deduction of some employees.

Al-Hajri affirmed that he is closely following up the issue to address the problem of these employees.

Riyadh to

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the six-party Arab consultative ministerial meeting called for ending the ongoing war on Gaza Strip and reaching an immediate ceasefire to protect the civilians in line with international humanitarian law.

The meeting, chaired by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, gathered on Saturday Jordanian and Egyptian foreign ministers Ayman Al-Safadi and Sameh Shoukri, respectively, as well as Secretary General of Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization Hussein al-Sheikh, UAE's presidential diplomatic adviser Anwar Gergash and Qatar's Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Al-Khulaifi.

Kuwait condemns

Continued from Page 1

It conveyed Kuwait's sincere condolences and sympathy to Iraq and to the families of the victims, wishing speedy recovery for the injured. Bahrain deplored Saturday, in the strongest terms, the "terrorist" booby-trapped drone assault on Khor Mor gas

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Union of Investment Companies in Kuwait has achieved a significant milestone by issuing the first magazine in Kuwait to utilize artificial intelligence, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The seventeenth issue of "Investor Magazine" focuses on the future of artificial intelligence not only in Kuwait but also in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and globally.

In a press release, Fadwa Darwish, Secretary General of the Federation, emphasized the importance of this achievement, stating that it represents a significant advancement in publishing for Kuwait and the region.

Darwish expressed pride in the Federation's proactive approach to adopting and implementing artificial intelligence solutions, aligning with their vision for the future characterized by innovation and effectiveness. She believes that artificial intelligence will enhance their capabilities in providing valuable content with broad cognitive impact to their readers.

The magazine provides in-depth analyses and statistical data showcasing the rapid growth of artificial intelligence technology and its fa-

cilitation of operations across various sectors, including healthcare and financial services. It also explores new trends and innovations in artificial intelligence and their economic and social impact on Kuwait's development.

Utilizing advanced technical tools, the magazine was prepared to automatically generate textual and visual content, ensuring accuracy and innovation in every article and report. This pioneering use of modern publishing technologies demonstrates the vast potential of artificial intelligence in the media industry.



Cover of Investor Magazine

Urgent plan urged to develop medical education in Kuwait

KU need to up medical admissions to meet demand: experts

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Academicians and health specialists confirmed that the expansion of health projects requires an urgent plan to develop medical education, noting that the College of Medicine at Kuwait University provides only 33 percent of the country's need for human doctors – a low figure that is not in line with the Kuwaitization and replacement plan at a time the country's hospitals need 300 human doctors annually, reports Al-Anba daily.

They warned about the delay in the plan to develop medical education, stressing that Kuwait University graduates only 100 human doctors every year, while the College of Medicine has the potential and ability to increase admissions but its current admission rate is lower than its absorptive capacity.



Al Rushood, Minister of Trade and Industry Abdullah Al-Joaan, Emirati Ambassador Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi and Emirati Minister of Foreign Trade Dr. Thani.

KFH participates in ‘UAE Cos Investment Meet’

‘KFH backs local, regional development plan’

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: At the "UAE Companies Investment Meet: Unlocking Kuwait's Potential," KFH Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, expressed his honor to be participating. He said: "This event presents a valuable opportunity for Kuwaiti and Emirati companies to collaborate on joint projects. Such collaborations can not only support economic development plans in Kuwait but also strengthen the historical ties within the GCC countries."

Al Rushood added "Kuwait boasts rich investment opportunities across diverse sectors. It also bene-

fits from a long-established private sector that has achieved numerous successes. The Kuwaiti banking system consistently supports local companies through financing, advisory services, and expertise. This strong support stems from the sector's high creditworthiness and extensive presence in key regional and global markets, where it collaborates with major international partners."

He emphasized that Kuwait 2035 Vision prioritizes streamlining and attracting investments. The economy is a top priority for the government. "Leveraging its strong financial resources, Kuwait is well-posi-

tioned for a major development driven by the private sector," he added.

Al Rushood further stated, "KFH is committed to offering various forms of assistance to help advance the development process and enhance the economic landscape at both the local and regional levels."

"I want to express my gratitude to the organizers and wish the forum success. I hope this event will play a vital role in attracting new investments, fostering growth in various sectors of Kuwait's economy, and ultimately realizing the hopes and aspirations of its people," he concluded.

He added the low admission at the College of Dentistry, which barely reaches 40 students, raises the cost of studying Dentistry at Kuwait University. He disclosed

that the College of Medicine has 190 professors, in addition to those seconded from the Ministry of Health, which means it has the required teaching staff.

Environmental panel to discuss windbreaks, marine cleanliness

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The Environmental Affairs Committee of the Municipal Council, chaired by Eng Alia Al-Farsi, is scheduled to discuss proposals put forth by committee members, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These include a proposal by Eng Al-Farsi, Eng. Munira Al-Amir, Eng Farah Al-Roumi, and Eng Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding the allocation of specific areas for windbreaks in Kuwait, following an integrated plan.

Additionally, the committee will review three proposals submitted by member Al-Shalfan concerning the maintenance of marine environmental cleanliness, recycling of plastic bottles and their caps, and preservation of beaches.

Furthermore, the committee will consider a proposal by members Al-Farsi, Al-Roumi, Al-Shalfan, Eng Abdul Latif Al-Daei, and Eng Ismail Behbehani regarding the allocation of a site for a facility dedicated to materials recovery for recycling.

Simultaneously, the joint committee comprising the Technical Committee and the Legal and Financial Committee will meet the day after tomorrow to finalize amendments to the regulations governing construction works and their associated schedules.

Chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, the committee will focus on aligning these regulations with investment and commercial housing schedules.

Bonus eligibility on website

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: While a large number of Ministry of Education employees have received notifications from banks on depositing the annual excellent job performance into their accounts; acting Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development Matrook Al-Mutairi has announced the addition of a special service for inquiring about an employee's eligibility for the bonus on the official website of the ministry, in coordination with the Information Systems Department, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Mutairi confirmed that this service is available for all ministry employees starting Sunday; explaining that with the approaching disbursement of the bonus to administrators, this service will allow the employees to find out if they are eligible for the bonus and the reasons in case they are not entitled.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة

RECALL INFORMATION

Mercedes-Benz Cars
MODEL: 447
Model year: 2022
Total vehicles: 25

RECALL REASON

Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain V-Class/Vito/Metris (447 platform) vehicles, the fuel pump impeller might not meet specifications in regards to material characteristics.

REMEDY

As a precautionary measure, the fuel delivery module will be replaced in the affected vehicles.
The required work certainly be carried out free.

CONTACT

Please contact Al Mulla Automobiles Co.
Phone 1-887-888
Mercedes-Benz Service Centre - Al Shuwaikh Industrial Area - 9 Street
Mercedes-Benz Service Centre - Al Shuwaikh Industrial Area - 13 Street
Mercedes-Benz Service Centre for Passenger Cars - Al Ahmadi - 29 Street

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

World News Roundup

Europe

Russia drones hit hotel

Thousands ‘protest’ to support Spain premier

MADRID, April 28, (AP): Thousands of supporters and party members of Spain’s Socialist party rallied outside the party’s national headquarters in Madrid on Saturday to show their support for Prime Minister **Pedro Sánchez** and urge him not to step down.

Sánchez stunned Spain on Wednesday when he announced that he was canceling his itinerary while he considers whether or not to resign after what he described as a “smear campaign” against his wife. He said he would reveal his future plans on Monday.



Sánchez

Sánchez’s shocking announcement came hours after a Spanish judge opened a preliminary investigation into allegation of corruption made against Sánchez’s wife by a group aligned with right-wing interests. The Spanish leader said the allegations were “spurious” and that they formed the worst attack in what he described as an orchestrated campaign to discredit him by targeting his family. The Madrid regional prosecutor’s office recommended the allegations to be thrown out.

The crowd packing the downtown street of Madrid on Saturday shouted “You are not alone!” and waved party flags. Socialist leaders and the leaders of other left-wing parties have urged Sánchez not to resign. Prime minister since 2018, Sánchez has over three years left on his term.

The right-of-center opposition Popular Party, however, said Sánchez’s behavior was a desperate attempt to draw attention away from his wife and to win support in upcoming regional and European elections.

□ □ □

Russian drones set hotel ablaze: Russian drones early Sunday struck the Black Sea city of Mykolaiv, setting a hotel ablaze and damaging energy infrastructure, the local Ukrainian governor reported, while ammunition shortages continued to hobble Kyiv’s troops in the more than 2-year-old war.

Vitaliy Kim, the governor of Ukraine’s southern Mykolaiv province, said that Russian drones “seriously damaged” a hotel in its namesake capital, sparking a fire that was later extinguished. Kim also reported that the strike damaged heat-generating infrastructure in the city, but gave no details. He added that there were no casualties.

Russian state agency RIA carried claims that the strike on Mykolaiv targeted a shipyard where naval drones are assembled, as well as a hotel housing “English-speaking mercenaries” who have fought for Kyiv. The RIA report cited Sergei Lebedev, described as a coordinator of local pro-Moscow guerrillas. His claim could not be independently verified.

Also on Sunday morning, the Russian Defense Ministry said that 17 Ukrainian drones were downed overnight over four regions in the country’s southwest. Three drones were intercepted near an oil depot in Lyudinovo, an industrial town some 230 kilometers (143 miles) north of the Ukrainian border, Gov. Vladislav Shapsha said.

□ □ □

Another suspect held in hall attack: A Moscow court has detained another suspect as an accomplice in the attack by gunmen on a suburban Moscow concert hall that killed 144 people in March, the Moscow City Courts Telegram channel said Saturday.

Dzhumokhon Kurbonov, a citizen of Tajikistan, is accused of providing the attackers with means of communication and financing. The judge at Moscow’s Basmany District Court ruled that Kurbonov would be kept in custody until May 22 pending investigation and trial.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said Kurbonov was reportedly detained on April 11 for 15 days on the administrative charge of petty hooliganism. Independent Russian media outlet Mediazona noted that this is a common practice used by Russian security forces to hold a person in custody while a criminal case is prepared against them.

Twelve defendants have been arrested in the case, including four who allegedly carried out the attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue, according to RIA Novosti.

Those four appeared in the same Moscow court at the end of March on terrorism charges and showed signs of severe beatings. One appeared to be barely conscious during the hearing. The court ordered that the men, all of whom were identified in the media as citizens of Tajikistan, also be held in custody until May 22.

□ □ □

EU poll campaigns kick off in Germany: Several German parties on Saturday kicked off their campaigns for the election of the European Parliament in June with a focus on issues such as the war in Ukraine and support by many European voters for far-right nationalist parties across the continent.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s center-left Social Democrats, or SPD, launched their official campaign for the June 9 EU election with a rally in Hamburg, Scholz’s longtime home city.

Responding to many German voters’ fears their country could be drawn into Ukraine’s war with Russia if it’s too proactive in its military support for the eastern European country, Scholz tried to alleviate such concerns.

The chancellor reiterated that Germany would continue to stand by Ukraine’s side under his leadership as the second-largest arms supplier after the U.S., but would avoid a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia.

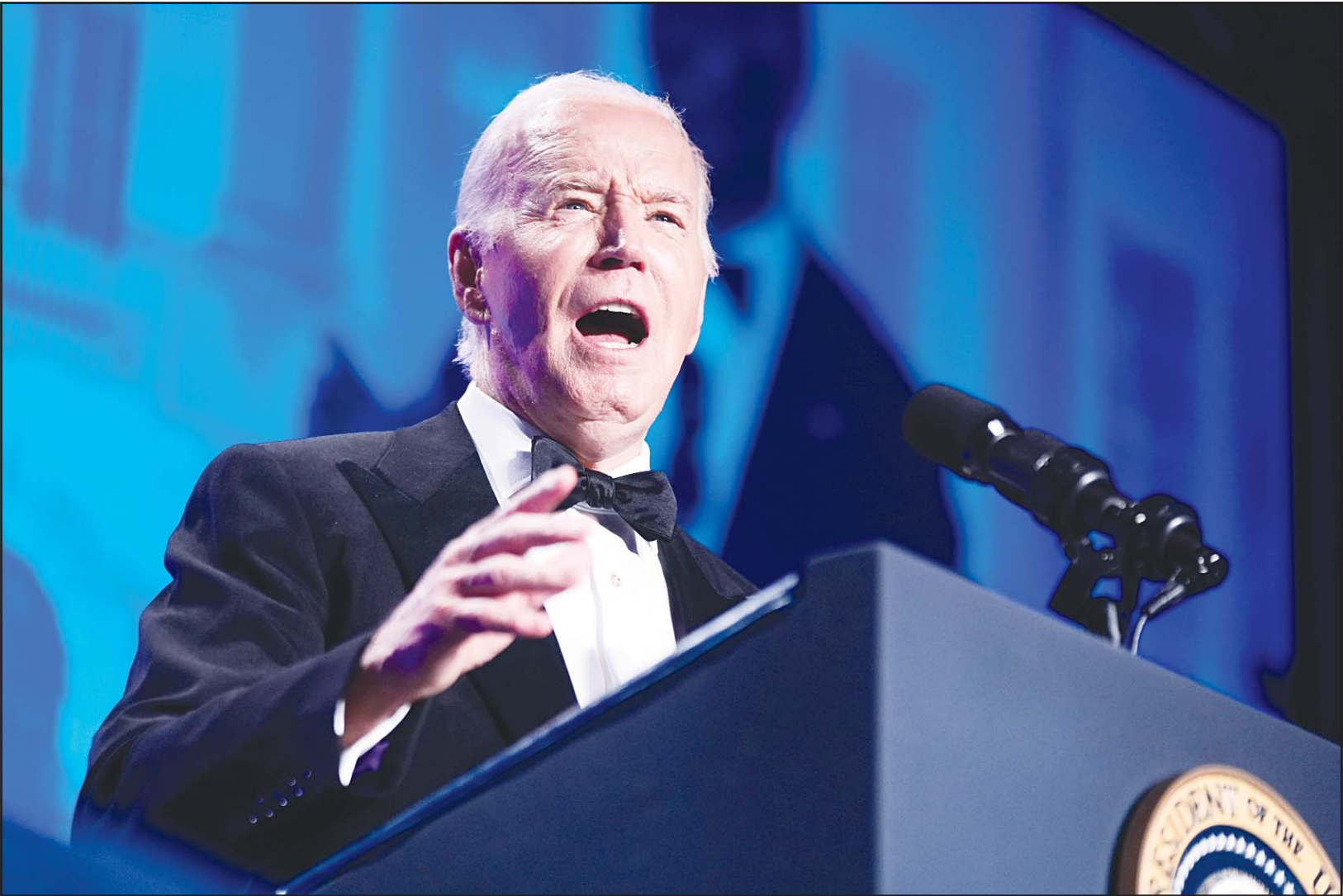
□ □ □

Hackers infiltrate Belarus KGB: A Belarusian hacker activist group claims to have infiltrated the network of the country’s main KGB security agency and accessed personnel files of over 8,600 employees of the organization, which still goes under its Soviet name.

The authorities have not commented on the claim, but the website of the Belarusian KGB was opening with an empty page on Friday that said it was “in the process of development”.

Seeking to back up its claim, the Belarusian Cyber-Partisans group published a list of the website’s administrators, its database and server logs on its page in the messaging app Telegram.

Group coordinator Yuliana Shametavets told The Associated Press from New York that the attack on the KGB “was a response” to the agency’s chief Ivan Tertel, who publicly accused the group this week of plotting attacks on the country’s critical infrastructure, including a nuclear power plant.



US President Joe Biden speaks at the White House Correspondents’ Association Dinner at the Washington Hilton on April 27 in Washington. (AP)

Politics

GOP picks Staggs as nominee to replace Romney

Biden roasts Trump at correspondents’ dinner

WASHINGTON, April 28, (AP): The war in Gaza spurred large protests outside a glitzy roast with President Joe Biden, journalists, politicians and celebrities Saturday but went all but unmentioned by participants inside, with Biden instead using the annual White House correspondents’ dinner to make both jokes and grim warnings about Republican rival Donald Trump’s fight to reclaim the US presidency.

An evening normally devoted to presidents, journalists and comedians taking outrageous pokes at political scandals and each other often seemed this year to illustrate the difficulty of putting aside the coming presidential election and the troubles in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Biden opened his roast with a direct but joking focus on Trump, calling him “sleepy Don,” in reference to a nickname Trump had given the president previously.

Focus

Despite being similar in age, Biden said, the two presidential hopefuls have little else in common. “My vice president actually endorses me,” Biden said. Former Trump Vice President Mike Pence has refused to endorse Trump’s reelection bid.

But the president quickly segued to a grim speech about what he believes is at stake this election, saying that another Trump administration would be even more harmful to America than his first term.

“We have to take this serious - eight years ago we could have written it off as ‘Trump talk’ but not after January 6,” Biden told the audience, referring to the supporters of Trump who stormed the Capitol after Biden defeated Trump in the 2020 election.

Trump did not attend Saturday’s dinner and never attended the annual banquet as president. In 2011, he sat in the audience, and glowered through a roasting by then-President Barack Obama of Trump’s reality-television celebrity status. Obama’s sarcasm then was so scalding that many political watchers linked it to Trump’s subsequent decision to run for president in 2016.

Biden’s speech, which lasted around

10 minutes, made no mention of the ongoing war or the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

One of the few mentions came from Kelly O’Donnell, president of the correspondents’ association, who briefly noted some 100 journalists killed in Israel’s 6-month-old war against Hamas in Gaza. In an evening dedicated in large part to journalism, O’Donnell cited journalists who have been detained across the world, including Americans Evan Gershkovich in Russia and Austin Tice, who is believed to be held in Syria. Families of both men were in attendance as they have been at previous dinners.

To get inside Saturday’s dinner, some guests had to hurry through hundreds of protesters outraged over the mounting humanitarian disaster for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. They condemned Biden for his support of Israel’s military campaign and Western news outlets for what they said was undercoverage and misrepresentation of the conflict.

“Shame on you!” protesters draped in the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh cloth shouted, running after men in tuxedos and suits and women in long dresses holding clutch purses as guests hurried inside for the dinner.

“Western media we see you, and all the horrors that you hide,” crowds chanted at one point.

Saturday’s event drew nearly 3,000 people. Celebrities included Academy Award winner Da’Vine Joy Randolph, Scarlett Johansson, Jon Hamm and Chris Pine.

Both the president and comedian Colin Jost, who spoke after Biden, made jabs at the age of both the candidates for president. “I’m not saying both candidates are old. But you know Jimmy Carter is out there thinking, ‘maybe I can win this thing,’” Jost said. “He’s only 99.”

Also:

SALT LAKE CITY: Mayor **Trent Staggs** of **Riverton, Utah**, was selected Saturday as the state Republican Party’s nominee to replace **Mitt Romney** in the US Senate, hours after the local official received former US President **Donald Trump**’s endorsement.

While the endorsement carried Staggs, 49, through the convention, his party support may not translate to success at the ballot box. He still must face other top contenders, including US Rep **John Curtis** and former Utah House Speaker **Brad Wilson**, in the June 25 GOP primary. Curtis, who is more moderate, and Wilson, a Trump supporter, already have qualified for the primary by gathering signatures.

The mayor from just south of Salt Lake City built his base by calling delegates personally and courting the endorsements of Trump and many of his allies nationwide. Staggs was the first candidate to enter the Senate race, even before Romney announced he wasn’t seeking reelection.

□ □ □

LANSING, Mich.: Former Rep Peter Meijer withdrew his name from the US Senate race in Michigan on Friday, ending a longshot bid to become the Republican nominee and return to Congress after being ousted by voters for supporting an effort to impeach then-President Donald Trump.

Meijer announced his candidacy in November and contended for the Republican nomination against former U.S. Reps. Mike Rogers and Justin Amash, in addition to wealthy businessman Sandy Pensler.

Meijer met an April 23 deadline to turn in petition signatures to get his name on the ballot for the August primary but withdrew from the race on Friday, a Michigan Secretary of State spokesperson confirmed to The Associated Press. Meijer’s name will not be on the ballot since he met a 4 p.m. deadline Friday to withdraw from the race.

“The hard reality is the fundamentals of the race have changed significantly since we launched this campaign. After prayerful consideration, today I withdrew my name from the primary ballot,” Meijer said in a statement.

Although many believed that Meijer had the potential to be competitive in a general election, his vote to impeach Trump undermined his bid to be competitive in a primary in a state that supported Trump in 2016. Trump has endorsed Rogers in the race.

criminal charges would be filed. (AP)

□ □ □

Shooting suspect in custody: Six people were shot late Friday outside a nightclub in the nation’s capital, police said.

The shootings happened around 11:30 pm in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington.

Metropolitan Police Department Assistant Chief **Ramey Kyle** said officers were called after a dispute started inside the nightclub and “spilled into the street.”

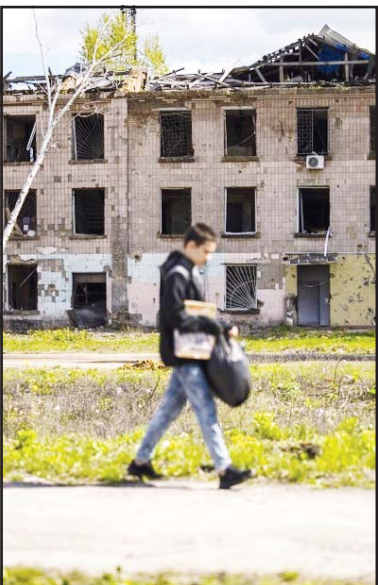
The six people who were shot had non-life-threatening injuries, police said. (AP)

□ □ □

Body of climber recovered: A helicopter crew recovered on Saturday the body of a climber who died after falling about 1,000 feet (300 meters) while on a steep, technical route in Alaska’s Denali National Park and Preserve, park officials said in a statement.

Robbi Mecus, 52, of Keene Valley, New York, died of injuries sustained in a fall Thursday while climbing a route on the southeast face of the 8,400-foot (2,560-meter) Mount Johnson, the park said. Her climbing partner, a 30-year-old woman from California, was seriously injured and was rescued Friday and flown to an Anchorage hospital, park officials said.

Another climbing party witnessed the fall and reported it around 10:45 pm Thursday. (AP)



A young man walks past a partially destroyed building in Russian attacks in Borodyanka, north of Kyiv, Ukraine on April 27. Borodyanka was occupied by Russian troops at the beginning of their full-scale invasion in 2022. (AP)



Mecus



Kyle

America

Police bust burglary ring: A burglary ring that allegedly stole more than \$4 million worth of jewelry mostly from the homes of South Asians in over two dozen communities has been broken up, the Massachusetts State Police said.

Four people, including two brothers, were indicted April 18 after a nine-month investigation on 95 counts of unarmed burglary and breaking and entering a dwelling house in the daytime with intent to commit a felony.

Police on Friday said the Providence-based theft crew broke into homes in 25 Massachusetts communities between July 21, 2018 and March 30. Police say the gang targeted South Asian homes because they thought they would have more jewelry.

Among the stolen jewels, police said, were diamonds and other gems worth \$75,000 each as well as gold bracelets, necklaces, earrings and cash. On several occasions, the gang stole locked safes weighing hundreds of pounds with the jewelry inside. (AP)

□ □ □

3 kids hurt in minivan accident: Three children were hurt when the minivan they were in rolled down a hill Saturday morning into a concrete baseball dugout in northern Illinois’ Woodstock.

The children, ages 12 and 13, were hospitalized with mild to moderate injuries.

They were among four children in the parked minivan which is believed to have been accidentally slipped into drive while the radio was being adjusted. Woodstock police said in a statement on Facebook.

A baseball game was being played in Woodstock’s Emricson Park when the minivan hit the rear of the dugout. None of the nearly dozen teenage ball players inside the dugout were injured. (AP)

□ □ □

Teen accidentally kills brother: A 14-year-old Florida boy told police he accidentally shot and killed his 11-year-old brother after finding a gun in an alley near their home, authorities said.

St. Petersburg police responded to the family’s home shortly after noon on Friday and found Amir Williams suffering from a gunshot wound, according to a police news release. The boy died at the scene.



An orange-clad man applauds for a girl playing violin as his orange-clad dog, bottom right corner, runs off during King’s Day celebrations in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on April 27. Many in the Netherlands are marking King’s Day, celebrating the birthday of their monarch who is enjoying a very slight rise in popularity as per a national poll. As King Willem-Alexander celebrated his 57th birthday with his family in the northeastern city of Emmen, people across the country engaged in the traditional ‘free markets’ held on that day, selling second-hand toys, books and other items. (AP)

Lat/Am

Mexican journo slain

Assailants kill 3 cops in Chile, shake nation

SANTIAGO, Chile, April 28, (Agencies): Armed assailants ambushed and killed three law enforcement officers in southern Chile on Saturday before setting their car on fire, authorities said, the latest attack on police to revive security concerns in the South American country.

It remains unclear who carried out the assault on Chile's national police force in the Biobío region some 400 kilometers (about 250 miles) south of Santiago, the capital. But a long-simmering conflict between the Mapuche indigenous community and landowners and forestry companies in Biobío and Chile's Araucanía region farther south has intensified in recent years. That has prompted the government to impose a state of emergency and deploy the military to provide security.



Boric

"There will be no impunity," Chilean President **Gabriel Boric** said, declaring three days of national mourning on Saturday, after firefighters dousing the burning police car made the grisly discovery.

The spate of bloodshed has tested Boric, who came to power in 2022 promising to ease tensions in the region, where armed Mapuche activists long have stolen timber and attacked forestry companies that they claim invaded their ancestral lands, among other targets like churches and national institutions.

But the indigenous community's distrust of authorities has deepened, spurring violence even as Boric's administration has touted its success in reducing Chile's national homicide rate by 6%, according to government figures from 2023 published earlier this week.

Attack

"This attack goes against all the enormous strides that have been made," said Interior Minister Carolina Tohá, a center-left former mayor of Santiago appointed as minister in late 2022 to boost Boric's position as his approval ratings dipped.

Describing the assailants as "terrorists," Boric traveled south to personally offer condolences to the victims' families. The Carabineros, Chile's national police force, said they were "working to the best of our abilities" to catch the assailants but declined to comment on possible leads.

The killing had been well planned, early reports suggest, timed to coincide with National Police Day, celebrating the 97th anniversary of the establishment of the Carabineros in Chile. It was the second such fatal attack on the force this month.

The Carabineros' general director, Ricardo Yáñez, told reporters the officers had been dispatched in response to fake distress calls from the rural road, where they were met with a barrage of gunfire.

"This was not coincidental, it was not random," Yáñez said of the ambush.

In Chile, around 1 in 10 citizens identify as Mapuche, the tribe that resisted Spanish conquest centuries ago and was only defeated in the late 1800s after Chile won its independence. Large forestry companies and farm owners control an estimated 500-700 kilometers of the land originally belonging to the Mapuche, many of whom now live in rural poverty.

□ □ □

Mexican journalist slain: Mexican journalists held a vigil and protest Saturday a day after one of their colleagues was slain in the southern state of Morelos.

They demanded a transparent investigation into the case and vented anger over the dangers news workers face in Mexico, which is one of the world's deadliest countries for journalists.

Dozens joined in the demonstration over the killing of Roberto Figueroa, who covered local politics and gained a social media following through satirical videos. After disappearing Friday morning, he was found dead inside a car in his hometown of Huitzilac in Morelos, a state south of Mexico City where drug-fueled violence runs rampant.

He was the first journalist to be killed this year in Mexico, which is the most dangerous country for journalists in the Western Hemisphere and has the highest number of missing journalists in the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a press freedom watchdog.

□ □ □

'Stop issuing human rights report': Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador Friday reiterated his request that the US government stop issuing the report evaluating the human rights situation in several countries, considering it a violation of sovereignty.

"It violates the sovereignty of any people, of any country, we are independent," Lopez Obrador told his daily press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City.

He questioned for the fourth time this week whether the report prepared by the US State Department serves to provide financial support to those countries that perform well in the field of human rights.

In the case of Mexico, the United States "has not given us a dollar," said Lopez Obrador.

□ □ □

Ecuador copter crash kills 8: Five soldiers and three civilians were killed in an Ecuadorian army helicopter crash on Friday, the armed forces said.

The helicopter, which was carrying humanitarian aid to the people affected by floods, crashed at 9:36 am (1436 GMT) in the Tiwino district of Pastaza Province, said the Ecuadorian army in a statement.

"The Ecuadorian army has ordered the immediate establishment of an accident investigation committee to determine the cause of this unfortunate accident, which has caused grief to the armed forces and Ecuadorians," it said.

□ □ □

Tourist in hospital after shark attack: A shark attacked a British tourist on Friday in the southeastern Caribbean, prompting the government of Trinidad & Tobago to close seven beaches and a marine park. The man was hospitalized in an intensive care unit following the attack, officials said.

The closure included beaches along the northwestern coast of the island of Tobago. The attack occurred at Turtle Beach along Great Courland Bay.

The government said in a statement that shark sightings were reported in the Grafton area and the Buccoo Reef Marine Park. Officials said the closures will allow the Coast Guard and Department of Fisheries to investigate the incident and "neutralize the shark threat, if possible."



An aerial drone photo taken on April 28, 2024 shows damaged buildings after a tornado in Guangming village of Zhongluotian town of Baiyun District, Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong province. Five people were killed and 33 others injured by a strong tornado that hit Guangzhou, the capital city of south China's Guangdong province, on April 27, local authorities said. (Xinhua)

Tornado in S.China kills 5, damages factories; cleanup efforts begin

Aerial photos posted by Chinese state media on Sunday showed the wide devastation of a part of the southern city of Guangzhou after a tornado swept through the day before, killing five people, injuring dozens others and damaging over a hundred buildings.

As businesses and residents began cleaning

debris, the images showed block upon block of devastation in the hardest hit areas with a few clusters of buildings standing amid the destruction, a truck overturned on its side and cars crushed by rubble. Some buildings had their sheet metal roofs torn off.

The tornado, which knocked out power in the

area, also injured 33 people on Saturday, officials said.

Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong province and a manufacturing hub near Hong Kong. The tornado which struck during an afternoon thunderstorm that also brought hail damaged 141 factory buildings, according to authorities. (AP)

Asia

Australian PM joins mass protests against violence

US, China talk past each other on most issues

BEIJING, April 28, (Agencies): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrapped up his just-concluded latest visit to China with a stop at a Beijing record store where he bought albums by Taylor Swift and Chinese rocker Dou Wei in a symbolic nod to cross-cultural exchanges and understanding he had been promoting for three days.

Music, he said at the Li-Pi shop on his way to the airport late Friday, "is the best connector, regardless of geography."

Relationship

Yet Swift's "Midnights" and Dou Wei's "Black Dream" could just as easily represent the seemingly intractable divisions in the deeply troubled relationship between the world's two largest economies that both sides publicly and privately blame on the other.

Blinken and his Chinese interlocutors, including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, all referred to these rifts even as they extolled the virtues of keeping communication channels open to manage these differences and avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations.

Blinken went out of his way to champion the importance of US-China exchanges at all levels. In Shanghai, he ate at a famous soup dumpling restaurant, attended a Chinese basketball playoff game and visited with American and Chinese students at the New York University branch. In his official meetings with Chinese leaders in Beijing, he spoke repeatedly of improvements in ties over the past year.

But he also stressed that the US has serious and growing concerns with China's policies and practices on the local, regional and global stages. And, he said, the US would not back down. "America will always defend our core interests and values," he said.

On several occasions, he slammed Chinese overproduction of electric vehicles that threatened to have detrimental effects on US and European automakers and complained that China was not doing enough to stop the pro-

JAKARTA, Indonesia, April 28, (AP): A strong magnitude 6.1 earthquake shook the southern part of Indonesia's main island of Java on Saturday, but there were no immediate reports of injury or significant property damage.

The US Geological Survey said the quake struck 102 kilometers (63 miles) south of Banjar city at a depth of 68.3 kilometers (42.4 miles). There was no tsunami warning.

High-rises in the capital Jakarta swayed for around a minute and two-story homes shook strongly in the West Java provincial capital of Bandung and in Jakarta's satellite cities of Depok, Tangerang, Bogor and Bekasi. The quake was also felt in other cities in West Java, Yogyakarta and East Java province, according to Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysical

Agency.

□ □ □

Funeral held for soldiers: A funeral was held Sunday for 20 soldiers who died at an army base in southwestern Cambodia in a huge explosion of stored munitions that also wounded several others and damaged nearby houses.

There has been no public explanation of what caused the Saturday afternoon blast at the base in Kompong Speu province, though there were no suggestions it was triggered deliberately.

Defense Minister Tea Seiha, representing Prime Minister Hun Manet, presided over the Buddhist funeral ceremony, which was attended by relatives of the victims and fellow soldiers. Cambodian flags covered the wooden coffins.

duction and export of synthetic opioid precursors.

At one point he warned bluntly that if China does not end support for Russia's defense industrial sector, something the Biden administration says has allowed Russia to step up its attacks on Ukraine and threaten European security, the US would act to stop it. "I made clear that if China does not address this problem, we will," Blinken told reporters after meeting with Xi.

Also:

CANBERRA: Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has joined nationwide protests calling for an end to violence against women.

Tens of thousands of Australians on Sunday gathered at events across the country to demand action to address gendered violence.

In Canberra, protesters were joined

on their march to Parliament House by Albanese, who earlier in April said Australia was facing a crisis of violence against women, and senior government ministers.

According to activist group Destroy the Joint, 26 women have been violently killed in Australia since the start of 2024.

"Violence against women is an epidemic. We must do better," Albanese wrote in a post on social media on Sunday morning. "Governments need to do better and as a society, we need to do better."

Speaking at a press conference earlier on Sunday, Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth said more time was needed to determine if the 10-year National Plan to End Violence against Women implemented by the government in October 2022 was yielding results.

□ □ □

US to withdraw troops: The Pentagon has confirmed that the United States will withdraw most of its troops stationed in the African countries of Chad and Niger.

"Do we have to adjust sometimes based on the dynamics? Yes, we do," US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Brown said Friday at a press conference when answering a related question.

Brown said the United States will "continue our (counter-terrorism) operations and continue our influence and work with many of the African nations that are on the continent."

On Thursday, Pentagon Press Secretary Patrick Ryder told a regular press briefing that the US Africa Command is in discussion with Chadian officials about a plan to "reposition some U.S. military forces from Chad."

He said some of the forces "were already scheduled to depart."

"This is a temporary step as part of an ongoing review of our security cooperation, which will resume after Chad's May 6 presidential election," Ryder said. (Xinhua)



A woman embraces a Chilean police officer during a demonstration seeking justice for police officers killed in the line of duty, in front of the La Moneda presidential palace in Santiago, Chile on April 27. Three police officers were killed on Saturday, in Cañete, Chile's Bio Bio region. (AP)

Business volumes & interest rates drive NBK's robust bottom-line

NBK reports solid performance with 9.2% profit growth in 1Q24

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, the Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), said, “NBK continued recording solid performance and building on past year’s momentum as we advance in executing our diverse strategy and leveraging our flexible business model throughout the challenging macroeconomic landscape.”

On the sidelines of the Analyst Conference for the results of 1Q24, Al-Sager added, “We reported net profits of KD 146.6 million in the first quarter of the year, growing by 9.2%. Driven mainly by growth in core banking income, our revenue stream stems from a diverse operational mix that proved successful in mitigating risks and optimizing performance. We achieved a growth of 11.2% year on year in net operating income to reach KD 309 million.”

Strategic investments

“Our success is underscored by the strategic investments that are aimed at achieving sustainable growth, enhancing customer experience, and creating long-term value to shareholders which is evident in our performance measures. Our return on average assets for the reporting period reached 1.55% whereas our return on average equity reached 15.2%,” Al-Sager highlighted.

“The ongoing investments by the Group in innovation and technology will support our ability to meet the evolving needs and expectations of our clients. By such, we will further strengthen our leading franchise across all business sectors and continue to build on our trust-based relationship with stakeholders,” he continued.

Local market

Speaking on NBK’s performance in the local market, Al-Sager stated, “Our approach in Kuwait remains centred on strengthening our market position in key segments, growing our clientele through digital products, and providing exceptional customer service. From a corporate banking standpoint, we continue to lead Kuwait’s infrastructure program and are well-positioned for any revival of infrastructure spend.”

“Furthermore, our Islamic banking arm, Boubyan Bank, along with our international operations both continue to expand their contribution to the Group aiding in our diversification strategy. Notably, our international operations maintain a robust contribution to the Group’s operating income and net profit.”

“Also, and notably in wealth management, we will endorse our position and brand presence through a global network of operations



Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO.

with the launch of NBK Wealth. We will further solidify our value proposition in providing innovative solutions and services towards a best-in-class wealth management experience,” Al-Sager noted.

“Similarly, as a frontrunner in the ESG space, we will continue to play a role in fostering sustainable advancement in the communities where we operate and in being a key partner in the sustainable financing endeavors of our clients,” he affirmed.

Egyptian market

On a question about the Group’s operations in Egypt, Al-Sager replied, “On Egypt, we witnessed recently signals of economic stability which is considered of the largest economies in the region and enjoys big potential for growth. As soon as the confidence in the Egyptian economy is regained, we believe that there are substantial growth opportunities within Egypt, and we will continue to be optimistic in this regard.”

“Speaking of our operations in Egypt, it is a main growth market for us, and we are committed to grow our operations in the Egyptian market, as one of our most profitable markets.”

Kuwaiti economy

On the other side, Al-Sager said that the Kuwaiti economy ended the quarter on a relatively soft note indicating that in terms of historical trends, credit growth stood low while

NBK Al-Sager

Our Profits Underscore Our Successful Strategic Investments Aimed at Achieving Sustainable Growth and Maximizing Revenues for Shareholders

■ Our international operations continue to expand their strong contribution to the Group’s operating income and net profit

■ We are well-positioned for any revival of infrastructure spend in Kuwait

■ Our solid performance for 1Q builds on past year’s momentum

■ Our diverse strategy and flexible business model further solidify our resilience amidst the challenging macroeconomic landscape

■ The ongoing investments in innovation and technology will support our ability to meet the evolving needs of our clients, and to further strengthen our leading franchise across all business sectors

■ Our investments aim to achieve sustainable growth, enhance customer experience, and create long-term value to shareholders

■ We seek to endorse our position and brand presence through a global network of operations with the launch of “NBK Wealth”

■ Egypt is a main growth market for us, and we are committed to grow our operations in the Egyptian market

■ We witnessed recently signals of economic stability and we believe that the Egyptian market enjoys big potential for growth

■ Local project activity declined significantly but project awards outlook for the remainder of 2024 should be better



NBK Headquarters

of National Bank of Kuwait commented on 1Q24 financial results saying, “Underlying drivers for the robust bottom-line performance are a combination of yoy growth in business volumes, higher interest rates, and a stronger operating performance. Group loans and advances grew by 5.7% year on year. Investment securities also contributed strongly to Group assets with a growth of 15.6% compared to March 2023.”

“The Group’s Balance Sheet remains strong with a stable credit quality, solid capital base along with the ability to generate healthy operating profits.Total credit provisions and impairment losses for 1Q24 amounted to KD25.5m, a decrease of KD2.6m over 1Q23.

“NBK Group continues to benefit from its unique position amongst Kuwaiti banks in terms of geographical spread through International Banking and the ability to conduct business in both Conventional and Islamic Banking,” he remarked.

Loans and deposits

On the loan outlook, Ronghe mentioned, “Corporate loan growth has been promising in the past twelve months both in our domestic and international locations.For that, growth in loans for the upcoming quarters will mainly stem from the growth anticipated in corporate loans.At the same time, as a nature of the Group’s international network, we remain well positioned to attract deposits at

competitive rates while the local competition doesn’t impact NBK’s to the extent it does to other local banks.”

Lower cost of risk

“As a result of the marked growth in operating income and controlled cost growth, the 1Q24 cost to income ratio was at 36.1% compared to 36.5%, one year ago. The cost of risk for 1Q24 decreased to 44bps compared to 53bps in 1Q23.Considering the declining interest rate scenario as we go ahead into the further quarters of 2024, we do expect the cost to income ratio to increase slightly, but it should be below the 40% mark,” Ronghe explained.

“The Group’s NIM increased from 2.48% in 1Q23 to 2.64% in 1Q24, backed by a strong year-on-year growth in volumes and interest rates. Benchmark interest rates are expected to remain at current levels for a longer period, with rate cuts being forecasted in later quarters of 2024,” he added.

Cautious optimism

“Looking forward, ongoing regional and international geo-politics, prospects of ‘higher for longer’ interest rates are likely to result in a macroeconomic environment which is less conducive to growth. We, however, remain cautiously optimistic that the overall operating environment, although challenging, will remain generally stable during 2024.”

Kamco Invest shareholders approve distribution of 5 Fils cash dividends

Assets under management grow by 7.8% to \$14.9 bln

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, held its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2023 where shareholders approved all agenda items

Shareholders approved the Board of Director’s recommendation to distribute 5% cash dividends (5 Fils per share), amounting to KWD1.7mn.

The AGM was chaired by the Company’s Chairman, Sheikh Talal Ali Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah, who discussed the Board of Director’s report highlighting key milestones achieved during 2023.

Al-Sabah said that the year 2023 witnessed instability due to geopolitical events and economic challenges, particularly in the Middle East region. The ongoing conflict in Gaza since early October 2023 compounded these challenges, alongside high inflation, and elevated interest rates. These events also affected global crude oil and energy prices resulting in volatile financial markets in the region.

GCC markets ended 2023 with one of the smallest annual gains globally. The MSCI GCC index was up 3.7% after recording mixed performance at the country level. Dubai, Saudi, Bahrain, and Qatar recorded gains ranging from 21.7% to 0.4%. On the other hand, Kuwait was the second biggest decliner in the region with the Kuwait All Share index reporting a drop of 6.5%.

Al-Sabah said, “Despite these challenges, the Company managed to achieve total revenue amounting to KWD18.0mn while revenue from fees and commission stood at KWD14.7mn representing 81.6% of total revenues.”

He added, “The Company enjoys a strong financial position with KWD59.7mn in shareholders’ equity as of 31st December 2023. In its most recent review dated in May 2023, Capital Intelligence maintained its “BBB” long-term credit rating and “A3” short-term rating with a stable outlook.”

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer, provided a detailed explanation of the operational performance for the year, which witnessed numerous milestones and achievements across various fields. During 2023, wealth managers worked closely with various business sectors, leveraging their diversified in-house expertise



AGM photo

rank amongst the top performers. Kamco Investment Fund was ranked the second best performing conventional fund whereas, Kamco Islamic Fund was the best performing Islamic equity fund in Kuwait according to the funds’ performance information declared on the website of Boursa Kuwait.”

During the last quarter of 2023, the company successfully consolidated its extensive experience in real estate, private equity, and venture capital, bringing them together under the overarching umbrella of Alternative Investments. As of December 31, 2023, the total value of managed assets within this sector surpassed USD2.2bn. Throughout the year, the team distributed a substantial sum of USD73.9mn to its clients while actively evaluating fresh investment prospects. The Alternative Investments team broadened its real estate portfolio by incorporating private debt investments in real estate projects, making a significant foray into a new asset class. They disbursed USD47.0mn to real estate investors, resulting in an annualized cash yield of 7% on invested capital.

In the face of challenges within the regional capital markets and prevailing high interest rates, 2023 stands out as yet another successful year for our Investment Banking business, evident in our market share of completed transactions. During the year, the Investment Banking team successfully completed 9 transactions worth USD1.6bn. The transactions included two Mergers & Acquisitions transactions, four equity capital market transactions, and three debt capital market transactions.

The company’s brokerage arm, First Securities Brokerage Company, continued to expand its client base by leveraging its online trading platforms. It experienced growth in market share and contributed to Kamco Invest’s overall income.

On geographical expansion, Sarkhou emphasized that network expansion and business growth remain central to the

US dollar settles at KD 0.307

KUWAIT CITY, April 28, (KUNA): The exchange rate of the US dollar on Sunday settled at KD 0.307 and the euro firmed at the level of KD 0.329 compared to Thursday’s rates, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said.

The CBK reported, in its daily

bulletin, that the sterling pound edged up 0.27 percent trading at KD 0.384, the Swiss franc firmed 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.

Israeli attack sparks escalation fears

Oil prices remain below \$90 despite Middle East tensions

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: While recent expectations were that oil prices would rise to more than \$100 per barrel, due to tensions in the Middle East, this did not happen and prices fluctuated at \$90, falling below \$86 per barrel, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Perhaps the fluctuating prices appear in response to the tensions in the Middle East, as traders continue to price at different degrees of escalation or calm in the conflict from one day to the next, and perhaps even from one hour to the next.

However, the current state of oil market fundamentals has few shocks, and unless direct threats to oil production and exports emerge from the Middle East, the market is expected to be able to absorb a decline in Iranian oil supplies, whether due to tougher US sanctions or some disruption to Iran’s oil production capabilities, as appears on the horizon.

The reported Israeli missile attack has revived fears of a broader escalation, but so far, no oil supplies from the Middle East have been directly threatened.

Moreover, the market is currently in good shape, according to some experts, as it has the highest spare capacity in years, and a buildup of commercial inventories has appeared this month, which should offset some of the geopolitical risks that have remained in the market since the Hamas attack on Israel last October.

Analysts estimate that OPEC+, which has once again firmly controlled the oil market, has a reserve capacity of about 5 million barrels per day of oil production that can be gradually restored in the event of severe market distress and oil prices rising

above \$100 per barrel.

According to statistics, this is OPEC’s highest excess capacity since the 2009 recession, with the exception of 2020, when the epidemic crushed oil demand and prices, and global producers withheld 10 million barrels per day from the market.

Given the capabilities of the OPEC+ group, it can influence oil prices by restoring some of the supplies amounting to one million barrels per day that currently prevent it from reaching the market - unless the Strait of Hormuz is closed to the movement of oil tankers, which would paralyze oil exports to all Middle Eastern producers including Iran.

Oil prices are likely to reflect some of these risks with the geopolitical risk premium in the coming months, but there is a belief that we will need to see a significant escalation to see a clear rise to highs in 2022 at \$125 per barrel from \$90 per barrel currently.

While US commercial inventories are slightly below the five-year average for this time of year, there has been a downward trend in increases so far this month, including a 5.8 million barrel inventory increase for the week ended April 5, and a 2.7 million barrel inventory increase for the week ended on April 12, according to EIA estimates.

Last but not least, OPEC+’s high spare capacity, recent inventory build-up in key markets, and additional non-OPEC+ production increases this year could mitigate the impact of tensions in the Middle East on prices, as well as if there is no actual supply disruption. These “shock absorbers” may prevent oil from rising to \$100.

6G to be commercially available by about 2030

By about 2030, 6G will be commercially available in areas where infrastructure conditions are met, including China, according to panelists at a Saturday forum on 6G innovation and development, which ran parallel to the ongoing 2024 Beijing Zhongguancun Forum.

Dai Xiaohui, secretary-general of the China Communications Standards Association, said that 6G has higher speeds, extremely low latency and greater connection density, and can realize the deep integration of artificial intelligence, intelligent perception and other technologies.

Huang Yuhong, general manager of the China

Mobile Research Institute, said that 6G provides not only communication services but also services such as perception and computing, expanding the mobile communication network into a mobile information network.

Gao Tongqing, deputy general manager of China Mobile Communications Group, said that “6G will promote changes in lifestyles, production methods, and innovations in social governance.”

“Beijing has taken the lead in building a public test platform and has started constructing a 6G open test network,” said Xu Xinchao, deputy secretary-general of the Beijing municipal government. (Xinhua)

Frustration grows as Cuba runs short of cash

Alejandro Fonseca stood in line for several hours outside a bank in Havana hoping to withdraw Cuban pesos from an ATM, but when it was almost his turn, the cash ran out. He angrily hopped on his electric tricycle and traveled several kilometers to another branch where he finally managed to withdraw some money after wasting the entire morning.

“It shouldn’t be so difficult to get the money you earn by working,” the 23-year-old told The Associated Press in a recent interview. Fonseca is one of an increasing number of frustrated Cubans who have to grapple with yet another hurdle while navigating the island’s already complicated monetary system - a shortage of cash.

Long queues outside banks and ATM’s in the capital, Havana, and beyond start forming early in the day as people seek cash for routine transactions like buying food and other essentials.

Experts say there are several reasons behind the shortage, all somehow related to Cuba’s deep economic crisis, one of the worst in decades.

Omar Everleny Pérez, a Cuban economist and university professor, says the main culprits are the government’s growing fiscal deficit, the nonexistence of bank-notes with a denomination greater than 1,000 Cuban pesos (about \$3 in the parallel market), stubbornly high inflation and the non-return of cash to banks. (AP)

UK PMI figures show a rebound in business activity

Fed’s fight against inflation still lacking progress as yen weakens to historic low

By National Bank of Kuwait

North America

Flash Services and Manufacturing PMI

Business activity in the US cooled in April to a four-month low while remaining in expansion territory, with the composite PMI output index dropping to 50.9 for the month, below March’s 52.1 figure. The drop is mainly attributed to weaker demand, suggesting that the economy has lost some momentum in the second quarter compared to the first. The drop in PMI figures was accompanied by a slight drop in employment for the month, with unemployment claims reaching 207k down from 212k the previous month

US GDP Dips in April

The US economy grew at the slowest pace in almost two years, as seen in the last quarter GDP figure of 1.6%. The figure was well below expectations of a 2.5% growth, as well as below the previous quarter figure of 3.4%. The slowdown reflected a mix of lower growth in consumer spending, as well as lower exports and outlays by the government.

PCE Data Rises More Than Expected in the y/y Figure

Core personal consumption expenditure rose at a rate of 2.8% year-over-year in March, above expectations of a 2.7% rise. Meanwhile the m/m figure rose by 0.3%, similar to the previous month’s figure and in line with expectations. Markets showed little movements following the data, where the US dollar index showed minimal movements, meanwhile the 2-year and 10-year notes dropped slightly. Personal income rose 0.5% for the month, slightly higher than the 0.3% increase seen the previous month. While the personal saving rate fell 0.4% from February, reaching 3.2%. As core PCE remains above the Fed’s target, markets are starting to anticipate less cuts in 2024, with the CME Group’s Fed Watch Gauge showing a 45.6% probability of a potential cut in September. The Federal Reserve is scheduled to meet in the first of May, where they will be discussing their outlook on the economy and inflation.

Canada Retail Sales Drop for the Month

Retail sales in Canada missed expectations after the reading came in at -0.1% in February versus estimates of a 0.1% rise. This marks the second straight month of retail sales contraction following January’s decline of 0.3%, reflecting the continued squeeze on Canadian households as a result of elevated inflation and high interest rates. Lower sales were recorded for building materials, home furnishings, furniture, electronics, and clothing, while motor vehicle sales rose by 0.5%. The Bank of Canada kept interest rates at 5% earlier in the month, leaving it near 23-year highs, while annual inflation ticked up to 2.9% in March, still away from the BoC’s ideal target of 2%.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 105.414.

United Kingdom

Manufacturing and Services PMI

UK businesses recorded rapid growth in April, with the PMI composite output index at an 11-month high of 54.0, above March’s 52.8 figure. Services PMI recorded 54.9, up from 53.1 the previous month. Meanwhile, manufacturing was at 48.7 for the month, below March’s 50.3 figure. The recovery in the services sector offsetted the decline in manufacturing, marking the sixth consecutive expansion in the UK’s private sector, and marking a rebound from the shallow recession that was expected last year. Business’s costs also rose at the fastest pace in nearly a year, mainly due to a rise in wages as well as higher prices for transport and raw materials, factors that may affect how the BoE proceeds with its rate cut plans.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2489.

Europe

Manufacturing and Services PMI

Business activity in the Eurozone expanded in April at the fastest pace in nearly a year, with the composite PMI figure expanding to 51.4 for the month, above March’s 50.3 figure, and above expectations of a 50.7 print. The expansion is supported by an increase in activity in the services sector in several Eurozone countries, where the flash services PMI increased to 52.9 for the month.

Rates – 28 st April 2024							
Previous Week Levels				This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month	
Currencies	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0654	1.0622	1.0752	1.0692	1.0600	1.0800	1.0739
GBP	1.2371	1.2296	1.2540	1.2489	1.2380	1.2560	1.2499
JPY	154.61	154.45	158.43	158.33	157.50	156.30	156.16
CHF	0.9101	0.9085	0.9156	0.9141	0.9010	0.8900	0.9050

Meanwhile Manufacturing PMI dropped to 45.6 from the previous 46.1 figure.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0692.

Asia-Pacific

Australia CPI

Australia’s inflation increased more than expected in the latest figure published in April, where the q/q figure increased by 1.0%, above the previous 0.6% figure and expectations of 0.8%. The y/y figure was up 3.5%, slightly higher than the previous figure at 3.4%. Despite inflation easing in the first quarter of 2024, the recent figure suggests that inflation is still trending above the RBA’s target, which might prompt officials to delay rate cuts, or to result in further rate hikes.

Japan Monetary Policy Statement

The Bank of Japan has decided to keep short term interest rates steady at 0.0% to 0.10% in its latest meeting, as it anticipates inflation to be on track to reach the BoJ’s target of 2.0%. While markets were anticipating no changes in the BoJ’s monetary policy, markets took the move to indicate that only small and slow steps will be taken in the coming days. Kazue Ueda, BoJ’s Governor stated in a speech following the meeting that a significant

move on the Yen might call for an intervention from the BoJ if it proves to have an effect on the economy and prices. The dollar-yen pair rose to record highs following the meeting, with the yen reaching a low of 158.33 against the US dollar, its weakest value since 1990.

China One- and Five-year Loan Prime Rates Unchanged

China’s one and five year loan prime rate were left unchanged at 3.45% and 3.95% respectively, in line with market expectations amid signs of economic recovery for the world’s second largest economy. The five-year loan prime rate acts as a benchmark for mortgage rates, a sector that faced severe downturn over the past two years due to various factors including the COVID lockdown. However, recent data showed strong exports and faster than expected GDP growth at 5.3% from 5.2% in the previous quarter. Premier Li Qiang, in an address to the National People’s Congress, targeted a 5% growth rate for 2024, and so far, the country is on track to surpass that goal.

The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2464.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30775

117 new models to make debuts

Decoding secrets behind the rise of China’s NEVs

BEIJING, April 28, (Xinhua): Attending China’s largest auto show, it is impossible to ignore the popularity of new energy vehicles (NEVs), which are changing the world’s largest auto market at an intense pace.

Organizers revealed that 117 new models will be making their debuts at the ongoing 18th Beijing International Automotive Exhibition (Auto China 2024), which runs through May 4. Overall, 278 NEVs are set to go on display, with Chinese NEVs being the superstars of the show.

Their cutting-edge technologies, customer-friendly novelties and affordability have wowed visitors at the show and underlined how the Chinese NEV sector has succeeded in zooming ahead over the past decade.

“What are we focused on? Speed. China speed,” said David Slump, President and CEO of Marelli, a leading global automotive supplier betting on China’s thriving new energy and smart vehicle sector.

During an interview with Xinhua at the auto show in Beijing, Slump highlighted the speed of technology, speed of delivery, speed of production and speed of the market’s development, a blistering pace which he believed was important for the company and the sector.

The show opened soon after green vehicles reached a milestone in China, accounting for more than half of the country’s passenger car sales in the first two weeks of April.

This milestone has been reached much earlier than the country’s initial target of 2035.

China’s NEV sales surged 37.9 percent year on year to about 9.5 million last year, compared with just 75,000 a decade ago, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Competition in China’s NEV industry has intensified, with both domestic and international brands rushing to

announce price cuts and release new models in a bid to secure market share.

Last week, Chinese EV brand Li Auto announced that it would cut the prices of several of its models by up to 30,000 yuan (about 4,225 U.S. dollars), and vowed to refund the difference to owners who bought these models earlier this year.

Price cuts in the first quarter of 2024, mainly involving NEV models, are equivalent to 60 percent of the cuts seen in the entire 2023 and equal to the price reductions implemented in the whole of 2022, said Cui Dongshu, secretary general of the China Passenger Car Association.

Industry analysts indicated that this fierce competition is a result of the transition of China’s NEV sector from a period of massive investment to a mature market -- a market that is likely to be reduced to a few leading firms.

“It’s hard to see the competition easing in the short term,” said Gu Huinan, general manager of GAC AION, which unveiled its new NEV model AION V at the ongoing show in Beijing.

Gu viewed the increasing NEV competition as a boost for the industry in that it catalyzes technological innovation and fosters an industrial ecosystem.

“It forces automakers to progress, and only those with a complete industrial chain, advanced manufacturing capacity to minimize costs, fast technological innovation, and a flexible mechanism to adapt to market changes, are expected to survive,” said Gu.

Fierce market competition will accelerate changes in the sector and help transform China into a global automaking powerhouse, Gu said.

Continuous innovation and input in research and development have pushed China’s NEVs from also-rans to champions. Such efforts are not only driving domestic growth, but also turbocharging innovation across the global automotive landscape.

JPMorgan’s Dimon hopes for soft landing for US economy

CEO says stagflation is a possible scenario

Weaker yen is becoming a headache for Japan business leaders & holidaymakers

TOKYO, April 28, (Xinhua): Japan business leaders expressed their concerns over a weaker yen after the central bank decided to keep the monetary policy unchanged, while the Japanese currency plunged to a fresh low over the weekend.

The Japanese yen on Friday weakened to a new low since May 1990 around the 158-yen range against the U.S. dollar in New York, after the Bank of Japan (BOJ) on Friday decided to keep guiding short-term interest rates in a range of zero and 0.1 percent.

The announcement weakened the country’s currency against the dollar

to multiple new lows, and it is widely believed among market watchers that the interest-rate gap between the United States and Japan is likely to remain for the time being.

Business leaders in Japan have increased calls on the country’s central bank to make an adjustment after the yen fell further against the dollar on Friday, national broadcaster NHK reported.

As Japan’s national golden week unfolded on Saturday, the feeble yen is becoming a headache for Japanese travelers while a boon for many foreign visitors.

During the holiday that runs through

May 6, more Japanese holidaymakers cite growing economic challenges compared to last year, local media reports showed.

Some 23.3 million people in Japan, roughly 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels, are expected to travel during the holidays, but more than 70 percent of respondents are choosing not to take overnight trips, NHK reported, citing a survey by major travel agency JTB.

Meanwhile, many inbound tourists told local media outlets that the yen’s depreciation is making it easier for them to go shopping and sightseeing in Japan.

of the Federal Reserve, the health of the U.S. consumer, the need for banks to open branches and the pressing geopolitical issues of the day.

Inflation has been stubbornly elevated so far this year, and a report Thursday showing growth slowed in the first three months of this year fanned fears of “stagflation,” which occurs when the economy is weak, or in recession, yet prices keep moving higher. It’s a particularly miserable combination of economic circumstances, with high unemployment occurring along with rising costs. Typically, a sluggish economy brings down inflation.

Stagflation last occurred in the 1970s, when conditions were far worse than today. In 1975, for example, in-

flation topped 10% while the unemployment rate peaked at 9%. Inflation is now 3.5% and unemployment just 3.8%, near a half-century low. If stagflation did occur, Dimon said he believes it would not be as bad as it was in the 1970s.

Fears of stagflation eased Friday after a government report showed consumer spending stayed strong in March, suggesting the economy will keep expanding at a solid pace in the coming months.

Dimon also emphasized the need for the Federal Reserve to remain independent, following a report by The Wall Street Journal this week that said advisors for former President Trump were considering ways to curb the in-

dependence of the Fed should again be elected. The steps could include making the Fed’s chairman removable by the president or requiring the president to be consulted on any changes to interest rates.

“I don’t know what these people are thinking, or how they think they are going to go about this,” Dimon said, saying that any changes would likely require legislation.

Chase was opening its 17th “community center” branch on Friday. These are larger branches that are designed for low-to-moderate income areas. They are designed with multi-purpose areas that do workshops and financial literacy work for communities in need.

Chinese enterprises ‘keen’ to expand international market

BEIJING, April 28, (Xinhua): China’s national trade promotion system issued 2,954 Admission Temporaire-Temporary Admission (ATA) Carnets in the first quarter of this year, surging by 73.66 percent year on year, said the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) on Sunday.

The ATA Carnet is an international customs and temporary export-import document. ATA Carnets issued in the first quarter covered a total value of 806 million yuan (about 113.4 million U.S. dollars), expanding by 117.25

percent year on year, according to the CCPIT.

The figures indicate that Chinese enterprises are keen to expand their presence in global markets via foreign trade related activities, including overseas exhibitions and business exchanges, said Zhao Ping, spokesperson of the CCPIT.

The CCPIT data also showed that the country issued 1.55 million certificates, up 17.38 percent year on year, including ATA Carnets and Certificates of Origin, etc.

ACCRA, April 28, (Xinhua): Ghanaian neighborhoods, including the eastern port city of Tema and its environs, have been grappling with prolonged, intermittent power outages over the past few weeks. This erratic electricity supply is part of a nationwide power crisis that is impacting not only residential consumers but also businesses, both small and large.

In Ashaiman, a town near Tema, the power outage has left many welders and car sprayers, who rely on electricity for their businesses, idle. As

a result, 35-year-old welder Yehusa Abdul-Malik has suffered income loss.

“A customer gave me a job to make door frames and windows for him using metal. I promised to complete the work within a week. However, due to the power outages, I was unable to start, and he became infuriated and took the job to another person,” Abdul-Malik said.

Napolean Ahiable, a 51-year-old barber and resident of Tema, described the power crisis as a nightmare, leading to a drastic reduction in his income. Operating his barbering business for over a

decade, Ahiable said that he could barely maintain his home and meet other expenditures because of the crisis.

“Sometimes, I work for only two days a week, and even within those days, there are intermittent outages, hence affecting business. I have to turn clients away because there is no electricity in my shop. This has reduced the amount of money I earn, and I find it difficult to feed my household well,” he said.

Ahiable, who employed two others in his shop, urged the Ghanaian authorities to find a permanent solution

to the crisis to ameliorate the suffering of many others.

“I want to appeal to the government to do everything possible to fix the problem for us so that we can have a stable power supply in order to keep us in business,” Ahiable added.

Adjo Enyonam, a 33-year-old cold store operator at Ashaiman, also lamented the negative impact the power crisis has had on her business. According to the mother of two, the power crisis has caused her to record losses due to unannounced outages on her premises.

Company exclusive sponsor of Mo Gawdat's AI, Scary Smart talk with KIBS

Zain: harnessing AI's potential to lead digital transformation charge

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Zain announced its Exclusive Sponsorship of the highly anticipated insightful talk with Mohammed (Mo) Gawdat, dubbed, AI: Scary Smart in partnership with the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS). During the session, the AI expert discussed the massive potential of artificial intelligence and how it is set to reshape the business and economic landscapes.

The event was joined by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al Kharafi, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Vice Chairman and Group CEO Isam Al Sager, Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Chairman Talal Behbehani, NBK Deputy Group CEO Shaikha Al Bahar, Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally, KIBS Director General Rana Al Nibari, along with top executives and leaders from the private sector.

During the talk, Mo Gawdat discussed the huge potential of AI innovations like Generative AI (GenAI), and how individuals and organizations can lead their futures by harnessing the power of this revolutionary technology. He also shed light on AI's imminent impact on technology, society, and economy, and how it will reshape the business and economic landscapes in ways previously unimaginable.

After his keynote, Mo Gawdat was joined by Zain Kuwait Chief Technical Officer Daaij Al Oud, Boubyan Bank Senior Manager for Advanced Data Analytics Jinan bin Salamah, and NBK Head of Global IT Operations and IBG Technology Yousef



Mo Gawdat with top executive leaders from the telecom and banking sector.



Gawdat is a leading expert on tech and AI.



Zain joined the stage to shed light on AI's impact on the business landscape.

AI Katifi. The three executives spoke with Mo Gawdat on the impact of AI across industries, especially on the telecom and banking sectors. They also discussed topics like ethics in AI and the significance of investing in building a strong data infrastructure with cloud computing and cybersecurity solutions to unleash the full potential of AI.

Mo Gawdat has a rich career in the tech industry, spanning 30 years of expertise. He is the former Chief Business Officer at Google X, bestselling author, and host of the popular podcast, Slo Mo. Gawdat has become a sought-after consultant on AI's impact, and he continues to share his experiences through books, podcasts and initiatives around the world.

As a leading digital service provider, Zain believes in the importance of harnessing AI's potential to lead the digital transformation journey and foster digital innovation. Recently, the company teamed up with global partner Huawei to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center of Excellence. The step aims to push both partners' plans for AI-enabled innovative services and 5G network automation in the region.

Zain continues to reinforce its efforts to further push AI-enabled innovative services and 5G network automation. The company strongly believes in the pivotal role AI tools and applications play in transforming networks, ultimately improving performance, efficiency, optimization, operations, and maintenance.



Annual Science Gala poster

Science International Forum-Kuwait hosts annual Science Gala on May 3

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Science International Forum-Kuwait will be organising the Annual Science Gala on May 3, 2024, 4 PM at Kuwait College of Science and Technology. The annual Science Gala is organized to provide experience, appreciation, motivation and knowledge for the student community in Kuwait. Interaction programs with India's leading scientists will be organized as part of the Gala providing a great opportunity for the students of Kuwait to meet and get exposure to the rich experiences of these famous scientists.

The chief Guest for the evening will be H.E Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Ambassador of India to Kuwait. The Guest of honour for the evening will be Dr. Tessy Thomas, Distinguished Scientist, Director General, Aeronautical Systems-DRDO (Rtd) and former Project Director of Agni 4. Winners of Sastra Pratibha will get a unique opportunity for a personal interaction session with Dr. Tessy Thomas.

Dr. Dheeraj Bharadwaj, Group CEO, City Group KSCP will deliver a speech on GLOBAL IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. Dr Dheeraj is a PHD holder from IIT Delhi and was the Young Scientist Award

Winner by the Indian National Science Academy in 2000. He also played a crucial role and worked along with Dr. Vijay Bhatkar in developing India's First Super Computer- PARAM.

SIF-Kuwait will screen the movie G.D Naidu - The Edison of India at 4 PM. The movie provide invaluable sights into the Life of Gopalswamy Doraiswamy Naidur who is referred to as the "Edison of India" and "the wealth creator of Coimbatore". He is credited with the manufacture of the first electric motor in India.

Sastra Pratibha contest Winners, Outstanding performers, KCSC Winners, Other Category Winners, Outstanding performers and Short film competition winners will be felicitated in this function. More than 150 students will receive prizes during the event.

This year The winners of Sastra Pratibha Contest and Kuwait Children's

Science Congress for the academic year 2023 - 2024 will take part in Sastrayaan 2024 scheduled to be organized by July 2024, where they will be visiting prestigious research facilities like DRDO, HAL, ISRO etc in Bangalore.

Bank safeguarding customers against online fraud in support of 'Diraya' campaign

Gulf Bank launches educational video for deaf, mute

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Gulf Bank has released an educational video for individuals with special needs to protect them from the risks of online fraud. This initiative is part of the bank's ongoing efforts to support the "Diraya" campaign, overseen by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association.

The video has received many views due to its meaningful educational content aimed at the deaf and mute community - warning them against sharing their personal information with others, and not engaging with anonymous messages that aim to steal data and banking details.

In related efforts to embed sustainability principles in the community and to meet the requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Gulf Bank offers immediate translation services into sign language at its branches for customers with special needs.

Furthermore, the bank has equipped each of these branches with iPads, enabling direct video call communication with the service provider's call center. A professional sign language interpreter assists in facilitating communication between the client and the bank staff.

Demonstrating its dedication to promoting financial inclusion, the bank provides services for customers with special needs via six branches located across all six governorates of Kuwait. This ensures an exceptional customer experience, smooth transactions, and constant accessibility.

Gulf Bank's specialized branches are crafted for wheelchair accessibility, with spacious layouts



Gulf Bank logo

that accommodate free movement. The ATMs are equipped with Braille keyboards for the visually impaired, alongside audio instructions for transactions. These facilities are located in private glass rooms to uphold user privacy.

Gulf Bank is committed to fulfilling its role in supporting the

"Diraya" campaign, which aims to enhance financial literacy, raise awareness of the banking sector's role, and educate customers on the best ways to utilize the varied services banks offer.

To achieve this, the bank distributes educational materials through multiple media and communication channels such as social media, newspapers, radio, and television, with the goal of reaching a wide audience.

The bank actively engages in several themes highlighted by the campaign, emphasizing customer rights in banking transactions according to the Central Bank of

Kuwait's guidelines, data and account security, and the safe usage of banking cards. This focus is crucial given the rapid evolution of financial and banking services and the growing number of fraud incidents.

Additionally, the bank remains committed to promoting the fundamental principles detailed in the Central Bank of Kuwait's Customer Protection Guide. This effort helps enhance the security of banking customers and supports the development of a balanced relationship between banks and their clients, according to the best international practices.



Photo during the event.

Bank introduces 5-Year Musawama financing plan

KIB introduces best financing offer on the new KIA Seltos through KIB PayTally App

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: As part of efforts to continue providing the best financing deals, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently announced the launch of an offer for the new KIA Seltos through its innovative KIB PayTally app. The offer includes a 5-year Musawama financing, with a Zero profit repayment plan, along with an additional warranty on the vehicle for 3 years or 100,000 kilometers, subject to the terms and conditions of the offer. This step comes as part of the Bank's strategy aimed at continuing to elevate its customers' banking experiences to a distinct level, as well as enhancing its partnership with the official agent for KIA vehicles, Al Mutawa Group.

Commenting on the launch of the new offer, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Head of the Central Sales Unit - Retail at KIB, said: "We are pleased to offer strong financing deals that meet our customers' needs and suit their modern lifestyles. Our focus is particularly on auto financing offers, as part of the diversity and expansion seen in the innovative KIB PayTally program and application. We view this as a significant step forward in Islamic banking solutions, further enhancing our customers' banking experiences. Additionally, this offer helps us achieve our strategic goals by strengthening our relationships with elite partners, agents, and car companies in Kuwait. We ensure that all customer segments receive suitable financing offers, enabling them to own luxury cars with exclusive benefits, meeting their expectations and aspirations."

It is worth noting that the new KIB PayTally application distinguishes itself as the first bank-led digital marketplace in Kuwait, offering its users the opportunity to shop in a more efficient and flexible manner by easily applying for and monitoring financing applications. It is designed to achieve a qualitative breakthrough in how customers access financing services and enjoy a comprehensive experience without the need to browse or visit multiple websites and branches. The platform is user-friendly, supported by unique features, and specifically designed to elevate the concept of digital



KIA-PayTally

shopping through exclusive offers not available elsewhere. Through this innovative application, KIB offers flexible financing ranging from KD 300 to KD 25,000, payable over a period of 3 to 60 months, without the need for salary transfer, making it the ideal choice for a wide range of customers, both citizens and residents alike.

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Riyaz Jamaldeen was elected new President of the Sri Lankan Chartered Accountants' Association for a two-year period starting from 2024, inducted by the outgoing President Dimuthu Ethugala who served as the President for years 2022 and 2023.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the CA Sri Lanka Kuwait Chapter, the Sri Lankan Chartered Accountants' Association was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel under the patronage of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Kuwait, His Excellency, Kandeepan Balasubramaniam.

The Chief Guest for the AGM was Heshana Kuruppu, the President of CA Sri Lanka.

Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India - Kuwait Chapter; Rabin Gonsalves and the Board Chairman of the Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association; Sabah Mubarak Al-Jalawi, also graced the occasion as distinguished invitees.

New office bearers for the two-year period from 2024 were elected unanimously as per the constitution of the Chapter as follows:

President-Riyaz Jamaldeen, Vice President-Nandana Kalubowila, General Secretary- Sachini Ariyawikrama, Treasurer-Chatura Jayasanka.

Executive Committee: Tharindu Rajapakse, Amantha Gomas, Mohammed Baseer Salabudeen, Neluja Fernando, Mohamed Nazmi Nabeel Ahamed, Nilanthi Asurumuni and Sameera Perera.

Tokens of appreciation were awarded to the Sponsors of the AGM, namely: The Oriental Insurance Company, Crevity Consultants, Travel Club Travel & Tourism, Kout Food Group, Dampa Feast, Sri Lankan Air Lines and Kuwait India International Exchange Company

The AGM proceedings were conducted by the General Secretary, Sachini Ariyawikrama. The Annual Report of 2023 themed 'From Imagination to Reality - The Evolution of AI' was jointly presented by Pasindu Karunathilaka, the Chairman of the AGM Organizing Committee and Tharindu Rajapakse, the Chief Editor. The AGM was compered by Tharindu Rajapakse who was an Executive Committee member of the Chapter, and the vote of thanks was proposed by Neluja Fernando.



Riyaz Jamaldeen elected as new President of the Sri Lankan Chartered Accountants' Association for a two-year period.

CA Sri Lanka Kuwait Chapter was established in November 2014 under the patronage of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Kuwait and was later admitted formally as the official chapter in Kuwait by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) on 17 February 2015.

Presently the Chapter has 70 members working in esteemed positions in the public and private sectors in Kuwait. The Chapter primarily facilitates continuous professional development for its members and strengthening their professional skills. The Chapter further collaborates with many institutions to support and contribute to building the Sri Lankan community in Kuwait.

CA Sri Lanka is the parent body of the Chapter, and is the apex body of accounting in Sri Lanka, providing continuous professional development for the accounting and finance professions. The members of CA Sri Lanka represent a brand of unique and versatile professionals, with the ability to steer any business successfully. CA Sri Lanka has over 6,000 members, based locally and globally, and are known for their professional integrity, exceptional technical and perceptive skills, financial discipline and divergent thinking, which helps them add value to the organisations they serve.

Film

BEIJING, April 28, (Xinhua): Chinese films, music and art can help international audiences learn more about China’s history, culture and values, said Chinese-American singer and actor Kris Phillips.

“I hope we can make internationally influential blockbusters with Chinese elements,” said Phillips, who is better known in China by his Chinese name Fei Xiang, in an interview with Xinhua. He noted that this would be an excellent way for the world to better understand China.

Phillips is in Beijing attending the 14th Beijing International Film Festival (BJIFF). As a member of the Tiantan Awards jury, he has a tight schedule.

He starred in the Chinese mythological epic trilogy “Creation of the Gods,” the first segment of which was screened in China last summer. The trilogy is based on the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) novel “Fengshen Yanyi” or “The Investiture of the Gods,” which tells the story of the fall of the Shang Dynasty and the rise of the Zhou Dynasty in the 11th century B.C. and the battles between gods, goddesses and mortals.

Phillips, who has enraptured audiences in China with his charm, starred as King Zhou, the last ruler of the Shang Dynasty.

Talking about his decision to play this role, the actor admitted that he was inspired by director Wuershan’s ambition. The director approached him in 2018, when preparation work for the trilogy had already been underway for five years.

Phillips shares Wuershan’s wish of telling Chinese stories to the world. In his view, a blockbuster film with a good story can easily transcend boundaries of language and culture, like the Marvel films which

Golden age for Chinese movies

Actor Phillips aims to tell Chinese stories through film

are popular among audiences in many different countries.

“There might be a 15-year-old boy in the United States, who watches ‘Creation of The Gods’ and becomes fascinated by the story and the heroes in it,” he said, adding that it could spark the boy’s curiosity to know more about China.

With this in mind, Phillips helped in writing the English-language subtitles for the film. The actor studied in the United States, and has performed in classics such as “The Phantom of the Opera.” He believed his language skills and familiarity with the story made him the best person to work on the film’s subtitles.

Attention

“For foreign audiences who cannot speak Mandarin, understanding of a Chinese film starts with the subtitles,” he said, suggesting that Chinese filmmakers pay more attention to perfecting the subtitles of their films for foreign distribution.

Phillips, 63, performed for the first time on the stage of China’s iconic Spring Festival Gala in 1987. The dashing rock star in a red tuxedo dazzled tens of thousands of Chinese, who were just beginning to learn about Western culture after the country’s reform and opening-up endeavors.

In the following years, he visited China numerous times, and witnessed the improvement of people’s livelihoods. “Now young people have more and more possibilities, and China’s future is promising. There is a widely-held belief among most Chinese people that life will

become better and better,” he said.

Along with China’s overall development, Phillips also believes that China’s film industry is entering a “golden era.”

Phillips told Xinhua that the United States went through a similar era in terms of its cinema scene. However, rising production costs in the 1990s then pushed the American film industry towards a path of commercialization. “But China boasts a vast domestic market, which is big enough for all kinds of films. This means Chinese filmmakers have the scope to produce commercial movies, as well as independent art films,” he said.

Phillips believed China has a wide range of untold stories and an enormous pool of talented people in its film industry. “As long as the industry continues to develop, Chinese films are bound to enjoy more opportunities to go international,” he said.

When asked about his criteria as a jury member for the Tiantan Awards, Phillips said that he would focus on story, characters and emotion. “I love films that leave something indelible, either a mood or an image or a line of dialogue,” he said. “If several days later they can still pop up in your mind, and you even talk about them with your friends, then the movie is a successful one,” he added.

To this day, Phillips still remains an idol for lots of Chinese people, but he acknowledges that idols are becoming increasingly diversified for the Chinese people, in the same way that the general public in China now has more choices when it comes to the likes of coffee and fashion brands.

Variety



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

Film

O’Connor, and Faist serve up intense drama

Zendaya shifts gear with ‘Challengers’

NEW YORK: Harvey Weinstein’s lawyer said Saturday that the one-time movie mogul has been hospitalized for a battery of tests after his return to New York City following an appeals court ruling nullifying his 2020 rape conviction.

Attorney **Arthur Aidala** said Weinstein was moved to Bellevue Hospital in **Manhattan** after his arrival on Friday to city jails.

“They examined him and sent him to Bellevue. It seems like he needs a lot of help, physically. He’s got a lot of problems. He’s getting all kinds of tests. He’s somewhat of a train wreck health wise,” Aidala said.

A message left with the hospital was not immediately returned Saturday.

Frank Dwyer, a spokesperson with the New York City Department of Correction, said only that Weinstein remains in custody at Bellevue. **Thomas Mailey**, a spokesperson for the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, said Weinstein was turned over to the city’s Department of Correction pursuant to the appeals ruling. Weinstein had been housed at the Mohawk Correctional Facility, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northwest of Albany. (AP)

□ □ □

BAGHDAD: Iraqi authorities on Saturday were investigating the killing of a well-known social media influencer, who was shot by an armed motorcyclist in front of her home in central Baghdad.

Ghufran Mahdi Sawadi, known as “Um Fahad,” was popular on the social media sites TikTok and Instagram, where she posted videos of herself dancing to music and was followed by tens of thousands of users.

An Iraqi security official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he wasn’t authorized to speak to the media, said that the assailant opened fire as Sawadi parked her Cadillac in front of her house on Friday, killing her, then took her phone and fled the scene.

The killing took place in **Zayoonah**, the same neighborhood where a prominent Iraqi researcher and security expert **Hisham al-Hashimi** was gunned down in 2020. Before the **US** invasion of 2003, the neighborhood was home to military leaders and considered a prestigious area in Baghdad. In recent years, many militia leaders

NEW YORK, April 28, (AP): How sexy can a qualifying tennis tournament in New Rochelle, New York, be? When the on-court drama involves Zendaya, Josh O’Connor and Mike Faist, the answer turns out to be quite a bit more than your average USTA singles match in Luca Guadagnino’s “Challengers.”

The film, directed by Guadagnino from a script by playwright Justin Kuritzkes, may have the appearance of a sports movie. Much of the action happens in between baselines. There are break points and short shorts. But in Guadagnino’s film, what’s being volleyed isn’t just a fuzzy little yellow ball.

“The ball is the ephemeral, invisible force of desire,” says Guadagnino, the director of “Call Me By Your Name” and “Bones and All.” “I wanted to show desire going back and forth.”

The result, by a score of about six-love, is the love triangle of the year. “Challengers,” which Amazon MGM Studios released in theaters Friday, takes the melodrama of the threesome and gives it a breathless, bi-curious spin. That’s especially due to the multilateral chemistry between Zendaya, O’Connor and Faist - all actors in their late 20s or early 30s, all very capable of smoldering when called upon.

It’s a big-screen statement especially for Zendaya, who’s also a producer on the film. She plays Tashi, the wife and coach of tennis superstar Art (Faist, the “West Side Story” breakout). Tashi was only relegated to the sidelines because of a career-ending knee injury - though it did little to sap her ambition. When Art, whose passion for tennis is fading, is matched in New Rochelle against an old friend, Patrick (O’Connor, star of Alice Rohrwacher’s recent “La Chimera”), their complicated past is, deliciously, resurrected.

Zendaya gravitated to the project not because it seemed a natural fit for her, but because it wasn’t.

“Because it sounded like a challenge. Because it is so different from me,” Zendaya said in an interview alongside her co-stars. “Sometimes when you’re a little afraid to tackle something like that you, you’re like, ‘Oo, maybe I should do it.’ I don’t want to walk into something and be like, ‘I got this. This is going to be easy.’”

“Challengers” was originally set to open last fall’s Venice Film Festival before it was postponed due to the

actors strike. But the delay has only given more time for the buzz around the film to grow. That has a lot to do with the attention on everything Zendaya does, but it also has to do with how the film puts three exciting young actors in the center of the frame, and doesn’t let go.

“What’s special is that the three of us got to lead the movie. That is cool,” says O’Connor. “An opportunity to do something like that is so rare.”

“Sometimes I’ve been a part of big ensembles,” adds Zendaya, who co-starred in the recent “Dune: Part Two.” “But it’s just the three of us. We are the cast. While we obviously have other amazing actors that contribute, this is the core thing here. Tennis training and the rehearsal period, it was just us. So thank god that we like each other.”

Attraction

Guadagnino, known for his organic way of working, compares the weeks he and the three stars spent together preparing in Boston to “kids on the beach creating castles of sand.” Though Faist has some ability, the rest were hopeless at tennis. Guadagnino hadn’t picked up a racket in his life before stepping onto the set in “Challengers.” Famed tennis coach Brad Gilbert was brought in to help.

But “Challengers” isn’t really about tennis, that’s just the arena where attraction and emotion in the film ultimately spills out. When it’s pointed out to Guadagnino that the tennis scenes are essentially his movie’s sex scenes, he responds, “Thank you.”

Faist, O’Connor and Zendaya all connected in different ways not just to how desire ebbs and flows but to how the characters are each juggling their fluctuating passions with their careers.

“It is this constant navigation in what we do. Once a project is over then you’re kind of in limbo. You’re always trying to find that thing that sparks something inside of you,” Faist says. “It was something I really resonated with, that idea of falling in and out of love with your craft.”

For Zendaya, the idea of having your craft ripped away, as it for Tashi, fueled arguably her finest film performance yet. “Challengers” is also the first time she’s leading a theatrical release.

“I’m grateful that I picked a career that I can keep doing for as long as I want to. I can be 80 years old and still be making movies if I get lucky enough to be able to or if that’s something I still want to be do then,” Zendaya says. “I can’t imagine that idea of that life or thing that makes you happy or gives you power being ripped away from you. I deeply empathize with that.”

Producer Amy Pascal first brought “Challengers” to Zendaya, a fittingly full-circle moment considering that Pascal cast Zendaya in her big-screen breakthrough, 2017’s “Spider-Man: Homecoming.” “Challengers,” though, signals a shift into more mature screen roles for the 27-year-old who from a young age as a Disney TV star had the responsibly of fame and providing for her family on her shoulders.

“Something I deal with personally is the idea of what I should want, or what people want for me,” Zendaya says. “I empathize with that in Tashi but also in Art because he’s playing for two people. He’s not just selfishly playing for his own joy anymore, he’s playing for someone else. Sometimes our work can feel like that, too. We’re playing for the benefit of other people, what people want for us, rather than what really would just make you happy.”

For Zendaya, Faist and O’Connor, “Challengers” allowed them to, when not busy steaming up the screen, wrestle with their own ambitions. O’Connor, who portrayed Prince Charles on “The Crown,” shot “La Chimera” - playing a character he more closely identified with - in between a very different role in “Challengers.”

“He is front-footed, he’s overly confident - all these qualities that I’ve always admired and always wanted that I’ve never quite been able to have. Just to play it and be in his shoes for a few months was bliss,” says O’Connor. “That’s what I’ll hold on to with Patrick. I really like him. I know he’s problematic but I really like him. I find him hilarious and charming and he knows himself. And those are all qualities that I don’t necessarily have but I admire in him.”

The connections and challenges each star brought to “Challengers” added up to a remarkably intimate drama and a potentially career-shifting experience. Even Guadagnino, who generally prefers editing to shooting, found his time on hard court with Zendaya, O’Connor and Faist to be enthralling.

have taken up residence there.

Sawadi isn’t the first prominent social media figure to be gunned down in central Baghdad. Last year, **Noor Alsaffar** or “Noor BM,” a transgender person with a large social media following, was also fatally shot in the city.

A neighbor of Sawadi who identified himself only by his



Weinstein



Sawadi

nickname, **Abu Adam** or “father of Adam,” said he came out to the street after hearing two shots fired and saw “the car’s door open and she was lying on the steering wheel.” (AP)

□ □ □

BEIJING: “Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire,” the latest install-

ment in the MonsterVerse film franchise, continued to top the Chinese mainland’s daily box office on Friday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

The monster film grossed over 7.34 million yuan (about 1.03 million US dollars) on the day.

It was followed by Hong

Kong action crime thriller “Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In,” which raked in 5.64 million yuan.

“The Boy and the Heron,” an Oscar-winning animated fantasy film directed by Japanese animation guru **Hayao Miyazaki**, came in third with a daily earning of 5.39 million yuan in box office revenue. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Music

McAlpine’s ‘Older’

Anitta’s new album is ode to Brazilian funk

LOS ANGELES, April 28, (AP): First, **Anitta** took over Brazil. Now, the world. The trilingual Brazilian pop star has returned with a new album, the club-to-bedroom ready “Funk Generation.” It is an infectious collection of dance songs celebrating a once maligned genre that also manages to experiment beyond its confines. But those searching for more mainstream pop music should look elsewhere.

Anitta is arguably Brazil’s most recognizable global pop singer since Astrud Gilberto sang “The Girl From Ipanema” nearly 60 years ago. (Fitting, because one of her biggest international hits, 2021’s “Girl From Rio,” interpolates the bossa nova classic. “Hot girls, where I’m from, we don’t look like models,” she sang. “Tan lines, big curves, and the energy glows.”)

When her 2022 album “Versions of Me” dropped, she was already a superstar known for meddling Brazilian sounds with a variance of genres: reggaeton, pop, yes, funk, but even pop-punk, lest anyone forget her boot-stomping “Boys Don’t Cry,” as inspired by Panic! At the Disco.

But “Funk Generation,” truly, is what Anitta has been working towards. There are no attempts at mimicking mainstream pop music trends, rather, her pop sensibilities arise only where they can amplify the funk she’s centered her life around. And when she says “funk,” she means Brazilian funk, what is frequently referred to as funk carioca or baile funk and is heard in favelas around Rio - a combination of Brazilian rhythms, African and electronic music, and rap.

Like hip-hop and reggaeton before it, funk in Brazil has been stigmatized for its lyrics about everyday realities: sex, violence, drugs. But music is storytelling, rhythms can bring about change, and Anitta’s new album makes it clear.

“Funk Generation” is made for late nights on the dance floor, not mainstream radio: “Lose Ya Breath” is all heavy sighs, cheery chants and nylon string guitars; “Funk Rave” is an almost euro-pop mix of her 2023 track of the same name.

“Fria” ushers in Latin R&B-pop, the not-safe-for-work electro-funk single “Double Team” brings back collaborators Bray and Bad Gyal (Thought “Bota Niña” was idyllic reggaeton-pop? The power of those voices intertwined knows no bounds.) “Savage Funk” delivers on the premise of the title - with lyrics even more provocative than the bed-squeaks of “I’d Rather Have Sex” from “Versions of Me.”) At every turn, on every song, Anitta understands her role: To make people dance.

The variance of genre may come across disjointed to some listeners, but since when does any DJ stick to one style? Here, Anitta’s doing a lot; she doesn’t want to be the life of the party, she wants to be the party.

When “Funk Generation” was first announced, Anitta described it as “an album where I celebrate my roots. It’s where I express the power of Rio’s funk in every track - its unique, danceable, and sensual beats,” she said in a statement. “It’s a rhythm born in the favelas, where I grew up, and it exudes resistance and art in every community.”

It does that, sure, but she’s not just a vessel. This is Anitta’s funk, a combination of global sounds that reminds everyone Brazil knows how to have a party. Everyone else would be wise to listen.

□ □ □

The opening track on folk-pop singer-songwriter **Lizzy McAlpine**’s third album, “Older,” is only one minute and 40 seconds long. In that time, “The Elevator” carries the listener into McAlpine’s internal world, climbing a steady piano melody toward a drum-led instrumental before the song meets an abrupt end — depositing the listener at the second track, but more importantly, in the thick of McAlpine’s current conundrum.

“It wasn’t slow, it happened fast,” she sings in a near-whisper, readying her heart-rendering thought. “I think we can make it; I hope that I’m right.”

The track sets the listener up for the album that follows: “Older” is a rich world for the listener to live within precisely because the songs vary in range and emotionality. Her songs tend to focus on maturation, entering and leaving relationships, learning to trust and be trusted. On “Older,” that includes navigating grief and growing older, while watching others grieve and grow older, too.

“Older” follows McAlpine’s 2021 album “Five Seconds Flat” and its viral hit “Ceilings,” McAlpine’s first entry into the Billboard Hot 100. The ballad soundtracked hundreds of thousands of social media videos, revered by fans for its cinematic telling of a (spoiler alert) imagined love story.

McAlpine, 24, evolves her visual, scene-driven songwriting on “Older” — sure to please fans of “Ceilings.”

McAlpine’s folk-pop tunes have always felt informed by musical theater styling (fitting, for a drama fan and one-time collaborator of composers **Benj Pasek** and **Justin Paul** of “Dear Evan Hansen” and “La La Land”), if mostly for her ability to infuse each song with character, as if acting.

Literally, she does that by referencing details — rocks thrown in water, a rejected cigarette, a crooked tie, a carousel ride — and telling blunt truths, like on “Drunk, Running,” when she admits: “I’m so sorry I stay/When I shouldn’t” atop piano.

The record is then effective when that intimacy is met with bold production that swells to meet the performer where she is at, and not in an attempt to impress. Take “Broken Glass,” which crescendos into a bridge that sees McAlpine belting above a drumbeat.

The penultimate song, “March,” is an aching but even piano-driven ode to McAlpine’s father, who died on March 13, 2020. Since his passing, she’s determined to dedicate a song in his honor on each of her projects, ideally track No. 13. Here, “March” brings reflections on grief: “Tryna find the lesson in it all but/I haven’t learned anything.” And: “I didn’t know it’d be this hard/So far away and then it hits you.”

The title track, “Older,” ends with McAlpine repeating the refrain: “I wish I knew what the end is.”

Tucked within McAlpine’s worried words is exactly what listeners look to her for: A still-confident tone, a pretty melody and reflections that only assure listeners in their own troubles.



Honoree Nicole Kidman addresses the audience during the 49th AFI Life Achievement Award tribute to her, Saturday, April 27, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Film

Streep, Urban, and more pay tribute

Kidman honored at AFI ceremony

LOS ANGELES, April 28, (AP): Morgan Freeman spoke the words, but pretty much everyone who took the stage at the presentation of the AFI Life Achievement Award agreed: “Nicole Kidman. She makes movies better.”

The line came in a video parody of Kidman’s AMC Theatres “we make movies better” ad that opened the Saturday night ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. It got huge laughs from the crowd of multigenerational A-listers there to honor the 40-year career of the 56-year-old Australian that has included roles in “Moulin Rouge,” “Eyes Wide Shut” and an Oscar-winning turn in “The Hours.”

Meryl Streep, Kidman’s “The Hours” co-star who presented to Streep the Life Achievement Award that she won herself in 2004, got laughs nearly as big when, in a mock-boastful voice, described the hardest part of being “incessantly called the greatest actress of my generation.”

It’s when you come up against someone else who is “really, really, really, really, really, really great” and you realize they did things you couldn’t do, as happened with Kidman the first day they worked together on the HBO series “Big Little Lies,” Streep said.

Streep and their “Big Little Lies” co-star Reese Witherspoon both did spot-on, Australian-accented impressions of Kidman that had the audience in stitches.

Streep also drew tears from Kidman when describing what she believed motivated her.

“People call it bravery when an actress bares all and leaps off into the unknown and she dives deep into the darker parts of what it is to be a human being,” Streep said. “But I don’t think it’s bravery. I think it’s love. I think she just loves it.”

Kidman teared up for the first time in the evening when her husband and

fellow Australian, singer Keith Urban, said she showed him “what love in action really looks like” when his substance abuse problems emerged almost immediately after they wed in 2006.

“Four months into our marriage, I’m in rehab for three months,” Urban said, looking at Kidman where she sat on a dais with their two daughters and other family. “Nic pushed through every negative voice, I’m sure even some of her own, and she chose love. And here we are 18 years later.”

Kidman said the night was the first time she allowed their teenage daughters to join her on a red carpet. She also has two children with her first husband, Tom Cruise.

She accepted the AFI award in the same venue where she accepted her Oscar in 2003 for playing Virginia Woolf in “The Hours.”

Thanked

She thanked by name every director she has worked with, including Stanley Kubrick, Jane Campion, Baz Luhrmann, Sofia Coppola, Yorgos Lanthimos, Sydney Pollack and Lars von Trier.

“It is a privilege to make films. And glorious to have made films and television with these storytellers who allowed me to run wild and be free and play all of these unconventional women,” Kidman said, wearing a floor-length, glittering-gold gown. “Thank you for making me better at my craft and giving me a place, however temporary, in this world.”

It was announced back in November of 2022 that Kidman would receive the award, first handed out in 1973, whose previous winners include Orson Welles, Bette Davis, Alfred Hitchcock, Gene Kelly, Sidney Poitier, Barbara Streisand, Tom Hanks, Robert De Niro, Denzel Washington and Julie Andrews.

The ceremony originally was scheduled for June of 2023, but delayed be-

cause of Hollywood’s strikes. It will air on TNT on June 17.

Kidman also was nominated for Academy Awards for “Moulin Rouge,” “Rabbit Hole,” “Lion,” and “Being the Ricardos,” whose director, Aaron Sorkin, also sang her praises at the ceremony.

Others honoring her included Zac Efron, Miles Teller, Zoe Saldana and Mike Myers, who came on stage in disguise in one of the eerie orgy masks from “Eyes Wide Shut.”

Kidman began her career as a teen in Australia in films including “Bush Christmas” and “BMX Bandits.” Naomi Watts, a friend from those days, described meeting Kidman when both had to sit in a waiting room in bathing suits for two hours at an audition. Aussies Russell Crowe, Hugh Jackman and Cate Blanchett all gave video tributes to the first from their country to win the award.

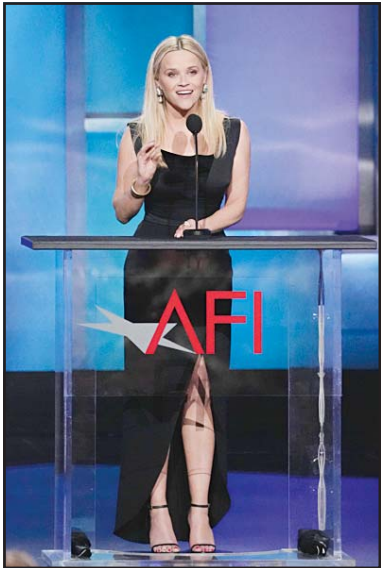
Kidman said in a video played at the ceremony that her appearance in the 1989 thriller “Dead Calm” brought her to the attention of, among others, Cruise, the only time his name was spoken Saturday night.

She had her breakthrough Hollywood role alongside him in 1990’s “Days of Thunder” - they would marry the same year - and also starred together in 1992’s “Far and Away” and in 1999 in Kubrick’s final film, “Eyes Wide Shut.”

She divorced Cruise in 2001, but her stardom only grew in his wake. Some of her biggest roles, and her Oscar, were still to come.

The role most often cited as a favorite during the awards show Saturday night was her musical turn in Luhrmann’s 2001 “Moulin Rouge.”

Freeman, the 2011 AFI honoree, in his in-person presentation that followed the video spoof, serenaded Kidman with the modified Elton John lines she sings in the film: “How wonderful life is, now you’re in the world.”



Actor Reese Witherspoon addresses the audience during the 49th AFI Life Achievement Award tribute to Nicole Kidman, Saturday, April 27, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Noem



Costanzo

Variety

NEW YORK: South Dakota Gov. **Kristi Noem** - a potential running mate for presumptive Republican presidential candidate **Donald Trump** - is getting attention again. This time, it’s for a new book where she writes about killing an unruly dog, and a smelly goat, too.

The Guardian obtained a copy of Noem’s soon-to-be released book, “No Going Back: The Truth on What’s Wrong with Politics and How We Move America Forward.” In it, she tells the story of the ill-fated Cricket, a 14-month-old wirehaired pointer she was training for pheasant hunting.

She writes, according to the Guardian, that the tale was included to show her willingness to do anything “difficult, messy and ugly” if it has to be done. But backlash was swift against the Republican governor, who just a month ago drew attention and criticism for posting an infomercial-like video about cosmetic dental surgery she received out-of-state.

In her book, Noem writes that she took Cricket on a hunting trip with older dogs in hopes of calming down the wild puppy. Instead, Cricket chased the pheasants while “having the time of her life.”

On the way home from the hunting trip, Noem writes that she stopped to talk to a family. Cricket got out of Noem’s truck and attacked and killed some of the family’s chickens, then bit the governor.

Noem apologized profusely, wrote the distraught family a check for the deceased chickens, and helped them dispose of the carcasses, she writes. Cricket “was the picture of joy” as all that unfolded.

“I hated that dog,” Noem writes, deeming her “untrainable.”

“At that moment,” Noem writes, “I realized I had to put her down.” She led Cricket to a gravel pit and killed her. (AP)

□ □ □

PHILADELPHIA: Anthony Roth Costanzo was hired Thursday as general director and president of Opera Philadelphia and will continue his career as a leading countertenor while taking over an ambitious company dealing with post-pandemic economic challenges.

“Even though I’m an opera singer, it’s my job to ensure the health of this art form I love,” he said in an interview this week. “And the other side of the coin is that I’m frustrated by opera and its inability to always innovate in the ways I think can help it grow. So, it’s something I have been building a skill set for for a long time, and I have been waiting for an opportunity that

feels right.”

Costanzo, who turns 42 on May 8, will start work on June 1 and replace **David Devan**, who is retiring after 13 seasons in charge. Music director **Corrado Rovaris** has a contract through 2026-27.

Opera Philadelphia for 2024-25 dropped its well-regarded season-opening festival, which began in 2017, and lowered next season’s budget to \$10 million - of which \$1,275,000 is projected to come from ticket revenue. There will be just three mainstage productions, starting with the US premiere

of Missy Mazzoli’s “The Listeners” on Sept. 25. (AP)

□ □ □

CHONGQING: This year’s Looking China annual youth film project was launched on Friday in southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality, with 10 foreign filmmakers invited to film the food and scenic spots of the region.

The young filmmakers, who are from **Greece** and **Russia**, will visit several districts and counties in **Chongqing**. They



Molly Tuttle and Golden Highway perform during the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival on Saturday, April 27, at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans. (AP)

will create documentary films from April 27 to May 2, using their perspectives to tell stories in and about China.

Anastasia Manaeva from Russia will go to the Dazu Rock Carvings, a world cultural heritage site, to film the story of how restoration of cultural relics and the application of digital imaging technology help preserve the exquisite rock carvings there. **Antonios Kordatos**, who is from Greece, will focus on the New International Land-sea Trade Corridor, showcasing how motorcycles produced in Chongqing are exported overseas via this transportation route. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

LONDON: Thunderous laughter and applause almost blew off the roof of an auditorium in London’s ExCeL Exhibition Centre on Saturday night, when a punchline by **Guo Degang**, a popular Chinese traditional crosstalk comedian, landed with an audience of thousands.

Along with Guo and his partner **Yu Qian**, a handful of comedians from the De Yun She Performance Group performed Xiangsheng, or crosstalk comedy, with both jokes about life anecdotes and traditional crosstalk episodes.

“Laughter is contagious and that is what makes the art form of crosstalk comedy powerful,” said Guo, a leading character in both the performance group and the industry.

Guo and his group started their first overseas tour in Australia in 2011. Since then, they have performed in places including the **United States, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Japan and Singapore**. This was the group’s second time performing in London. (Xinhua)

African nations eager for malaria vaccine rollout

Strategic goals for malaria vaccines by 2030: Roadmap for success

By Dr. Ali Sher

Later trials in humans, despite demonstrating cellular immune responses in over 90% of the subjects, had very poor antibody responses. Despite this following administration of the vaccine, some candidates had complete protection when challenged with *P. falciparum*. This result has warranted ongoing trials.

[NANP]19-5.1-sporozoite & schizont protein
In 1995 a field trial involving [NANP]19-5.1 proved to be very successful. Out of 194 children vaccinated, none developed symptomatic malaria in the 12-week follow-up period, and only 8 failed to have higher levels of antibody present. The vaccine consists of the schizont export protein (5.1) and 19 repeats of the sporozoite surface protein [NANP]. Limitations of the technology exist as it contains only 20% peptide and has low levels of immunogenicity. It also does not contain any immunodominant T-cell epitopes.

Role of vaccine in protection
RTS,S works by targeting a portion of the circumsporozoite protein on the surface of the malaria sporozoites. The idea is that a vaccinated individual will generate antibodies and kill off the parasite before it can enter red blood cells. But the vaccine does not develop perfect protection. In the first year after vaccination, it is about 50% effective in preventing clinical cases of malaria in children aged 5 to 17 months. After 4 years, efficacy drops to 36% for clinical episodes and 32% for severe malaria. The vaccine has also been tested in younger infants aged between 6 and 12 weeks, but efficacy was lower and the benefits were not deemed significant enough to justify its use in this age group.

Malaria vaccine technology roadmap
The world's leading global health organizations have developed the malaria vaccine technology roadmap for accelerating development of a highly effective malaria vaccine. The roadmap includes the following strategic goals for malaria vaccines by 2030:
■ Develop and license malaria vaccines with protective efficacy of at least 75% against clinical malaria for areas with ongoing malaria transmission.
■ Develop malaria vaccines that reduce transmission and human malaria infection, enabling elimination in multiple settings through mass vaccination campaigns.
18 million doses of first-ever malaria vaccine allocated to 12 African countries for 2023- 2025:

■ In response to high demand for the first-ever malaria vaccine, 12 countries in Africa will be allocated a total of 18 million doses of RTS,S/AS01 for the 2023-2025 period.
■ Malaria Vaccine Implementation programme countries Ghana, Kenya and Malawi will receive doses to continue vaccinations in pilot areas.
■ Allocations were also made for new introductions in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Since 2019, Ghana, Kenya and Malawi have been delivering the malaria vaccine through the Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme (MVIP), coordinated by WHO and funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Unitaidd. The RTS,S/AS01 vaccine has been administered to more than 1.7 million children in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi since 2019 and has been shown to be safe and effective, resulting in a substantial reduction in severe malaria and a fall in child deaths. At least 28 African countries have expressed interest in receiving the malaria vaccine.

In addition to Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, the initial 18 million dose allocation will enable nine more countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda, to introduce the vaccine into their routine immunisation programmes for the first time. This allocation round makes use of the supply of vaccine doses available to Gavi, Vaccine Alliance via UNICEF. The first doses of the vaccine are expected to arrive in countries during the last quarter of 2023, with countries starting to roll them out by early 2024.

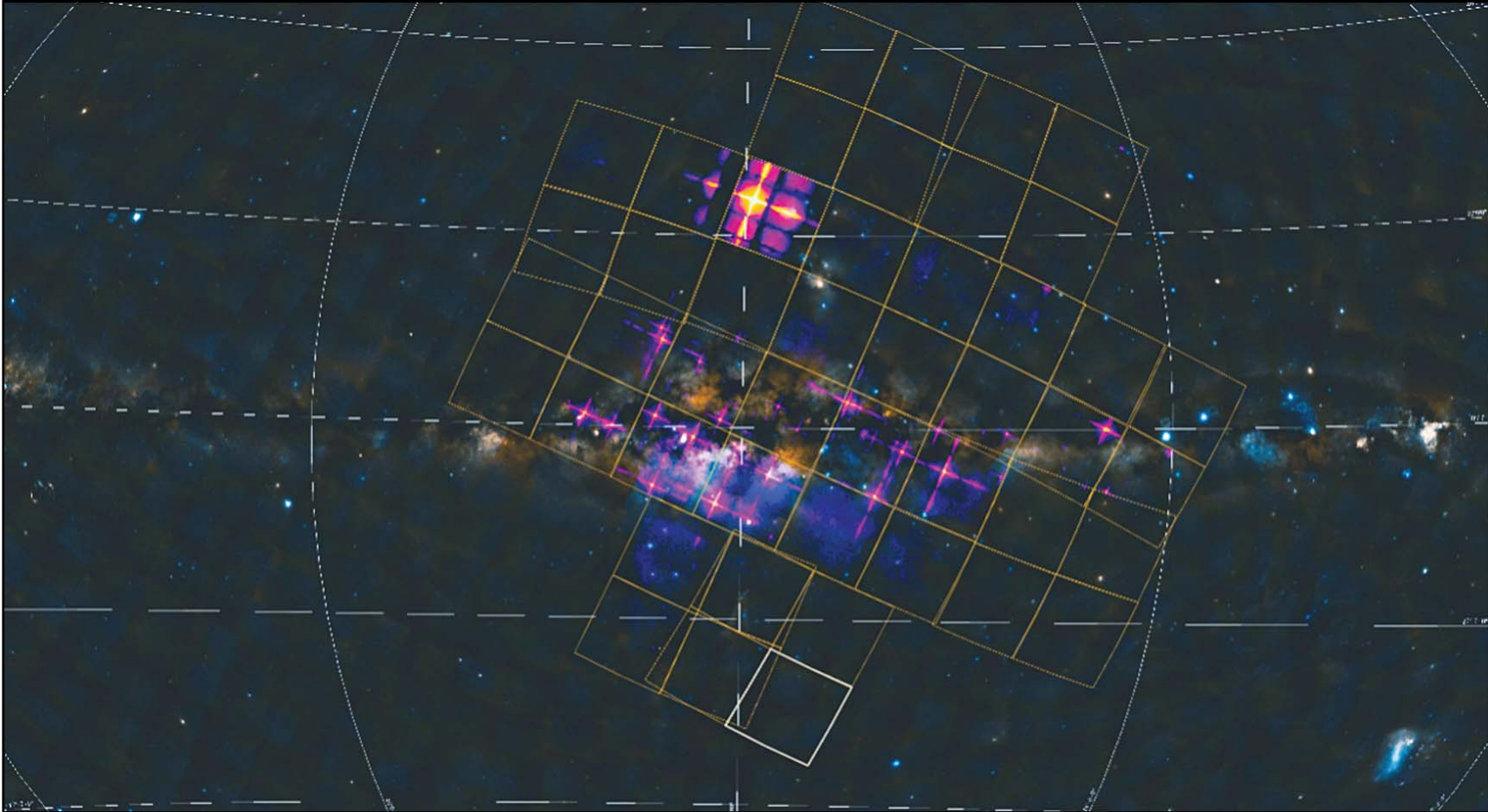
"This vaccine has the potential to be very impactful in the fight against malaria, and when broadly deployed alongside other interventions, it can prevent tens of thousands of future deaths every year. "Nearly every minute, a child under 5 years old dies of malaria. As supply increases, we hope even more children can benefit from this life-saving advancement."

"The malaria vaccine is a breakthrough to improve child health and child survival; and families and communities, rightly, want this vaccine for their children. This first allocation of malaria vaccine doses is prioritised for children at highest risk of dying of malaria. "The high demand for the vaccine and the strong reach of childhood immunisation will increase equity in access to malaria prevention and save many young lives. We will work tirelessly to increase supply until all children at risk have access."

Annual global demand for malaria vaccines is estimated at 40-60 million doses by 2026 alone, growing to 80-100 million doses each year by 2030. The RTS,S/AS01 vaccine, developed and produced by GSK, and in the future supplied by Bharat Biotech, and the second vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, developed by Oxford University and manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII), is the future vaccine which will eradicate malaria from the world soon.

Note: There is no vaccine against *P. vivax* available, only few vaccine candidates are currently in active clinical trials. The best combination of antigens and adjuvants are not available for vaccine development.

(Concluded)



This photo shows a view captured by a Wide-field X-ray Telescope (WXT) directed at the center of the Milky Way for around 40,000 seconds. (Xinhua)

Beijing holds forum on promoting university tech transfer

China's Einstein Probe captures first in-orbit images

BEIJING, April 28, (Xinhua) - China's Einstein Probe (EP) astronomical satellite, sent into space in January this year, has captured its first in-orbit detection images, which were presented at a parallel forum of the 2024 Zhongguancun Forum in Beijing on Saturday.

Inspired by the functions of lobster eyes, EP uses new X-ray detection technology to observe mysterious transient phenomena in the universe that flicker like fireworks.

Yuan Weimin, principal investigator of the EP mission and a researcher at the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), said that since the probe's launch on Jan. 9 this year, commissioning tests have been conducted, confirming the functionality and performance of the EP satellite and its scientific instruments.

During its commissioning phase, EP has detected 17 X-ray transients and 127 stellar flares. These findings have guided a range of ground-based and space-based telescopes in follow-up observations in multiple wavebands, Yuan said.

Preliminary analysis of the data from EP and other telescopes has confirmed EP's potential to discover diverse X-ray sources and even new types of objects, and its important role in unveiling the evolution of the universe and the structure of spacetime, Yuan added.

"With great efforts, our team made this almost impossible mission possible," Yuan said.

Zhang Chen, assistant to EP's principal investigator, said that the probe has captured X-ray images of various celestial bodies during its commissioning phase. These observations have demonstrated the outstanding capabilities of EP's two scientific instruments: a Wide-field X-ray Telescope (WXT) to monitor a panorama of the X-ray sky, and a Follow-up X-ray Telescope (FXT) to provide close-up views and pinpoint transient sources captured by the WXT.

EP will continue its in-orbit calibration activities in the coming months, Zhang added.

The EP mission is one of a series of space

science missions led by CAS. It is also an international collaboration mission with contributions from the European Space Agency (ESA), the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics (MPE) in Germany, and the French space agency CNES.

The mission aims to help scientists capture the first light of supernova explosions, search for and pinpoint X-ray signals accompanying gravitational wave events, and discover dormant black holes and other faint transient and variable celestial objects in the far reaches of the universe.

Also:

BEIJING: The Forum on Promoting University Technology Transfer opened on Saturday at the Beijing University Of Technology.

As the first event of its kind to be held during the 2024 Zhongguancun Forum (ZGC Forum) annual conference, it has attracted representatives of hundreds of domestic and overseas universities and enterprises to explore new models to enhance the transformation of scientific and techno-

logical achievements.

Facilitating the transfer of original and disruptive technological innovations -- from academia to industry, from laboratories to production lines, and from shelves to markets -- is crucial to driving industrial innovation through technological advancement, said **Shan Zhongde**, vice minister of industry and information technology.

He noted that it is a significant measure in advancing the development of new industrialization and new quality productive forces.

The China National Intellectual Property Administration, along with seven relevant government departments, initiated patent inventory work at the beginning of this year, and over 1,700 universities and research institutions in **China** have compiled an inventory of 914,000 patents to date.

The three-day Forum on Promoting University Technology Transfer has gathered more than 500 university sci-tech achievements. The event saw the release of a compilation of outstanding cases of sci-tech achievement transformations among universities.

Controversial nicotine alternative under scrutiny

Decoding Zyn: Nicotine pouch raising health concerns

WASHINGTON, April 28, (AP) - A tiny Philip Morris product called Zyn has been making big headlines, sparking debate about whether new nicotine-based alternatives intended for adults may be catching on with underage teens and adolescents.

Here's what to know about Zyn:

Zyn is an oral pouch that contains nicotine powder and flavorings like mint, coffee and citrus. The pouches are the fastest-growing segment of the tobacco industry, which has struggled for decades to replace falling cigarette sales.

Zyn is marketed by Philip Morris International to adult tobacco users. Although it doesn't contain tobacco, US regulators still treat it as a tobacco product.

Competitors sell similar products. Altria, for instance, sells its own flavored pouches called On.

Users stick them between their lip and gums, where they slowly release low levels of nicotine that are absorbed into the bloodstream. Because pouches generally don't contain tobacco, there's no spitting, unlike older products like chew and snuff.

Philip Morris representatives say the nicotine-only formulation is part of Zyn's appeal.

"People can be reluctant to move into an oral tobacco product if they view it as similar to traditional chewing tobacco," company spokesman Corey Henry said. "Consumer acceptability is a big part of Zyn."

All tobacco products carry serious health risks. Cigarettes are widely understood as the most harmful, increasing the likelihood of cancer, heart disease and lung problems. Chewing tobacco is linked to mouth cancer, gum disease and tooth loss.

But in the last decade or so, researchers and health regulators have begun to acknowledge different levels of harm among different tobacco products.

In 2019, the Food and Drug Administration said a different oral tobacco product, called snus, contains lower cancer-causing chemicals than cigarettes and could benefit smokers who switch.

Snus are similar to nicotine pouches like Zyn, except that they contain fermented tobacco. Studies from Sweden and other places where they are popular have shown lower rates of lung cancer and related diseases compared with other European countries where smoking is more prevalent.

There's little research on the long-term effects of nicotine pouches, but many researchers expect they will show similarly low rates of carcinogens and other toxic

components.

Still, that doesn't mean they're safe. A study last year found Zyn and similar products contain low levels of harmful substances such as ammonia and formaldehyde.

Currently FDA officials are letting Zyn stay on the market while they review Philip Morris' marketing application, which was submitted in 2020.

To win FDA authorization, companies generally must show that their products will reduce disease among adult tobacco users without attracting underage use by teens and adolescents.

Not according to the latest federal data. Only 1.5% of high school and middle schoolers reported using nicotine pouches when surveyed last year. That's well below the roughly 10% who used electronic cigarettes.

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

Medical Classifieds

For your ads on this page

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

www.arabtimesonline.com

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE
الفروانية FARWANIYA

Dr.Shajahan V.M
BDS, MDS
Dental Surgeon

Dr.Ayham Askar
BDS
Dental Surgeon

Dr. Raina Fernandes
BDS
Dental Surgeon

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

◆ SCALING & GUM TREATMENT

◆ COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION

◆ GUM & ORAL SURGERY

◆ BAD BREATH TREATMENT

◆ SURGICAL TREATMENT

◆ ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

◆ COSMETIC FILLING

◆ FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES

◆ CROWN TREATMENT

◆ SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm

Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya

www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Samson powers Rajasthan to win

Delhi edges Mumbai to keep IPL playoff hopes alive

NEW DELHI, April 28, (AP): Heavy hitting from Jake Fraser-McGurk and Tristan Stubbs helped Delhi Capitals hold off Mumbai Indians by 10 runs in a high-scoring Indian Premier League game.

In the second game of the day, Sanju Samson powered league leaders the Rajasthan Royals to a seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants.

Fraser-McGurk lashed 84 runs off only 27 balls and Stubbs contributed an unbeaten 48 off 25 as Delhi amassed 257-4 in 20 overs.

Tilak Varma led Mumbai's reply with 63 off 32 but the visitors fell short at 247-9.

CRICKET

Delhi moved to fifth place, just outside the top four on net run-rate. Mumbai was ninth after its sixth loss in nine games.

Put into bat, Delhi made a fiery start. The openers smashed 114 runs off only 45 balls. Beside Fraser-McGurk, Abishek Porel scored 36.

The power play yielded 92-0 as Fraser-McGurk reached 50 off only 15 balls. He took another 34 runs off the next 12 balls faced but was out with a century in sight after pulling a Piyush Chawla googly straight to deep mid-wicket. Fraser-McGurk excited with 11 boundaries and six sixes.

Shai Hope added 41 off 17 balls, including five sixes.

Delhi crossed 200 in 16.1 overs and there was enough time to launch a death overs' attack.

Stubbs took center stage, smacking six fours and two sixes, including 30 runs off the 18th over bowled by Luke

Steele wins LIV Golf Adelaide tourney from fast-finishing Oosthuizen

ADELAIDE, Australia, April 28, (AP): Three-time PGA Tour winner Brendan Steele held off a fast finishing Louis Oosthuizen to wvin the LIV Golf Adelaide tournament at The Grange Golf Club by one stoke.

The 41-year-old Steele shot a final round 68 Sunday for a 54-hole total of 18-under 198 to earn his first victory since he won his second Safeway Open in 2017 on the PGA Tour.

Steele had a streak of five consecutive birdies early in the round, before some putting jitters appeared in his back nine to open the door for a fast finishing pack of challenges including Oosthuizen, and former previous Masters winners Charl Schwartzel (64) and Jon Rahm (64).

"Yeah, I was telling myself that I knew there was going to be hard moments today regardless of the result and that I just needed to get back in there and start playing with freedom again," Steele said moments after winning.

ning. "And, and I was able to hit some good shots after that and write the show."

South Africa's Oosthuizen shot 65 to finish second at 17-under 199, and had drawn within one stroke of Steele late in Sunday's final round, only for the American to make some clutch pars in the final holes to clinch victory.

GOLF

Oosthuizen's compatriot Schwartzel and Rahm were among a group of five players at 16-under 200, with Joaquin Niemann (66), Andy Ogletree (65) and Dean Burgmester (67) in a tie for third.

Former world No.1 Rahm had an eagle and six birdies in his 8-under 64 but had left too much ground to catch up on Steele on the final day to capture his first title since joining the LIV tour

in December.

Last year's winner Talor Gooch shot 70 and finished in a tie for 26th at 10-under.

Some of the LIV Golf's biggest names were also off the pace this week, including Brooks Koepka (nine-under), Dustin Johnson (nine-under), Phil Mickelson (seven-under) and Sergio Garcia (six under).

Australian team Ripper GC, led by local favorite Cameron Smith, with Marc Leishman, Matt Jones and Lucas Herbert, won the teams format on the second playoff hole against the South African-based team, Stingers GC, to the delight of another large and boisterous crowd at The Grange course on Sunday.

The LIV tour remains in the Asia region next week for the May 3-5 Singapore event at the Sentosa Golf Club. Then there's a month-long break before resuming in Houston from June 7-9.



Individual Champion Brendan Steele of HyFlyers GC poses with the trophy after the final round of LIV Golf Adelaide at the Grange Golf Club in Adelaide, Australia. (AP)

Samson's fourth half-century of the season led Rajasthan to 199-3.

Dhruv Jurel contributed an unbeaten 52 off 34 balls.

Rajasthan got a speedy start from in-form openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (34) and Jos Buttler (24), who shared 60 off 35 balls.

But they fell in a span of three deliveries at the power play's end.

Samson then anchored the innings intelligently, and with Jurel for company they powered the chase towards victory.

They combined for 121 runs off 62 balls, hitting six sixes and 12 boundaries. Four of those sixes were Samson's, sending a reminder to the India selectors ahead of the T20 World Cup in June.

Earlier, Lucknow skipper Lokesh Rahul scored 76 off 48 balls to rescue them from 11-2 in two overs. They put up a par-plus 196-5 total.

Deepak Hooda chipped in 50 off 31 balls, adding 115 off 62 balls with Rahul.

Rajasthan opened a six-point gap to the chasing pack. Lucknow stayed fourth.

Afridi & spinners help Pakistan level T20 series versus spirited N. Zealand

PCB appoints Kirsten and Gillespie as cricket coaches

LAHORE, Pakistan, April 28, (AP): Shaheen Shah Afridi's 4-30 led Pakistan to a series-leveling nine-run win over a spirited New Zealand in their fifth and final Twenty20 on Saturday.

Batting allrounder Josh Clarkson looked like getting New Zealand a stunning series win but his last two partners ran themselves out trying to feed him the strike.

New Zealand was all out for 169 with four balls left in reply to Pakistan's 178-5, and Clarkson finished with a career-best 38 not out off 26 balls.

The Kiwis came without nine front-line players and were expected to be swept in the series, which was also preparation for the T20 World Cup in June. After a first-game washout they were bowled out for 90 but fought back to come within four balls of stealing the series.

CRICKET

Pakistan rode captain Babar Azam's 69 off 44 balls but New Zealand continued the home team's struggles in the middle overs with disciplined spin and seam bowling.

"It was a par score but I think we should have scored 15, 20 runs more," Babar said. "Throughout the series we tried different combinations and we wanted to see where our bench strength stands. There are many good signs but we won't be complacent."

Babar was fluent in the power play against the pacers. He shared 73 runs with Usman Khan, who scored 31 off 24 balls.

Usman, who was banned by the United Arab Emirates for five years for switching his allegiance to his country of birth in a hope of making the T20 World Cup, had a below-par debut series. He scored only 59 runs in four innings.

New Zealand clawed its way back. Ben Sears clean-bowled Babar with a fiery yorker but the seamer was punished by left-hander Fakhar Zaman (43) in the death overs. Pakistan scored 55 runs in the last five overs.

New Zealand's reply cruised to 81-1 in eight overs before the top order was spun into knots.

Opener Tim Seifert, who missed the last game due to a sore back, clubbed Mohammad Amir for five boundaries and a six in the fast bowler's first two overs. Seifert scored 52 off 33 when he was bowled by leg-spinner Usama Mir (2-21).



Pakistan's and New Zealand's players pose with trophy of the T20 series which end draw 2-2, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

Spaniard still doubts his body can hold up at French Open

Nadal gets even with De Minaur at Madrid Open

MADRID, April 28, (AP): Rafael Nadal tore his headband off, thrust his arms in the air, and soaked up the cheers. It was only a second-round win, but coming from where Nadal had been just a few weeks ago when he couldn't even get on the court, he could have been savoring a trophy.

He had just beaten 11th-ranked Alex de Minaur 7-6 (6), 6-3 at the Madrid Open , avenging a straight-set loss to the Australian less than two weeks ago.

Nadal is no longer aiming to add to his 92 career titles after being decimated by injuries in recent years. The 37-year-old just wants to play like Rafael Nadal, or as close to that as he can. So he is going forward game by game, measuring his efforts to avoid an injury that would likely force his defini-

tive retirement, with the ultimate goal of being competitive one more time at next month's French Open.

"I have been through some very difficult months when there were moments when I didn't see the reason to continue, but I had the dream of experiencing feelings like this again and above all at home," Nadal said. "It was incredible."

TENNIS

The 22-time Grand Slam champion was cheered on by Spanish King Felipe VI, soccer great Zinedine Zidane and a raucous crowd that packed the Caja Magica to see what will most likely be the tennis great's last tournament in Spain.

Nadal was playing just his fourth competitive match since his latest injury layoff in his farewell season.

De Minaur beat Nadal just 11 days before in Barcelona, where the Spaniard returned to the courts for the first time in more than three months. Nadal looked much better this time around.

But Nadal said being ready to play at Roland Garros, with its more demanding five-set format, is another matter, especially given the importance he has for the tournament he has won 14 times.

"Roland Garros is the most important tournament of my tennis career, and all the things that I lived there, enjoyed there, stay in my heart forever," he said.

"So if I am not able to go on court and dream, even if it's the minimum,

minimum percentage, (then) for me doesn't make sense to go on court. I'd prefer to stay with all the amazing memories that I have. I want to be there, and even losing, but, you know, to go on court with the chance to dream about something important."

Nadal got a straight-set win over American teenager Darwin Blanch on Thursday, but De Minaur was much stiffer competition and the tension in the stands of Manolo Santana Stadium was palpable.

The first set saw both players break serve twice. De Minaur then saved four set points before Nadal finished him off in the tiebreak to take the lead. Nadal pressed his advantage, broke De Minaur's first service game of the second set and closed out the victory.

Nghitumbwa hands Wang 1st career loss

WINDHOEK, April 28, (Xinhua): Namibian boxer Fillipus "Energy" Nghitumbwa delivered a stunning performance, clinching victory over China's Wang Dekang in the WBO International super bantamweight title fight on Saturday evening.

The intense 12-round battle unfolded in Windhoek, captivating fans with its display of skill and determination.

Nghitumbwa's triumph came through a hard-fought points decision, marking a significant milestone in his career.

Reflecting on the match in a post-fight interview, Nghitumbwa admitted underestimating his opponent initially but acknowledged Wang's resilience, forcing him to elevate his performance.

BOXING

"The win means a lot to me. I will maybe now see myself in the top ten of the world rankings," he expressed, elated by his achievement.

For Wang, who experienced his first career defeat after boasting a record of nine wins, the loss was a bitter pill to swallow. However, he remained optimistic, praising Nghitumbwa as a formidable competitor and expressing eagerness for future challenges.

"He is very good competitor, and I am looking forward to my next fight," Wang said.

With this victory, Nghitumbwa advances his professional record to an impressive 14-2-0, solidifying his status as a rising star in the super bantamweight division. Meanwhile, Wang's record now stands at 9-1-0, a setback that will fuel his determination in upcoming matches.

The electrifying bout was part of the MTC Nestor Sunshine Boxing inaugural event this year, paying tribute to the late President Hage Geingob, a dedicated advocate of the sport.

Messi leads Miami past New England

WASHINGTON, April 28, (Xinhua): Lionel Messi scored two goals and set up another as leaders Inter Miami recovered from a goal down to cruise to 4-1 away victory over New England in their Major League Soccer clash on Saturday.

The hosts made an ideal start in front of 66,000 fans at Gillette Stadium when Tomas Chancalay chipped goalkeeper Drake Callender from an acute angle after Carles Gil's perfectly weighted through ball.

Messi equalized just after the half hour as he ran onto Robert Taylor's pass and calmly slotted his shot past Henrich Ravas.

The Argentina World Cup winner put his side ahead with another cool finish after combining with former Barcelona teammate Sergio Busquets.

Inter Miami were in irresistible form and substitute Ben Cremaschi made it 3-1 shortly after when he bundled home from close range after Messi's attempt was kept out by Ravas.

Messi then turned provider as he laid the ball off to Luis Suarez, who lifted a superb effort into the far corner from a standing start.

Truex goes back-to-back at Dover Motor Speedway for 2nd career NASCAR victory

DOVER, April 28, (AP): It was another Truex family reunion in victory lane at Dover.

Ryan Truex won the Xfinity Series race at Dover Motor Speedway for the second straight year, giving the younger brother of Martin Truex Jr. the only NASCAR victories of his career.

Truex went back-to-back at the Monster Mile to give him two wins in 194 career starts over the three national series. The No. 20 Toyota pulled away over the final two laps in a race that went eight laps over

its scheduled 200-lap finish. The race was slowed by rain, but it sure didn't matter to Truex, who does not have a fulltime Xfinity ride and made just his fourth start this season.

The Truex family had a special weekend last year at Dover. Ryan Truex dominated on the concrete-mile track and swept all three stages of the Xfinity race, leading 124 of the 200 laps. Two days later, Martin Truex Jr. won the Cup Series race at Dover - with their dad on hand to celebrate with both sons.

"Really in this sport, what you did last year doesn't mean a thing," Martin Truex Jr. said earlier Saturday. "He felt pretty good about his car yesterday. He didn't get the lap he wanted in qualifying."

Hours later, Ryan Truex got the laps he wanted down the stretch.

"I can't believe it," he said. "Our car was just good at the end when it mattered. I was so loose all day."

Joe Gibbs Racing won its 200th career Xfinity race with Toyota.

The 32-year-old Truex huffed and puffed during a post-race interview saying: "I think I held my breath the last two laps."

Truex was again joined by his father and brother in victory lane - and also his fiancée, who had started to leave the track with under 20 laps left before she hitched a ride back on a cart.

"Martin was pretty pumped-up again. Not as much as last year," Truex said, laughing. "He was still pretty pumped up. And so was my dad."

Moving Soon?

Get your move where you want with stress- free.

Services Offered:

- Free Estimates
- Full-service Packing
- Comprehensive Insurance
- International Shipping Door to Door
- Customs Clearance
- Storage
- Pet Moving

Contact: • Nisha : 90079810 • Sreesha : 98571513

GLOBAL FREIGHT SYSTEMS COMPANY W.L.L.

fast and reliable movers

nisha@global-freight.net

Kuwait Club boost title defense bid with victory over Al-Qadisiya

Al-Arabi keep pressure on leaders

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Kuwait Club Zain Premier League campaign gained momentum as it overcame a formidable adversary, Al-Qadisiya, securing a crucial 2-0 victory in the fourth

SOCCER

round clash at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

With this win, Kuwait Club surged to 53 points, solidifying its position atop the league standings, while Al-Qadisiya remained at 46 points in third place.

In another match-up, Al-Arabi bolstered its pursuit of Kuwait Club with a 2-0 win against Al-Fahaheel, elevating its tally to 50 points.

Kuwait Club dominated proceedings from the outset, imposing its style on the game with a determined display. Youssef Nasser opened the scoring just six minutes into the match, capitalizing

on Al-Qadisiya's defensive lapses. He later doubled the lead from the penalty spot after Bahraini Mohammed Al-Marhoon was fouled by Al-Qadisiya's Victor.



Ahmed Al-Dhafiri and Nayef Zuwaid fight for the ball.

Kuwait Club's Tunisian coach, Nabil Maaloul, credited the victory to the players' discipline and high spirits, emphasizing the significance of securing three points in its title defense quest. He highlighted the challenge posed by Al-Qadisiya's tactical adjustments but praised his team's resilience.

Looking ahead, Maaloul stressed the importance of maintaining focus, especially with a crucial clash against Al-Arabi looming in the fifth round.

In contrast, Al-Qadisiya coach Muhammad Al-Mishaan lamented his team's lack of concentration and its inability to recover after conceding early goals. He attributed the loss to individual errors and emphasized the importance of addressing these shortcomings.

Al-Mishaan acknowledged the uphill battle ahead but remained optimistic about Al-Qadisiya's chances, contingent upon results from other matches. He affirmed the team's commitment to preparation for the upcoming Amir Cup final against Salmiya, aiming to maintain its competitive edge.

Relegation battle intensifies

Kazma close in on league survival

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Kazma aims to secure its Zain Premier League status for the next season as it faces Al-Shabab at the Friendship and Peace Stadium today at 5:30 pm in the third round of relegation group matches. Concurrently, Al-Jahra will host Khaitan at 8:15 pm.

Currently, Kazma leads the standings with 26 points, followed by Khaitan with 15 points, and Al-Shabab with 14 points, trailing three points behind Al-Jahra, which occupies the fourth and final position.

SOCCER

The top two positions in this group, determined over six rounds, will guarantee remaining in the Premier League for the following season, while the third and fourth positions will result in relegation to the First Division.

In the upcoming match, Kazma needs just one point from their remaining four matches, a task made easier by the gap in quality between it and its competitors. However, tonight's match holds particular significance for Kazma, especially considering Al-Shabab's previous victories over them



Players in an aerial battle.

in the league's earlier sections (1-0 and 2-1). Kazma is eager to restore its reputation by securing a win.

On the flip side, Al-Shabab aims to maintain its momentum and assert dominance over their host.

In the other match, Al-Jahra remains hopeful of sustaining its qualifying chances and securing a second successive victory, while Khaitan is determined to prolong their "survival" journey and maintain its hold on second place.

Abdullah Al-Awadhi secures championship title



The winners on the podium with an official during the awarding ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Abdullah Mishari Al-Awadhi, representing Al-Masayel Club and the Kuwaiti show jumping equestrian team, secured the championship title in the seventh round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League Championship. The event hosted at the Kuwait Equestrian Center in the Subhan area and sponsored by Zain, KGL, and Kuwait International Bank, show-

cased remarkable equestrian talent.

In the challenging ninth main round, known as "The Grand Prix," set at a height of 145 cm, Al-Awadhi demonstrated exceptional skill, advancing to the differentiating round alongside knights Ghazi Al-Jariwi and Madi Al-Khamis without incurring any penalty points. In the decisive round, Al-Awadhi's stellar performance saw him, clear the

obstacles flawlessly, completing the course in 37.13 seconds, securing victory ahead of Al-Khamis and Al-Jariwi.

EQUESTRIAN

Ali Al-Kharafi claimed fourth place, with Anaz Al-Anaz and Fawaz Al-Subaie following suit. The

champions were honored by Hamad Al-Musaibih, Director of Corporate Relations at Zain Telecommunications Company.

In earlier rounds, Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi dominated at a height of 135 cm, while Hussein Al-Kharafi led in the seventh round at 125 cm, and Abdulaziz Al-Athaina clinched the top spot in the sixth round at 115 cm.

Magic rout of Cavaliers even series

Lakers avoid elimination

LOS ANGELES, April 28, (AP): The Los Angeles Lakers finally cracked the Denver Nuggets' mastery of this rivalry and extended their playoff lives for at least another game.

To absolutely nobody's surprise, LeBron James led the way.

James scored 30 points, Anthony Davis added 25 points and 23 rebounds, and the Lakers avoided post-season elimination with a 119-108 victory over Denver in Game 4 of their first-round series.

D'Angelo Russell and Austin Reaves scored 21 points apiece for the seventh-seeded Lakers, who snapped their 11-game losing streak against the defending NBA champions with their first win over the Nuggets since December 2022.

BASKETBALL

A series with clear patterns and rhythms finally changed in the Lakers' favor. For the fourth straight game, Los Angeles took a double-digit lead before the Nuggets rallied in the second half behind Nikola Jokic.

But for the first time in this series, the Lakers didn't wilt under the defending champions' pressure. The 39-year-old James scored 14 points in the fourth quarter on 6-of-8 shooting, again carrying the Lakers late in his 21st NBA season.

Game 5 is Monday night in Denver. "We've given ourselves another lifeline, and it's a one-game series for us," James said. "Monday's game is the most important game of the season for us, and we understand that."

Denver swept Los Angeles out of the Western Conference finals last season, but the current Lakers responded to this 0-3 deficit with a performance more worthy of a team that rolled into the postseason with 12 wins in 15 games.

"We get another opportunity to go play one more game, and if we win, come back and play another one and keep moving from there," Reaves said. "Odds aren't stacked in our favor, but anytime we can keep ourselves floating above water and give ourselves an



Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (right), shoots as Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic defends during the first half in Game 4 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Los Angeles. (AP)

opportunity to do something special, we're up for the challenge."

Jokic had 33 points, 14 rebounds and 14 assists for his 18th career triple-double and second in this series, but the two-time MVP and his teammates couldn't reassert their usual late-game dominance over the Lakers.

The Lakers' 19-point lead with just over six minutes left dwindled to 113-106 on Jokic's three-point play with 1:25 to play, but Reaves hit a short jumper before adding four free throws in the final minute.

Denver ultimately couldn't overcome yet another slow offensive start in a series full of them.

Magic 112, Cavaliers 89

In Orlando, Franz Wagner had 34 points and 13 rebounds, and the Orlando Magic held the Cleveland Cavaliers scoreless for a second-half stretch of almost seven minutes Saturday in a victory that tied the Eastern Conference first-round series at 2-2.

Wagner had 10 points in the first five minutes of the third quarter, matching Cleveland's total for the entire period, when the Magic outscored them 37-10 and turned what had been a nine-point halftime deficit into their second straight romp.

Jonathan Isaac (14 points, including Orlando's only two 3-pointers of the first half) and Markelle Fultz (12 points, four rebounds) gave the Magic major help off the bench. Paolo Banchero, who had 35 points in Orlando's 121-83 win in Game 3 on Thursday night, finished with nine points and five assists.

Jarrett Allen had 21 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers. Donovan Mitchell had 18 points, all in the first half, and six assists.

Celtics 104, Heat 84

In Miami, Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown each scored 22 points, and Boston soundly beat Miami to take a 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round playoff series.

Tatum added 10 rebounds and six assists for the Celtics, who led Game 3 wire-to-wire and reclaimed the home-court edge that they lost when Miami won Game 2 in Boston. Kristaps Porzingis had 18 points and Derrick White scored 16 for the Celtics, who used runs of 12-3, 11-0 and 20-8 in the first half to take full control.

Bam Adebayo scored 20 points for eighth-seeded Miami, which remains without starters Jimmy Butler and Terry Rozier because of injuries. Nikola Jovic and Tyler Herro each scored 15 for the Heat, who got 12 from Jaime Jaquez Jr.

Thunder 106, Pelicans 85

In New Orleans, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 24 points and Oklahoma City beat New Orleans to take a 3-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Jalen Williams and Josh Giddey each scored 21 for the Thunder, who escaped Game 1 with a two-point victory before posting victory margins of 32 in Game 2 and 21 in Game 3.

Top-seeded Oklahoma City hit 17 of 36 (47.2%) from 3-point range and held a lead of 10 points or more throughout the second half, going up by as many as 24 in the fourth quarter.

Employees of Al-Jahra Club demand their overdue salaries amidst financial turmoil

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: Employees of Al-Jahra Club, encompassing coaches, administrators, players, and staff, rallied in protest before the club's management, demanding overdue salaries spanning seven months. Enduring hardships and financial strain during this period of unpaid wages, the demonstrators implored athletic authorities to swiftly address the crisis, allowing them to attend to their daily needs. Mounting debts, akin to an escalating "snowball," had become unsustainable, leaving them with no recourse but to voice their grievances.

The genesis of Al-Jahra Club's turmoil traces back to the aftermath of the January 12, 2023 elections, won by lawyer Khaled Al-Jarallah's faction, which faced challenge from a rival slate, triggering a convoluted legal battle. Amidst the legal wrangling between local and international arbitration bodies, the club's employees bore the brunt of the conflict, enduring months without pay

due to the absence of a functioning board of directors to authorize salaries.

Following media exposure, the General Sports Authority established a financial committee to settle outstanding dues, comprising representatives from Al-Jahra and Al-Nasr clubs, under the stewardship of Faisal Al-Yateem and Bashar Abdullah. Empowered to conduct banking transactions and disburse salaries, the committee aimed to alleviate the financial plight of technical, medical, and administrative staff.

In a plea to Kuwaiti sports authorities, Essam, a handball coach at Al-Jahra Club, urged swift resolution of the crisis, highlighting the dire circumstances faced by employees. Despite their dedication to club development, the prolonged salary halt left them grappling with mounting expenses, including rent and school fees. Mohamed Suleiman, another coach, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the sacrifices made to sustain club activities amid financial strain. However, bureaucratic delays and internal disputes continued to impede the disbursement process, prolonging the ordeal for club personnel.



The demonstrators at the office of the Club.



Al-Qadisiya player held by defenders.

Al-Qadisiya consolidate third

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The first handball team of Al-Qadisiyah Club reaffirmed its position in third place in the overall standings of the "Al-Damj" league with a commanding victory over Al-Sahel, clinching a 43-19 win in a postponed match held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

HANDBALL

With this result, the team standings reshuffled, with Kuwait Club leading with 20 points, followed closely by Al-Salmiya with 19 points. Al-Qadisiya secured the third spot with 17 points, while Kazma and Al-Arabi each accumulated 16 points. Burgan followed with 12 points, tied with Sulaibkhat and Al-Nasr at 11 points. Al-Fahaheel held eight points, while Al-Qurain and Yarmouk each possessed seven points.



Rafael Nadal, of Spain, serves a ball to Alex de Minaur, of Australia, during the Mutua Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid. (AP) – See Page 14

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwaitis continue to dazzle at Gulf Youth Games



Kuwait Karate team pose for a group photo after the awarding ceremony.



Mona Al-Qattan displays her kata silver medal.

15 new medals for Kuwait



The swimming champions celebrate with the Kuwaiti flag.

ABU DHABI, April 28: Kuwait's swimming champions continued to dazzle at the first Gulf Youth Games hosted by the UAE, securing three gold medals and two silver medals.

At the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club, the relay team comprising Hamad Al-Ghaith, Hassan Zaid, Saud Al-Enezi, and Hamoud Hamed clinched gold in the 200 x 4 m freestyle race. Mohammed Hamed seized gold in the 100 m backstroke race, while Saud Al-Enezi triumphed in the 200 m butterfly race. Additionally, Hassan Rajab and Abdullah Al-Sultan claimed silver in the 400m medley and 100m backstroke, respectively.

GULF YOUTH GAMES

In karate, Kuwait concluded its campaign with four new medals, with Omar Jassim securing gold in the individual kata event and Mona Al-Qattan earning silver in the same category. The male and female team kata teams each secured silver medals, bringing Kuwait's karate tally to 14 at the close of the competition.

Sultan Al-Otaibi clinched gold in judo's 55 kg category, while Khaled Al-Kandari, Ali Al-Shammari, and Saud Al-Anzi secured bronze in their respective weight categories.

The young women's 3x3 basketball team clinched the gold medal,



Table tennis silver medalist Khadija Al-Halwaji.

defeating Saudi Arabia 21-7 in the final after overcoming the UAE team 17-6 in the semi-finals.

Adding to the haul, the Kuwaiti table tennis team secured another silver medal, with Khadija Al-Halwaji excelling in the young women's singles event. This added to the team's previous silver medals in doubles and team competitions.

Looking ahead, the fencing competition is set to commence at the Zayed Sports Complex hall in Fujairah. Kuwait's delegation, led by administrators Ahmed Hussein and Manal Al-Sardi, coaches Saud Al-Zamil, Tomasudenticio, and Jemal Camia Fili, along with 18 male and female players, is geared up for the challenge.

Iran claim Asian Cup Futsal title

BANGKOK, April 28, (Xinhua): Iran beat Thailand 4-1 in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup final here on Sunday to claim a record-extending 13th title.

Iran enjoyed a flying start with a 1-0 lead in the first minute before making it 2-0 five minutes later.

Thailand tried to claw its way back with a goal after the interval, but Iran silenced the home crowd with its third just two minutes later.

Thailand opted for the power play but the move proved costly in the 79th minute when Iran's goalkeeper lofted

the ball into Thailand's empty net to seal the win.

In the bronze medal duel, Uzbekistan defeated Tajikistan 3-1 on penalties.

The top four of the 16 teams in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualify for the FIFA Futsal World Cup slated between September 14 and October 6 in Uzbekistan.

As third-placed Uzbekistan has automatically qualified as the host nation, fifth-placed Afghanistan booked a place at the tournament with a 5-3 playoff win against Kyrgyzstan.

Arsenal survive late scare at Tottenham to maintain lead

LONDON, April 28, (AP): Arsenal survived a late scare at Tottenham to stay ahead in the race for the Premier League title on Sunday.

A 3-2 win at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium ensured Mikel Arteta's team will remain at the top of the standings after the latest round of fixtures and keep the pressure on defending champion Manchester City.

But Arsenal had to endure a nervous finish despite powering to 3-0 lead in a London derby that was supposed to be one of its biggest tests in the title chase.

SOCCER

Tottenham responded in the second half through Cristian Romero and Son Heung-min's penalty in the 87th minute.

Arsenal took the lead against Spurs through Pierre-Emile Hojberg's own-goal in the 15th. Bukayo Saka added a second in the 27th and Kai Havertz made it 3-0 at the break with another in the 38th.

Romero capitalized on Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya's errant kick in the 64th to set up a potential comeback.

Bournemouth beat Brighton 3-0 after goals from Marcos Senesi, Enes Unal and Justin Kluivert.

Aston Villa squandered a two-goal lead to draw with Chelsea 2-2 in the English Premier League on Saturday, denting its push for Champions League qualification.

It could have been even worse for Villa as Chelsea thought it grabbed a winner through substitute Axel Disasi in stoppage time. The goal was ruled out for a push in the buildup and that angered Chelsea's players, who surrounded the referee after the final whistle.

Villa built a 2-0 cushion by half-time after an own-goal by Marc Cucurella in the fourth minute and a strike by Morgan Rogers in the 42nd.



Tottenham's Micky van de Ven, (left), jumps for a header with Arsenal's Kai Havertz during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, England. (AP)



Secretary Hamed Al-Omran welcomes the players at the airport.

Squash delegation from Doha receives warm welcome after Qatar championship success

KUWAIT CITY, April 28: The squash delegation from Doha received a heartfelt welcome upon their return from the successful Qatar International Junior Open Championship at Kuwait International Airport. Assistant Secretary of the Federation, Hamad Al-Daghim, and Board of Directors member and Vice Chairman of the National Teams Committee, Ahmed Al-Adwani, adorned the champions' necks with roses, joined by international player Abdullah Al-Muzain and other dignitaries including senior game administrators, coaches, and players' families.

Led by Secretary Hamed Al-Omran, the delegation achieved remarkable results in the tournament. Khaled Al-Fawzan secured the U-17 championship title, while

Salman Al-Saleh claimed victory in the U-11 category. Saleh Al-Kandari secured second place in the U-13 division, with Abdul Rahman Al-Maghrabi clinching third place in the same category. Additionally, Abdullah Hani

SQUASH

secured third place in the under 17 year's category.

Expressing his delight, Secretary General of the Squash Federation, Hamed Al-Omran, celebrated the outstanding performance of the delegation, with five out of seven players claiming top honors in their respective categories at the Qatar Junior Championship.

Chelsea dominated the second half, with Noni Madueke reducing the deficit in the 62nd and Conor Gallagher curling in from the edge of the area for an equalizer in the 81st.

Villa, which is fourth, moved seven points clear of fifth-placed Tottenham.

Spurs have three games in hand on Villa but have the much tougher run-in, which includes matches against Arsenal - on Sunday - as well as Liverpool and Manchester City.

Villa is looking to qualify for the Champions League for the first time. It was European champion in 1982, when Europe's top competition was called the European Cup.

The draw guaranteed Villa at least a place in next season's Europa League.

Big-spending Chelsea stayed in ninth place but also has games in hand over the teams it is battling with for qualification for the minor European competitions next season.

A man was arrested and charged for alleged tragedy chanting during Manchester United's home game against Burnley in the Premier League, police said Sunday.

The 44-year-old from Lancashire in northern England has been charged under Section 5 of the Public Order

Act 1986, which relates to causing harassment, alarm or distress.

"As we have enforced recently, continued incidents of tragedy chanting by anyone will not be tolerated and will be dealt with robustly," Greater Manchester Police said in a statement.

The game ended 1-1.

Burnley said in a statement on Saturday that it was aware of "offensive footage" circulating on social media from a section of United's Old Trafford stadium occupied by away fans.

"Tragedy related gesturing and chanting is completely unacceptable, and Burnley Football Club take a zero-tolerance approach," the club said.

Police asked for previously circulated videos of the alleged incident to be removed from social media.

Soccer authorities and the police are trying to clamp down on tragedy-related chanting.

New measures this season mean people found to have committed offenses face stadium bans and potential criminal prosecution.