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Amir honors schools, educators on World Teachers' Day

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Opinion

With decision ... nothing's impossible

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

SOLVING the most important dilemmas begins with a decision. In this world, there is a solution to every problem ... Even death ends the suffering of a chronic patient, which of course is the will of Allah, but that is the case when all treatments fail to succeed.

However, this does not apply to countries, which have their own laws, experiences, and minds. They also have the right to emulate others who have solved similar problems. This is not a shame.

Therefore, there is no problem without a solution, irrespective of whether it is related to the housing issue, improving the citizens' livelihood, unnecessary support, infrastructural development, disguised unemployment, the relationship between the executive and legislative authorities, amending the Constitution, or raising the national product through the implementation of major projects that benefit the country and those in it. All of the aforementioned challenges have solutions, but the problem is the decision, and the ambiguity that surrounds it.

Is it in the hands of the National Assembly or the government? Or does it happen through social media, as Kuwait seems to have multiple heads, each with its own decision?

If an MP objects to a project, the Council of Ministers suspends it, and if a minister does not like the implementer, he stonewalls it. A major catastrophe happens when the two authorities together take into consideration what is published on social media, after which the ministry issues an order, but at the request of an MP, the decision is suspended, as if the latter's authority is greater than the authority of the government.

Regarding the problem of infrastructure and road repair, the matter does not require much headache ... Just allocate a budget, and the Ministry of Public Works will begin work.

As for the Bedoun issue, there are many laws that have been issued in this regard, but they have been put inside the drawer. On the other hand, in other countries, especially the Gulf countries, this issue has been resolved through a government decision. It did not become a problem that international institutions talk about, as is the case with us, because some do not want to solve it due to flimsy reasons.

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Day by Day

THERE is no doubt that our country does not have ministerial stability. There is a minister who was appointed minister at night, and on the basis that he would take the oath in the morning, while he was told in the morning: Thank you. You have been dismissed.

This means, he lived as a minister for about six hours while there were ministers who held the position for a month or two, they did not even have time to review their ministries.

The dismissal or resignation did not give them any time to know the employees in their offices.

Some of them did not know that their private bathroom was located in their office, because there was no time to find out.

It is the parliamentary encroachment on the powers of the Council of Ministers and the rights of ministers and the presidents, because of parliamentary idle talk.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Top: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with teachers on World Teachers' Day at the Theater of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Abdullah Al-Salem University, located in the Shuwaikh district. Above: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is presented with a memento.

Amiri Diwan photos

Amir to embark on state visit to Egypt

KUWAIT CITY, April 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is scheduled to depart Kuwait heading to Egypt Tuesday (April 30) on a state visit.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador in Cairo Ghanim Al-Ghanim underscored the significance of the upcoming historic visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Egypt Tuesday during which he would meet with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

Ambassador Al-Ghanim told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday that the upcoming visit would be the Amir's first since assuming the office last December, coinciding with president El-Sisi's third term. This visit was welcomed both officially and among people.

Al-Ghanim emphasized that the Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations were characterized by their close and enduring historical bonds, spanning decades and serving as a model for Arab-Arab relations.

He explained that the historical and special relationships between Kuwait and Egypt, dating back to before Kuwait's independence in 1961, have been strengthened over the decades by the alignment of visions between their leaderships, contributing to their consolidation in various fields.

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Kuwait's expat remittances plunge

Down 28.47%

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The value of remittances from expatriate workers in Kuwait declined by 28.47% in 2023.

The Al-Seyassah daily said last year the remittances of expatriates from Kuwait were about 3.867 billion dinars (\$12.581 billion), compared to 5.406 billion dinars (\$17.588 billion) in 2022.

Based on statistics issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, the secondary income account deficit in the net value of current transfers abroad decreased to 3.97 billion dinars during 2023, compared to 5.48 billion dinars in 2022.

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Kuwait on alert for 'heavy rain'

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Meteorologist Issa Ramadan has warned of an upcoming depression that will affect the country for several days, accompanied by light to moderate southeasterly winds. These winds will intermittently increase relative humidity and reduce horizontal visibility, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The forecast indicates cloudy to partly cloudy weather with expected rain, possibly accompanied by thunderstorms. The chances of rain will be particularly high on Tuesday, continuing into Wednesday and Thursday. During this period, relative humidity will increase further, reducing visibility and leading to high waves.

Ramadan emphasized the need for caution in the coming days, highlighting that the weather patterns in May are unusual this year. He advised that southeasterly winds and high humidity are expected to persist into the following week.

Additionally, Ramadan noted that some Gulf countries may experience moderate to heavy rainfall due to the convergence of warm, humid air masses from the Arabian Sea with cold air masses from the upper atmosphere.

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US backs Gaza truce: Blinken

Kuwait joins US-GCC strategic talks

Kuwait deploys 2nd medical relief team to Gaza hospitals

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY, April 29, (KUNA): Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) announced, Monday, the departure of the second medical relief team consisting of 14 physicians and consultants from different medical and surgical fields to Al-Arish Airport heading towards Gaza's hospitals.

In a statement to (KUNA), Head of the medical team Dr. Ibrahim Al-Saleh confirmed sending the Kuwaiti relief medical team to the Gaza Strip came within the framework of donations campaign, launched by Kuwait Relief and is still ongoing.

The team left with six tons of basic and necessary medical supplies and equipment, to help the health system in Gaza Strip and provide medical care and medications, especially for some critical cases and chronic diseases, he added.

The team will perform important surgical operations in various surgical specialties, in addition to implementing a number of other relief projects, most notably food and shelter projects, Dr. Al-Saleh noted.

He praised the efforts of the official and humanitarian agencies in Kuwait, Egypt and Palestine, and their Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

In a similar statement, Treasurer of (KSR) Jamal Al-Nouri said in a similar statement to (KUNA) that the society decided to undertake the second relief trip due to the popular support the first flight received from Kuwaiti, Gulf and Arab people, and the calls for repeating such experiences.

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MoFA photo
Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya at the joint ministerial meeting on strategic cooperation with the United States and Gulf Cooperation Council countries in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed gratitude to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud for hosting and organizing the World Economic Forum.

HH the Amir commended their leadership in promoting international cooperation and sustainable economic growth amidst global challenges. The Amir also thanked them for their hospitality during his visit, reaffirming the strong fraternal bonds between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (KUNA)

ANKARA: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced, Monday, it provided relief aid to 400 people in the city of Sevan, northern Armenia.

The head of the association's field team, Khaled Al-Mutairi, told KUNA that the distribution of aid comes within the KRCS's relief campaign to help needy and displaced people from the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The food parcels sufficient for one family of five, were distributed for a month, in addition to blankets, heaters and cleaning supplies, he said. (KUNA)

DOHA: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Monday that they donated USD 500,000 to help out the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

This came in a statement to KUNA from the Deputy Chairman of KRCS Anwar Al-Hasawi, after being in a consultative meeting with ARCS partners and humanitarian organizations in Doha. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:43 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 05:08 Maghrib .. 18:23
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:46

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot, humid especially over coastal areas and cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to easterly wind, with speeds of 20-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for

rising dust

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.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	32	27
Kuwait Airport	33	26
Abdaly	32	26
Jahra	33	27
Salmiyah	29	25
Nuwaisib	33	25
Wafra	33	23

HH the Amir attends honoring event for top teachers, schools

KUWAIT CITY, April 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday sponsored and attended the scheduled honorary ceremony for distinguished schools and teachers marking the World Teachers' Day at the Theater of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Abdullah Al-Salem University in the district of Shuwaikh.

His Highness the Amir arrived at the venue of the ceremony in a motorcade to a warm welcome by Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Mohammad Al-Adwani and the organizers of the event.

The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister tasked with forming the government Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Caretaker Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the Head of the Supreme Judicial Council Judge Dr. Adel Majed Bouresli and senior state officials.

The ceremony began with the national

anthem and recitation from the Holy Quran. The education minister then addressed a speech welcoming His Highness the Amir, lauding his substantial support for the educational sector and pledging to press ahead with the process of overhauling the sector, its systems and curricula. He underscored the key role of the teacher for generations' development and implanting good ethics and values in the students' conscience.

Mohammad Nasser Al-Barak addressed the attendees with a statement on behalf of the teachers, warmly greeting His Highness the Amir and his gracious attendance of the ceremony, thanking him for his special care for the teachers and pledging to offer all available expertise for Kuwait's progress and promotion. He also thanked the minister and the department's leaders for the good management of the educational sector.

His Highness the Amir awarded the attending teachers and representatives of the excellent schools before departing the venue.



KUNA photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah responds to the clapping of the audience at the beginning of the ceremony.

Photos document Kuwait history: Dashti

Kuwaiti-Belgian exhibit marks 60 years of bilateral relations

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, Christian Dooms, praised the depth of Kuwaiti-Belgian relations, which he described as "excellent".

On the sidelines of the opening of the exhibition "Kuwaiti-Belgian Relations in Pictures" at the National Library, the ambassador said he is looking forward to enhancing further cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

Ambassador Dooms affirmed that the exhibition provides a wonderful look at the vibrant diplomatic relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Belgium, highlighting the importance of such cultural exhibitions to shed light on the strong relations between the two countries.

He thanked the Kuwaiti researcher Issa Dashti for his wonderful booklet, which serves as an important documentary about the history of relations between the two countries.

The ambassador indicated that the booklet covers 60 years of diplomatic relations through photographs of unforgettable events and visits.

He said, "The Belgian royal family has established real bonds of friendship and respect with the highest authorities in Kuwait. Many political contacts have taken place between ministers and members of parliament during these years."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hala Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah praised the level of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Belgium, recalling the important and historical role of the Kingdom of Belgium in supporting and endorsing Kuwaiti rights, and its participation in the international coalition forces to liberate the State of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion.

In a statement to reporters on the sidelines of the opening of the "Kuwaiti-Belgian Relations in Pictures" exhibition at the National Library yesterday afternoon, she said, "This year will witness the two countries celebrating the diamond jubilee of bilateral relations, which have been established for 60 years."

This exhibition aims to document a number of historical milestones, through 60 selected images that reflect the good path that brought the two countries together. Let this booklet be one of the pieces of evidence and documents that worked to preserve part of the history of Kuwaiti-Belgian relations over 60 years.

The creative and distinguished researcher Issa Dashti collected and prepared the mate-

rial for this exhibition and issued the three booklets. They are considered important documents and references about the history of those relations between the two friendly countries. He was able to competently preserve and document our relationship with friendly Belgium."

In this regard, the organizer and owner of the exhibition Issa Abdul Rasul Dashti expressed his happiness at being responsible for documenting this important occasion by holding this exhibition, which includes about 30 different photos that documented some of the common events between the two countries, as well as by issuing the exhibition brochure, which includes 60 important photographs that documented with pictures and explanations the Kuwaiti-Belgian events, the book "Kuwaiti-Belgian relations in pictures" and the book "The Visit of the Belgian Princess Astrid."

He said, "These are the first books of their kind in this field, which constitute important sources for researchers and those interested in studying bilateral relations. It is clear that our relationship with Belgium is older than 60 years, especially after I found some British documents that talk about the participation of the tenth ruler of Kuwait Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in offering condolences for the death of the former King of Belgium, and the Kuwaiti flag being flown at half-mast at Al-Seif Palace in mourning for the king's death."

Kuwait was also a stopover for some of Belgium's ambassadors to the countries of the region during their travel trips. These and other documents dating back to that period give us an indication and evidence of the strong relationship between the two friendly countries."

Dashti said he hoped he had succeeded in documenting this aspect of Kuwait's history.

He added, "I also hope that we would display this history of ours in Brussels so that the Belgian people would learn about our special relationship with them."

I also thank Her Excellency Sheikh Hala Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for her attendance and sponsorship of this exhibition. This is evidence of its great interest in the history of Kuwait, which brings it together with friendly and brotherly countries."

I thank His Excellency the Belgian Ambassador, Christian Dooms, for opening this historic exhibition. I also extend my thanks to Mrs. Siham Saad Al-Azmi, Director of the Kuwait National Office, for hosting and supporting this exhibition and overcoming all obstacles to its establishment."



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al Salem Al-Sabah receives the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi and the accompanying delegation.

PM, UAE minister meet

UAE seeks investment, probes Kuwait market

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al Salem Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait, has received His Excellency Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade in Kuwait City. His Excellency was leading a high-level Emirati delegation to the "UAE Companies Investment Meet", which was designed to identify trade and investment opportunities in the Kuwaiti market.

During the meeting, which was attended by His Excellency Dr Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Al Zeyoudi underscored the positive nature of UAE-Kuwait relations, which reflect the shared determination of both leaderships to catalyze growth and support each other's economic development.

His Excellency Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi welcomed the opportunity to restate the importance of bilateral relations. "The UAE and Kuwait enjoy a long-term economic partnership and this visit is an important opportunity to both restate its value and seek to increase private-sector collaboration in priority sectors. The UAE Companies Investment Meet provides a key platform to build the networks, and identify the opportunities, that can deliver mutually beneficial results in the months and years to come."

While attending the event, His Excellency Al Zeyoudi also held a meeting with His Excellency Abdullah Hamad Al Jawaan, Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry in the State. They reviewed bilateral trade, which reached AED45 billion in 2023, marking a 2 percent increase compared to 2022 and 16 percent compared to 2021, and agreed to maintain the positive momentum. Kuwait is the UAE's 12th largest trading partner globally, its 10th leading export destination and 6th globally for re-exports.

Trading

The UAE, meanwhile, ranks as Kuwait's second largest trading partner globally, and first in the Arab world. The UAE is currently Kuwait's leading non-oil export destination, accounting for 22% of total global exports, and ranks 3rd in terms of Kuwait's imports.

In terms of investment, the UAE is the 3rd largest investor in Kuwait's economy accounting for 6% of total investments in 2022 at a value of more than AED3.3 billion. In turn, Kuwait is the tenth largest investor in the UAE with a total investment value of AED13.2 billion by the close of 2021.

His Excellency Abdullah Al Jawaan welcomed the UAE delegation, and said in a statement that the growth of bilateral trade between the two countries reflected the strength and diversity of the economic relations between the two nations, which continues to evolve. The UAE Companies Investment Meet, Al Jawaan noted, will boost bilateral trade ties, facilitate successful investment agreements, and enhance the exchange of ideas and expertise. "Events such as this one will restore the historic role of the private sector in both Kuwait and the UAE as a strong bridge that connect the two brotherly peoples."

Al Jawaan expressed his thanks to the UAE Embassy in Kuwait for organizing the trade event. He said he was looking forward to its positive outcome that will benefit the two nations.

The "UAE Companies Investment Meet", under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al Salem Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait, was held from April 28th to 29th under the banner "Unlocking Kuwait's Potential". It was organized by the UAE Embassy in Kuwait in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies, and the Public Authority for Industry, and the Public Authority for Manpower in Kuwait.

The UAE delegation in Kuwait included His Excellency Abdullah Mohammad Al Mazrouei, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and His Excellency Jamal Aljarwan, Secretary General of the UAE International Investors Council, in addition to some 20 leading UAE companies across various sectors.

'Consider poll results in forming new govt'

Citizens interests on top: Al-Dahoum

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: MP-elect Bader Al-Dahoum has asked HH the Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah to consider the election results in forming the new government in order to choose competent ministers who can fulfill the citizens' demands.

He urged the premier-designate to learn from the experience of former prime ministers who lost their popularity upon neglecting the interests of citizens.

He went on to disclose that a colleague has been begging the MPs-elect to support him in the National Assembly speaker election, stating the latter claimed that HH the interim Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah promised to support him and that he obtained the support of majority of the MPs-elect. He pointed out the decision of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem to decline the post is clear evidence that his colleague is lying. He added his colleague even vowed that if he is elected speaker, the legislature will not be annulled and political stability will be achieved. He asserted such claims are dangerous as the said MP-elect is linking his occupation of the speaker seat with the verdicts of the Constitutional Court, stressing that stability and reform are possible only if the latter is away from the speaker's seat.

In another development, MP-elect Shuaib Al-Muwaizri warned the leaders of Islamic countries in general, and the Gulf countries in particular, against the approval of treaties presented at the economic forum. He said the treaties presented by the World Health Organization (WHO) are aimed at destroying countries, spreading viruses and diseases, causing massive chaos and undermining

the sovereignty of states. He added there is conspiracy in announcing new viruses, imposing total curfew, canceling cash payment, imposing the monitoring of citizens, destroying natural food sources, and causing starvation.

Moreover, MP-elect Saleh Ashour asked Minister of Health Ahmad Al-Awadhi to address issues in his ministry, including the shortage of medicines and implementation of court decisions in favor of many pharmacies.

He also said that the competent employees in the ministry are not given a chance to be promoted to leadership positions, most of which are occupied by seconded staff from other ministries.

He added the Ministry of Public Works paved Road 600 in Wafra two months ago, but many damaged spots are now seen on the road. He stressed the need for the ministry to ask the concerned contractor to immediately carry out the necessary maintenance works.

On the other hand, MP-elect Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi participated in the gathering organized by the Students Union at Kuwait University, and the academic staff at the university and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), in solidarity with the teachers' encampment in American universities in protest against the genocide of Palestinians. He affirmed the Kuwaiti position on the Palestinian cause is permanent; and it reflects the vision of the people, government, Assembly and political leadership.

Former MP Hamad Al-Matar praised the ongoing protest, indicating "the Zionist lobbyists have kidnapped the American administration." He highlighted the fact that supporting the Palestinian cause is deep-rooted in Kuwait, while urging everyone all over the world support the righteous position of the Palestinians.

MP-elect Mohammad Al-Dousari expressed his pride in attending the gathering as the Palestinian cause is righteous at all levels -- political, moral, humanitarian and religious. He affirmed that the people of Kuwait will never disappoint and betray the Palestinians as it happened in some sisterly countries.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, Christian Dooms inaugurates the exhibition.

Minister rejects 15 metres rumors

'Height of model houses stays same'

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan sent an explanatory letter yesterday to the Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri, confirming that the current private and model housing listing will take effect without any change, and that the situation will continue as it is without prejudice to the interests of citizens or discrimination between them.

She emphasized that the height of the private and model housing buildings remains as is currently, which is 18 meters, including

the height of the staircase.

The minister denied what is being circulated on social media sites about reducing the height of the building in private and model housing areas to 15 meters.

Meanwhile, six candidates submitted their nomination papers yesterday to the General Elections Administration to register their names in the Municipal Council's by-elections for the sixth (Khaitan) and ninth (Ahmadi) constituencies, which are scheduled to be held on May 18. These candidates are - Atallah Saleh Al-Sawagh, Hussein Al-Hamdan, Jawad Qambar, Fahad Nasser Al-Ajmi, Abdulaziz Hajjiya and Mubarak Al-Hajri. The total number of candidates has now reached 16.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Activists and prominent personalities during the sit-in at the Shaddadiya University on Gaza situation.

Major gap between Kuwait's hospitals, qualified workers

"It sounds like there's a significant gap between the healthcare infrastructure in Kuwait and the availability of qualified medical personnel to staff these facilities," columnist Dr **Saud Mohammad Al-Asfour** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This shortage seems to stem from a lack of effective planning and coordination between educational institutions and the healthcare sector. Despite the construction of new hospitals and efforts to renovate existing ones, the shortage of skilled medical professionals remains a pressing issue.

"The Kuwait University's scholarship programs, while producing graduates with high academic achievements, appear to be insufficient in terms of meeting the demands of the healthcare sector. Additionally, there seems to be a need for greater investment in training programs and opportunities for medical professionals to specialize and further their education, both domestically and through international collaborations.

"Addressing these challenges will likely require a comprehensive approach that involves closer collaboration between educational institutions, healthcare authorities, and government agencies to develop and implement effective strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining qualified medical personnel.

"It seems like there's a need for the Kuwait University to reassess its scholarship programs and infrastructure to better align with the demands of the healthcare sector and the state's plans to expand and improve its healthcare system. Increasing the number of scholarship opportunities for students, both domestically and abroad, could help address the shortage of qualified medical personnel.

"Additionally, investing in the rehabilitation and modernization of existing university facilities, such as Sabah Al-Salem University in Al-Shaddadiya and the new Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem University, will be crucial for ensuring that students have access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities that meet international standards.

"This will enable them to receive training and education that aligns with advancements in medical science and technology, ultimately producing graduates who are better equipped to contribute to the healthcare sector in Kuwait.

"By enhancing scholarship programs, upgrading infrastructure, and ensuring that educational offerings are in line with the evolving needs of the healthcare industry, Kuwait University can play a pivotal role in addressing the shortage of qualified medical professionals and supporting the state's efforts to improve its healthcare system.

"It seems there's a concern about the current state of healthcare in Kuwait, particularly regarding the utilization of private hospitals and the 'wellness' system. Private hospitals are experiencing similar issues as government hospitals, such as overcrowding and long waiting times, and there's a perception that they are exploiting the 'wellness' system, which was originally intended for retirees.

"This situation is seen as a waste of public resources, especially considering the investment in government hospitals that are now underutilized. The shortage of medical staff in government hospitals and the long wait times for appointments have led citizens to seek care in private hospitals, often at no cost to themselves if they have 'wellness' benefits.

"However, this reliance on private hospitals may exclude those who do not have access to 'Afiya' benefits and contribute to commercial exploitation in the healthcare sector.

"There's a need to address the shortcomings in government hospitals to make them more appealing and accessible to the public, thereby reducing the burden on private healthcare facilities and ensuring equitable access to healthcare services for all citizens.

"It seems there are concerns about the evolving landscape of private hospitals, particularly in light of the 'Afiya' system. While private hospitals have improved their facilities and management, there's a perception that they may prioritize their reputation over addressing shortcomings in care. Patients may feel that certain medical conditions are better treated in government hospitals, especially for childbirth and minor surgeries.

"There's a call to reconsider the overall medical system, including scholarship plans for medical education and the rehabilitation of government hospitals.

"Moreover, there's a need to reassess the 'Afiya' system, as it may represent a waste of state funds and lead to commercial manipulation in medical specialties. This includes the unnecessary prescription of medications, which can contribute to inefficiencies in the healthcare system."

Also:

"It seems that Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan felt that Kuwaitis were suffering from in their private residences, as the Minister kept the height of private housing at 20 meters," columnist **Abdul Mohsen Muhammad Al-Husseini** wrote for

Al-Anba daily.

"When we started living in private housing areas, there were conditions for building private houses, including the construction percentage for the plot. These conditions did not allow construction except on the condition of staying away from the neighbor by three meters, and in the facade, a distance of ten meters must be left. These conditions were in the seventies.

"One of the conditions was that the building should not exceed two floors, and among the requirements was to stay away from government facilities, such as the power transformer, by fifty meters.

"Today there are houses adjacent to the power transformer, and the house is higher than the roof of the transformer. I hope that Minister Al-Mashaan will tour the private housing areas to see the conditions and consider amending the previous laws and requirements that led to an increase in the problems of private housing due to the lack of parking.

"The amended law allows the construction of more than two floors. Without requiring the provision of parking for each apartment, as is the practice in many sisterly countries, as there are conditions for construction, which is to provide parking for residents.

"I felt very happy with the Minister's interest in what the citizens are suffering... and I hope that Minister Al-Mashaan will continue her efforts so that she can address all the problems that residents of private housing areas suffer from...

"My attention was drawn to what Mr. Ahmad Al-Sarraf wrote in **Al-Qabas** newspaper, who in his article a few days ago praised the efforts of Minister Al-Mashaan and her ability to find solutions to the problems that citizens suffer from because of the roads that have multiple potholes in all private residential areas and highways. The state must pay attention to the efforts made by Minister Al-Mashaan to find solutions to treat roads and residential areas.

"Let us salute Minister Al-Mashaan for her sincere efforts in taking all necessary decisions and actions that serve the interests of citizens."

"Cooperate and do not be stubborn... We remind our representatives about the Divine Constitution, and that what Allah Almighty and His Noble Messenger said is better than what man wrote in the earthly Constitution by obeying and respecting the ruler. Therefore, they are requested to adhere to the speech of His Highness the Amir -- may Allah protect him -- in the last 10 days of the blessed month of Ramadan," **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The most important aspect of the speech is the call to adhere to the provisions and texts of the Constitution. We are fed up with hearing this, yet they do not adhere to the constitutional texts, the first of which is the violation of Article 90, which states it is unconstitutional to convene prior to the opening of the legislative term. This is in addition to calling some people rather than others, and the failure to adhere to the principle of equality and separation of powers, because they bypassed the powers of ministers. They even reached the point of exposing the powers and options of His Highness the Amir in naming the Crown Prince, the Prime Minister and the ministers.

"The most common observation is that scores are settled in most interrogations, instead of interrogation being a tool for the right to monitor the government and to work in the spirit of cooperation, not with the intention of challenging and controlling, in order to reach the desired goals for public good.

"The government works according to what it deems appropriate for a better future based on the financial, political and social information it possesses, its relationship with other countries, its knowledge of the circumstances surrounding it, and its future outlook that protects the country from any emergency, God forbid. Its policy is constant even when its ministers change.

"Meanwhile, the representatives of the National Assembly are in a state of change. Most of them work according to their own point of view. They tickle the feelings of their voters in order to return to the next Assembly at the expense of public interest. There are many examples, the most recent of which is their objection to the legal measure taken by the Ministry of Interior to protect the national identity, although His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, stressed the need to strictly apply the law to preserve the Kuwaiti identity and protect it from tampering.

"Oh guide, oh guide... Even if it is impossible due to the similarity of character, human nature pushes a person to gain the love of others to increase his knowledge and expand his circle of friends. The rational group calls for this, while the other group makes people turn away, because of their bad behavior and snarling of the tongue. One of them calls the other 'monkey', because he is the enemy of himself due to his excessive nervousness, while losing his tolerance. This type of person is not a desirable companion. We ask Allah for guidance for him and others like him.

"O Allah, protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and harm."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**

Services recognized

Minister refers Fire Chief Al-Makrad for retirement

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, has issued a decision to refer Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Makrad, the head of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD), to retirement, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.



Al-Makrad

Al-Makrad has been recognized for his exceptional efforts in developing the DGFD. He has received numerous local, Gulf, Arab, and international medals in acknowledgment of his effective role in activities related to protecting lives, property, and civil protection, as well as his dedication to the enhancement and development of the department.

In appreciation of his contributions, Al-Makrad has been granted the rank of First Lieutenant General. His last day of work will be Tuesday.

Outskirts targeted

Massive campaign is on to raze encroachments

By **Mohammad Al-Musleh**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Kuwait Municipality launched a massive campaign on Monday to remove the illegal godowns in Salmi, as part of a comprehensive government plan to remove encroachments on state properties and serious violations observed in several locations in the country.

According to informed sources, the municipality has prepared a time plan to remove encroachments on state properties, which will take three months in several land sites, including Salmi, Abdali, Al-Mutlaa, Kabad, Barr Al-Sulaibiya, and Amghara, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Interior and the Environment Public Authority.



Al-Muwaizri

These illegal reserves had been transformed into mini-factories, warehouses, and random workshops, with some wild sites becoming a hotbed for all kinds of violations, transgressions, and illegal practices.

The sources said, "Some have acquired state lands by surrounding them with various areas and exploiting them in an irregular manner, as if these lands were private estates without a license."

Meanwhile, Head of the Violations Removal Department in Farwaniya Municipality Fahad Al-Muwaizri affirmed that the field tours resulted in the removal of 85 canopies for encroachments on state property used to rent parking lots, in addition to the removal of 105 iron barriers and chains, adding that necessary measures were taken against the violators.

'No living in premises'

Firms violating industrial laws closed down by PAI

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Public Authority for Industry has taken action on 11 establishments that were found to be in violation of industrial laws. These violations ranged from operating without proper licenses to incomplete operations.

Sources told the **Al-Jarida** daily that a new list has been issued, warning of closure penalties if the violations are not promptly rectified. Some of the offenses observed included engaging in blacksmithing, marble cutting, and carpentry activities without obtaining industrial licenses, contravening Law No. 56 of 1996 regarding industrial regulations.

The closures were enacted based on violation reports submitted by the Industrial Inspection Department of the Industry Authority, with recommendations from the Permanent Committee for Industrial Violations.

It was determined that the violations persisted and would continue until they are remedied. If the violations persist beyond a month from the closure date, stricter penalties will be enforced.

Among the observed violations were instances of workers' housing located in mezzanines of plots up to 500 square meters and the absence of firefighting licenses.

Additionally, an industrial company was warned by the Industry Authority for storing five electricity generators within plot boundaries and housing workers in an area of 500 square meters. The company was given a maximum of one month to rectify the violation, with more severe measures threatened if non-compliance persists.

These closures are part of an ongoing effort by the Industry Authority, following a series of closures earlier in the year due to violations of industrial and regulatory laws. The actions are based on reports from the Industrial Inspection Department and recommendations from the Permanent Committee for Industrial Violations, as discussed in their meetings last March.

Store shut, 23 citations: The Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team at the Kuwait Municipality branch in Hawally Governorate closed a store and recorded 23 violations in its recent inspection campaign, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

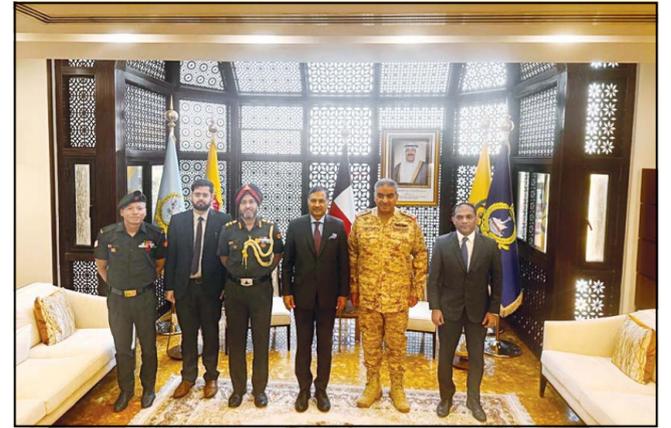
In a press statement, the Public Relations Department at the Municipality disclosed that the team carried out the inspection campaign in Hawally and Salmiya to ensure the shops and markets are strictly complying with the rules and regulations of the Municipality.

According to the department, the uncovered violations include displaying advertisements without a license, opening a store before obtaining a license, utilizing a space not mentioned in the license and displaying goods outside the store.

Head of the team Ibrahim Al-Sabaan urged the shop owners to fully abide by the rules and regulations in order to avoid penalties such as administrative closure.

Trucker video clip old: The video clip of a reckless expatriate truck driver that went viral on social media is old, as the incident happened in 2023, reports **Al-Anba** daily quoting sources from Ministry of Interior.

Sources revealed the expatriate stole a truck parked in front of a company in Shuwaikh Industrial Area and drove recklessly as he fled from the scene; thereby, endangering the lives of others. Sources confirmed the suspect was arrested and Case No. 363/2023 was registered against him. Sources added he was referred to the Public Prosecution and the court, which took the necessary action against him.



Indian ambassador to Kuwait and his delegation pose for a picture with Kuwait's Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant-General Bandar Salem Al Muzayan.

Indian envoy meets Kuwait Army chief

Ambassador of India to Kuwait, Dr Adarsh Swaika called on Lieutenant-General Bandar Salem Al Muzayan, Chief of General Staff of Kuwait. The In-

dian envoy apprised Al-Muzayan of the state and prospects of bilateral relations between India and Kuwait, including defense cooperation.

Man held for role in 'money-laundering'

Mechanic dies; drugs in accident car

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Public Prosecutor has ordered the detention of an expatriate amid accusations of involvement in a significant money laundering case, stemming from allegations, reports Al-Anba daily.

Despite the expatriate's denial of the charges and claims of victimization by a specialized network, his statements hold little weight as he was fully accountable for all banking operations conducted through his accounts prior to the network's involvement.

According to a security source, the Criminal Investigation Department received a notification regarding an expatriate allegedly facilitating money laundering transactions from his account to a network outside Kuwait. Subsequently, security forces apprehended the accused at his residence.

Upon interrogation, the expatriate asserted that he worked as a driver and had accepted an online job offer to promote goods on the internet in order to supplement his income. He admitted to providing all his banking details, including IBAN, account number, and card information, under the impression that his nearly empty account would not be exploited for illicit activities.

In light of this incident, a security source cautioned both citizens and residents against the dangers of indiscriminately sharing banking information with untrustworthy individuals, as it could lead to unwitting involvement in criminal activities.

Emphasizing the principle of accountability, the source underscored that the account holder bears responsibility for all

transactions carried out through their account.

Furthermore, the source highlighted the existence of organized criminal networks that lure individuals with false job opportunities, ultimately ensnaring them in unlawful schemes.

Mechanic dies under car: An unidentified mechanic, believed to be an Asian, died under the weight of a vehicle he was repairing on the Salmi Road, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the vehicle owner, the vehicle moved suddenly while the mechanic was performing the repair work crushing the man to death under its wheel.

When a rescue patrol moved to the site of the incident, the owner of the car told police the car had a breakdown and he had summoned the mechanic to fix it.

A case of accidental death has been registered at Taima Police Station.

Drugs in accident car: A collision between three vehicles on the Sixth Ring Road opposite the Shooting Club resulted in the seizure of 60 narcotic pills, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In the accident three people were injured and their vehicles were damaged. A security source said after a report was received by the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior security patrols were dispatched to the site of the accident and the injured were taken to the nearby hospital.

Upon inspection of the vehicles, security-men spotted 6 medium-sized bags containing 60 'red and white' pills. The pills were found in the one of the vehicles.

Police investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the pills. The damaged vehicles have been towed to the Sulaiyiba police station.

June 10 trial in vote-buying case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Criminal Court adjourned to June 10 the trial of a current parliamentarian in the Fourth Constituency and others who were accused of buying votes. The case was adjourned in order for the National Assembly to respond to the request to lift

the parliamentarian's immunity.

The prosecutor charged the candidate with electoral bribery, but he denied the accusation leveled against him.

The court confronted the rest of the defendants with copies of the seized nationality certificates, but they denied the accusation completely along with the accusation of them buying votes for the accused candidate.



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CAPT postpones bid opening for water filling station project

MEW confirms supply of power to Khaitan residential area

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
 KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced Saturday, that it has finished supplying power to all stations in the Khaitan Residential Project. The ministry affirmed its readiness to receive requests to connect power to all project plots after it was able to

operate all the project stations. It is worth noting that the total number of plots in the project is 1,448. Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) decided to postpone the date for opening the bids submitted for the tender to supply, install and maintain smart water filling card devices as well as install surveillance cameras on the sites for the 26 water filling stations from Sunday, to June 23.

According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Customer Affairs Sector, through the aforementioned tender, aims to replace the current system in which 26 filling stations operate with another modern one that keeps pace with technological development. A digital technology system will be installed that facilitates water consumption through a specific appli-

cation that will increase safety rates and revenues and reduce water wastage during the filling operations at the same time. They explained that the sector is currently offering the tender through CAPT. If the bids are opened on the aforementioned date, they will be referred for study and the preparation of the technical recommendation, and then returned to the agency to take the award decision

and then begin implementing the agreed-upon works in the contract. Before launching the tender, coordination took place between the customer service sector and the water projects sector, which participated in preparing the aforementioned tender papers and documents. There is a mechanism that leads to compatibility and integration of the tenders presented by it with the system to be installed in order to avoid

any malfunctions that may affect the smooth progress of work. It is worth noting that water filling stations have achieved revenues estimated at KD 6 million during the year 2023. The stations' water is also a strategic alternative in the event of a disaster or a water outage from the network during maintenance operations that occur periodically in all regions, including the border and agricultural areas.

'CSC's haphazard structure hits public sector job nominations'

'Coordinated efforts of several departments vital'

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The nomination of citizens, who registered in the central employment system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to apply for public sector jobs, has been delayed due to the haphazard organizational structure of the CSC, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained the distribution of departments in the organizational structure of the CSC was done in a random manner; thereby, delaying the documentary cycle for completing the work, in addition to the dispersion of powers that were supposed to be given to one department, sector or official.

Sources said the process of nominating citizens registered in the central employment system requires the coordinated efforts of several departments including the Information Systems Department,

Ranking Department and Selection Department. Sources revealed each director must address the assistant undersecretary who in turn addresses the undersecretary to obtain approval. Sources added that the Budget, Job Title Modification, Manpower Needs, Job Grades and Titles departments are not under the Employment Sector as they are distributed to various other sectors.

Sources also stated that the Job Description Department is under the Administrative Development Sector and the Job Arrangement Department is under the Financial and Administrative Sector, indicating only the Registration and Nomination departments are under the Employment Sector.

They pointed out this dispersion is unhealthy and does not serve the work. For example, the Employment Sector must address four departments under other sectors to create a new job title, sources said.

Sources disclosed the Job Arrangement Department, which is under the Finance and Administrative Sector, is responsible for ap-

proving job titles for new employees and this is supposed to be the responsibility of the Employment Sector.

The Organizing Structures and Job Descriptions departments were merged and put under the Administrative Development Sector, although the Job Descriptions Department's task is to set the terms of reference for the employee's job title in new jobs and this is the responsibility of the Employment Sector, they added.

Sources stressed the need to solve this issue, especially since the Employment Sector is considered the most important sector in the CSC; and the departments entrusted with carrying out its tasks are distributed to other sectors.

Sources went on to say that the Termination of Expatriates' Services Department is under the Employment Sector, even though it is supposed to be under the Legal Affairs Sector, which currently has only two departments -- the Legal Advice and Legislation Department and the Grievances Department; while some sectors have five departments.



A photo from the seminar.



A section of the attendees.

KFAS organizes seminar

Seminar showcases advanced structural health monitoring of the 'Al-Hamra Business Tower'

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) organized a seminar on "Structural Health Monitoring of Al-Hamra Business Tower" in cooperation with Al-Hamra Real Estate Company and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

The seminar aimed at disseminating the results of a research project funded by KFAS entitled "Ground Motion Modeling and Structural Monitoring of high-rise Buildings" which was implemented at Al Hamra Business Tower by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. Devices and sensors were installed in Al Hamra Tower to measure the building's response to the dynamic loads that high-rise buildings are exposed to, due to wind speed and the effects of local and regional seismic activities.

The project is an extension of another funded project, which was also implemented by KISR and Kuwait University in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where Kuwaiti researchers gained extensive experience and knowledge during its implementation, enabling them to implement the current phase. The project included a high-accuracy computational model for the tower, which was developed and utilized for continuous monitoring of its structural safety to detect any damages or changes that may arise in the building's structural system.

The seminar was attended by a number of researchers, academics, engineers and architects, and representatives and officials from several relevant entities and institutions, including Kuwait University, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Municipal Council, Ministry of Public Works, Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Environment Public Authority, in addition to the private sector.

KISR stated that the project is aligned with Kuwait's Developmental Plan aimed at developing and enhancing the resilience of infrastructure projects. The project, funded by KFAS, was carried out in the Sustainabil-

ity and Reliability of Infrastructure (SRI) Program under the Energy and Building Research Center at KISR. The research team developed innovative Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) technology, tailored specifically for infrastructure applications in Kuwait. This technology, successfully implemented in Kuwait's tallest building, the Al-Hamra Business Tower. This is the first time such advanced monitoring technology has been applied in Kuwait, representing a significant step towards developing sustainable smart cities supported by advanced sensor technology and real data. The technology has the potential to transform how infrastructure safety is monitored during extreme events such as earthquakes and sandstorms. The technology provides accurate information about the safety of infrastructure and the areas most affected during emergencies, thereby enabling more efficient and effective responses by governmental authorities. This technology can be scaled to monitor other critical systems, such as bridges and energy infrastructure throughout Kuwait.

Al Hamra Real Estate Company indicated that Al Hamra Business Tower has become a symbol of innovation and excellence in adopting the highest international architectural standards, as it has won many international awards through its commitment to the development of its infrastructure by applying thorough creative strategies, which include integrating leading technologies such as a solar energy system and a structural health monitoring system to ensure the safety and longevity of the tower.

The facility management is constantly working to protect its facilities as part of its commitment to drive innovation and promote learning in the architectural community. This seminar affirms Al Hamra Business Tower's proactive approach in adapting international standards and practices to suit local needs and enhancing its leading position in the field of architecture and engineering.

Coast Guard team visits AU facilities

Australian University obtains accreditation from CG for pleasure craft license training

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Australian University has obtained approval from the Coast Guard General Department in the Interior Ministry to be an accredited and licensed institution for training and qualifying those who wish to obtain pleasure craft license (A) and issue certificates for those who meet the requirements, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Coast Guard General Department gave its approval after its specialized team visited the university's facilities, halls and simulators; and reviewed the procedures followed by the Marine Sciences Department in conducting the Nokhadha (A) Course.

Director of the Coast Guard General Department Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef presented the certificate of accreditation to Vice-President for Support Services at the Australian University Saqr Al-Sharhan during their meeting at Sabah

Al-Ahmad Naval Base recently. Technical Director for Operations at the Marine Sciences Department in the university Abdullah Shams Al-Din, Marine Colonel Mishal Al-Quraifa, Marine Colonel Youssef Al-Salem, Marine Colonel Abdullah Al-Rashed and Marine Lieutenant Colonel Youssef Al-Haddad also attended the meeting.

Al-Din said: "We thank the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Coast Guard General Department, for this trust. We affirm the university's commitment to provide all its capabilities to strengthen its partnership with various government entities in the service of the dear homeland. We will also work towards obtaining accreditation for other maritime courses in the near future with the aim of developing and qualifying workers in the maritime sector in particular, and seafarers in general."

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Ways discussed to benefit from expertise of Chinese companies in energy storage

Al-Jarallah meets delegation of Chinese Chamber of Commerce

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Dean of Kuwait Journalism and the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received at Al-Seyassah Press House on Monday, the Chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce and member of the Executive Council of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Jeffrey Kin-fung Lam, and the Chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce's Asia, Africa and Middle East Committee Jonathan Lamport, along with chamber members and representatives of Chinese government-owned companies operating in various sectors Patrick Tsang, Chairman of Tsang Group, Kelvin Liu, Vice Chairman of Tsang Group, and Andre Kwok, Chief of Staff of Tsang Group, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, a number of issues were discussed, particularly the partnership with the Jarallah Group for various economic activities, the most important of which is the media sector.

The delegation emphasized the major role played by the Al-Seyassah Press House, in particular its two parts - Al-Seyassah Newspaper and Arab Times - in boosting economic, social and cultural cooperation with

China, and enhancing Arab, Gulf and Kuwait relations with China and the Chinese private sector by introducing the public to Chinese, Arab and Gulf companies.

The two sides reviewed the prospects for building cooperation in the field of modern technology and renewable energy. They discussed ways to take advantage of the high temperatures in Kuwait to generate energy, and benefit from the expertise of Chinese companies in energy storage.

They also discussed ways to develop the relations between the private sectors of the two countries, implement the agreements signed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Chinese President Xi Jinping last year in this regard, activate partnerships between Kuwaiti and Chinese companies, and find common ground for developing trade relations and investment exchange.

They highlighted the commitment of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce of China to strengthen this cooperation.

It is worth noting that the meeting was attended by the Chief Financial Officer of Al-Jarallah Group Ahmed Wasfi.



Left: Ahmed Al-Jarallah with the delegation chief and (right) Al-Jarallah with the members of the delegation. Photos by Rizk Taufiq

With decision ...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait's primary concern is seeking help from everyone, including the Bedouin residents, for the long-awaited development, whether it is in the northern economic region or for completing the construction of Mubarak Port or modernizing all services, or developing the islands, which are an important source of investment if there is a vision for what tourism investment means, or the many other dormant projects.

Even in the housing problem, there are many effective solutions that neighboring countries, some Arab countries and European countries have worked on to close this file forever.

In fact, the new cities have become a source of economic and commercial activity. This is not the case in Kuwait, as citizens here have to wait for 20 years to obtain housing care. Some of them die before they can enjoy their dream house.

In Kuwait, we do not lack solutions, but it is the absence of decision, or rather the lost decision between the two authorities, each of which is supposed to know its limits and not overlap the other, along with the weakness of ministerial will and hesitation that has caused all the crises we are experiencing.

When the will becomes effective and determined to achieve a solution, then Kuwait will become one of the most developed countries and an effective force in the regional economy within a few years.

This is why Kuwaitis have one constant question - When will we have a decision? Will we not remain subject to the parliamentary-ministerial wrangling that neither nourishes nor avails against hunger.

Kuwait's expat

Continued from Page 1

The value of Kuwait's current account surplus with respect to goods, services, and income decreased in the past year by 18.13% to 1.58 billion dinars, compared to 1.93 billion dinars in 2022.

This decline in the current account is attributed to a decrease in the merchandise balance surplus, and an increase in the net deficit in the Kuwait's current balance of payments.

In general, the overall position of the Kuwait balance of payments turned into a deficit during the year 2023 at a value of 150.2 million dinars, compared to a surplus of 1.13 billion dinars in the previous year.

Kuwait on

Continued from Page 1

This phenomenon is attributed to a positive dipole in the Indian Ocean, which elevates water temperatures and increases humidity in the upper layers of the atmosphere. Consequently, towering clouds form, bringing heavy rainfall. These observations align with research presented by climate specialists studying the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean region.

Kuwait deploys

Continued from Page 1

During the first flight, the Kuwaiti medical team managed to perform nearly 184 surgical operations, in addition to more than 1,000 medical examination for wounded and sick people in hospitals in the Gaza Strip, Al-Nouri added.

The team also signed an agreement to employ 313 Palestinian medical staff, in addition to the team opening a medical point that will benefit 4,000 affected people in the Gaza Strip, in addition to other food and shelter charitable projects.

Amir to

Continued from Page 1

Ambassador Al-Ghanim added that the visit of His Highness the Amir would enhance the excellent relations between the two countries, expanding to broader areas under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and the Egyptian president.

He also noted the alignment of positions between the leaderships of both countries regarding all regional and international issues, especially in Palestine and the ongoing aggression against the people of Gaza, which exceeded seven months.

He stressed that the visit affirmed the Kuwaiti leadership's commitment to enhancing communication and consultation between Cairo and Kuwait regarding regional and international developments,

also involved discussing mutual interests and developing bilateral relations in various fields, which would benefit both countries.

He emphasized that the visit affirmed the Kuwaiti leadership's commitment to strengthening communication and consultation with Cairo on regional and international developments, also to discuss mutual interests and enhance bilateral relations, benefiting both countries.

Al-Ghanim praised Egypt's longstanding support for Kuwait since the independence, emphasizing Egypt's stance in favor of Kuwait's security and stability.

He also praised Egypt's efforts to improve its investment climate and welcome Arab and foreign investments, particularly those from Kuwait, as he noted Kuwait's private sector's confidence in Egypt's investment environment, particularly due to the economic reforms undertaken by the Egyptian government.

He told KUNA that Kuwait hold a prominent status among Arab investments in Egyptian markets, reflecting the Kuwaiti investor's confidence in the Egyptian economy and the available investment prospects.

Al-Ghanim also pointed out the financing programs offered by the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development (KFAED), which support more than 50 strategic projects, significantly contributing to the Egyptian economy.

He expressed confidence that the visit of His Highness the Amir to Cairo and his meeting with the Egyptian President would be successful on all fronts, given their wisdom, and benefiting both countries and their peoples.

The official visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Egypt, due on Tuesday, is a culmination of the historic ties and joint coordination between the two countries.

The visit of His Highness the Amir to Egypt is the first since His Highness assumed the office of the state last December.

He paid other visits as the Crown Prince representing His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on October 21, 2023 at Cairo Peace Summit, on November 7, 2022 at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and at the second edition of the Green Middle East Initiative Summit.

On December 17, 2023, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi visited Kuwait, where he offered his condolences on the death of the late Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Kuwait joins

Continued from Page 1

Speaking at events in Riyadh, Blinken said the best way to ease the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza would be to conclude an elusive cease-fire agreement that would release hostages held by Hamas. And, he said Hamas had been presented with an "extraordinarily generous" offer by Israel that he hoped the group would accept.

"Hamas has before it a proposal that is extraordinarily, extraordinarily generous on the part of Israel and in this moment the only thing standing between the people of Gaza and ceasefire is Hamas," he said at a World Economic Forum gathering in the Saudi capital.

"They have to decide, and they have to decide quickly. So, we're looking to that and I'm hopeful that they will make the right decision and we can have a fundamental change in the dynamic," Blinken said.

Although talks continue, Hamas has thus far balked at a series of offers negotiated by Egypt, Qatar and the United States and agreed to by Israel, and even without a deal, Blinken said it was critical to improve conditions in Gaza now.

"We're also not waiting on a cease-fire to take the necessary steps to meet the needs of civilians in Gaza," Blinken told Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers earlier Monday.

"We have seen measurable progress in the last few weeks, including the opening of new crossings and increased volume of aid delivery to Gaza and within Gaza, and the building of the U.S. maritime corridor, which will open in the coming weeks. But it is not enough. We still need to get more aid in and around Gaza," he said.

"We need to improve deconfliction with humanitarian assistance workers. And we have to find greater efficiency and greater safety and deconfliction is at the heart of that. And, finally we have to make sure that we're focusing not just on inputs, but on impact."

Scores of relief workers have been killed since the conflict began, and a deadly Israeli attack on a World Central Kitchen aid convoy in Gaza this month only highlighted the dangers and difficulties of protecting them. Israel has said the strike was a mistake and has disciplined officials involved.

GCC leaders discuss water security amid concerns over climate change

Doha hosts 3-day Gulf Water Conference

DOHA, April 29, (KUNA): The 15th Gulf Water Conference kicked off Sunday in Doha, which is organized over three days by the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), in cooperation with the Gulf Water Science and Technology Association and the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

The head of Kahramaa, Engineer Eissa Al-Kuwari, said in his speech that achieving water security is an urgent challenge for the world and climate change increases this challenge, pointing that about 2.5 percent of the water on the planet is natural and its largest source is groundwater.

He added that about four billion people in the world live in areas suffer from water scarcity, according to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) expected in 2030 that the global demand for fresh water will exceed 40 percent, in addition to that climate change, sea level, changing rainfall patterns, and increased intensification of the water cycle, which leads to floods and drought.

Al-Kuwari stated that these challenges require developing plans and determining priorities such as expanding water treatment through the use of green technology and implementing circular economy policies for water management, stressing the importance of water security in achieving development.

He added that the conference under the slogan (management pace modern technology) tackles the potential of technologies in various fields in the sector for effective water management and to devote the uses of modern technology to achieve the desired goals, strengthen the water sector and protect its fresh source.

For his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Water Science and Technology Society Engineer Abdulrahman Al-Mahmoud mentioned in his speech the importance of technology in enhancing the sustainability of the water sector, pointing to the leadership of the GCC in keeping pace with technological developments in water production, quality, transportation, distribution, or rationalization.

The President of the Arab Water Council, Dr Mahmoud Abu Zaid expressed his hope that this conference will be an opportunity to exchange opinions, ideas and experiences to reach the desired goal, especially since the conference's topics generally address the development of water conservation and improve its quality.

For his part, Dr. Hamo Al-Omrani, member of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) said that the issue of water is one of the important topics in the region and water security has become a priority.

A number of specialists from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) are participating in the conference activities, including Dr Mansour Ahmad, Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq, Dr Mohammad Al-Rashed, and Dr Adel Al-Haddad.



Eng Eissa Al-Kuwari



Top and above: Photos from the launching of 'Embassy Cup Football Tournament'.

Embassy of Bangladesh launches football tourney to mark 50 yrs of diplomatic ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: To mark the fiftieth anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Kuwait, the "Embassy Cup Football Tournament" was launched on Friday, April 26, 2024, under the auspices of the Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait. Organized by the Bangladesh Football Association, Kuwait, the tournament was inaugurated by H.E. Major General (Retd.) Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc, G, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait,

at the Fahaheel Stadium. Senior embassy officials, members of the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait, and representatives from print and electronic media were in attendance. A total of 21 football teams will compete in this knockout-style tournament, which will feature 21 matches. This tournament is part of a series of events planned by the Embassy of Bangladesh, Kuwait, throughout 2024 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh-Kuwait relations.

KU expert analyzes ministerial jurisdiction in urgent matters

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Constitutional expert Dr. Muhammad Al-Faili from Kuwait University's Faculty of Law highlighted that ministerial jurisdiction during the handling of urgent matters typically includes the authority to initiate investigations, as prescribed by relevant laws and regulations.

Delving into a study for Al-Jarida, titled 'A commentary on the fatwa department's opinion regarding the minister of youth's authority to investigate the director of the youth authority during urgent matters', Al-Faili noted the unique nature of the issue necessitating consultation with the "Fatwa and Legislation" department.

Specifically, he addressed concerns about the minister of sports potentially facing political accountability during urgent matters, which, constitutionally, is not feasible since the ministers resign collectively. The study scrutinizes the definition of "urgent matters" within Kuwait's context, emphasizing its criticality due to government resignations and the extended duration of forming new administrations.

During such transitional phases, the responsibility for governance falls to interim authorities handling urgent matters. Notably, the lack of established literature defining urgent matters underscores the significance of the Fatwa and Legislation Department's opinion, serving as a benchmark issued by the government's legal advisor.

The study dissects the opinion request submitted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, focusing on whether the suspension and investigation of the director of the Public Authority for Sports by the minister of State

for Youth Affairs during urgent matters aligns with legal frameworks.

The Fatwa Department's response discerns between decisions made out of necessity, those pertaining to regular public service operations, and those with political implications, emphasizing that ministers handling urgent matters cannot be held politically accountable due to their resigned status.

In its analysis, the study reflects on the methodological approach adopted by the Fatwa Department, highlighting potential ramifications on political responsibility and the need for legal clarity.

It questions the jurisdictional oversight of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, particularly concerning coordination between ministries and the scope of urgent matters vis-à-vis ordinary governance functions.

Furthermore, it delves into the relationship between urgent matters and political accountability, stressing the need for a nuanced understanding of ministerial actions within legal frameworks.

The study suggests that the Fatwa Department's interpretation may have implications for government powers during transitional phases, emphasizing the importance of judicial oversight for resolving disputes definitively.

In conclusion, the study underscores the significance of the Fatwa and Legislation Department's opinion in navigating complex legal terrain during transitional governance phases. It advocates for deeper contemplation and potential judicial intervention to establish binding legal precedents for future administrations and jurisprudence.

World News Roundup

Europe

Sánchez stays in office

Scottish 1st minister Humza Yousaf quits

LONDON, April 29, (AP) — Scotland's first minister, **Humza Yousaf**, resigned on Monday rather than face a no-confidence vote just days after he torpedoed a coalition with the Green Party by ditching a target for fighting climate change.

Yousaf, whose Scottish National Party has been weakened by a campaign finance scandal and divisions over transgender rights, stepped down after failing to strike a deal with a breakaway nationalist party whose single seat could have given him a majority in Scotland's devolved regional parliament.

With no prospect of victory, Yousaf quit rather than face defeat later this week when Scottish lawmakers were scheduled to vote on motions of no confidence in Yousaf and his government.



Yousaf

"After spending the weekend reflecting on what is best for my party, for the government and for the country I lead, I've concluded that repairing our relationship across the political divide can only be done with someone else at the helm," he told reporters. "I have therefore informed the SNP's national secretary of my intention to stand down as party leader."

The debacle in Scotland adds to the fevered political climate in the broader United Kingdom, where concerns about immigration, health care and government spending have undermined support for the ruling Conservative Party.

The Conservatives and the opposition Labour Party had proposed separate no-confidence motions as they sought to weaken the SNP before a UK-wide parliamentary election expected to take place later this year. The SNP has been the dominant party in Scottish politics for almost two decades and currently holds 43 of the country's 59 seats in the UK parliament.

Spain PM to remain in office: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Monday ended days of speculation about his future by saying he will continue in office "with even more strength."

Sánchez shocked his country last Wednesday by taking five days off to think about his future, following the decision by a court to open preliminary proceedings against his wife on corruption allegations.

"I have decided to continue on with even more strength at the helm of the government of Spain," he said in a televised speech after informing King Felipe VI of the decision earlier Monday.

His resignation would have deprived Europe of its longest-serving Socialist prime minister currently in charge of a major European Union country right before European elections in June.

'Putin likely didn't order Navalny's death': US intelligence officials have determined that Russian President Vladimir Putin likely didn't order the death of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny in February, according to an official familiar with the determination.

While US officials believe Putin was ultimately responsible for the death of Navalny, who endured brutal conditions during his confinement, the intelligence community has found "no smoking gun" that Putin was aware of the timing of Navalny's death - which came soon before the Russian president's reelection - or directly ordered it, according to the official.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Soon after Navalny's death, US President Joe Biden said Putin was ultimately responsible but did not accuse the Russian president of directly ordering it.

7 dead in police checkpoint attack: A group of militants attacked a police checkpoint in Russia's North Caucasus region, killing two officers, officials said Monday.

Four other officers were wounded and all five attackers were killed in the shootout in the Karachay-Cherkessia region late Sunday, according to the regional branch of Russia's Interior Ministry.

The Investigative Committee, the country's top state criminal investigation agency, said the same gunmen had raided another police checkpoint in the region a week before, killing two police and injuring another. It didn't describe the attackers' affiliation or motive.

Two Russian journalists jailed: Two Russian journalists were arrested by their government on "extremism" charges and ordered by courts there on Saturday to remain in custody pending investigation and trial on accusations of working for a group founded by the late Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny.

Konstantin Gabov and Sergey Karelin both denied the charges for which they will be detained for a minimum of two months before any trials begin. Each faces a minimum of two years in prison and a maximum of six years for alleged "participation in an extremist organization," according to Russian courts.

They are just the latest journalists arrested amid a Russian government crackdown on dissent and independent media that intensified after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago.

1 migrant dies, 25 rescued in Greece: Authorities on the Greek island of Samos said Monday that a migrant died and 25 others were rescued from a sinking dinghy that had left the nearby coast of Turkey.

A search and rescue operation was launched, assisted by the European border protection agency, Frontex, for others possibly missing, officials said.

The coast guard said it responded to a distress call on Sunday. Twenty-three people were rescued from the sinking vessel while two others were pulled from the water. A third man found unresponsive was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

Convicted ex-officials freed: A court in Athens convicted five former senior firefighting and disaster response officials on Monday, over a 2018 wildfire outside the capital that killed more than 100 people.

The fire that swept through the seaside town of Mati, east of Athens, was the deadliest in the country's history. Residents and vacationers, many trapped in their cars, were killed as they tried to escape.

The officials, including a former fire chief, received sentences of between 15 and 111 years for multiple counts of criminal negligence resulting in injury and loss of life. But the presiding judge ordered that sentences could be served concurrently, capping jail time at five years.



A man is surrounded by tornado damage after severe storms moved through the night before in Sulphur, Okla on April 28. (AP)

Oklahoma towns hard hit by tornadoes begin cleanup after 4 killed in weekend storms

Small towns in Oklahoma began a long cleanup Monday after tornadoes flattened homes and buildings and killed four people, including an infant, widening a destructive outbreak of severe weather across the middle of the US.

Punishing storms that began late Saturday in

Oklahoma injured at least 100 people, damaged a rural hospital, washed out roads and knocked out power to more than 40,000 customers at one point, state officials said. Tornadoes on Friday in Iowa and Nebraska also caused wide destruction and were blamed for one death.

The destruction was extensive in Sulphur, a town of about 5,000 people south of Oklahoma City, where a tornado crumpled many downtown buildings, tossed cars and buses and sheared the roofs off houses across a 15-block radius. (AP)



First responders work the scene after three Louisiana police officers were shot in a standoff on April 28 in Kenner, La. (AP)



Judd



Conley

Suspect killed in standoff: Three Louisiana police officers were wounded by gunfire Sunday in a standoff with a man who was later killed by a police sharpshooter, authorities and news reports said.

Sheriff Joseph Lopinto said a sniper from the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office shot and killed the suspect at a house in Kenner where he had held off police and fired shots at law enforcement authorities after shooting three officers who tried to enter the home, WGNO-TV reported.

The injured officers were taken to a hospital after being shot Sunday morning in Kenner, about 15 miles (25 kilometers) west of New Orleans, Kenner Police Chief **Keith Conley** said. (AP)

Runner dies: A runner in the St. Jude Rock 'n' Roll Running Series in Nashville on Saturday has died after receiving emergency treatment at the race, organizers said Sunday.

The Rock 'n' Roll Running Series said the runner received urgent medical attention by an on-site team before being transported to a hospital, where the participant died. Organizers did not immediately release the identity of the runner.

"We appreciate the medical personnel who worked quickly to support the participant," the statement from organizers said. "We share our greatest sympathies with the family and friends of the race participant, and we will continue to offer them our support as they go through this very difficult time."

The race events that took place Saturday included marathon, half-marathon, 10K and 5K distances. More than 23,000 runners were registered for the weekend's races. (AP)

'Deputies killed gunman': Two Florida sheriff's deputies were seriously wounded and the man who shot them was killed when a gunfight erupted at a public park, according to the sheriff.

Politics

US prez wins primary in Puerto Rico

Biden tries humor on campaign trail

WASHINGTON, April 29, (AP) — US President Joe Biden is out to win votes by scoring some laughs at the expense of Donald Trump, unleashing mockery with the goal of getting under the former president's thin skin and reminding the country of his blunders.

Like a comic honing his routine, the Democratic president has been testing and expanding his jokes over the past few weeks. It started with jabs about his Republican opponent's financial problems, and now Biden regularly pokes fun at Trump's coiffed hair, his pampered upbringing.

Modern

The jokes are the latest attempt to crack the code on how to clap back at Trump, whose own insult comedy schtick has redrawn the boundaries of what is acceptable in modern politics. Few have had much luck, whether they try to take the high road or get down and dirty with Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president.

"This is a constant challenge," said Eric Schultz, a senior adviser to former President Barack Obama. Trump is "not someone who plays by the rules. So it's up to Biden to figure out how to adapt and play by new rules of engagement."

So far, Biden has been trying to thread a delicate needle to boost his chances of a second term. He uses humor to paint Trump as a buffoon unworthy of the Oval Office, but the president stops short of turning the election into a laughing matter.

Sometimes he finds that a few jokes can energize an audience even more than a major policy victory and draw precious attention away from an opponent who otherwise commands the spotlight even while stuck in a New York courtroom for his first criminal trial.

The latest example came at the White House Correspondents' Asso-

Republicans seeking congressional seat debate 'limits' on immigration

ATLANTA, April 29, (AP) — Brian Jack sought to make a Sunday debate among Republican candidates for an open Georgia congressional seat all about his close ties to former president Donald Trump, while the other contenders ignored Trump's endorsement of Jack.

Five Republicans running for their party's nomination in Georgia's 3rd Congressional District met in an Atlanta Press Club debate. Besides Jack, who was Trump's political director during his administration and worked for then-US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, they included former state senators Mike Crane and Mike Dugan, former state Rep. Philip Singleton and party activist Jim Bennett.

They're seeking to replace Republican US Rep Drew Ferguson, who is stepping down. The district

hugs the Alabama border from Carrollton to Columbus and swings east into the Atlanta suburbs of Newnan and Peachtree City.

Jack repeatedly referenced his work in the Trump administration, promising that in Congress he would continue that work.

All of the candidates, in a show of hands, said they believed Trump was the rightful winner of Georgia's 16 electoral votes in 2020, despite no reliable evidence to contradict Democrat Joe Biden's win.

All of the candidates voiced support for more restrictions on immigration, with several including Jack saying they support mass deportations of people who have entered the country illegally. Jack said he would have voted against the recent foreign aid package to Ukraine, Israel and others until he was satisfied on border security.

vious years given recent austerity measures imposed by a federal control board that oversees the island's finances.

On Sunday, Puerto Rico's Democrats also chose 36 of 65 delegates they hope to send to the National Democratic Convention that will be held in Chicago in late August.

Although residents of Puerto Rico are US citizens, they are not allowed to vote in presidential elections.

Earlier this year, Charlie Rodríguez, president of Puerto Rico's Democratic Party, said he would seek to hold a symbolic presidential election in November for those on the island eager to cast a vote for the next president.

They're seeking to replace Republican US Rep Drew Ferguson, who is stepping down. The district

refused commands to get out on his own. They spotted the vehicle early Saturday in a county park after it had closed for the night.

Judd told reporters Saturday that preliminary information from investigators indicated the slain man shot first.

"He asked for a gunfight, we gave him a gunfight," the sheriff said. "And he'll never be in another gunfight again, because he's dead." (AP)

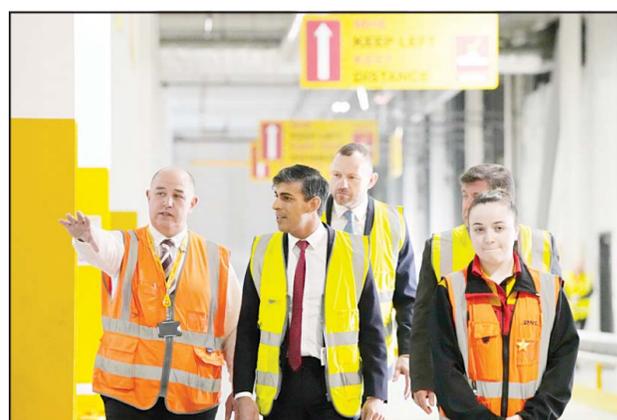
Interstate 40 reopened: Interstate 40 was reopened in both directions Sunday as fire crews continued watch over a controlled burn of remaining fuel from a freight train derailment near the Arizona-New Mexico state line, a local fire chief said.

Earlier evacuation orders have now been lifted.

"It's all under control," said Fire Chief Lawrence Montoya Jr. of McKinley County, New Mexico. "Our hazmat team is on site, along with our well-trained firefighters."

Montoya, the incident commander at the scene, said the controlled burns were still consuming remaining fuel on some cars.

He said no one was hurt in the Friday derailment of the BNSF Railway train near Lupton, Arizona, which occurred on the New Mexico side of the tracks, or during the subsequent firefighting operation. (AP)



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, (second left), visits the DHL Gateway port facility at Stanford Le Hope on the Thames estuary east of London on April 29. (AP)

Africa

Togo votes

40 dead in W.Kenya after dam collapses

NAIROBI, Kenya, April 29, (Agencies): A dam collapsed in western Kenya early Monday, killing at least 40 people after a wall of water swept through houses and cut off a major road, police said.

The Old Kijabe Dam, located in the Mai Mahiu area of the Great Rift Valley region that is prone to flash floods, collapsed and water spilled downstream, police official Stephen Kirui told The Associated Press.

Ongoing rains in Kenya have caused flooding that has already killed nearly 100 people and caused the opening of schools to be postponed.

Heavy rains have been pounding the country since mid-March and the Meteorology Department has warned of more rainfall.

The East African region is experiencing flooding due to the heavy rains, and 155 people have reportedly died in Tanzania while more than 200,000 people are affected in neighboring Burundi.

Kenya's main airport was flooded on Saturday, forcing some flights to be diverted, as videos of a flooded runway, terminals and cargo section were shared online.

More than 200,000 people across Kenya the country have been affected by the floods, with houses in flood-prone areas submerged and people seeking refuge in schools.

President **William Ruto** had instructed the National Youth Service to provide land for use as a temporary camp for those affected.

Meanwhile, Kenya has postponed the reopening of its schools by one week due to ongoing flooding caused by heavy rains, as flood-related deaths since mid-March in the East African country neared 100.

Affected

Some schools remained "adversely affected" by the flooding, the Education Ministry said Sunday night. Local media reported that more than 100 schools were flooded, some with collapsed walls and roofs blown away.

All schools were set to reopen on Monday but will now open on May 6.

Ninety-three people have died in the flooding in Kenya and that number is expected to rise after a boat capsized in the northern Garissa county on Sunday night. The Kenyan Red Cross said it had rescued 23 people from the boat, but more than a dozen people were still missing.

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The highest number of deaths in Kenya have been reported in the capital, Nairobi, according to police records.

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Togo voters head to polls: Togolese voters headed to the polls on Monday to vote in the country's parliamentary elections, which will test support for a proposed new constitution that would scrap future presidential elections and give lawmakers the power to choose the president instead.

The opposition and the clergy say the legislation is an effort by President Faure Gnassingbe to prolong his rule. It was passed by lawmakers in late March and is close to being enacted.

Authorities have cracked down on civic and media freedoms ahead of the vote. In early April, the government banned protests against the proposed new constitution and the arrest of opposition figures.

In mid-April, a French journalist who arrived in Togo to cover the elections was arrested, assaulted and expelled. Togo's media regulator subsequently suspended the accreditation process for foreign journalists.

The electoral commission has also banned the Catholic Church from deploying election observers to monitor the process.



'88,000 displaced in Somalia': The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said on Sunday that about 88,000 people were internally displaced in Somalia in the first three months of 2024.

The UNHCR said the displacement was mainly caused by conflict or insecurity and the long-term effects of flooding, which occurred between October and December 2023.

"Clan conflicts and political differences within the federal member states (FMS) as well as between the Somali government and the FMS further threaten the fragile security situation," the UNHCR said in its latest update released in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

The UN refugee agency noted that the security situation in the country remains tense, with ongoing military operations to reclaim territory from al-Shabab, which has been responsible for multiple indiscriminate attacks, often causing harm to ordinary Somalis.

The indiscriminate reprisal attacks against the non-state armed group have resulted in the deaths and displacement of innocent bystanders, the UNHCR said.



SAfrica puts in place measures: The South African government on Sunday assured its citizens that the upcoming national and provincial elections will be conducted in a safe and secure environment, with just one month to go before South African voters head to the polls.

"As the government, we want to issue a stern warning to anyone with the intention of disrupting the elections that law enforcement officers will deal with them decisively and put them behind bars," Minister of Defense and Military Veterans Thandi Modise said in Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital, while briefing the media on crime prevention and security preparedness for the elections.

Modise said they will rely on coordinated and intelligence-led planning and operations before, during, and after the elections.

"We have put measures in place to protect all public facilities that will be used for voting, including national key points and other essential infrastructure that might be targeted by criminal elements."



Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, (left), talks to journalist as Indonesian President Joko Widodo listens during a joint press conference at Bogor Presidential Palace in Bogor, Indonesia on April 29. (AP)

Asia

SKorea oppn leader urges prez to accept probes

Indonesia, S'pore leaders hold talks

BOGOR, Indonesia, April 29, (AP): Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Monday celebrated the countries' continued cooperation at their seventh and final Leaders' Retreat in Jakarta, an annual meeting between the two Southeast Asian leaders that was also attended this year by their successors.

Lee's visit to Indonesia is one of his last working trips before he hands over the reins of his administration to a new leader. The eldest son of Singaporean founding father Lee Kuan Yew announced his resignation earlier this month after two decades at the helm. His deputy prime minister and finance minister, Lawrence Wong, will succeed him in May.

Widodo, Indonesia's first president from outside the traditional Jakarta elite who is widely known by the nickname Jokowi, will be succeeded by Prabowo Subianto, who takes office in October.

All four top officials met Monday at the colonial-style Presidential Palace in Bogor, just outside Jakarta, as the retreat became a passing of the guard for both countries.

"I'm glad that President Jokowi and I are handing over the bilateral relationship in good state to our successors," Lee said at a joint news conference with Widodo after the meeting. "I have every confidence that Mr. Prabowo and DPM Lawrence will continue to bring the relationship to greater heights."

Singapore's Prime Minister's Office said in a statement ahead of Lee's visit that the two leaders would take stock of the significant progress made in bilateral cooperation during their tenures.

Previously, the two countries ratified three milestone agreements, including a defense cooperation agreement and separate treaties on extradition and airspace.

The agreements were signed during the 2022 leaders' retreat and came into effect this year.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: Emboldened by his party's recent election win, South Korea's opposition leader pressured President **Yoon Suk Yeol** to accept special investigations into allegations involving top officials and his wife, as they met Monday for talks on bipartisan cooperation.



Xi to visit France, Serbia & Hungary as China appears to seek role in Ukraine

BEIJING, China, April 29, (AP): Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit France, Serbia and Hungary next week as Beijing appears to seek a larger role in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that has upended global political and economic stability.

The visit by Xi, China's president and head of the ruling Communist Party, is his first to Europe in five years and will "inject new momentum to the peaceful development of the world," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said at a daily briefing on Monday.

China claims neutrality in the Ukraine conflict, but Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin declared their governments had a "no limits friendship" before Moscow's February 2022 attack on Ukraine. China has refused to call the Russian assault an invasion and has been accused of bolstering Russia's financial and technological ability to continue producing weapons for use against Ukraine, which

is awaiting tens of billions of dollars in military aid to counter Russia's aggression.

The Foreign Ministry said Xi's visits will begin April 5 and end April 10 but gave no further details.



Teens plotted to buy guns: Four teenagers plotted to buy guns and attack people days after a bishop was stabbed in a Sydney church, according to police documents cited in news reports on Monday.

Five teens, aged 14 to 17, were charged in a Sydney court on Thursday last week with a range of offenses including conspiring to engage in or planning a terrorist act.

Police alleged they all "adhered to a religiously motivated, violent extremist ideology" and were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy charged with stabbing Assyrian Orthodox Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel on April 15 as a church service was being streamed online.

TOKYO: Japan's governing party, stung by an extensive slush funds scandal, lost all three seats in parliamentary by-elections Sunday in a major setback for Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in seeking reelection as his party's leader in the autumn.

The loss is considered punishment by voters for the Liberal Democratic Party scandal that erupted last year and has undermined Kishida's leadership. The party's loss of power is unlikely, however, because the opposition is fractured.

"The results were extremely severe," LDP Secretary General Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters. "We humbly accept the severe results, and we will do our utmost to regain the trust from the public as we continue our effort to reform and tackle the challenges."

The liberal-leaning main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan clinched all three seats in Shimane, Nagasaki and Tokyo, according to final vote counts posted on prefectural election committee websites.

well as former President Martín Torrijos. Those three are in a virtual tie for second behind Mulino, according to recent polls. Mulino skipped all three presidential debates.

Mulino has campaigned with promises to create jobs and stop migration through Panama's Darien jungle, where more than a half million people trekked last year. The message has resonated with an elec-

torate tired of the country's political establishment, but nostalgic for the days of a humming economy.

Panama, however, is not growing like it was during Martinelli's 2009-2014 presidency, and experts expect the economy to slow next year.

A factor in the economic deceleration is the Supreme Court's decision to declare an unconstitutional legislation that granted a 20-year concession to a huge copper mine. The decision came after weeks of street protests by a wide slice of Panamanian society roiled by concerns over water access - amid a troubling drought - and nationalist fervor about the deal with a Canadian mining company.

The extended drought has also reduced traffic through the Panama Canal, a critical economic engine for the country.

There is a constitutional challenge to Mulino's candidacy because he was not selected through a party primary and does not have a running mate. The Supreme Court has not made clear when it will rule on that challenge.

The rise of Mulino's candidacy has unfolded as Martinelli's own legal saga plays out.

Already banned by the US government, Martinelli was convicted of money laundering in Panama last July and this March electoral authorities disqualified him from the election, launching Mulino into the top spot on the Achieving Goals party ticket. (AP)



Romulo Roux, presidential candidate for Democratic Change, addresses supporters during a closing campaign rally in Panama City on April 28. Panama will hold general elections on May 5. (AP)



Sheinbaum



Gálvez

Lat/Am

Mexico candidates debate: Mexico's leading presidential candidate repeatedly touted the social programs of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and walked a fine line between supporting the national oil company and promising a clean energy transition in the second debate Sunday night ahead of the June 2 election.

Former Mexico City Mayor **Claudia Sheinbaum** of the president's Morena party continues to hold a healthy lead over **Xóchitl Gálvez** of a coalition of opposition of parties and Jorge Álvarez Máynez of the small Citizen Movement party.

López Obrador significantly raised Mexico's minimum wage and increased spending on social programs, most of which are popular direct cash transfer programs. Sheinbaum has benefited from her mentor's popularity throughout the campaign and promised to continue his programs.

She called the model of government that he started and she has committed to continuing "humanist, an honest model, protector of our patrimony, with better salaries, with better pensions, without raising taxes."

Even Gálvez, Sheinbaum's most serious competitor, stressed that she, too, would maintain the popular, but costly programs if elected. The former senator and tech entrepreneur reminded voters that she knew poverty growing up and was able to advance in part because of a scholarship.

"I am a woman who comes from below, who knows poverty and knows how poverty hurts and the time that it steals from you," Gálvez said. (AP)



Mulino vows back to better times: The leading candidate to be Panama's next president is a last-minute stand-in who promises to return the Central American country to a boom time that experts say will be difficult to recapture.

José Raúl Mulino, a maritime lawyer and former security minister, was thrust to the top of the presidential ticket after Panama's electoral authorities ruled former President Ricardo Martinelli ineligible following his money laundering conviction and sentencing.

Lacking Martinelli's charisma and popular appeal, but benefiting from the supermarket magnate's vociferous support, Mulino has maintained a healthy lead in the field crowded with eight candidates ahead of the May 5 election.

The remaining field features a couple of also-rans from previous elections - Ricardo Lombana and Rómulo Roux - as



Preschool children under the program of "Out of School Education for Children (OSEC)" enter their classroom in Mosokotsi land located in Botswana's southern district of Kweneng, Gaborone on April 9. The OSEC is a viable alternative to ensure Botswana's promise of education for all. It addresses the needs of specific groups of children who are out of school for various reasons, particularly those living in rural areas. (Xinhua)

bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and Related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for (3) months with Interest Rate/Return of (4.375%).

dollar plunges

The exchange rate of the US dollar on Monday dropped 0.08 percent against the Kuwaiti dinar trading at KD 0.307 and the euro rose by 0.23 percent to KD 0.330 compared to Sunday's rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the sterling pound rose by 0.31 percent to KD 0.385, the Swiss franc rose by 0.25 percent trading at KD 0.337 and the Japanese yen remained stable at KD 0.0022.

Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions. (KUNA)

Gold prices went down at USD 2,338 per ounce after the closing of last week's exchange market, recording weekly losses for the first time in five weeks. Kuwaiti (Dar-AISabaek) company in a specialized report, said that gold futures prices reduced their gains due to the continued tightening of US monetary policy and the Federal Reserve (the central bank)'s insistence on not lowering interest rates in the short term. The American economic data had a major role in the sharp fluctuation witnessed in the price of gold last week, as the US Department of Commerce announced that the price index for personal consumption expenditures, including food and energy, rose by 2.7 percent on an annual basis in March, which is higher than estimates of 2.6 percent, which means the inflation index remains above the target level of two percent, the report added.

The US dollar regained some of its strength against other major currencies, as the index that measures the performance of the green currency increased by 0.4 percent to close at 106 points, which led to declines of gold price. The market observers expect the US Central Bank to postpone its decision to reduce interest rates in conjunction with University of Michigan data, which revealed an increase in American consumers' expectations for inflation during the coming year from 2.9 percent to 3.2 percent, "which are all indicators that indicate the bank's delay in reducing interest rates in the near future," the report said. (KUNA)

gold prices down to \$2,338 per ounce**Market Movements**

29-04-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts	
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+137.92	12,369.46		
DUBAI	-	DFM	+12.43	4,160.66		
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	+140.89	6,769.64		
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+1,371.65	26,011.28		
		PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-894.56	71,850.38

Business

Global 'sovereign wealth' funds reach \$12.7 trillion

Kuwait's sovereign fund vital amid economic challenges

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: According to the latest data from the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute in April 2024, the total value of sovereign funds worldwide reached approximately \$12.7 trillion, up from about \$11.9 trillion in the same period last year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The top 10 largest funds accounted for around \$9.2 trillion, representing approximately 72.7% of the total. Among the Gulf countries, the largest sovereign funds belong to the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar.

These sovereign funds play a crucial role in supporting economies that have achieved sustainability in their public finances or are actively pursuing that goal.

However, Kuwait is facing economic challenges and must focus on preserving and developing its sovereign fund. Unlike other Gulf countries, Kuwait is considering distributing its fund's revenues to address public finance issues and promote economic sustainability.

Regarding the Kuwaiti economy, growth expectations for the region have decreased from 3.6% to 2.4% for the year 2024. Kuwait's economy has been particularly affected, with growth expectations shifting from positive to negative.

This decline is attributed to geopolitical tensions and internal political factors. However, there are doubts about the accuracy of these projections due to deficiencies in national statistics and public administration.

Despite these challenges, the National Bank of Kuwait has shown improved profitability indicators compared to the previous year. All indicators, including return on equity, return on capital, return on assets, earnings per share, and price multiples, have increased, reflecting positive performance.

General market index down by 0.06%

Boursa Kuwait indices see slight decline for third consecutive day

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Sunday, the General Market and Premier Market indices on the Boursa Kuwait, marked their third consecutive decline, albeit with minimal changes, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The General Market Index experienced a marginal decrease of 0.06 percent, or 3.96 points, closing at 7022.09 points. Liquidity surged to 51.9 million dinars, with a total of 205.6 million shares traded across 12,378 transactions. Of the 121 shares traded, 49 gained, 51 lost, and 21 remained unchanged.

Similarly, the Premier Market Index dipped by 0.13 percent, or 9.60 points, settling at 7,653.54 points, with liquidity totaling 45.6 million dinars. Trading involved 147.7 million shares via 8,213 transactions. Out of the 33 shares traded, 12 gained, 15 lost, and 6 remained unchanged.

Conversely, the main market index bucked the trend, rising by 0.28 percent, or 16.63 points, to reach 5,919.55 points. Liquidity amounted to 6.3 million dinars, with 57.8 million shares traded over 4,165 transactions. Among the 88 shares traded, 37 gained, 36 lost, and 15 remained unchanged.

The trading session at Boursa Kuwait commenced with significant liquidity growth, along with an uptick in

the index level. Agility stock initially attracted attention, followed by KFH stock, although it faced selling pressure. Over time, purchasing interest returned to Agility, registering a notable increase nearing 5 percent.

Several small and medium-sized stocks experienced gains, with selective buying observed in "Future Kids," Unicap stock, and other smaller stocks. NBK remained stable, while the prices of certain stocks, including KFH, Senaat, Boubyan, Rasiyat, and Al-Mabane, declined.

Despite Al-Tijari shares experiencing a slight rise during yesterday's trading, ending the session in the red, liquidity exceeded 52 million dinars, instilling confidence amid logical technical corrections following the previous week's upswings. The potential for renewed rises remained high, with buying intentions and position building activities resuming throughout the week.

Across the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the performance of operational indices varied. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia witnessed declines, whereas Muscat, Doha, and Manama experienced varying degrees of increases, with Muscat leading with a one percent rise. Oil prices concluded at \$89 per barrel during last Friday's trading.

pared to the previous year. All indicators, including return on equity, return on capital, return on assets, earnings per share, and price multiples, have increased, reflecting positive performance.

In terms of merchandise exports,

Kuwait achieved a surplus in the fourth quarter of 2023, amounting to approximately 3.5 billion dinars. The majority of these exports were oil-related, highlighting the significance of the oil sector in Kuwait's economy.

Shareholders approve distribution of cash dividend at 37%

GIG sustains strong performance in 2023 despite global challenges

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) today held its Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meetings in which shareholders approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividend of 37% (37 fils per share) for the year ended 31 December 2023, the equivalent of 10.5 million Kuwaiti dinars. Attendance reached 91.947%.

Heading the meetings, Group Chairman Mr. Farqad Abdullah Al-Sane, presented the company's performance for the year and said:

"Despite global market uncertainties and geopolitical challenges that impacted industries, GIG successfully maintained its healthy position as an insurance leader in the Middle East and North Africa, ending the year 2023 with a solid bottom line and net profit of KD 21.2 million (US\$ 69 million), and a diversified business model that sets it for further sustainable development and growth. This was achieved thanks to a conservative strategy, sound governance and the Group's strength in effectively managing its business amidst pressures, ensuring flexibility and efficiency.

"As it moves forward, GIG continues to prioritize the interest of its stakeholders, and diligently monitors global developments as it aims at capitalizing on opportunities and delivering value to its shareholders. The Group is today very well positioned to continue its growth, supported by a global and reputed network of insurance and reinsurance leaders under the umbrella of GIG's majority shareholder, Fairfax Financial Holdings."

By the end of 2023, GIG obtained three credit ratings from leading agencies. Moody's rated GIG's Insurance Financial Strength Rating at "A2" with a stable future outlook, while S&P Global Ratings and A.M. Best both gave GIG an "A" rating with a stable outlook for its Financial Strength Rating and Issuer Credit Rating.

The Group also focuses on enhancing its standards of corporate governance across its operations and decision-making processes and invests in implementing best standards of sustainability. GIG recognizes sustainabil-



GIG executives

ity as a fundamental aspect of its core culture, serving as a primary supporting pillar for its continued success.

On his part, Group CEO Mr. Khalid Al-Hasan mentioned,

"We are proud at GIG to showcase this year again our resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to delivering value to our stakeholders. While global markets witnessed unprecedented events, we remained steadfast in our mission to provide comprehensive insurance solutions while navigating the evolving landscape of the MENA region. Our stable financial performance underscores our dedication to sustainable growth, value creation and digital transformation. This dedication to sustainability both in terms of growth, as well as in our operations, can be seen in our annual Sustainability Report where we proudly present our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion as a pillar to our success as well as our belief that prioritizing sustainability is crucial for long-term success and creating value for all stakeholders.

"2023 was also marked by another major milestone for our Group with Fairfax Financial Holdings becoming GIG's largest shareholder. The structural change accelerates our growth trajectory and aligns with our strategic vision of expanding beyond our region. We are now part of one of the largest

insurance networks in the world paving way for vast opportunities for collaboration, synergy, and expansion, positioning us as a formidable presence in the global insurance arena."

Al-Hasan concluded:

"We are optimistic about the opportunities ahead of GIG. We will continue to leverage our strengths to better serve and deliver long-term value to our stakeholders. Together, we built the brand, and we will continue to build on our achievements to propel GIG towards unprecedented sustainable growth. I extend my sincere gratitude to our loyal customers, esteemed partners, and dedicated shareholders for their unwavering support and trust in our journey throughout these years. Additionally, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to our exceptional employees whose dedication, hard work, and commitment have been instrumental in our success."

GIG is one of the leading insurance groups in the Middle East and North Africa, providing life, non-life and Takaful insurance for over 60 years in Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, UAE, KSA, Oman, Qatar, Iraq, and Lebanon.

Geopolitical tensions pose short-term risks

Global energy prices fall in March 2024, led by gas consumption decrease in EU

By KAMCO Invest

Natural Gas Market Update

Global energy prices fell across the board during March-2024 led by a notable decrease in gas consumption in the EU. The decline reflected lower heating demand driven by unusually warmer-than-expected winter in most of the EU countries. This caused Asian and European natural gas spot prices to decline to the lowest level since the Russia-Ukraine conflict during Q1-2024.

Overall, the World Bank's Natural Gas Index recorded 35.7% y-o-y decline during Q1-2024 to close March-2024 at 68.1 points. The World Bank's monthly average European natural gas price recorded 38.1% y-o-y decline to average 8.55 USD/MMBtu during March-2024 while the World Bank's US monthly average gas price witnessed a 34.9% y-o-y drop to an average of 1.5 USD/MMBtu during the month. In terms of East Asian LNG prices, the World Bank's liquefied average price for Japan recorded 24.8% y-o-y decline to reach 13.54 USD/MMBtu during March-2024.

According to the IEA, natural gas prices are expected to recover during 2024 and improve by 2.3% during the year driven by expected growth in demand primarily from the industrial power sectors of energy hungry fast-growing economies in Asia coupled with higher demand from residential and commercial sectors. Moreover, geopolitical tensions such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the war on Gaza and the stoppage of LNG transport across the Red Sea since the beginning of the year pose greater risk to the short-term outlook of the commodity during the year and might put an upward pressure on the current sluggish prices. It was a similar story in the Asian markets where unusually mild winter coincided with improving supply fundamentals during the winter season of 2023/24. On the other hand, the Asian markets witnessed a combination of higher LNG production in Asia as well as higher-than-expected piped natural gas deliveries to China, which brought downward pressure on Asian natural gas spot prices. Similarly in the US, the downward pressure on natural gas was brought in by a combination of ongoing increase in gas production and weak demand. Geopolitical tensions such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict have already disrupted natural gas markets and it took two years for the global gas markets to recalibrate and stabilize. However, new conflicts and current geopolitical tensions might limit growth of natural gas consumption in 2024, according to the IEA.

Growth in LNG demand in key markets in Asia and Europe is expected to be restricted by limited global LNG supply. In its latest Gas Market Report Q2-2024, the IEA penciled LNG growth to average 3% in 2024. According to the IEA, natural gas demand in Asia increased 6% y-o-y or 25 bcm during the period between the October-2023 till March-2024 period. China was the main driver on the growth in natural gas consumption as the country witnessed 9% y-o-y growth in its gas consumption during the same period.

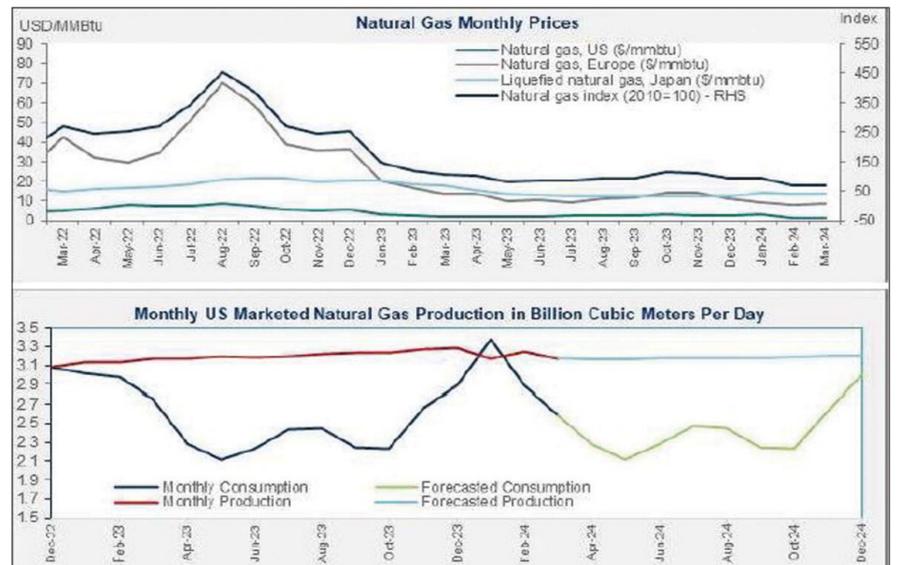
According to the latest Monthly Gas Report from GECF, natural gas demand in China improved 10% y-o-y to reach 34 bcm in Feb-2024. The growth in China's gas consumption

was mainly driven by the renewal of economic activities in the country. In context, electricity generation from natural gas in China increased by 14% y-o-y during Feb-2024 while total electricity production increased 10% y-o-y during the month. In terms of power mix for electricity generation in China, coal remained the largest fuel representing 65% of usage in China followed by renewables (19%), hydro (9%), nuclear (4%) and natural gas (3%). Similarly, natural gas consumption in Japan witnessed 10% y-o-y growth to reach 8.7 bcm in March-2024. The monthly growth in Japan's gas consumption was attributed to growing demand in the power generation sector due to cold weather. Japan's power sector witnessed 12% y-o-y increase in natural gas consumption which reached 4.6 bcm during March-2024.

The trend of monthly gas consumption growth was even stronger in other Asian countries such as South Korea and India. In February-2024, natural gas consumption in India jumped 25% y-o-y to 5.6 bcm registering its 14th consecutive month of y-o-y growth in natural gas consumption. India's monthly growth in gas consumption was mainly driven by energy demand growth in the power generation, petrochemical, and refinery sectors. Comparatively, natural gas consumption in South Korea, another major natural gas importer, increased 11% y-o-y in March-2024. This growth was fueled by increased demand in the power generation sector as well as city gas sectors.

Natural gas demand in the OECD Europe region recorded a 1% y-o-y decline during the 2023/24 heating season, according to the IEA. The dip in European gas consumption was attributed to a combination of developments impacting natural gas consumption in the region including strong expansion of renewable and nuclear energy consumption. Comparatively, natural gas consumption in the Eurasia region witnessed 4% y-o-y growth during the 2023/2024 heating period. Natural gas consumption in the EU fell 9% y-o-y during March-2024 mainly due to less energy demand for heating. According to latest report by GECF, gas power generation in the EU recorded 15% y-o-y drop during March-2024 while electricity generation in the block recorded relatively modest decline of 2.7% y-o-y during the month. German natural gas consumption fell 10% y-o-y to 7.4 bcm during March-2024. This significant drop in gas consumption in Europe's largest economy was mainly due to the fact that Germany witnessed the warmest March ever recorded in the country with average temperature being 7.4 degree Celsius or 2.8 degrees above the normal temperature. Moreover, Italy's natural gas consumption declined by 6% y-o-y to 5.7 bcm while gas consumption in France fell 13% y-o-y to 3.3 bcm during March-2024. Natural gas consumption in North America remained flat during the 2023/24 winter heating season, according to the IEA. Despite growth in gas-fired power generation, a steep decline in demand in the residential and commercial sectors due to mild winter weather was enough to offset that growth.

According to the GECF, total natural gas consumption in the US declined by 4.5% y-o-y to 80 bcm during March-2024. In context, natural gas consumption in US residential and commercial sectors dropped by 15% and 16 y-o-y, respectively. On the other hand, the US power gen-



eration sector maintained its natural gas consumption during March-2024 mainly due to the ongoing coal to natural gas switch in the sector.

The global LNG market trade remained strong during the 2023/24 heating period. There have been several liquefaction projects that came online during the past year (2023) which have greatly supported in meeting the global growing demand for LNG. Global aggregate traded volumes for LNG increased by 3% y-o-y over the October-2023 till March-2024 period. However, LNG imports in certain regions of the globe fell during 2023/24 heating period. OECD Europe's primary natural gas supply declined by an estimated 4% (or 10 bcm) y-o-y over the 2023/24 heating season, on the back of combination of lower natural gas demand and high storage levels. According to the IEA, LNG imports in Europe fell 12% y-o-y or 11.5 bcm during 2023/24.

In its latest short-term energy outlook, the EIA forecasted that US natural gas consumption would remain stable at 104 bcf/d (2.94 bcm/d) in 2024 reflecting an overall expected consumption stabilization in the country. The EIA also estimates that US natural gas marketed production to reach 90 bcf/d (2.55 bcm/d) in 2024 witnessing an increase of 1.1% from 2023 to 2024. In terms of sectors, the EIA forecasts that the US natural gas share of electricity generation to remain at 42% in 2024 and then witness a marginal drop to 41% in 2025. In terms of natural gas prices in the US, the EIA forecasts the Henry Hub natural gas spot price to average at around USD 2.20/MMBtu during 2024 and then

increase to USD 2.90/MMBtu in 2025 due to expected rise in demand for LNG exports which is forecasted to reach an annual record in 2025. In terms of US LNG exports in 2024, the EIA expects US (LNG) exports to average 12 Bcf/d (0.34 bcm/d) in 2024, recording a 2% increase compared with 2023. Furthermore, US LNG exports are expected to increase by a further 2 Bcf/d (0.06 bcm/d) or 18% in 2025; due to the additional LNG export capacity that is expected to be afforded by three of the five LNG export projects currently under construction which are expected to start operations and increase up to full production.

In the GCC, Qatar has announced another expansion of its LNG capacity during Q1-2024. QatarEnergy has announced its third phase of LNG expansion during February-2024 which is expected to add 16 million tons of LNG per annum. The additional capacity is expected to increase Qatar's overall capacity to 142 million tons per annum by 2030. In context, Qatar has been working on to increase its LNG expansion capacity for the last six years and there have been notable projects previously unveiled by the country including the 127 million tons per annum project expected to be completed by 2027. Moreover, Qatar has been positioning itself to take advantage of Europe's growing demand for LNG to replace the continents Russian natural gas supply. According to Bloomberg, Qatari LNG will be reserved in the UK's giant new LNG tank from the middle of next year. Reserving capacity in the UK is a strategic move for Qatar as it would make it easier for the GCC country to send volumes of LNG to the UK, store them and deliver to customers.

Budget deficits in 2024-2025 should be limited given higher dividends from Aramco

Saudi Arabia's non-oil growth to be broadly steady in 2024

By National Bank of Kuwait

Saudi Arabia

Non-oil economic growth decelerated in 2023 though remained robust at 3.8% (private sector +4.4%) as consumption expenditure proved resilient. We project non-oil growth to be broadly steady in 2024 (+3.7%) then potentially accelerate in 2025 helped by lower interest rates. Budget deficits in 2024-2025 should be limited given higher dividends from Aramco and a modest rise in government spending. The main upside risk is higher-than-forecast oil production in 2024-2025 while the major downside risk is a weaker-than-expected non-oil expansion that may be triggered by the projected deceleration in government spending growth and/or pressure from ongoing elevated interest rates.

Non-oil private sector growth to accelerate in 2025

Despite higher interest rates, non-oil economic growth remained robust in 2023, softening to 3.8% from 5.3% in 2022. The private sector continued to be the growth driver, although its expansion moderated to 4.4% in 2023 from a strong 5.6% in 2022. Sector-wise, trade, restaurants, and hotels contributed the most to GDP growth, expanding by 7% in 2023, supported by the strong focus on boosting tourism, both inbound as well as domestic. In terms of expenditure on GDP, private-sector investment continued to be the fastest growing, although it decelerated sharply to 6.2% in 2023 from a very strong 22% average in 2021-2022.

We expect the constructive macro-economic dynamics to be sustained in 2024 and potentially accelerate in 2025 as the impact of lower interest rates starts to kick in. Consumer spending remains resilient, with the value of POS transactions up around 10% y/y through mid-April, in line with the increase recorded in 2023. Despite ongoing tight liquidity in the banking sector, credit growth (+11% y/y through February) remains buoyant, even showing signs of strengthening in the first months of 2024, driven by corporate credit (+15%). The PMI continues to be favorable (averaging 56.5 in Q1), and while it hit a recent low in January, has improved driven by the important sub-indices of output and new orders. We forecast the non-oil sector to grow by a broadly steady 3.7% in 2024 and then by 4.2% in 2025, driven by private sector gains of 4.5% and 5%, respectively.

This positive outlook is supported by the government's effective policy-making and the upgrade to the projected spending levels for 2024-2025 in the latest budget. There are challenges along the way, however. For example, given that government spending

soared by an average of 12% in each of the past two years, the spending intensity is set to slow in 2024-2025, which could weigh on non-oil activity. In addition, given some stalling in the US disinflation progress so far this year, the cut in interest rates is being pushed out to late 2024, keeping Saudi interbank rates, and hence the cost of borrowing elevated, which is not supportive for non-oil activity this year. Consequently, the tailwind of lower interest rates (Saudi policy rates usually move together with US rates) will be mostly a story for 2025. Another key metric to monitor is foreign direct investment (given that higher investment levels are crucial to achieve Vision 2030 targets), which, after rising strongly in 2021-2022, dropped in 2023 to stand at 1.8% of GDP compared with a 5.7% target for 2030.

As for the oil sector, growth was negative in 2023 (-9%) given the production cuts, which deepened around the middle of that year. Given our house view on oil market dynamics, Saudi oil production is expected to remain at current levels throughout 2024 and increase only gradually next year, translating into oil GDP growth of -5.2% and +3.7%, respectively. However, KSA will likely continue to take a very proactive and nimble role in managing global oil supply, which could result in a steep deviation from our oil production assumptions for 2024-2025. All in all, total GDP is forecast to increase by a limited 1.2% in 2024, pressured by the oil sector, then grow by a stronger 4.2% in 2025 as oil GDP growth turns positive and non-oil growth strengthens.

Inflation to soften further; unemployment at a record low

Inflation (which remained relatively low, driven by subsidies, price caps, and strong competition) continued to soften, standing at 1.6% y/y through March, with housing rentals (+10.5% y/y) almost the sole driver of price pressures over the past year. Despite ongoing hot housing rentals, we project average inflation to continue softening, standing at 1.8% and 2% in 2024-2025, down from 2.3% in 2023. Solid non-oil growth and ongoing Saudization initiatives dropped the unemployment rate among Saudis to an all-time low of 7.7% at the end of 2023, down from 8% one year before, and a stone's throw from the 7% target set for 2030.

Manageable fiscal deficits; higher oil GDP upside risk

An 11% increase in spending in 2023, a 12% drop in oil revenues but a 11% rise in non-oil revenues resulted in a fiscal deficit of 2% of GDP. We project limited deficits of 1.7%-2% of GDP in 2024-2025, as government spending (which will likely continue to exceed budget) rises modestly, oil revenues increase on higher dividends from Aramco, and non-oil revenues continue growing, fueled by an expanding non-oil sector.

Zain supports efforts of economic diversification in Kuwaiti market

Company sponsored UAE Companies Investment Meet

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Zain has sponsored the UAE Companies Investment Meet, entitled Unlocking Kuwait's Potential, organized by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Kuwait. The event ran for two consecutive days at the Regency Hotel and was joined by 20 UAE-based companies from across the most vibrant industries.

The event was attended by the representative of H.H. the Prime Minister; H.E. Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Joan, H.E. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmad AlZeyoudi, H.E. UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Mutar AlNeyadi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al Kharafi, Vice Chairman and CEO of International Financial Advisors (IFA) & Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies Saleh Al Selmi, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Industry Mohammed Al Adwani, along with top executives and leaders from both the public and private sectors.

The UAE Companies Investment Meet was organized by the Embassy of the UAE in Kuwait in partnership with the Union of Investment Companies, the UAE Chambers, the UAE International Investors Council, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotions Authority (KDIPA), the Public Authority of Manpower, the Public Authority for Industry, and the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP).

During the event, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti affirmed Zain's



H.E. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani Al Zeyoudi and Bader Nasser Al Kharafi with top leaders at the event.



Zain affirmed its support to efforts promoting economic diversification locally.

support to this influential gathering that contributed to fostering sustainable growth in the Kuwaiti market across industries. He explained that Zain believes such platforms play a significant role in enhancing the business landscape, achieving economic diversification, promoting competitiveness, and positioning Kuwait on the regional map as an investment hub.

Al Khashti also noted that Kuwait's private sector is a key strategic partner to local developmental goals and remains a main pillar of success, as

it plays a prominent role in leading the economic landscape, promoting diversification, enhancing productivity, and fostering long-term sustainable growth. This has led Zain to support this event that has contributed to achieving these goals.

The UAE Companies Investment Meet aimed to enhance Kuwaiti-Emirati bilateral relations, diversify commercial partnerships in the Kuwaiti market and support their growth, explore promising investment opportunities to achieve sustainable growth, and

offer space for exchanging ideas and expertise. 20 UAE-based companies joined the event, representing vibrant industries like food security, infrastructure, health, technology, transportation, shipbuilding, aircraft maintenance, and more.

The companies demonstrated their offerings and strategic efforts to the local business community, with many presentations held to introduce investors and potential business partners to opportunities for collaboration, investment, and strategic partnership.

Mohammed bin Rashid is a marvel of his time: Loay Jassim Al Kharafi

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: During the UAE Companies Exhibition and Forum held in Kuwait on April 28 and 29, graced by esteemed leaders and officials from the economic sectors of both nations, and featuring the participation of 20 prominent Emirati companies spanning the public and private domains, and in light of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum announcement of the approval of designs for a new passenger terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport, setting the stage for Dubai to spearhead the global aviation sector for the forthcoming four decades.

Loay Jassim Al Kharafi, CEO of Mohamed Abdul Mohsen Al Kharafi and Sons company, expressed profound admiration, stating: "Mohammed bin Rashid is a marvel of his time — a shining example of rare excellence. His dreams and endeavors, executed with quiet determination, continually impressing the world and bringing prosperity not only to his country but to the whole region. Congratulations to the Emirates and beyond. He stands as the visionary architect, builder, and financial expert of the region, navigating through a world full of conflicts and divisions. Yet, we witness the fruition of stability and robust economic growth."

The forum presents a significant opportunity to strengthen exports and industrial integration between the UAE and Kuwait. It facilitates discussions on tenders and investment prospects for Emirati companies in Kuwait's market. Non-oil trade between the two countries grew



Loay Jassim Al Kharafi

by 2% in 2023, reaching 45 billion dirhams, a notable increase from previous years. The UAE serves as the primary destination for Kuwait's non-oil exports, accounting for 22% of its global exports. These figures underscore the UAE's pivotal role as a gateway for Kuwaiti exports and re-exports worldwide. The forum offers numerous avenues to boost trade cooperation between the UAE and Kuwait and reinforce their strategic economic partnership.

The exhibition and forum reflect the shared commitment of both countries to enhance collaboration across various sectors. The inaugural Emirati Companies Exhibition and Forum brought together local, regional,

and international companies and investment institutions, providing an ideal platform to explore promising sectors, industries, and key investment and commercial opportunities for Emirati companies in the Kuwaiti market.

Dr. Matar Al Neyadi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, inaugurated the exhibition and forum, with the presence of Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi- UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Mr. Abdullah Al-Joan - Minister of Trade and Industry in Kuwait, Mr. Abdullah Al Mazrui - President of UAE Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and other prominent economic figures from both countries.

Dubai plans to move its busy int'l airport

DUBAI, April 29, (AP): Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, will move its operations to the city-state's second, sprawling airfield in its southern desert reaches "within the next 10 years" in a project worth nearly \$35 billion, its ruler said Sunday.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's announcement marks the latest chapter in the rebound of its long-haul carrier Emirates after the coronavirus pandemic grounded international travel. Plans have been on the books for years to move the operations of the airport known as DXB to Al Maktoum International Airport at Dubai World Central which had also been delayed by the repercussions of the sheikhdom's 2009 economic crisis.

"We are building a new project for future generations, ensuring continuous and

stable development for our children and their children in turn," Sheikh Mohammed said in an online statement. "Dubai will be the world's airport, its port, its urban hub and its new global center."

The announcement included computer-rendered images of curving, white terminal reminiscent of the traditional Bedouin tents of the Arabian Peninsula. The airport will include five parallel runways and 400 aircraft gates, the announcement said. The airport now has just two runways, like Dubai International Airport.

The financial health of the carrier Emirates has served as a barometer for the aviation industry worldwide and the wider economic health of this city-state. Dubai and the airline rebounded quickly from the pandemic by pushing forward with tourism even as some countries more slowly came out of their pandemic crouch.

The number of passengers flying through DXB surged last year beyond its total for 2019 with 86.9 million passengers. Its 2019 annual traffic was 86.3 million passengers. The airport had 89.1 million passengers in 2018 - its busiest-ever year before the pandemic, while 66 million passengers passed through in 2022.

Earlier in February, Dubai announced its best-ever tourism numbers, saying it hosted 17.15 million international overnight visitors in 2023. Average hotel occupancy stood at around 77%. Its boom-and-bust real estate market remains on a hot streak, nearing all-time high valuations.

But as those passenger numbers skyrocketed, it again put new pressure on the capacity of DXB, which remains constrained on all sides by residential neighborhoods and two major highways.

Kuwait and United Arab Emirates



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Sponsorship aligned with digital transformation plan, says Sager Albenali

ABK sponsors 'AI: Scary Smart' lecture with Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced its sponsorship of the 'AI: Scary Smart' lecture organized by the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS), attended by Mr. Talal Behbehani, Chairman of ABK, as well as leaders in the banking and telecom industries. This was hosted by Mohammad Jawdat, former CEO at X (formerly known as GoogleX) and expert in artificial intelligence.

This lecture revolved around artificial intelligence and its prominent technologies, major developments and mechanisms during the coming years. It also covered the effects of the rapid development of artificial intelligence, technological transformations and their impact on growth opportunities and the future of the banking and other sectors, as well as societies and individuals.

The Bank's sponsorship of the lecture reflects its commitment to staying abreast of artificial intelligence advancements, leveraging them to improve operational processes, solutions, and banking services. This aims to boost its competitive position in Kuwait's banking sector, and meeting customers' needs in accordance with the highest international standards.

The sponsorship also underscores the strong rapport between ABK and KIBS, emphasizing the Bank's ongoing dedication to enriching the banking sector through collaborative initiatives. This includes fostering employee expertise in partnership with reputable institutions on the local, regional, and global scale.

On this occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at



Chairman of ABK Talal Behbehani and the bank's team during the event.



Key attendees during the panel discussion.

ABK, said, "Our sponsorship of the 'AI Scary Smart' lecture aligns with our ongoing digital transformation plan to boost operational efficiency, drive innovation, and implement automation across our operations to enhance performance across the Bank."

Furthermore, he emphasized that artificial intelligence is a significant force in today's business sectors. He highlighted the Bank's commitment to understanding its benefits and utilization methods to align with established plans efficiently and within the allotted timelines.

Albenali closed his statement by affirming, "ABK strives to stay abreast of technological advancements in the banking sector. Sponsoring the seminar has enabled us to delve into different facets of artificial intelligence, particularly through Jawdat's expertise and comprehensive discussions covering various topics."

Marafi encourages following ABK on social media for latest offers

ABK introduces AI Tajar Plus merchant account with special interest rates

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has announced the launch of its new AI Tajar Plus business account with exclusive benefit packages, setting a new industry standard. With this account, ABK becomes the first in the market to provide special interest rates tailored specifically for business owners.

Recognizing the vital role that SMEs play in driving economic growth, ABK is dedicated to supporting and rewarding this essential customer segment. The AI Tajar Plus account has been meticulously crafted to cater to the unique financial needs of merchants, providing them with a competitive edge in today's dynamic marketplace.

In her statement, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, emphasized the significance of this offering, stating, "We understand the importance of SMEs in fueling economic prosperity. As such, we are proud to introduce a game-changing solution that not only empowers merchants but also



Ms. Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking

demonstrates our commitment to their success."

AI Tajar Plus encompasses a comprehensive suite of benefits, including a 1% monthly interest rate, a personally designed debit card, a free Mastercard Gold credit card, free monthly account statements, free monthly checkbooks, free local and international money transfers, and a free monthly certi-



ABK AI Tajar Plus

fied cheque. This is in addition to special discounts with strategic partners that can assist companies in establishing and growing their business.

In line with its customer-centric approach, ABK continues to innovate and enhance its offerings to meet the evolving needs of its diverse customer base. Through the introduction of AI Tajar Plus ac-

count's offerings, ABK reaffirms its commitment to empowering merchants and catalyzing economic progress.

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

Earn 30% cashback on Cari & Jahez

Weyay Bank introduces exclusive benefits for students' allowances

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Weyay Bank, the first digital bank in Kuwait, unveils its latest initiative tailored exclusively for students receiving allowances. With a steadfast commitment to understanding and addressing the unique needs of young consumers, Weyay Bank's newest campaign is set to redefine the banking experience for this demographic.

In a bold move to empower students, Weyay Bank introduces an unparalleled opportunity: transfer your allowance to Weyay Bank and unlock tailored benefits. By simply using their Weyay Prepaid card, students gain access to an array of exclusive rewards, including:

- 30% Cashback on Cari and Jahez: Recognizing the importance of convenience in today's fast-paced world, Weyay Bank partners with Cari and Jahez to provide students with unbeatable cashback rewards on their online orders, empowering them to save while savoring their favorite meals. Terms and conditions apply.

- 1% Cashback on All Spends: Every transaction counts, and with Weyay Bank, students can earn rewards effortlessly. From textbooks to transportation, every purchase contributes to their savings, with 1%

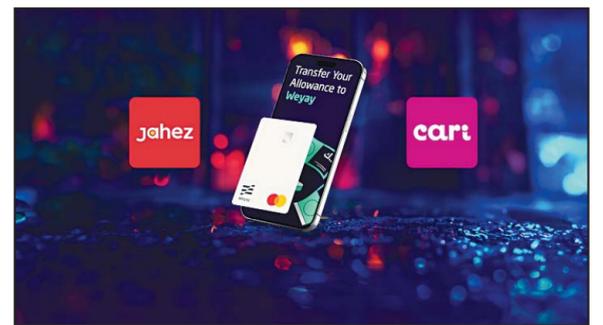


Mohammad Al-Hunaidi

cashback on all spendings. Terms and conditions apply.

Moreover, this campaign marks just the beginning of Weyay Bank's ongoing dedication to creating tailored offers for allowance students. With a proactive approach to understanding and meeting the evolving needs of students, Weyay Bank promises even more thrilling opportunities on the horizon.

"Weyay Bank is not just a financial institution; it's a lifestyle partner for today's dynamic students," remarked Mohammad Al-Hunaidi, Product



Allowance cashback poster.

Owner at Weyay Bank. "Our latest campaign is a testament to our unwavering commitment to empowering students and enhancing their banking experience. We're thrilled to kickstart this journey and look forward to launch more exciting offers designed specifically for allowance recipients."

Furthermore, Weyay Bank offers a comprehensive suite of digital products and services that complement and enrich the student lifestyle. From Digital Allowance and Salary Transfer to Budgeting and Tracking, Saving Pots, Peer-to-Peer Money Re-

quests, stc Digital Store, and more, Weyay Bank continues to lead the digital banking landscape in Kuwait. Moreover, with Weyay's streamlined account opening process, customers can open an account in under 3 minutes, ensuring hassle-free access to their innovative banking solutions.

As Weyay Bank continues to revolutionize the banking landscape in Kuwait, students are encouraged to stay tuned for forthcoming announcements and discover how Weyay Bank is shaping the future of student banking.

'Diraya' campaign targets financial literacy

KIB enhances data protection measures for financial fraud

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) continues to improve banking protection measures, and to dedicate all efforts aimed at enhancing customer awareness and financial literacy, particularly concerning the increasing incidents of financial fraud. This initiative is part of the 'Let's Be Aware' (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, which was launched four years ago by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association, in collaboration with

local Kuwaiti banks. KIB's efforts in this area reflect its ongoing commitment to protecting its customers' assets and elevating their banking experience to new levels of security and reliability.

In discussing the Bank's direction in this matter, Ammar Maqames, Manager of the Electronic Banking Services Department at KIB, said: "At KIB, we reaffirm our ongoing commitment to tracking and combating any financial fraud attempts that our customers might encounter, whether they originate from fake advertisements intended to violate their privacy and steal their financial and personal data, or from other increasingly varied methods we've observed recently." Maqames added: "To achieve the main goal of our efforts in ensuring the reliability of banking operations, we continually work on developing banking protection systems and enhancing measures that provide our customers with a secure experience across all our banking channels, such as the KIB mobile app, KIB online service, and more."

Maqames pointed out that KIB enhanced its data protection measures by introducing confirmation steps to the process of adding a new beneficiary through its online banking services. The steps involve sending a message

containing a one-time password (OTP) to the customer's mobile phone. The message includes the name of the new beneficiary and the Bank's contact information in the event of suspected fraud. The Bank also sends a notification about the success or failure of the process. More importantly, the Bank will not activate the beneficiary before the lapse of at least 12 hours, unless the customer contacts the Bank to confirm adding the beneficiary from their part. Additionally, KIB contacts the customer if any suspicious activity or transaction is detected on their bank account, and continues to enhance its security systems and fraud prevention mechanisms for electronic payment links and the financial services it provides to its customers.

It is worth mentioning that KIB recognizes the importance of its leading role in educating its customers to prevent them from falling victim to fraud. The Bank consistently publishes material related to financial awareness on all its digital and electronic channels to guide customers towards safe and appropriate responses to any fraud attempts.

In this context, the Bank reemphasizes the importance of adhering to certain recommendations should one encounter any suspicious fraud attempts. Key among these is the urgent need to report to the customer service center immediately at the number 1866866 if there is any suspicion of a data breach involving financial or personal information, or if unusual activity is observed on bank accounts, ATM cards, or credit cards. Additionally, it is vital not to respond to any calls requesting bank card details or one-time passwords (OTP), to ignore any suspicious emails or text messages, to avoid clicking on links from unknown sources, and to refrain from installing any software requested over a phone call. The Bank also assures that neither it nor any of its employees will, under any circumstances, request any private banking information, one-time passwords (OTP), or passwords in this manner or by any other means.



Maqames



Diraya campaign poster.

IDAK hosts 'Basic Life Hackathon' empowering children with essential skills

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: The Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) recently spearheaded an engaging initiative, the 'Basic Life Hackathon,' aimed at equipping children above 10 years old with crucial life skills. The event, organized by the Cultural Committee under the leadership of Dr. Aysa John, garnered enthusiasm from participants, parents and organizers alike.

Inaugurating the Hackathon, IDAK General Secretary Dr. Jijan Sam Thomas, emphasized the importance of such activities for youth, acknowledging the necessity to prepare them for various life scenarios. Dr. Jijan extended gratitude to all involved in conceptualizing and executing the event.

The 'Basic Life Hackathon' comprised of three comprehensive sessions designed to address everyday challenges and foster creativity among the young participants. The first segment featured an interactive discussion led by Educational Psychologist Mrs. Simi Rajesh on "Overcoming Challenges", which was greatly appreciated by the young participants.

Subsequent sessions delved into practical life skills, covering topics such as table etiquette, basic electrical and plumbing fixes, stitching, shoe lace tying, tie knots, as well as



Photos from event

fostering creative abilities through activities like pour painting, cookie baking, and string art.

The event witnessed active participation from members of the Cultural Committee, including Dr. Aysa John, Dr. Pramod Menon, Dr. Santosh C V, Dr. Prabha Ramabhadran, Dr. Reebha Sara Thomas, and Dr. Parvathy Rajkumar, who led the hands-on training sessions.

Dr. George P Alex, President of IDAK, commended the organizing

team for their innovative endeavor and pledged continued support for similar initiatives in the future. Certificates of appreciation were awarded to all participants by IDAK's Vice President Dr. Roshila Mathew, President Elect Dr. Shalin Simon, and Joint Secretaries Dr. Asheel Mohammed and Dr. Amrita Geevarghese.

In a gesture of appreciation, Cultural Committee Co-Chair Dr. Pramod Menon extended heartfelt thanks to all participants, parents and

IDAK volunteers Dr. Srikanth Reddy, Dr. Sudhin Kurien, Dr. Jyothy V Kuriakose, Dr. Remya Mathew and Mrs. Regina Thomas whose contributions made the event a resounding success. He also thanked Mango Hyper and Al Mulla Exchange Company for their financial support for IDAK activities.

The 'Basic Life Hackathon' stands as a testament to IDAK's commitment to nurturing the holistic development of the younger generation.

'The Contestant' focuses on Nasubi's remarkable journey

Docu revisits a bizarre 1990s Japanese reality show

TOKYO, April 29, (AP) - Naked and frail, a shaggy-haired man films himself as he endures solitude in a tiny room for months, and months more.

"The Contestant," directed by Clair Titley, explores the story behind the late 1990s hit reality TV show from Japan, "A Life in Prizes," in which a comedian nicknamed Nasubi is forced to survive on whatever he can redeem from mail-in coupons, as he is denied contact with the outside world.

The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2023 and will stream on Hulu from May 2.

Tomoaki Hamatsu - whose nickname "Nasubi," meaning eggplant in Japanese, refers jokingly to his long chin - never manages to clothe himself and remains naked throughout the show. But he dances to celebrate the things he does obtain, especially food, even if it's just a pot of kimchi.

Canada's National Post, in a review of Titley's documentary, described the TV show as "The Truman Show" meets "OldBoy," referring to the 1998 American film starring Jim Carrey about a man who unwittingly stars in a reality TV show about his own life and the 2003 Cannes-winning Korean film about an imprisoned man.

The British director Titley said she chanced upon the reality show and reached out to Nasubi because she felt no one had ever told his side of the story.

"I felt that they were kind of dismissive and even derogatory to an extent about, you know, look at those crazy Japanese. And I really wanted to know Nasubi's story. I really wanted to know what had hap-

pened to him, why he'd stayed in there," she said in a recent Zoom interview with The Associated Press.

What makes her documentary more than a just-for-laughs, big-in-Japan satire are the interviews Titley conducts with Hamatsu's mother, sister and friend, who express outrage, sorrow, pride and a mix of other emotions as the show grew into a prime-time hit. They said they felt sorry for what he endured, including his nudity.

The film also explores Hamatsu's childhood experience of being bullied because of his long chin and how he turned to laughter to protect himself.

Solitude

Hamatsu says the hardest part of the show was the solitude, although being without clothing - and very little food - for a year and three months also took a toll on him. The comedian was moved to tears when he received a standing ovation at a New York screening of the documentary.

"I feel I was able to relay a positive message through the documentary," he said.

"The Contestant" raises serious questions about how far society might go for entertainment, and the big audiences and money it represents.

The show's producer said in the documentary he just wanted to "capture the moment" and did not mention any reservations about producing the show.

"I think to an extent we are all complicit in these narratives. I think

that's something to be aware of. It's very easy to stand back and look at all of this, and sort of think, 'Oh, look at what those producers did.' But, you know, as viewers we need to take some responsibility," Titley said.

The film explores the various emotions of being trapped in different ways, including in relationships, hardships or just feelings of meaninglessness.

Hamatsu is from Fukushima in northeastern Japan, which was hit by the March 2011 triple disaster, when a giant tsunami followed a 9.0 magnitude quake and devastated the coastline, setting off the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl.

Hamatsu, who still works as an actor, also devotes his time to the reconstruction of Fukushima and raising awareness about the region.

"I want everyone to know the people of Fukushima are working hard," he said.

"Life is gradually returning to what used to be in the exclusion zones. Of course, I realize the road to decommissioning the nuclear plants is still a long battle. But I would like people to know the Fukushima of today, feel hope by visiting Fukushima and watch Fukushima rebuild."

In a vindication of sorts at the end of the documentary, Hamatsu becomes a climber and conquers Mount Everest, a feat he dedicates to Fukushima.

Many people think the famous show 25 years ago was the high point of Hamatsu's life, since he is not on TV much anymore, he said.

"But it's just the opposite. That was the worst point in my life. I overcame that. And now I am free to do what I want."

Film

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Jerry Seinfeld, from left, Cedric The Entertainer and Jim Gaffigan in a scene from 'Unfrosted.' (AP)

Film

From stand-up to director: The 'Unfrosted' journey

Seinfeld's commitment to the bit

NEW YORK, April 29, (AP) - Jerry Seinfeld has been responsible for more movies than you think.

Yes, he co-wrote and lent his voice to 2007's "Bee Movie." But before that, "Seinfeld" - where going to the movies, with or without the aid of MovieFone, was nearly as regular a destination as the coffee shop - gave birth to dozens of (fake) films. "Rochelle, Rochelle." "Prognosis Negative." "Sack Lunch."

But nearly three decades after Seinfeld was, in one episode, cajoled into bootlegging "Death Blow," he has finally made his first film. Seinfeld directed, co-wrote and stars in "Unfrosted," a star-studded comedy about the invention of the Pop-Tart premiering May 3 on Netflix.

The film, which co-stars Melissa McCarthy, Jim Gaffigan, Hugh Grant and others, is an outlandish, "Mad Men"-inspired '60s-set satire in which Kellogg's and Post Cereal are engaged in a cutthroat race to "up-end America's breakfast table."

"When you see any scene of it you go, 'What is that?' And I was very happy about that," Seinfeld said in a recent interview. "I like that you look at it and go, 'I don't know what this is.'"

For Seinfeld, who has resolutely stuck to stand-up since "Seinfeld" ended in 1998, it's a rare post-sitcom project, joining a short and sporadic list including the short-lived reality series "The Marriage Ref" and the popular streaming show "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee."

"Unfrosted," though, returns Seinfeld to one of his abiding passions. Remember all those cereal boxes in his apartment on "Seinfeld"? The Pop-Tart is a particular fascination, though. In his 2020 comedy special "23 Hours to Kill," it formed an extended bit beginning with the childhood memory: "When they invented the Pop-Tart, the back of my head blew right off."

For Seinfeld, the Pop-Tart has an almost mythical quality. A movie about Oreos or Milk Duds or even Junior Mints wouldn't work, he says. But the Pop-Tart is different.

"A lot of it is the word. It's a funny word," says Seinfeld. "I heard Mattel is trying to do a Hot Wheels movie. That could work. Certain things really got us when we were kids, you know?"

In a wide-ranging interview, Seinfeld discussed sub-

jects large and small.

AP: Is it true that your moments on the "Curb Your Enthusiasm" finale were improvised with Larry David?

Seinfeld: The idea occurred right in that moment. I said, "Hey, let's talk about the finale right now." We had been talking about it all day because it was their finale. We were just talking about series finales all day. And I was saying that "Mad Men" was my favorite and I thought "The Sopranos" one was great, and obviously ours was what it was.

AP: What does that mean? You're happy with it or not?

Seinfeld: Well, I think what we said in that scene. We thought, "Yeah, that would have been better." (Laughs) It's very hard to remember. The emotional state I was in after nine years was a little ragged. Maybe we weren't thinking quite clearly. The idea of doing that on his show - the math of it is really amazing. To do that, two people have to have two successful long-running sitcoms and they have to be playing themselves, with a 25-year separation. When I was driving home that night on the 10 in L.A., my head was exploding because of the math of what just happened - to set something up in '98 and pay it off in '23. For a joke person like me, I felt like I landed on the moon.

AP: "Unfrosted" began with an old stand-up bit of yours. Is it surprising to you that you've made a movie about it?

Seinfeld: It was all ("Seinfeld" writer) Spike Feresten's idea. I did not want to do it. I did not think it would work. What's a movie about inventing the Pop-Tart? That's not funny. And ("Seinfeld" writer) Andy Robin came up with the idea that it's "The Right Stuff." And I went, "Oh, that's funny."

AP: I think you have a line about "splitting the atom of breakfast" so this is also like a snack-size "Oppenheimer."

Seinfeld: Yes, "Oppenheimer." I think it's a fun game if anyone wants to play - how many movies we stole from. Obviously, "The Godfather," obviously "The Right Stuff." At one point, I was going to say, "I'll bury you under the ground, Eli," from "There Will Be Blood." And we weren't even going to explain it. The character's name wasn't Eli.

AP: You once in an interview suggested you only say you love Pop-Tarts to make the joke work.

Seinfeld: I probably just said that to make that point. But I do love Pop-Tarts. I had one yesterday. We were doing a social media piece with Jimmy Fallon and Meghan Trainor. I took a bite and I went, "This is fantastic." What I like about it is the man-made quality of it. I love great objects that fit in your hand in a nice way. A pack of cigarettes is one of the greatest things you can put in your hand. It just feels great. Dice feel great. I like a nice spoon. I like things. (Laughs)

AP: Were you aware of the recent trend of movies based on products?

Seinfeld: Yeah, but we were started long before that. I was a little disappointed that I suddenly became part of a trend but there was nothing we could do about it.

AP: Do you have any guesses as to why we've turned our focus to American consumerism? Your film is a big, silly satire of American consumerism.

Seinfeld: For me, I love men in suits talking about something stupid, like cereal and puffs and sprinkles.

AP: You've often spoken about your dedication to sharpening and sculpting a joke. Are you still driven by that?

Seinfeld: I started a bit the other night about your kitchen sponge on the sink looking up at you going: "I don't know how much more you think I have. I was done two months ago." Now it's just growing and growing into a monologue of your kitchen sponge telling you, "Let me go! Let me die a rectangle, not in pieces." When I lock on to something like that, I just want to see how far I can go with it, how long will they let me talk about this.

AP: You're about to turn 70. Is that meaningful to you?

Seinfeld: No.

AP: Some entertainers turn inward when they reach their 70s, like Steven Spielberg did with "The Fabelmans." But maybe this is a very personal movie for you.

Seinfeld: Very much. This is my "Fabelmans." Because I'm not interested in my life. I'm interested in eating.

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Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024

PARIS: French media are reporting that police have summoned actor Gérard Depardieu for questioning about allegations made by two women that he sexually assaulted them on movie sets.

Broadcaster BFMTV and the daily Le Parisien both reported that the 75-year-old actor was called in for police questioning in Paris on Monday.

The Paris police, the Paris prosecutor's office, Depardieu's lawyers and a lawyer for one of the alleged victims did not immediately respond to Associated Press emails seeking comment.

BFMTV and Le Parisien reported that the police summons relate to accusations of sexual assault filed by two women who accuse him of groping during filming - one in 2014, the other in 2021.

Depardieu has also been accused by more than a dozen other women of harassing, groping or sexually assaulting them. He was handed preliminary rape and sexual assault charges in 2020 following allegations from actor Charlotte Arnould.

Depardieu denies wrongdoing. In an open letter last October, he said: "I have never, ever abused a woman." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: The sexy tennis drama "Challengers" won the box office this weekend with \$15 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Zendaya and costars Mike Faist and Josh O'Connor have been on a globetrotting press tour to get the word out about Italian director Luca Guadagnino's original film, which opened in 3,477 locations in the U.S. and Canada.

"We're obviously very, very happy with the number," said Kevin Wilson, who heads the theatrical distribution for Amazon Studios and MGM. "Looking at the audience who showed up, it's really encouraging. It's not the easiest audience to get to theaters."

Women made up 58% of ticket buyers, who also skewed younger overall: 41% were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Ticket sales from large format screens, including IMAX, made up about 40% of the opening weekend grosses. According to PostTrak exit poll reported by Deadline, 55% of audiences said they went to see the film because of Zendaya. In fact,

this weekend, Zendaya movies accounted for around 26% of the overall box office with the re-release of "Dune: Part Two" in IMAX, which made nearly \$2 million.

The 27-year-old actor has been part of some of the most successful franchises of the last few years, including the "Spider-Man" and "Dune" movies. In both cases those



Zendaya



Depardieu

were supporting roles in massive brand-name properties, but her eye-catching red carpet looks also often make headlines. "Challengers" would be the first real test of her ability to "open" a film on her own star and MGM and Amazon were not going to risk doing it without her.

The studio had originally planned to release "Challengers"

in the fall of 2023, with a picturesque launch at the Venice Film Festival. But when the actors went on strike last July, the studio made the decision to scuttle the festival premiere and move the film to this weekend when they could safely assume the strike would be resolved. Zendaya sported many tennis-themed looks, styled by

Law Roach, for her appearances.

"It would be hard to argue that we should have released this movie when she wasn't able to support," Wilson said.

He gave special credit to the studio's publicity and marketing teams for orchestrating a world tour that resulted in several viral fashion moments. (AP)

People & Places

Film

'Stand-up my lifeline'

'Unfrosted' delivers laughs & nostalgia

Continued from Page 11

AP: Why have you always avoided topicality or politics in your comedy?

Seinfeld: I don't have the fluency. Your comedy thing, whatever it is, it only works on certain things. My thing only works on these dumb things.

AP: Still, there is a kind of meaning in dedicating yourself to meaninglessness.

Seinfeld: I've discussed this at length with my friend Joel Hodgson ("Mystery Science 3000") and he's incredibly articulate on this subject, which is: The throw-away culture of our childhood was not throw-away to us. We deeply love these things and they were meaningful in their meaninglessness.



Seinfeld

AP: You and Marc Maron had a great debate on his podcast as almost diametrically opposed comedians. He believes in baring his soul on stage and you pledge fidelity to the joke. I thought you were both right.

Seinfeld: My attitude, I think, was more talking to comedians. I think comedians, if they want to survive throughout their life doing this, they have to pay close attention to the laughs. No less value in what he's doing, but I would worry about how long would this last for in your life. But, yeah, that's a good point. We were both right, just different.

AP: You've said you want to do stand-up into your 80s and beyond.

Seinfeld: To the end. To the very end.

AP: You still feel that way?

Seinfeld: Yeah. The only hard part of my life is the other things. People do ask me about slowing down and I go, "The work part of my life is not stand-up. It's all the other things." Stand-up is an incredible, pure experience. Surfing is the great regret of my life that I never really got good at that. I did it for two weeks one time many years ago. But if you were a surfer, you would never stop doing it. That's what stand-up is for me. Feeling that energy, that natural life-force energy under you and around you, I never get tired of that.

AP: Are you thinking about another stand-up special?

Seinfeld: No, I'm not. I'm not sure of it as a comedy form for me right now. I would love to think of something else, if I even wanted to do it - which I don't right now. Like, "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee," the subtext of that is: I'm really sick of talk shows on TV. That's why I did that. And let me show you why. We don't want to see them sitting on a couch anymore. The people who are doing it aren't having any fun doing it. That was my anti-talk show. So I would want to do an anti-stand-up special if I did one. I envy, sometimes, these little Italian artisans who don't really care if anybody knows who they are or what they do. And stand-up can be like that. Any writing work is very lonely work. Stand-up, in a way, is kind of a private, lonely world. I'm going to Dayton, Ohio, on Friday. No one's going to know what happened there. I'm very attracted to that. I'm more attracted to that than, "Hey everyone, I made a movie." My way, if I had my choice, is that I would like to do this work very quietly and privately.

AP: It's interesting you'd say that as someone who had one of the biggest TV shows ever. Maybe you had your fill of it.

Seinfeld: That's possible. But it never felt like me. Larry and I, when we first started to do the show thought: This will be a really fun, little boutique thing that will just get our people that like this kind of quirky, off-beat thing, and that would be cool. What it became was never on our radar. Then, suddenly, you're a big wave surfer. I think it was tougher on Larry than for me. Because you feel the pressure. I never minded the pressure.

AP: Have you experienced younger generations finding "Seinfeld" on Netflix?

Seinfeld: That age around 10 to 12, they seem to find it. They have no idea what it is at first. (Laughs) I think the credit all really goes to Jason (Alexander), Michael (Richards) and Julia (Louis-Dreyfus) - what they did with those characters, the color that they found in all of those characters. Larry and I, we were just doing these silly conversations, but they made it so accessible. They deserve the credit for the success of the show.

Also:

NEW YORK: Dan Rather returned to the CBS News airwaves for the first time since his bitter exit 18 years ago, appearing in a reflective interview on "CBS Sunday Morning" days before the debut of a Netflix documentary on the 92-year-old newsman's life.

After 44 years at the network, 24 as anchor of the "CBS Evening News," Rather left under a cloud following a botched investigation into then-President George W. Bush's military record. Rather signed off as anchor for the last time on March 9, 2005, and exited the network when his contract ended 15 months later.

With continued enmity between him and since-deposed CBS chief Leslie Moonves, Rather essentially became a nonperson at the news division he dominated for decades.

"Without apology or explanation, I miss CBS," Rather told correspondent Lee Cowan in the interview that aired Sunday. "I've missed it since the day I left."

Rather escaped official blame for the report that questioned Bush's Vietnam War-era National Guard service but, as the anchor who introduced it, was identified with it. CBS could not vouch for the authenticity of some documents upon which the report was based, although many people involved in the story still believe it was true.

In the documentary "Rather," debuting Wednesday on Netflix, Rather said he thought he would survive the incident, but his wife, Jean, told him, "You got into a fight with the president of the United States during his reelection campaign. What did you think was going to happen?"

Rather did not retire after leaving CBS, doing investigative journalism and rock star interviews for HDNet, a digital cable and satellite television network. Over the past few years, he has become known to a new generation as a tart-talking presence on social media.

This past week, he posted on X during former President Trump's hush money trial: "Is it just me or did today seem sleazy even for Donald Trump?"



Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones performs during the first night of the US leg of their 'Hackney Diamonds' tour on Sunday, April 28, 2024, in Houston. (AP)

Film

'There's Still Tomorrow' director opens on success, hope

Cortellesi's film strikes a chord

LONDON, April 29. (AP) - Actor Paola Cortellesi has long been a staple on the Italian pop culture scene, mostly known for her work as a comedian. Then she turned to directing and her first feature movie, "There's Still Tomorrow," took Italy by storm.

The black-and-white film about an ordinary woman trapped in a toxic marriage in post-World War II Italy opened in October. The low-key drama resonated with women from all walks of life, even overtaking the global hit "Barbie" at the Italian box offices.

After its whirlwind success at home, the movie launched internationally and opened in the United Kingdom on Friday. Cortellesi was in London earlier in the week to promote "C'e' Ancora Domani," as the movie is titled in Italian, in which she also stars in the lead role.

With a bright smile contrasting her elegant black suit, white shirt and hoop-like black glasses, Cortellesi, 50, stopped by The Associated Press to chat about her unexpected success.

"Thankfully, the camera is high, so you don't see my double chin," she joked as she sat down.

Her signature mix of fun and serious talk soon became apparent as Cortellesi confessed she didn't have high expectations for the film - monochrome cinematography and old-fashioned storylines are not popular at the box office these days.

But there was something especially captivating in the drama unfolding on the screen between Delia - the main character in "There's Still Tomorrow," played by Cortellesi - and

that of her husband Ivano, played by Valerio Mastandrea.

"We heard of queues outside the cinema, something that never happens," Cortellesi said. "My friends started sending me pictures from all over Italy of people queuing. I heard of sold-outs."

As the revenue numbers soared, Cortellesi's interactions with the audiences at the end of the screenings brought even more satisfaction.

"They wanted to talk, to tell me a little about the story that had touched them and how this story could be about them," she said.

Relationship

The movie's Delia is physically assaulted by her husband but Cortellesi also brings other kinds of abuse to light - verbal, psychological and financial - and depicts how a victim is often isolated by an abuser as a way of denigrating them further.

Modern audiences have connected with the movie, she said, because the traits of a toxic relationship are recognizably the same nearly 80 years later.

"The dynamics repeat themselves. They are the constants," she said. "Often women do not report abuse because they are not economically independent, they would not know what to do."

It is the contemporary parallels of this tragedy that Cortellesi believes made the movie a success. A woman in an abusive relationship could maybe consider running away from this situation, but it's not easy, especially if she has children.

"We must also understand that it's very complicated," Cortellesi says.

She says not only women but men, too, respond to her movie. On the day of its release in Italy, Cortellesi recounts how she was greeting the audience after a later showing and met an older man in the crowd.

"He told me, 'I'm watching it for the second time.' So I told him that's not possible ... it just opened today," she recounted. "He said, 'I was at the show before, now I'm back. I found a seat and I'm watching it again.'"

Like Delia in the movie, Cortellesi is a mother. One time, as she was reading a children's book about women's rights to her 11-year-old, Laura, she recalls her daughter's reaction.

"She didn't know that women had practically no rights before and so she asked me incredulously, talking about divorce, talking about abortion, talking about the vote, talking about whatever, she said 'No, but why? Really?' and it was wonderful to see her so amazed," recalls the director.

"We must fight, be aware of our rights and fight to defend them," Cortellesi added.

In taking her movie around the world, Cortellesi says she is learning how the subject of women's rights affects people in different countries in different ways - in some places, women have been emancipated longer than in Italy.

Her moment of hope?

Cortellesi said she read about young girls, as they were leaving the movie theater after seeing her film, commenting that they want to "practice freedom."

"Their own freedom and that of others others," she said, smiling.



Italian director and actress Paola Cortellesi poses for a photograph during an interview in London, Monday, April 22, 2024. (AP)



Harry



Sansom

Variety

LONDON: British author C.J. Sansom, best known for his historical crime novels featuring the Tudor lawyer and investigator Matthew Shardlake, has died, his publisher said Monday. He was 71.

Pan Macmillan said Christopher John Sansom was working on his latest Shardlake novel, "Ratcliff," when he died Saturday after a period of worsening health.

Sansom introduced the character of Shardlake in his first novel, "Dissolution," a murder mystery set in Tudor England in the 16th century. The title referred to King Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.

Published in 2003, the book's combination of intriguing detective story and convincing historical details won Sansom critical acclaim and many fans, and he went on to release six more novels featuring Shardlake.

"Dissolution" has been adapted into a Disney+ series, and the show, starring actors Sean Bean and Arthur Hughes, is set to be released on Wednesday.

Sansom also penned two standalone historical thrillers, "Winter in Madrid" and "Dominion." Over 3 million copies of his books are in print, his publisher said.

"An intensely private person, Chris wished from the very start only to be published quietly and without fanfare," his editor and publisher, Maria Rejt, said. "But he always took immense pleasure in the public's enthusiastic responses to his novels and worked tirelessly on each book, never wanting to disappoint a single reader."

Sansom was born in 1952 in Edinburgh. He had a doctorate in history and trained as a solicitor before becoming a full-time writer. (AP)

HOUSTON: Time marches on and all good things must come to an end. But don't tell that to The Rolling Stones.

What many believe to be the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world showed no signs of slowing down anytime soon as they kicked off their latest tour Sunday night at Houston's NRG Stadium.

The Stones have been touring for more than 60 years. Frontman Mick Jagger and lead guitarist Keith Richards are both 80, with guitarist Ronnie Wood not far behind at 76. Their tour is being sponsored in part by AARP.

But during a vibrant two-hour show, the Stones played with the energy of band that was on tour for the first time.

"It's great to be back in the Lone Star

State," Jagger told the packed stadium, filled with longtime fans, many wearing faded concert shirts from previous tours.

Jagger often strutted up and down the stage with seemingly boundless energy while Richards and Wood played many familiar guitar riffs beloved by fans. Jagger often led the audience in sing-alongs.

"The energy level is up and it's always up with them. The age doesn't show," Dale Skjerseth, the Stones' production director, said Friday before the concert.

The Stones have hit the road to support the release of their latest album, "Hackney

Diamonds," the band's first record of original music since 2005.

Houston was the first stop on the band's 16-city tour across the U.S. and Canada. Other cities on the tour include New Orleans, Philadelphia and Vancouver, British Columbia. The tour ends on July 17 in Santa Clara, California.

During Sunday's 18-song concert set list, the Stones played several tracks off the new record, including lead single "Angry." They also played classics including "Sympathy for the Devil," "Gimme Shelter," "Honky Tonk Women" and "Start Me Up."



This image provided by Hulu shows Nasubi in 2021 in a scene from the documentary film "The Contestant" directed by Clair Tittle, explores the story behind the late 1990s reality show from Japan, "A Life in Prizes," in which a comedian nicknamed Nasubi is forced to survive on whatever he can redeem from mail-in coupons, as he is denied contact with the outside world. (AP) — Details Page 11

Saudi MoH partners with Gates Foundation for polio eradication initiative

Saudi Arabia, Bill Gates partner for new pandemic vaccines

RIYADH, April 29, (KUNA): The Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Bill Gates, stated that the foundation would work with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to develop capacities for creating new vaccines to prevent future pandemics.

In a speech at the first-ever World Economic Forum (WEF) Special Meeting hosted in Riyadh, following the announcement of an initiative to eradicate polio between Saudi Arabia and his foundation.

Gates emphasized that eradicating polio was crucial not only to save lives and prevent them from living with disability and suffering but also to envision a world free of diseases.

"We began the polio eradication initiative in the 1980s, and the number of polio cases has declined significantly, we are close to eradicating this disease, which once threatened humanity," Gates said.

He added that this success was not the anticipated success, the disease's infection rate must reach zero, as this is the desired goal.

He also thanked Saudi Arabia, where this new commitment would ensure the provision of vaccines for measles and other diseases to more than 30 million children, he described the investment as "the future of children wherever they are in the world and a strengthening of health systems at the same time."

He concluded his speech by mentioning he was proud to partner with Saudi Arabia, as this was not only collaborating to eradicate polio but also to build capabilities to develop new vaccines, prevent crises, and protect the world from future pandemics.

Also:

RIYADH: The Saudi Minister of Health Fahad Al-Jalal announced, Sunday, the initiative to eradicate polio in partnership with the Bill and Melinda

Reused disposable tools
CDC confirms 1st HIV cases from 'cosmetic needle' use

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., April 29, (AP): Three women who were diagnosed with HIV after getting "vampire facial" procedures at an unlicensed New Mexico medical spa are believed to be the first documented cases of people contracting the virus through a cosmetic procedure using needles, federal health officials said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in its Morbidity and Mortality Report last week that an investigation into the clinic from 2018 through 2023 showed it apparently reused disposable equipment intended for one-time use.

Although HIV transmission from contaminated blood through unsterile injection is a well-known risk, the report said this is the first documentation of probable infections involving cosmetic services.

Many popular cosmetic treatments are delivered with needles, such as Botox to iron out wrinkles and fillers

Gates Foundation.

This came in a statement during a "bridging the healthcare gap" meeting which included Saudi Health Minister Al-Jalal, Pakistani Prime Minister Mian Mohammad Shabbaz Sharif, Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Ghebreyesus, and Co-Chairperson of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Bill Gates, and President of the Gates Foundation Anita Zaidi, among others who participated in the World Economic Forum

to plump lips. A "vampire facial," or platelet-rich plasma microneedling procedure, involves drawing a client's own blood, separating its components, then using tiny needles to inject plasma into the face to rejuvenate the skin. Tattoos also require needles.

The New Mexico Department of Health began investigating the spa in the summer of 2018 after it was notified that a woman in her 40s had tested positive for HIV even though she had no known risk factors. The woman reported exposure to needles through the procedure at the clinic that spring.

The spa closed in fall 2018 after the investigation was launched, and its owner was prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license.

The report said the investigation showed how important it is to require infection control practices at businesses that offer cosmetic procedures involving needles.

in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Al-Jalal added that this initiative between King Salman Relief Center and the Gates Foundation aims to annually save over 370 million children suffering from polio, and to eradicate the disease.

Saudi Arabia also pledged USD 620 million over the next five years to the global polio eradication initiative, underscoring the continuous efforts to eradicate the disease while providing the best care to suffering children.

Cleveland Clinic leads the way in innovative therapy

Non-invasive 'ultrasound' tech used to treat some liver tumors



Choon Hyuck David Kwon, M.D., Ph.D., performs histotripsy on liver tumors.

CLEVELAND, April 29: Global health system Cleveland Clinic has started using a recently FDA-approved ultrasound device to treat liver tumors. The non-invasive technology, called histotripsy, uses brief high-intensity ultrasound pulses that disrupt and kill the targeted tumor cells.

Choon Hyuck David Kwon, M.D., Ph.D., director of Minimally Invasive Liver Surgery at Cleveland Clinic's Digestive Disease Institute, led a team of surgeons and nurses during the first case in which a small tumor on the left side of the patient's liver was liquified. Following the procedure in December 2023, the patient recovered well. The patient was being treated for liver metastases from colorectal cancer.

Target

To deliver the treatment, Dr. Kwon used an ultrasound machine connected to a mobile robotic arm, which was positioned above the patient's abdomen to precisely target the liver tumor. The microsecond ultrasound pulses created microbubbles in the targeted tumor, which disrupted and killed the diseased cells.

"This treatment is noninvasive, which provides the patient with an easy recovery following the procedure," said Dr. Kwon. "In addition, studies have shown that, in some cases, a histotripsy treatment may stimulate the body's immune system to attack cancer cells."

Researchers are looking into a phenomenon – known as abscopal effect – that has been observed in patients with cancer following radiation therapy and ablation. Following radiation therapy treatment, researchers have noticed, in some cases, an anti-tumor response that causes untreated tumors to shrink. Histotripsy may also produce an abscopal effect in some cases.

Since the first case, Dr. Kwon and his colleagues – including Federico Aucejo, M.D., and Jaekeun Kim, M.D. – have successfully used the ultrasound technology to treat more patients with liver tumors. On average, the procedure lasts up to an hour.

"More research is needed to continue to study the benefits of histotripsy, including the occurrence and frequency of the abscopal effect," said Dr. Kwon. "I see this noninvasive treatment as a complement to our current therapies for liver tumors, including surgery and chemotherapy."

Currently, histotripsy is only FDA-approved for tumors in the liver.

Also:

NEW YORK: New York City residents may soon see warning labels next to sugary foods and drinks in chain restaurants and coffee shops, under a law set to go into effect later this year.

The rule requires food businesses with 15 storefronts or more to post a warning icon – a black and white spoon loaded with sugar – next to menu items containing at least 50 grams of added sugar.

Businesses will also have to post the following warning label to accompany the logo: "Warning: indicates that the added sugar content of this item is higher than the total daily recommended limit of added sugar for a 2,000 calorie diet (50g). Eating too many added sugars can contribute to type 2 diabetes and weight gain."

The city's health department posted its proposed rule language last week and set a public hearing for late May. City officials and Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat, approved the law last year.

NASA study tracks Earth's rivers

China completes ignition test for powerful liquid-propellant engine

BEIJING, April 29, (Xinhua): China has successfully completed an ignition test for its liquid-propellant engine with the highest thrust, according to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

This marks a new breakthrough in the country's liquid propulsion development. It is also the first-ever parallel ignition test of four large-thrust liquid oxygen (LOX) kerosene engines.

The 130-tonne class LOX kerosene engine, developed by the CASC, has a total thrust of over 500 tonnes. Compared to the currently operational 120-tonne class LOX kerosene engines, it not only boasts a larger thrust and better performance, but also a more compact structure, effectively enhancing the rocket's carrying capacity.

The parallel ignition test refers to the integration of four mature engine systems, working in unison rather than simply being bundled together. This approach provides a larger thrust for the rocket while also reducing the overall complexity of the system. The successful trial run validates the coordination of multiple engines and their reliability in high thermal environments, demonstrating that the engines are fully capable of flight applications.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: A study led by NASA researchers has provided new estimates of how much water courses through Earth's rivers, which is crucial information for understanding the planet's water cycle and managing its freshwater supplies.

Researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California used a novel methodology that combines stream-gauge measurements with computer models of about 3 million river segments around the world.

The study, published recently in Nature Geoscience, estimates that the total volume of water in Earth's rivers on average from 1980 to 2009 was about 2,246 cubic kilometers.

The researchers estimate that the Amazon basin contains about 38 percent of the world's river water, the most of any hydrological region evaluated.

Estimates in the study could eventually be compared with data from the international Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) satellite to improve measurements of human

Pharmaceutical innovation

Chinese experts find hidden drug resources in deep sea

FUZHOU, April 29, (Xinhua): Chinese marine scientists have identified a plethora of previously unknown microbial natural products from the deep sea floor that may have pharmaceutical applications.

In the cold seeps of the deep sea, microbial communities thrive on the geological seepage of hydrocarbons and inorganic compounds for sustenance, in stark contrast to the sunlight-dependent ecosystems that people are more familiar with on the surface.

These organisms utilize biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) to synthesize natural products that help them contend for resources. These unknown natural products are believed to possess potent anti-microbial properties, which could be a game-changer in the fight against drug-resistant infections.

The team of scientists, led by researchers from the Third Institute of Oceanography under the Ministry of Natural Resources, have analyzed 22 sediment cores from nine cold seeps, and detected natural product-encoding BGCs from 63 archaeal and bacterial phyla.

A large proportion of the BGCs they discovered are likely to encode antimicrobial compounds, serving as chemical weapons for host defense and competition within the microbial community, according to the study published recently in the journal Science Advances.

The findings provide a pathway to identify previously unrecognized antimicrobial compounds and other types of drugs, according to the researchers.

impacts on Earth's water cycle, NASA said on Friday.

Launched in December 2022, SWOT is mapping the elevation of water around the globe, and changes in river height offer a way to quantify storage and discharge.

'Victory for nature'

EU's saltwater lagoon rights advocate wins 'Green Nobel'

LOS ANGELES, April 29, (AP): Growing up, Teresa Vicente spent long days in Spain's Mar Menor swimming in transparent waters, cupping seahorses in her hands and partying under the moonlit sky. Out there, she recalled, time stood still.

But over the decades, chronic contamination from mining, development and agricultural runoff turned the once crystal-clear waters of Europe's largest saltwater lagoon into a graveyard. A mass fish die-off in 2019 prompted the professor of philosophy of law at the University of Murcia to take action.

Over the next several years, Vicente, now 61, led a grassroots campaign to save the region's ecological jewel from collapse. Her efforts helped lead to a new law passed in 2022, giving the lagoon the legal right to conservation, protection and damage remediation.

Vicente is one of this year's seven winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, known as the "Green Nobel," which honors grassroots activists and leaders from across the globe for achievements in protecting the natural world. The recipients were selected from about 100 nominees.

Humanity (cross head) "This prize signifies an international recognition that we are facing a new stage in humanity," said Vicente in Spanish. It's a stage where "human beings understand they are part of nature. And this recognition means that it is not a local or national conquest, but rather a European and international one."

"They call Mar Menor the lagoon of magic," she added, "and all of us on this journey have seen a lot of magic."

The other winners are: Marcel Gomes, executive secretary for the media nonprofit Repórter Brasil, who organized a campaign that alleged connections between beef from the world's largest meatpacking cor-

poration, JBS, and illegal deforestation in Brazil and helped pressure retailers around the world to stop selling the meat.

Indigenous activist Murawah Marroochy Johnson, who helped stop development of a coal mine in Australia's Queensland state that would have devastated nearly 20,000 acres (8,000 hectares) of a nature preserve, spewed nearly 1.6 billion tons of planet-warming carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over its lifetime, and endangered the rights and culture of Indigenous peoples.

Alok Shukla, who led a community movement that saved nearly half a million acres (200,000 hectares) of forests from 21 proposed coal mines in Chhattisgarh, a state in central India.

Andrea Vidaurte, who helped convince the state of California's air quality agency to establish two transportation regulations that limit emissions from trains and trucks. The rules include the nation's first emissions limit for trains.

Nonhle Mbuthuma and Sinegugu Zukulu, Indigenous activists who prevented seismic testing for coal and gas in a coastal area off South Africa's Eastern Cape.

Michael Sutton, executive director of the Goldman Environmental Foundation, called the winners "an incredible group of individuals laboring, sometimes in obscurity, against overwhelming odds to prevail against governments, against industry."

Vicente was born and raised in Spain's southeastern city of Murcia, home to the Mar Menor. When she learned about the 2019 fish die-off, she was at the University of Reading in England studying how other countries had successfully bestowed legal rights upon natural resources to protect them.

To save the lagoon, Vicente in 2020 helped write the first draft of a bill granting legal protection to the Mar Menor and submitted it to Spain's Parliament, which allows citizens to propose laws directly. But the process required her to gather 500,000 signatures during COVID-19 lockdowns.



Vicente

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Victory puts happy ending on rough week for Team Penske

McLaughlin wins 2nd straight at Barber Motorsports Park

BIRMINGHAM, April 29, (AP): Scott McLaughlin won his second straight race at Barber Motorsports Park, giving Team Penske a much-needed triumph on Sunday just days after IndyCar erased Josef Newgarden's victory and also disqualified McLaughlin from the season opener.

McLaughlin and Penske's fuel strategy worked to perfection, with teammate Will Power finishing second - the same order they started in.

CAR RACING

McLaughlin's fifth IndyCar win provided temporary solace after a troubling week for Team Penske, led by series owner Roger Penske. On Wednesday, Newgarden had his season-opening win at St. Petersburg, Florida, stripped for manipulating the push-to-pass function system on

his car. McLaughlin, likewise, was disqualified after finishing third.

Power was docked points and fined but not disqualified. They bounced back to give Team Penske its eighth win in 14 races at the permanent road course.

"We just had to keep rolling," McLaughlin said. "We know our job. We know what we need to do. I'm just super proud of our execution."

Reigning Indy 500 winner and two-time series champion Newgarden finished 16th at a race where he had won three times before. He had tearfully acknowledged two days earlier having used the push-to-pass when it wasn't allowed at St. Petersburg, while saying he didn't knowingly break the rules.

Most of the drama for his teammates McLaughlin and Power was left behind once hitting the track, with McLaughlin holding onto his

lead coming out of a third and final pit stop with 16 laps to go. He led 58 of the 90 laps and raced to the win coming out of a caution with two laps to go. Power held off rookie Linus Lundqvist to finish second.

"He got a run on me and you don't want two Penske cars out of the race with everything that was going on," Power said of McLaughlin. "So I was kind of easy on him going into Turn 1 there. We were certainly fast but a lot of strategy played into that."

Felix Rosenqvist was fourth and Alex Palou fifth.

Pole-sitter McLaughlin and Power, who started with him on the front row, maintained their spots after their third and final pit stop. They emerged ahead of the 2021 winner Palou, who opted for a two-stop strategy that left him without enough fuel to push the pace.

A restart with 30 laps to go left

Palou nursing his fuel for the rest of the way, while McLaughlin worked to build enough of a cushion to stay up front with one more stop.

"We had to save so much fuel that it was impossible," Palou said.

Arrow McLaren had a rough day after Pato O'Ward was awarded the St. Petersburg victory with Newgarden's disqualification.

O'Ward received a drivethrough penalty for contact that sent Pietro Fittipaldi skidding backward through the grass and into the tire barriers. "That was a freakin' racing incident," O'Ward said when told of the penalty. He finished 22nd.

Teammate Alexander Rossi's left rear tire got loose and rolled across the grass shortly after emerging from pit road, forcing another caution at about the midway point. He completed 60 laps.

The race got a comical moment

when a mannequin fell off her normal hanging spot from a bridge above the track. Nicknamed Georgina by track creator George Barber, the mannequin landed on the grass at the edge of the track with a hand appearing to stretch onto the racing surface. The

IndyCar safety team rescued Georgina during a caution after Sting Ray Robb went into the wall, saying his steering wheel had broken.

However, she didn't stay intact, since a passing car lopped off her left hand.



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, and teammate Shane Lowry, of Ireland, right hold up their trophy after winning the PGA Zurich Classic golf tournament at TPC Louisiana in Avondale, La. (AP)

Green repeats on LPGA Tour

McIlroy & Lowry team up for New Orleans victory

AVONDALE, April 29, (AP): Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry won the Zurich Classic of New Orleans team event Sunday, beating Chad Ramey and Martin Trainer with a par on the first hole of a playoff.

Trainer pushed a 6-foot par putt to the right of the cup to end it, with Lowry and McIlroy sharing a smiling embrace on the green.

The 34-year-old McIlroy, playing in the event for the first time, won his 25th PGA Tour title and first of the season. Lowry claimed his third PGA Tour victory. The Irish tandem closed with a 4-under 68 in the alternate-shot final round to match Ramey and Trainer at 25-under 263.

GOLF

Ramey and Trainer began the day tied for 27th and shot to the top of the leaderboard with nine birdies between the seventh and 18th holes. They tied the alternate-shot tournament record of 63, but then had to wait nearly three hours to see if their lead would stand up.

They struggled to execute on the playoff hole. Trainer pulled his drive into the left rough, Ramey also yanked his approach left off the cart path and into the wall below the suites around the 18th green. Trainer then chipped short before Ramey finally got onto the green.

Ryan Brehm and Mark Hubbard missed the playoff by one shot when Brehm's birdie putt from the fringe narrowly missed to the right. Former BYU teammates Patrick Fishburn and Zach Blair, the 54-hole leaders, were tied for the lead until failing to birdie the par-5 16th and taking double bogey on the par-3 17th.

Hannah Green closed with a 5-under 66 and won the LPGA Tour's JM Eagle LA Championship for the second



Hannah Green holds up the championship trophy after winning the LPGA's JM Eagle LA Championship golf tournament at Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles. (AP)

straight year, holing out twice from off the greens in a pivotal back-nine stretch at Wilshire Country Club.

A year after making a 25-foot birdie on the final hole of regulation and winning on the second hole of a playoff, Green took the drama out of this one for her fifth LPGA Tour victory and second of the year.

Green began the key run with a chip-in birdie on the par-3 12th and made a 6-foot birdie putt on the par-5 13th. Then, after Stark bogeyed the par-4 16th two groups ahead, Green ran in a 25-footer for eagle from the fringe on 15 to open a four-stroke lead, and she made it 5 under in five holes with a birdie on 16.

Stark birdied her last two holes for a 68. The 24-year-old Swede also finished second last week outside Houston in The Chevron Championship, two strokes behind top-ranked Nelly Korda in the first major of the year.

Kohli hits 70 as Bengaluru beats Gujarat by 9 wickets



Chennai Super Kings' Shivam Dube plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad in Chennai, India. (AP)

Jacks unleashes batting barrage

AHMEDABAD, India, April 29, (AP): Will Jacks unleashed a batting barrage and shared an unbroken 166-run partnership with Virat Kohli as Royal Challengers Bengaluru beat Gujarat Titans by nine wickets in the Indian Premier League.

In the late game, skipper Rituraj Gaikwad smacked 98 runs off 54 balls to lead Chennai Super Kings to a 78-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Jacks scored his first IPL hundred off 41 balls, finishing 100 not out, which included 10 sixes as Bengaluru chased down Gujarat's 200-3 in 20 overs with 24 balls to spare at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

CRICKET

Kohli scored 70 not out off 44 balls at the other end as Bengaluru passed the victory target to reach 206-1 in 16 overs.

Chasing another high total to mathematically stay in contention for a knockout spot, 10th-place Bengaluru made a good start. Kohli and opening partner Faf du Plessis (24) put on 40 off 23 balls.

Du Plessis holed out in the fourth over, marking the last wicket the Titans' attack would manage on the day. Jacks started off slowly, allowing Kohli to take charge as he raced to 50 off 32 balls. It was the star batter's fourth half-century in the IPL this year and he also crossed the 500-run mark for this season.

Kohli scored 20 more off the next 12 balls he faced, but he was a spectator at the non-striker's end for much of this period.

Jacks took charge, smacking Mohit Sharma for 29 runs in the 15th over. He raced to 50 off 31 balls, and then accelerated further. The next 50 came off only 10 balls, a span that included six sixes and two fours.

Jacks smashed 29 runs off Rashid Khan's 16th over to bring a very early end to the proceedings.

Bengaluru had needed 53 off 36 balls and managed to get there from just 12.

Southee to make his 7th appearance

Williamson to lead NZ at the Twenty20 World Cup

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, April 29, (AP): Veteran seamer Tim Southee will play at his seventh Twenty20 World Cup after being included Monday in an experienced New Zealand squad for the tournament starting June 1 in the Caribbean and United States.

Kane Williamson will make his sixth T20 Cricket World Cup appearance and will captain the team at the tournament for the fourth time. He is warming up for the tournament in the Indian Premier League.

Southee's regular new ball partner Trent Boult has been included to play at his fifth World T20, despite no longer having a central contract with New Zealand Cricket.

The 35-year-old Southee is New Zealand's leading wicket-taker in T20 internationals with 157 and is also the Black Cap's top wicket-taker at T20 World Cups with 29, five more than Boult.

The New Zealand selectors have sprung a minor surprise by selecting Matt Henry among four specialist

seamers and ahead of Ben Sears, who was named as a traveling reserve. Henry, 32, will be playing at a T20 World Cup for the first time and has made only 20 previous appearances for New Zealand in the short format.

"Matt has worked exceptionally hard on his skills across the phases of a T20 game to come back into selection consideration," head coach Gary Stead said.

CRICKET

Lockie Ferguson is the other specialist seamer in New Zealand's 15-man squad. Adam Milne and Kyle Jamieson were unavailable because of injury.

Allrounder Rachin Ravindra also will play at a T20 World Cup for the first time, after being one of the breakout stars of last year's 50-over World Cup. He adds to New Zealand's spin options along with Mitchell Santner, Michael Bracewell, Ish Sodhi and

Glenn Phillips.

"Rachin has made every post a winner in the past 12 months and it was exciting to see him continue that trajectory over the summer in the T20 format against Australia," Stead said.

Wicketkeeper Tim Seifert has been omitted, meaning Devon Conway and Finn Allen will share the gloves. Conway is still recovering from a thumb injury sustained in New Zealand's T20 series against Australia last month while Allen recently has been sidelined with a back injury.

Thirteen of the 15 squad members took part in New Zealand's last tour to the West Indies in 2022. Six have played in the Caribbean Premier League.

Squad:

Kane Williamson (captain), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee.

with Shahrukh Khan.

Khan hit five sixes in his 58 off 30 balls for his first IPL half-century. Scoring 50 off 34 balls, Sudharsan then added another 69 off the last six overs with David Miller (26 not out).

Gujarat Titans stay seventh after 10 games with only four wins. Bengaluru has three wins from 10 games.

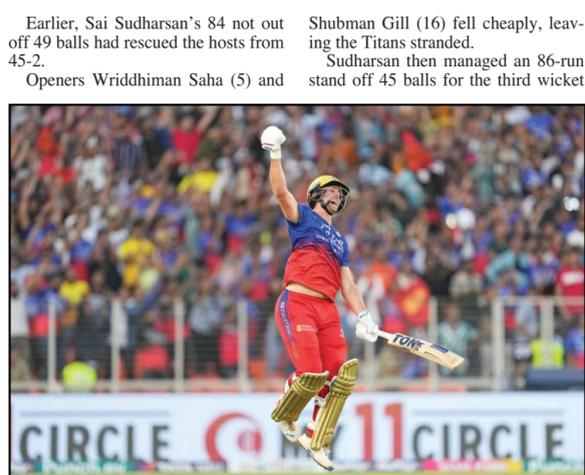
In the second game, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande picked up 4-27 in three overs as Hyderabad was bowled out for 134 runs in 18.5 overs in pursuit of Chennai's imposing 212-3.

Gaikwad followed up his century in the previous game with another big score. He hit 10 fours and three sixes and anchored his side to a 200-plus total again.

Daryl Mitchell found form to score 52 off 32 balls, adding 107 off 64 with Gaikwad.

Hard-hitting Shivam Dube provided the finishing touch with a brisk 39 not out.

Despite dewy conditions, Hyderabad's batting lineup crashed for a second time running when faced with a 200-plus target.



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Will Jacks celebrates his century during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

So many goals scored in stoppage time this year

Late escapes keeping Alonso's Leverkusen unbeaten this season

BERLIN, April 29, (AP): Just call him Xabi Houdini. Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso has seen his team pull off several scarcely believable escapes from defeat this season as it remains unbeaten across all competitions.

Leverkusen, which has already secured the Bundesliga title, is on a 46-game run without a loss - a record across Europe's "big five" leagues.

It has been achieved in extraordinary fashion.

Robert Andrich scored with the last kick of the game for a 2-2 draw with high-flying Stuttgart on Saturday. The goal came in the sixth minute of stoppage time when there was only supposed to be five. Stuttgart had won seven of its nine games since losing to Leverkusen in the German Cup and

led 2-0 against Leverkusen, but even that wasn't enough of a cushion to prevent Alonso's team from coming back and extending its unbeaten record.

The previous weekend, Josip Stanišić scored in the sev-

enth minute of stoppage time for a 1-1 draw at Borussia Dortmund. And in Leverkusen's previous game, Amine Adli scored in the 90th minute for a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Europa League. In all, Leverkusen has eight draws this sea-

son to go with 38 wins. "We've scored so many goals in stoppage time this year," Adli said after the latest drama on Saturday. "But we should score earlier. It would be better for us." Andrich's equalizer against Stuttgart was the 16th goal that Leverkusen has scored in the 90th minute or later across all competitions this season, and the 21st that was scored from the 86th.

"It's not easy to explain what we did again after last week - again in the last minute," Alonso said. "There's no explanation why it happens so often, but it's good for us."

Those late goals helped Leverkusen clinch the Bundesliga title ahead of 11-time defending champion Bayern Munich with five rounds to spare.

"We've already reached our main target - to be champions - but we want to keep going, we don't want to stop. There are still three games (in the Bundesliga). We want to stay unbeaten for the rest of the season," Alonso said.

Leverkusen's next game is against Roma in the first leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday. The teams met at the same stage last season, when José Mourinho's team eliminated Alonso's thanks to a 1-0 win in Rome. They drew the second leg 0-0 in Leverkusen.

"From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Häcken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs. Roma," Alonso said. "So yeah, hopefully we can use this experience well."

SOCCER

Yarmouk win first division title, qualify for Zain Premier League

Al-Tadamon held by Burgan

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY April 29: Yarmouk edged Sulaibkhat 1-0 to clinch the coveted first division title, securing its spot in the prestigious Zain Premier League. Sitting atop the league standings with 30 points, Yarmouk stands proud, four points clear of

SOCCER



Yarmouk coach Goran follows the match against Sulaibkhat.



Othman Al-Failakawi

Al-Tadamon in second place and nine points ahead of Al-Sahel in third.

Its upcoming fixtures hold the promise of further success. However, Al-Tadamon's draw with Burgan (1-1) postponed its qualification to the Premier League, intensifying the bat-

tle for the coveted spots.

With the top two teams from the first division earning qualification, the race remains fierce. Al-Sahel must now win its final two matches against Sulaibkhat and Yarmouk, while hoping for Al-Tadamon's misfortune against Yarmouk. The intricate tiebreaker scenarios loom, with direct confrontations and goal differentials potentially deciding fates.

Othman Al-Failakawi, a key figure in the club's management, extended his congratulations to the club president, board members, fans, and the entire staff for the historic achievement. He praised the relentless efforts of the players, highlighting their unbeaten run throughout the tournament.

Underlining the unwavering support from the Board of Directors, Al-

Failakawi emphasized the club's commitment to providing resources and nurturing talent to realize their goals.

He lauded the players for their dedication and determination, reaffirming their collective ambition to ascend to the Premier League. The team's focus remains unwavering as they aim for victory in their upcoming matches, buoyed by their recent success.



Roma's Sardar Azmoun (left), and Napoli's Juan Jesus vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Roma at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples, Italy. Tammy Abraham scored his first goal after a long injury layoff to earn fifth-place Roma a 2-2 draw at defending champion Napoli, which is eighth. Still, Roma had its advantage over sixth-place Atalanta reduced to two points after Atalanta beat Empoli 2-0. Also, fourth-place Bologna required a late goal from Alexis Saelemaekers to secure a 1-1 draw with relegation-threatened Udinese. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Ondine suffers ACL tear: Top British gymnast Ondine Achampong says she feels "devastated" after suffering an ACL tear that should rule her out of competing at the Paris Olympics.

The 20-year-old Achampong, who was part of the British women's team that took silver at the world championships in 2022, posted a message on social media Monday saying she sustained the injury during a competition ahead of the European championships.

Recovery from a torn ACL can take up to a year. Artistic gymnastics at the Paris Olympics start on July 27.

Achampong recently won four gold medals at the British championships.

The European championships take place in Rimini, Italy from May 2-5. (AP)

Vunipola arrested and fined: England rugby international Billy Vunipola was arrested and fined after an incident at a nightclub in the Spanish island of Mallorca in which police officers reportedly used a Taser to subdue him.

English club Saracens released a statement on behalf of the 31-year-old Vunipola on X, formerly Twitter, in which he said he got involved in an "unfortunate misunderstanding" that "got out of hand" as he left a night spot in Palma in the early hours of Sunday. (AP)

'VAR ruins the euphoria that soccer can bring'

Video reviews have changed face of soccer, one country holding out

STOCKHOLM, April 29, (AP): As the Swedish league got underway this spring, yellow-and-black-clad supporters of Stockholm club AIK held up an enormous banner containing a long, vivid story about the dark forces of modern soccer conquering the world.

The intruder in this case is VAR - the high-tech video review system formally written into the laws of soccer in 2018 to help referees make the right calls in the biggest moments.

While most leagues around the world are now using this technology, Sweden is an outlier in holding out and, in its view, retaining the game in its purest form.

The Swedish league is the only one of Europe's top-30 ranked leagues yet to have rolled out the system. It won't be happening anytime soon, either.

Thews is more than just a die-hard AIK fan. He played a part in mobilizing anti-VAR sentiment among Sweden's top clubs and helped push through a motion at AIK opposing the introduction of the technology, before the Swedish soccer federation had the chance to bring it in.

That's possible because Swedish clubs are majority-controlled by members - essentially, supporters - under a regulation that states members should control at least 50% of their club's shares, plus one.

Although the federation initially appeared to want VAR in operation - the technology is, after all, used at European and international level - it will not go

against the wishes of its member-run clubs. As a result, the federation has held off on further discussions about adopting VAR and said last week it doesn't envisage any in the foreseeable future.

SOCCER

That's a big win for Swedish matching fans who are proud of their rebel status in European soccer.

Soccer as it should be, in their view.



Referee Tobias Stieler calls a penalty for Benfica after consulting VAR during the Europa League round of 16, first leg, soccer match between SL Benfica and Rangers FC at the Luz stadium in Lisbon. (AP)

VAR "ruins the euphoria" that soccer can bring, Thews says. "The absolute happiness and passion, or grief and sadness, that comes from a goal being conceded or a goal being scored if you're not sure what has happened until it has been reviewed and decided in a VAR room."

Compared to other sports, soccer is a latecomer to video replays. In the United States, the NFL introduced instant replays in the mid-1980s but scrapped the system in 1991 after widespread discontent. They returned in 1999 and have spread to other major North American leagues and international sports, such as cricket and rugby.

In soccer, pausing for video reviews can appear more disruptive. Not least because the VAR system has its imperfections.

In the English Premier League, a communications mix-up between the official running the video review and the on-field referee cost Liverpool a valid goal in a loss at Tottenham in October. Weeks later, a Tottenham-Chelsea match had a total of 21 minutes of stoppage time added on largely because of a raft of video reviews. Earlier this month, Nottingham Forest put out an inflammatory statement, questioning the integrity of a match official, after being denied what it perceived to be three clear penalty shouts overlooked by the video referee.

In Spain, Barcelona threatened legal action to force a replay after a VAR-related controversy in the recent "clasico" against Real Madrid.

Silva to leave Chelsea

Saudi sports 'commentator' Ramadan passes away at 91

RIYADH, April 29, (Agencies): The renowned Saudi sports commentator Muhammad Ramadan passed away at the age of 91 after battling illness.

Throughout his career, Ramadan became synonymous with the historic triumphs and achievements of Saudi sports, particularly through his commentary on national team matches. With over 40 years spent behind the sports microphone, he earned the distinction of being one of the oldest commentators in the Middle East.

Originally from the Al-Bab neighborhood in Makkah, Ramadan's journey was marked by various professional stages. Despite specializing in political science, his passion for sports led him to pursue a career in journalism, where he excelled as a journalist, field correspondent, and commentator.

Ramadan's golden voice resonated through generations, leaving an indelible mark on the sports landscape of Saudi Arabia. Despite facing health challenges in recent years, his dedication to his craft remained unwavering until his peaceful departure yesterday morning.

Brazil defender **Thiago Silva** will leave **Chelsea** at the end of the season after four years at the club.

The 39-year-old Silva made the announcement on Monday, saying he is leaving the door open for a return to Chelsea "in another role."

"Goodbyes are for those that leave and don't come back," he said in a message to Chelsea's fans. "I intend on coming back one day."

Silva joined Chelsea in 2020 after his contract at **Paris Saint-Germain** expired. He said he only planned to stay at the English club for one season.

He continued playing for the team after winning the Champions League at the end of his first season there. Now his sons are playing in Chelsea's youth teams.

"It's a source of great pride to be a part of the Chelsea family - literally because my sons are here," Silva said. "I hope they can continue their careers here at this victorious club that many players wish to be part of."

Chelsea has five league games left this season but is languishing in ninth place after an inconsistent campaign under first-year coach **Mauricio Pochettino**.

Jefferson Savarino scored one goal and set up another as **Botafogo** climbed to the top of Brazil's Serie A standings on Sunday with a 2-0 away win over Rio de Janeiro rivals **Flamengo**.

Luiz Henrique put the visitor ahead just after halftime at the Maracana stadium when he latched onto Savarino's corner with a low volley from the edge of the 18-yard box that flew into the bottom-left corner.

Venezuela international winger Savarino doubled the lead by firing a first-time effort past goalkeeper **Agustin Rossi** after Jeffinho's slide-rule pass. "We played well as a team and we deserved the result but as far as I'm concerned it's just one victory," Botafogo manager **Artur Jorge** told reporters after the match. "I can understand that this is an important rivalry and for our fans the result could have a wider impact. Having said that, our aim is always to win, irrespective of who we are playing against."

The result leaves Botafogo with

nine points from four games, a point ahead of second-placed **Atletico Mineiro**. **Flamengo** is eighth, two points further back.

In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Sunday, **Cruzeiro** won 3-1 at home to Vitoria, Corinthians cruised to a 3-0 home victory over **Fluminense**, **Fortaleza** drew 1-1 at home to **Bragantino**, **Atletico Paranaense** drew 1-1 at **Juventude** and **Atletico Goianiense** drew 1-1 at **Internacional**.

Real Betis was frustrated in its pursuit of a European place in the Spanish league after a 1-1 draw at home against **Sevilla** in the Sevilla derby.

Betis went ahead with a goal by **Isco** in the 38th minute but **Kike Salas** equalized for the visitors in the 56th, leaving Betis two points from sixth-place **Real Sociedad** in the final Europa Conference League spot.

Fifth-place **Athletic Bilbao** was nine points ahead of Betis in the final Europa League qualification place.

Sevilla stayed in 13th but opened a 12-point gap to the relegation zone with five rounds to go. Betis was awarded a penalty kick shortly after Sevilla equalized, but the call was reversed with the help of video review.

SOCCER

Isco's penalty kick came after a controversial handball.

Betis was coming off two straight victories - against **Celta Vigo** and at Valencia - after a run of four straight losses. Sevilla had won three in a row.

It was the fourth consecutive draw between the rivals.

Second-to-last **Granada** kept alive its slim chances of escaping relegation with a 3-0 rout of mid-table **Osasuna**.

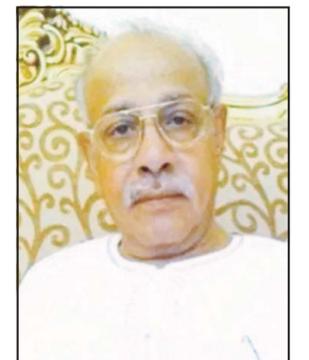
Facundo Pellistri, **Myrto Uzuni** and **Lucas Boye** scored for Granada, which is 10 points from safety with five rounds left.

It was the second win in three matches for the club from southern Spain. It had not won in 11 consecutive games before that.

Cadiz, sitting in the final relegation spot, moved five points from safety after a 1-1 draw at home against 16th-place **Mallorca**, which is six points from the drop zone.

Rayo Vallecano, eight points above danger, lost 3-0 at Villarreal, with a brace from Alexander Sorloth.

Celta Vigo, the first team outside the relegation zone, lost 3-0 at Alaves.



A file photo of renowned Saudi sports commentator Muhammad Ramadan.

I prefer to continue with Al-Fahaheel: Al-Khatib

KUWAIT CITY, April 29: Firas Al-Khatib, the coach of Al-Fahaheel, emphasized that his current focus remains squarely on his team, indifferent to the speculation surrounding his next coaching destination amidst receiving multiple offers recently.

Al-Khatib dismissed discussions about his potential future move as premature, expressing his preference to continue with Al-Fahaheel.

SOCCER

Highlighting the importance of maintaining fourth place in the standings, Al-Khatib viewed this as a positive development for both himself and the club's supporters.

He hinted at upcoming matches potentially providing opportunities for players who have been sidelined since the season's inception, offer-



Firas Al-Khatib, the coach of Al-Fahaheel.

ing them a chance to showcase their abilities and stake a claim within the team.



Indonesia's Jonatan Christie tries to stop a shot from Thailand's Saran Jamsri in a round 2 match for the Thomas Cup Finals held in Chengdu in southwestern China's Sichuan Province. Badminton powerhouse Indonesia is aiming for its 15th title at the Thomas Cup after defeating Thailand 4-1 in the second round of group stage on Monday. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwait youth handball team sets up a 'showdown' with Morocco



The joy of the Kuwaiti players in qualifying for the final.

Madrid well rested ahead Bayern showdown

Bavarians and Dortmund seek CL 'glory' to kick off big summer of soccer for Germany

MUNICH, April 29, (AP) — It's shaping up to be quite the few weeks for German soccer.

The country is preparing to stage the European Championship over June and July, with Germany's national team taking a nicely timed upturn in form.

Before that, Germany might yet be celebrating having a European champion once again, with Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund making up half of the lineup for the Champions League semifinals beginning this week.

The last time Bayern and Dortmund both reached the Champions League semifinals was in 2013 and they went on to meet in the title match at Wembley Stadium, with Bayern winning 2-1. As fate would have it, Wembley will be hosting the final this year, too.

Setting up a repeat of that 2013 final would mean upsetting the odds.

Bayern is up against another European heavyweight in Real Madrid, the record 14-time champion and king of the competition.

Dortmund faces Paris Saint-Germain, whose star striker Kylian Mbappe is looking to lead the French team to its first ever Champions League title in his last season there before a likely move to Madrid.

Germany didn't have a single semifinalist in each of the last three seasons. In the 2019-20 competition, it had two - Bayern and Leipzig - and Bayern was the eventual champion.

This season, Bayern and Dortmund have mounted impressive European campaigns while underperforming on the domestic front.

SOCCER

Bayern has relinquished its Bundesliga title to Bayer Leverkusen after an 11-year hold on the biggest prize in German soccer, and needs to win the Champions League to avoid a first trophy-less season since 2012.

Dortmund, meanwhile, is in fifth place in the league so its deep run in Europe has come as something of a surprise.

Madrid should arrive well rested after the Spanish league moved its game at Real Sociedad to Friday. Madrid won 1-0.

With Madrid set to win Spain's domestic title, coach Carlo Ancelotti kept Jude Bellingham, Vinicius Junior, Eduardo Camavinga, Toni Kroos, Federico Valverde, Antonio Rudiger and goalkeeper Andriy Lunin on the bench at the start of the league game in San Sebastian. Forward Rodrigo did not travel with the team because of flu.

All started against Manchester City in the second leg of the quarterfinals and are expected to be back in the starting lineup against Bayern.

Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel is leaving at the end of the season, and the Champions League - which he won with Chelsea in 2021 - offers him the chance to go out on a high.

Two months on from Bayern's announcement that Tuchel would depart, he seems more popular than ever among sections of the Bayern support. Part of that is down to the calm, controlled way Bayern knocked out Arsenal in the second leg of their quarterfinal. Partly it's a reaction to Bayern's failure to hire top coaching targets like Bayer Leverkusen's Xabi Alonso or Germany's Julian Nagelsmann.

As Tuchel nears the end of a troubled tenure at Bayern, he's often seemed more upbeat than ever. "If people want me to stay, it is still an issue that has no priority," Tuchel said Friday when asked about a fan petition begging the club to keep him. "Even if in this case it is a pleasant issue for me."

The injuries that have plagued Bayern this season are easing off, too. Tuchel predicted Friday that Serge Gnabry would recover from his latest problem in time to play - and score - against Madrid on Tuesday, while fellow forward Leroy Sané could also return.

PSG won another French league title on Sunday - after second-place Monaco lost at Lyon - but the Champions League is the trophy the Qatar-backed club is desperate to finally get its hands on.

And there would be no better way for Kylian Mbappe to sign off at the end of the season than by leading PSG to victory in European club soccer's elite competition.

The club is already planning for life without its superstar striker, who is set to walk away as a free agent, with players like Randal Kolo Muani, Ousmane Dembele and Goncalo Ramos expected to help fill the void in his absence. But Mbappe could still have a big say in the Champions League and he scored two goals in PSG's 4-1 comeback win against Barcelona in the quarterfinals.

PSG drew 3-3 at home to Le Havre on Saturday after coming back from 3-1 down and needing an equalizer from Ramos in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

It's been a strange season for Dortmund and that was underlined by Saturday's 4-1 loss against top four rival RB Leipzig.

Al-Adwani commends players

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CASABLANCA, April 29: The Kuwaiti youth handball team is poised to face off against the Moroccan national team in the final of the sixth Arab Youth Championship, set to conclude in Casablanca, Morocco. Preceding the final showdown, a match to determine third and fourth place will take place between Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, scheduled for 6:00 pm.

Kuwait secured its spot in the Arab final with a thrilling victory over Saudi Arabia, clinching a narrow 30-29 win. The team's standout player, Abdulaziz Al-Najjar, was honored as the best player of the match. Meanwhile, Morocco emerged victorious against Tunisia

in the same round, sealing its spot in the final with a score of 22-20.

Today's final sets the stage for a rematch of the tournament opener, where the Kuwait triumphed over Morocco on its home turf before drawing with Tunisia and suffering a loss to Saudi Arabia. Notably, the Algerian team withdrew from the tournament, thus avoiding a clash with Kuwait.

HANDBALL

Qayed Al-Adwani, Secretary General of the Handball Federation and head of the national team delegation in the Sixth Arab Youth Championship, commended the stars for their qualification to the tournament final. He emphasized the team's calm and focused approach throughout the championship, praising their exceptional performance that led them to the semi-final victory. Al-Adwani expressed confidence in the Kuwaiti stars' ability to claim the title and reaffirmed Kuwait's standing in the Arab handball community.

Kuwaiti powerboat 'stars' secure podium finishes at World Championship Endurance

MADRID, April 29, (KUNA) — In the inaugural round of the 2024 World Championship Endurance hosted by the International Powerboat Federation in Sanxenxo, Spain, the Kuwaiti powerboat team notched two notable achievements, bringing home commendable placements. Head of the Kuwaiti delegation and leader of the speedboat, wakeboard, and free diving committee at the Kuwaiti Marine Sports Club, Ali Al-Shamali, proudly announced the team's successes.

World champions Bader Al-Dosari and his skilled counterpart, Mohamed Al-Essayie, clinched second place in the demanding "Production Boat Class" category (B), showcasing their prowess in single-engine boats boasting 300 horsepower. Additionally, Khaled Karam, another esteemed world champion, alongside his adept teammate Adel Al-Sharidah, secured third place in the fiercely competitive Promotion Class category (P). Their performance highlighted their expertise in single-engine boats fueled by 150 horsepower.

Al-Shamali expressed his elation at the team's achievements, emphasizing the intense competition, the impressive turnout of participants, and the considerable public interest witnessed throughout the tournament. The Kuwaiti contingent faced off against teams from various nations, including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Malta, Italy, and the host country, Spain, underscoring the global nature of the

AFC set to end presidential term limits

GENEVA, April 29, (AP) — The Asian Football Confederation could soon abolish term limits for its president and other elected officials, continuing a trend among international sports bodies toward easing anti-corruption rules and letting leaders stay in office.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia are among four AFC members who are proposing to end term limits when the Asian soccer body meets in Bangkok next month ahead of the FIFA Congress there on May 17. The proposal, which has been seen by The Associated Press, asks member federations to "remove the term limits imposed on the AFC executive committee members and president."

That would open the door for AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa of Bahrain to keep the job - and the status it brings as a FIFA vice president - after his current term ends

event.

With the first leg of the 2024 championship concluded, attention now turns to the forthcoming rounds. The anticipation builds for the next installment set to unfold in Belgium come June, promising further exhilarating competition and the opportunity for the Kuwaiti team to showcase their skills on the international stage once more.

Knicks take 3-1 lead over 76ers as Clippers even series

Timberwolves outlast Suns to finish sweep

PHOENIX, April 29, (AP) — Minnesota star Anthony Edwards noticed early in the third quarter that the Phoenix Suns switched up their defense, playing him one-on-one most of the time instead of using the double teams from the first half.

The budding superstar took that as a challenge.

Edwards scored 31 of his 40 points in the second half. Karl-Anthony Towns added 28 and the Timberwolves pulled away late to beat the Suns 122-116 on Sunday night and sweep the first-round playoff series.

It's the first playoff series win for the franchise in 20 years.

Edwards finished 13 of 23 from the field, including 7 of 13 from 3-point range. The 22-year-old threw down a powerful, one-handed jam to give Minnesota a 115-111 lead with 2:14 left.

Phoenix would never recover. The Wolves finished off the Suns despite Devin Booker's 49 points on 13 of 21 shooting. He also made 20 of



Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant, (right), shoots over Minnesota Timberwolves center Naz Reid (11) during the first half of Game 4 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Phoenix. (AP)

21 free throws. Kevin Durant added 33, but the rest of the team struggled.

Minnesota won after coach Chris Finch left the game late in the fourth after an inadvertent collision with Wolves guard Mike Conley. Assistant coach Micah Nori took over for the final 1:41 and the Wolves closed with relative ease.

Knicks 97, 76ers 92

In Philadelphia, Jalen Brunson scored a career playoff-high 47 points, added 10 assists and the New York Knicks beat the Philadelphia 76ers to take a 3-1 lead in their first-round playoff series.

OG Anunoby added 16 points and 14 rebounds, and took on some of the defensive assignment against Joel Em-

biid in the fourth quarter as the Knicks moved within a victory of getting to the Eastern Conference semifinals for the second straight year.

The No. 2-seeded Knicks can do that with a victory at home on Tuesday night.

Embiid played the entire second half after the 76ers faltered badly when he sat in the first. But the All-Star center, who has been dealing with lingering problems from his surgically repaired left knee that he appeared to reinjure after a dunk in Game 1, and was recently diagnosed with Bell's palsy, a form of facial paralysis, couldn't muster a basket in the fourth quarter.

Embiid finished with 27 points, 10 rebounds and six assists. Tyrese Maxey added 23 points for the 76ers, who will try to force another game at home, which would be Thursday.

Clippers 116, Mavericks 111

In Dallas, Paul George and James Harden each scored 33 points while playing key fourth-quarter roles to help Los Angeles hold on after blowing a 31-point lead and beat Dallas, evening the first-round series at 2-2.

The Clippers won again without Kawhi Leonard, who missed the series opener with right knee inflammation before playing in the two Dallas victories.

The teams have split a pair on each other's home court in the third Western Conference first-round meeting between them in the past five seasons. Game 5 is Wednesday night in Los Angeles.

BASKETBALL

Kyrie Irving scored 40 points for Dallas, including an acrobatic layup with 2:15 remaining for a 104-103 lead that was the first for the Mavericks since the middle of the first quarter.

Luka Doncic had 29 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his fourth career playoff triple-double - all against the Clippers.

George scored 26 points in the first half, when the Clippers' lead reached 55-24 on a 3-pointer by Harden. The high-scoring stars combined to go 11 of 16 from long range as LA finished 18 of 29 overall.

Pacers 126, Bucks 113

In Indianapolis, Myles Turner scored 29 points, Tyrese Haliburton added 24 and Indiana made a franchise playoff record 22 3-pointers as they pulled away late for a victory over Milwaukee.

The win gave the Pacers a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Indiana has won three straight since losing the opener and can reach the Eastern Conference semifinals for the first time since 2014 - with a win Tuesday at Milwaukee.

Indiana is 7-2 this season against the Bucks, who are trying to avoid a second straight first-round exit.