

Scan the OR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2024 / SHAWWAL 12, 1445 AH

emergency number 112

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT

Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com

NO. 18574

Two-month residency

leeway for foreigners

Work permit fee exemptions laid out

150 FILS

KUWAIT MINISTERIAL DECISION AMENDS EXPAT RESIDENCY LAW

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Deputy Prime Minister, Min-

ister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh

Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah issued a ministerial decision

amending some provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 957/2019 on the executive regulations of the Foreigners'

KUNA photo

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development inks MoU with the International Labor Organization. - See Page 8

Opinion

O leadership, may Allah appease you, as you have realized our ills

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Highness, the people acknowledge the immense pain they are enduring due to the deterioration of their country at all levels. This is because of the legacy of dysfunctional relationships between the past Cabinets and the previous National

Despite the fact that they spark unnecessary crises, the state cannot stand without organs



Al-Jarallah

nothing else. Today, considering the ongoing consultations to form an executive author-

peaceful

their

were

and

ity that will help implement the plans that Your Highness announced in previous speeches, it is necessary for the ministers to have the necessary administrative and political capabilities that will serve the ultimate goal of achieving the interest of and not see the position as merely an

Likewise, no one should take such a task based on the principle of "I scratch your back and you scratch mine", or "he is our son". Kuwait is not a laboratory for failed experiments. This is what the leadership had warned about in all the previous speeches.

Also, the legislative authority is not a "Friday market" for concluding personal deals between parliamentarians

Your Highness the Amir, you pinpointed this problem in the lofty speech delivered during the oath-taking session, in which every word must be an agenda for the two authorities, if they want to work with a national conscience.

To achieve all of this, it is necessary to implement the plans and agreements that were drawn up for advancement, irrespective of whether it was Tony Blair's plan in 2009 including his emphasis on the relationship between governments and the national assemblies to be like it is in all countries of the world, or the agreements signed in 2018 with China for the sake of the Silk City and its path that other countries followed.

You renewed this agreement during your visit to Beijing last year. However, the wrangling between the Council of Ministers and the parliament obstructed it. This is because of the influence of extremist parliamentarians, or the interests of some influential people.

Therefore, freezing it was an effective action, either in submission to parliamentary desires, or through hesitation and fear on the part of ministers, or because the deep state had no benefit from it, which made the state institutions more like a group of farms instead of bodies that are seeking advancement.

Your Highness, we know that the commercial and industrial movement is the foundation of stability and prosperity. This cannot be achieved without partnerships with countries that have huge capabilities and seek mutual benefit. It cannot be pursued without governments that have the decisionmaking power and a close relationship with the legislative authority.

Therefore, the people understand that you are seeking a government that is not like the previous ones, but rather takes what you command and works

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com Follow me on:

facebook.



ment and Future Foresight, affiliated with Planning, these measures ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah will chair a delegation attending the EU-Gulf High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation due in Luxembourg on Monday, said the Kuwaiti ambassador to Bel-

member countries and comes in the context of their bilateral partnership that was agreed in 2022 Ambassador Nawaf Al-Enezi, who is also chief of Kuwait's diplomatic missions at the EU

The gathering is also deemed a significant indication of mutual willingness to promote the strategic partnership between both sides, implement their political dialogue, and upgrade the level of coordination about issues of mutual interest, favorably reflecting on regional and global security and stability, he added. (KUNA)

PALU, Indonesia: Indonesia's elite counterterrorism police arrested eight suspected militants in recent days believed to be part of a new cell linked to Jemaah

tween Tuesday and Thursday, said Agus Nugroho, the provincial police chief, adding that five suspects were arrested in the city of Palu, two in Sigi, and one in Poso which is a known extremist hotbed. (AP)

WASHINGTON: State Dept. spokesperson **Matthew Miller** said Friday the **United States** is committed to strengthening the global nonproliferation regime by taking action to disrupt procurement networks supporting proliferation activities of con-

four entities pursuant to Executive Order 13382, which targets proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their means of

PARIS: A man wearing a fake explosive vest and making threats was detained Friday outside the Iranian Consulate in Paris after police locked down the area, authorities said. His motive was

unclear. The incident came at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East, and as Paris is on high security alert as it gears up to host the Summer Olympics in three

Newswatch

Islamiyah, an al-Qaida-linked group, authorities said Saturday. Police conducted raids in Central Sulawesi province be-

cern.
"Today, we are designating delivery," he said in a press release. (AP)

BRUSSELS: Kuwaiti Deputy gium Saturday.

The forum is an unprecedented event between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and EU and NATO, told KUNA.

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: A re-

cent government report has recom-

mended several measures to further

enhance happiness in Kuwait in the

coming years, despite the country's

already impressive performance on

the World Happiness Index, where

it ranked first among Arab and Gulf

countries in 2024, reports Al-Qabas

vatory for Sustainable Develop-

Outlined by the National Obser-

Gulf Cup prep quizzed

MPs slam sports director suspension

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: A number of MPselect have denounced the decision of State Minister for Youth Affairs Dawoud Maarafi to suspend Public Authority for Sports Director Yousef Al-Baidan for the latter's alleged sluggishness in preparing for hosting the upcoming Gulf Cup.

MP-elect Mohmmad Al-Mutair finds it funny that Al-Baidan is suspended for being slow in preparing for a football tournament, which will take place eight months later. He thinks Al-Baidan is being punished for getting Kuwaiti sports out of the control of some influential individuals. He said the decision exposed the truth that Maarafi is working for

MP-elect Bader Al-Dahoum pointed out that Maarafi is making a sacrifice for his alliances through the issuance of such a decision, in addition to his previous decision to reinstate the suspended sports clubs even before the Public Prosecution completes investigation into these clubs. He said the higher committee headed by Maarafi is in charge of preparations for the upcoming Gulf Cup.

MP-elect Mubarak Al-Tasha asserted the decision is a manifestation of the confusion of the caretaker government, while revealing the unjustified desire to take revenge and instigate crises. He said Maarafi ignored the fact that he is the official in charge of preparations for the Gulf Cup since he chairs the concerned

higher committee. MP-elect Saad Al-Khanfour stressed that

Continued on Page 5

■ Supporting cultural, entertain-

ment, sports, and tourism activities

to stimulate job creation, diversify

the economy, boost Kuwait's glob-

al standing, and improve citizens'

■ Promoting accountability and

■ Prioritizing government spend-

ing to reduce inequalities and create

■ Ensuring universal access to pub-

Continued on Page 5

transparency across all sectors.

standard of living.

fair job opportunities.

lic services.

Kuwait unveils plans for

ongoing happiness boost

'Downplay' **Iraq investigates** Kalsu base blast

UN Secretary-General Antonio Gut-

erres reiterated on Friday that it is

high time to stop 'the dangerous cycle

of retaliation in the Middle East.

Kuwait-funded aid convoy reaches Northern Gaza. - See Page 5

US vetoes Palestine's request for full **UN** membership

Kuwait renews call for Palestinian rights

BAGHDAD, April 20, (AP): Iraqi authorities said Saturday that they were investigating an explosion that struck a base belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), a coalition of Iran-allied militias, killing one person and injuring eight.

Militia officials had initially described the explosion at the Kalsu military base north of Babylon - a former U.S. base that was handed over to the Iraqi military in 2011 - as an airstrike, blaming it on U.S. forces. The U.S. Central Command denied in a statement that it had carried out any airstrikes in Iraq.

The PMF in a statement Saturday afternoon described the blast as an "attack" but did not blame any specific party.

Iraq's Security Media Cell said the country's air defense command had not detected any drones or fighter plane in the airspace of Babylon before or during the explosion. It said one PMF member died and eight people were injured, including an Iraqi army soldier.

The PMF is a coalition of primarily Shiite, Iran-backed armed groups designated as an "independent military formation" within the Iraqi armed forces.

In recent months, some of the PMF member groups launched attacks on U.S. forces based in Iraq and Syria, which they said was in retaliation for Washington's support of Israel in its war against Hamas in Gaza. Those attacks halted at the end of January after three U.S. soldiers were killed in a strike on a base in Jordan, near the Syrian border, prompting U.S. retaliatory strikes in Iraq.

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed deep regret over the UN Security Council's (UNSC) failure to approve a full membership for Palestine in the United Nations.

In a statement on Friday, the ministry said that Kuwait renewed its call for the international community to exert further efforts to resolve the situation in Palestine and to protect the rights of Palestinian people.

Kuwait also applauded the efforts of Algeria, supported by the Arab group in the UN and other friendly countries to back up Palestine's membership resolution.

Saudi Arabia on Friday regretted the United Nations Security Council's failure to adopt a resolution accepting the State of Palestine as a full member in the international organization.

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign

Affairs said in a statement the obstruction to grant the State of Palestine full membership in the United Nations "contributes to boosting intransigence of the Israeli occupation and its continuing breaches of the international law. It renewed the call upon the in-

ternational community to undertake its responsibilities vis a vis the Israeli occupation's attacks on the civilians in the Gaza Strip. The United States vetoed the Algeria-proposed resolution to

grant Palestine full membership late on Thursday. The US' use of veto at the UN Security Council not to recognize Palestine's state as a UN full

member is a step back in efforts aiming to achieve fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle

Continued on Page 5

ers recruited with work permits and the prescribed fees, reports Al-Seyassah daily. KUNA photo The decision stipulates the fol-Article 1 -

Residency Law and its amendments, reports Al-Anba

tion No. 957/2019 is amended as follows: "A foreigner who entered the country in accordance with Clause Nos. 1-7 and 14 of Article Four of this

decision may remain here without a residence permit for a period not ex-

Article One of the decision states that Article 12 of Ministerial Resolu-

The employer must obtain work permits according to an estimate of need after obtaining the approval of the concerned department of PAM. An additional for each work permit in accordance with the provisions of this

ceeding two months from the date of his entry. Procedures must be initiated to obtain

regular or temporary residency within this period.

recorded in the civil identification card issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), while data related to the

temporary residency stipulated

in Article 14 of this decision are

recorded in accordance with the

mechanism specified by the Residency Affairs General Depart-

Article Two mandates the con-

cerned undersecretary to imple-

ment this decision, which shall take effect from the date of its

publication in the Official Ga-

Meanwhile, the Deputy Prime

Minister, Minister of Defense,

Acting Minister of Interior, and

Chairman of the Board of Direc-

tors of the Public Authority for

Manpower (PAM) Sheikh Fahad

Al-Yousef issued a ministerial

decision regarding the mecha-

nism for granting work permits

and the transfer of migrant work-

ment in the Interior Ministry.

'Regular residence data are

Article 2 -

The following categories are exempted from paying the additional fee referred to in Article One of this decision:

1 - Companies wholly owned by the government.

2 - Hospitals, dispensaries, medical centers and medical clinics licensed by the Ministry of Health. 3 - Universities and private

colleges. 4 - Private schools.

5 - Foreign investors approved

by the Investment Promotion Au-6 - Sports clubs, federations,

public benefit associations, cooperative societies, trade unions, foundations, and charitable en-7 - Agricultural plots licensed by the Public Authority for Ag-

ricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). 8 - Fishing. 9 - Barns, grazing sheep and

10 - Industrial establishments and small industries. Article 3 -In cases where it is permissible

to transfer workers from one employer to another in accordance with the procedures in force at PAM, the transfer of a migrant worker who was brought in with a work permit to another employer is permitted in accordance with the provisions of this decision, which is before the lapse of three years and for a fee of KD

Continued on Page 5



A Palestinian youth seriously wounded in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip is brought to the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, late Friday, April 19, 2024. (AP)

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Hot and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for rising dust.

By Night: Mild, relatively humid over coastal areas and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might

be thundery at times.

Weather

Max Exp Min Rec Station **Kuwait City** 37 38 38 38 31 Kuwait Airport Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Nuwaisib Wafra

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

Member Al-Muwaizri seat to be declared vacant

Municipal Council to discuss multiple vital issues in Monday session

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Municipal Council will hold its 17th regular session on Monday, headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri, to discuss the items on its agenda, the most important of which are:

1. The objection raised by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan to the Municipal Council's approval to remove the parking lots adjacent to Waleed Bin Abdul Malik School, and amend the Municipal Council's decision taken on June 26, 2023 to maintain the proposed parking lots opposite Awad Rashid Al-Shanfa Street in Firdous Block

2. Minister Dr. Al-Mashaan's objection to the Municipal Council's approval of the Ministry of Finance's request regarding the reallocation of the site decided upon in accordance with the Municipal Council's decision dated May 31, 1999 on an area of 750 square meters and with dimensions of 25m x 30m in Salmiya for the benefit of the Ministry of Finance on a permanent basis instead of a temporary one, and canceling any previous decisions regarding the site.

3. The letter of Dr. Al-Mashaan regarding the ratification of the minutes of the Municipal Council meeting held on March 4, 2024 for the second session, which includes the minister's objection to approving the proposal submitted by the members of the Municipal Council Fahad Musaed Al-Abd Al-Jader and Ismail Behbehani. Other members are Abdullah Al-Enezi, Saud Al-Kandari, Alia Al-Farsi, Dr. Hassan Kamal and Nasser Al-Jadaan. This is regarding transferring the use and ownership of some residential plots in block (12-66-80-227) of Salmiya to investment housing.

The state will expropriate residential plots with an area of less than 500 square meters, in addition to reorganizing the previously mentioned plots and the region in general, while developing infrastructure services

Other Voices

By Ahmad alsarraf

I made many mistakes, most of which did not hurt me, so I forgot them, but

I did not forget, even after 57 years, and

I was very sad to the extent tears rolled

cally admired the Jewish people, and I

still do, and I formed friendships with

a number of them, in America and Brit-

ain, as professionals, consultants, and

friends, and they were extremely kind,

intelligent, and honest in their deal-

ings, and that admiration was reflected

or extended to Israel, which I believed

was founded on values worthy of re-

spect. (With my belief in the right of

the Palestinian people to their land, and

my denunciation of all the injustice and

crime inflicted on them at the hands of

ive and wrong I was, and that the prin-

ciples of Zionism, which emanate from

an extremist political doctrine for which

there is no room for others or mercy,

and blind fanaticism are the norm, and

this made me look at things in a differ-

I am not a fan of the Iranian regime,

or any religious political regime, which

is extremist in nature, and I was almost

imprisoned, in a "state security" case,

after I criticized the symbol of the Is-

lamic Republic, but this should not affect my opinion of the recent military

confrontation between Iran and Israel.

A friend says that Israel has gained

from the Iranian attack, as it has re-

vealed the limited capabilities of Iran,

compared to Israel, the West, and

countries in the world have limited ca-

pabilities compared to those countries,

people of Gaza also declined, and Israel

now became the victim and the aggres-

sor, and this reduced global pressure

on it. The Iranian attack gave Israel the

right to retaliate, at the appropriate time!

missile attack erased the effects of Isra-

A friend also believes that the Iranian

and Iran is no exception.

This is naive talk, as 90% of the

Global interest in the tragedy of the

The Gaza crime showed me how na-

down my cheeks

when I heard Ja-

mal Abdel Nasser

announced his res-

ignation from the

leadership, after

his involvement

in the disastrous

defeat of 1967.

and how naive I

was, hoped that he

would remain in

also histori-

that position.

the Zionists).

ent way.

America!

My fatal mistakes...& Iran

4. Minister Dr. Al-Mashaan's objection to approving the proposal submitted by the Vice President of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi.

In the event that a previously jointly owned property is transformed into a single owner, the street will be added to the current property owner for free. This will apply to the plots in private housing from the date of issuance of the decision.

5. The Minister's refusal to approve the Municipal Council's request submitted by the Public Facilities Management Company to determine the license for the surface parking site No. 4 located behind the headquarters of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs in Sharq, Block 2 on a temporary basis, provided that the site is evacuated and handed over to the municipality upon the municipality's request.

6. Minister Dr. Al-Mashaan's objection to the Municipal Council's failure to approve the request submitted by the Public Authority for Industry regarding allocating a site to establish a station for treating liquid industrial waste in Subhan Industrial Area,

7. The letter that was issued by Dr. Al-Mashaan regarding the ruling issued against Nasser Hammad Muhammad Al-Kafif, a member of the Municipal Council, in case No. 142/2020 of Fintas Criminal Court. Accordingly, Al-Kafif's membership was revoked. Based on article 13 of law No. 33/2016, the Municipal Council must declare his seat vacant in the first session after the issuance of the ruling and hold by-elections to fill his seat in the ninth district within 30 days from the date of that vacancy.

The Council will also announce in the same session that the seat of Municipal Council Member Fahad Al-Muwaizri in the Sixth District is vacant due to him running in the 2024 National Assembly elections.

el's intelligence and military failure on

October 7, and restored its confidence.

Their success in shooting down 99% of

ballistic and cruise missiles and 60% of

drones is evidence of that, but he forgets

that his comparison is unfair! American,

British, European, and even Arab forces

contributed to shooting down Iranian

missiles, knowing that Iran remains a

Third World country, and its capabili-

ties should not be compared to the ca-

pabilities of those who shot down its

missiles. The Iranian attack also demon-

strated, in the friend's opinion, that Iran

poses an existential threat to Israel, and

that it will not hesitate to annihilate it if

Iran, for the first time since 1979, suc-

ceeded, from its territory, in challenging

Israel, and made it stand on its tiptoes.

worried about what would come next.

These were real hours of panic that the

world witnessed in the appearances of

displaced people in schools, running

for shelters, and storing medicines and

food; even leaving the country, all of

which are new matters, with their mo-

dated, have proven that harming Israel

and forcing it to live in a state of am-

bush is not difficult. It is a country heav-

ily armed to its ears, but it is fragile and

tinue forever, and without it it will not

be able to withstand for long, or be

happy. With peace, even its arsenal of

nuclear weapons cannot be used except

in the case of "against me and my ene-

mies," due to the small area of the coun-

try. The terror Iran has spread in the

hearts of the Israelis is something that

only an ignorant person would deny.

Had major countries not raced to protect

it, the extent of the destruction would

fan of the Iranian regime, and I do not

agree with Hamas, and I do not think

that it is any different or less extrem-

ist than the extremist Israelis, and there

will be no peace with it. But at the same

time, I do not believe in the demise of

Israel. Rather, I believe that its victory

over Hamas, and over every Palestinian

or Arab extremist, cannot be achieved

not believe in the existence of a God,

but they believe that He promised them

the land of Palestine! -- Israeli historian

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

Note: The majority of Zionists do

without the two-state solution.

I repeat and repeat gain, I am not a

This is no longer guaranteed to con-

in constant need of American support.

Iran's missiles, let's call them dilapi-

What the friend did not notice is that

it possesses nuclear power!

mentum, in Israeli society.

Joint GCC efforts sought to tackle phenomenon

PAM in forefront at anti-human peddling forum

20: In the ongoing battle against human trafficking, stakeholders from various sectors convened at the fifth session of the Government Forum to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Middle East, held in Muscat, Oman, under the theme "Combating Human Trafficking: Legislation and Operational Approaches." Chaired by Faisal Al-Gharib, the Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments Islamic Affairs, alongside the Chairman of the Permanent National Committee dedicated to implementing the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, the forum saw active participation from the Public Authority for Manpower, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Deputy Director for the Workforce Protection Sector, highlighted the forum's objectives, emphasizing the exchange of experiences and best practices among Middle Eastern countries in combating human trafficking. The overarching goal is to develop a unified vision that aligns with evolving criminal methodologies, ensuring the sustained and effective suppression of this crime while providing support to its victims through specialized training programs.

During a panel discussion, Al-Murad shed light on the Authority's pivotal role in addressing laborrelated issues, including shelters for victims, and Kuwait's legislative framework concerning human trafficking. He also outlined the notable accomplish-



Participants at the forum.

ments of the permanent committee in fostering collaboration between the "workforce" and civil societv entities.

This collaborative effort underscores the collective commitment to confront the multifaceted challenges posed by human trafficking,

with a strategic emphasis on legislative measures and operational strategies tailored to the evolving landscape of criminal activity.

MEW likely to face challenges as power load jumps in 'high temps'

Production less, consumption to spiral in summer

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: With temperatures rising yesterday to 38 degrees Celsius in the afternoons, the electricity load index jumped to almost the "red zone", recording 11,244 megawatts, which is the maximum load recorded by the index during this period.

The load on Friday reached a high of 10,700 megawatts, which means that there is an increase in loads amounting to 544 megawatts within one day.

In this context, informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy warned of an increase tion, which amounts to about 18,600 megawatts, while the ministry's expectations for the maximum load are 17,250 megawatts. This means that the ministry will face challenges with a limited surplus, especially since a number of units are in the maintenance phase during that period.

The ministry called for the need to implement urgent solutions to confront the crisis, with emphasis on following a policy of rationalization, in coordination with some ministries such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and the Public Authority for Industry.

It indicated that there are future solutions that must be implemented, the most important of which is accelerating the pace of electrical energy projects and establishing stations, adding that a number of projects are included within the ministry's plan, including those that will be implemented in cooperation with the Public-Private Partnership Authority.

Meanwhile, informed sources revealed that the ministry has three projects to produce brackish water from three fields with a production capacity of 50 million imperial gallons through drilling 136 wells. They explained that the wells were drilled as follows: - 19 wells in the F field northwest of Umm Qadir, 32 wells in the Kabd field northeast of Umm Qadir, and 85 wells in the northwest of Shaqaya. This is aimed to increase the capacity for production of brackish water.

The current combined productivity of all brackish groundwater wells amounted to about 142 million imperial gallons per day, which is used for mixing with distilled water, irrigation, cosmetic agriculture and other domestic uses, as well as for watering livestock and construction work. The brackish water reaches about 79,119 consumers at affordable prices for use in the aforementioned purposes.

PAM issues order to regulate manpower need in nurseries

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The director general of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) recently issued an administrative decision stipulating regulations on estimating the manpower needs of private nurseries, reports Al-Anba daily.

The regulations will take effect from the date of the issuance of this decision, which will be published in the Official Gazette. The concerned authorities must be informed about the regulations as follows:

Article One (License): The concerned department at the Ministry of Social Affairs shall issue a license to a private nursery for children -- only one license per licensee. It is permissible to open one or more branches with the same name of the nursery, provided the license issued to the licensee is valid for a minimum of six months.

Article Two (Nursery Building): The following regulations shall be applied regarding the nursery building:

1. The entire building must be prepared for a nursery and it should not be used for other purposes such as housing, storage or any activity or purpose other than those it is

2. All occupational safety and health requirements specified by PAM must be completed, as well as ensuring the availability of heating and air conditioning equipment.

Article Three (Supervisory and Administrative Systems): The supervisory and administrative staff should be females only as follows:

1. Director - should hold an academic qualification not lower than a bachelor's degree or diploma in the educational field and experience of not less than five years in the same field.

2. Supervisor - should hold an academic qualification not lower than a diploma in the educational field.

3. Assistant Supervisor - should hold an academic qualification not lower than completion of a training high school. course of not less than six months in the educational field and a first aid course.

4. Secretary - should hold a certificate of not lower than intermediate level, in addition to experience and knowledge in secretarial work.

5. Employee - no qualification. Article Four (Admission and Child Care):

The nursery should accept only the follow-1. Infant stage - from 30 days to two years

old

2. Weaning stage - from two years old to two and a half years old 3. Orchard stage - from two and a half

4. Nursery stage: from three years old to below kindergarten age

years old to three years old

The nursery must maintain documents and records of the children like the admission applications; copies of civil identification cards; telephone numbers of parents; and attendance, absence and health records.

Article Five (Estimated Manpower):

The initial number of employees for the nursery upon the opening of its file is six - one director, one secretary, three female employees and one driver.

Drug pills found with suspect

Wanted duo attack police officer

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: An illegal resident and an expatriate were arrested for attempting to run over a security officer, resisting security personnel, and consumption and possession of narcotics, reports Al-Anba.

Case files indicate that patrol officers noticed a speeding American four-wheeler along Kabad Road at 2:50 am Friday. When the officers signaled for the driver (an expatriate) to pull over, the driver fled and attempted to run over a policeman. A patrol car chased the vehicle and stopped it by force. The driver and his companion, who turned out to be residing in the country illegally, were searched. This led to the discovery of three white pills and other narcotic substances in the pocket of one of them.

The officers issued citations for recklessness on the road, imprudence, endangering the lives of others, resisting police, and not wearing a seat belt.

The officers also discovered that Saad Al-Abdullah Police Station had issued a warrant to arrest the illegal resident for carrying an unlicensed firearm and threatening to kill another person, in addition to the arrest warrant from the Drugs Control General Department.

À case was filed at Sulaibiya Police Station and the two suspects were referred to the concerned authorities.

Fire in Sharq garage: Fire broke out in a garage in Sharq without causing injuries or loss of lives, reports Al-Anba daily.

2-car crash

Rescue team hurt

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: A collision between a vehicle and a rescue patrol car along Kabad roundabout caused injuries to a girl and a sergeant assigned in the Rescue Police Unit, reports Al-Anba daily.

Security and rescue officers were dispatched to the location immediately after the Operations Unit received information that a vehicle collided with a patrol car belonging to Jahra Rescue General Department.

Medical emergency workers said the girl might have sustained spinal fracture, while the patrol officer got minor injuries.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to establish the circumstances leading to the ac-

Firefighters were dispatched to the location immediately after the Operations Unit at Kuwait Firefighting Force received information on the fire incident. The fire was extinguished in record time.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of fire.

Police nab 64 illegals, criminals

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Rescue Police intensified their efforts to uphold law and order, as well as provide aid to those in need. In a recent series of campaigns, they focused on apprehending violators while simultaneously offering humanitarian assistance to 286 emergency cases, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During security and traffic operations conducted by the Rescue Police, they seized a total of 90 vehicles and apprehended 64 individuals wanted either for evading authorities or facing legal issues . Additionally, 10 individuals were detained in connection with unusual circumpired residency permits (29 cases) or lacking proper identification documents (44 cases) were detained and handed over to the appropriate authorities for further action . Additionally, police intervened in 12 altercations

In terms of traffic violations, a total of

and rendered aid to 286 emergency cases.

8,625 infractions were recorded, including 177 instances of vehicles generating excessive noise. As a result, 10 vehicles were impounded. These enforcement actions were conducted between April 13 and April 19, 2024.

Furthermore, individuals found with ex-

MoH set to mark World

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Week of Immunization

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: On the occasion of the celebration of World Immunization Week, which is held from April 24 to 30 each year, the Ministry of Health issued a guidebook on vaccines and immunizations avail-

According to informed sources in the ministry, immunization protects about 25 million people of all ages from death

The main goal of immunization, as defined by the World Health Organization, is to reduce infection and death rates from diseases that can be prevented by vaccination. The World Health Organization aims to achieve a vaccination coverage rate of no less than 90 percent, but Kuwait aims to achieve rates of up to 100 percent.

The sources stressed the importance of vaccination as a safe and successful means of protecting children from many diseases such as measles, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough and other diseases. They explained that the Department of Infectious Disease

Control in the Public Health Department works to enhance the health of citizens and residents through policies and measures taken to reduce the possibility of contracting infectious diseases. One of these policies is the Expanded Program on Immunizations to reduce infectious diseases and deaths resulting from those diseases that can be prevented by vac-

There are two basic types of vaccines. The first type is live attenuated vaccines, including viral vaccines to treat German measles, mumps, chicken pox, yellow fever, rotavirus, nasal influenza vaccine, and oral polio vaccine, and bacterial vaccines such as tuberculosis and typhoid vaccine.

diwaniya 💎 چيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

New PM needs to steer clear of bumpy road & potholes ahead

"FIRST of all, we congratulate Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah for winning the confidence of His Highness the Amir, may God protect him, by assuming the presidency of the Council of Ministers. This great responsibility falls on Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah in light of very sensitive internal and external circumstances," columnist Dr Muhammad Hussein Al-Dalal wrote for Al-Qabas daily

"Far from pleasantries and images of political theorizing, and closer to the existing reality, and in light the difficult road ahead of the new Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, we point out a num-



ber of aspects of the difficulty and obstacles in the road, which require special attention from the Prime Minister and the team working with him, to avoid the dangers of the road, and the difficulties facing the team to sail to the shore safely.

"Within the past 3 years, Kuwait has seen 4 governments and 4 parliaments, and this wrong situation reflects the state of instability that the country is experiencing. There are no ongoing government programs, no productive parliamentary work, and no stable executive work for many reasons, including the absence of vision and work to address the situation.

"The large void in leadership appointments, the situation which requires the new government to seriously evaluate and build a strategic vision that leads to enhancing stability in the performance of constitutional authorities.

'The obstacle of overlapping powers of members of the executive authority is what I consider most apparent, in light of the recent historical experience. It is the most difficult path facing the new prime minister. Many governments in recent years have failed, confused their roles, and lost their compass due to the absence of a unified administration, and the presence of more than one head, leadership, and opinion in the executive authority, and therefore it requires success.

"The new government's path is to take a pause in evaluation and frankness among the members of the executive authority, with the aim of resolving the forms of overlap and entanglement in the performance of the executive authority in order to achieve the proper and required institutional performance.

"The Prime Minister faces the mentalities of some leaders of the executive authority who are hostile and opposed to the political path, and the relationship between the two authorities and the constitutional system in general, and that mentality places obstacles in front of any government that seeks to make the political path successful, or to enhance cooperation between the government and the National Assembly, and requires the new ministry to curb the behavior of those who belong to it. This mentality is out of concern for the constitutional system, which, after God, is a

safety valve for Kuwait and its people. "Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah has previous experience in ministerial and executive work, and that experience carries within it positive and negative aspects, especially in the relationship with the National Assembly. It is important for the Prime Minister to realize, in light of his new duties, that we are all children of today, and that his greatest responsibilities as Prime Minister, he needs to wear a new dress, the basis of which is opening new pages of positive relations with everyone, and serious institutional work to advance the roles of the Council of Ministers.

"The famous rule says, 'Whoever has a sound beginning will have a sound end', and the first impression the people will have of Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah is his formation of the new ministry.

"If the new ministerial formation is of a high degree of competence, strength, and honesty, then it is truly a good beginning that foretells a promising future for the government and its prime min-

"If the beginning is bad due to poor formation, the impression will be bad, and the end of the government will be bad. The recent formations of successive governments have caused the general performance of the ministry to be weak, due to the incorrect selection methodology in the ministerial formation, which was primarily based on selecting personalities according to the method of appeasements and quotas, and relying on technocratic figures.

"All of this is at the expense of selecting individuals with political and administrative skill to manage the affairs of the state. It also requires in order to overcome the obstacle of the weakness of the Council of Ministers institution, that the Prime Minister attaches the Council of Ministers to a high-level team that provides forms of advisory and technical support in an institutional

"Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah has his own experience with the National Assembly, and it is not necessarily positive. The ministry comes after new elections in which the people returned the majority of the members of the previous Assembly, in light of their apprehension about the directions of the executive au-

"It is a message from the people that must be read seriously, and all of this is accompanied by a campaign from a group in society, which I consider in my own opinion to not represent the majority of the Kuwaiti people, is inciting

the executive authority against the National Assembly and its members, and all these obstacles, whether personal or general, must not deviate the Council of Ministers from the path stipulated by the Constitution, with cooperation be-

tween the two authorities. "Rather, this obstacle must be an incentive to support the discourse of reason and wisdom through joint action and positive consensus, and to sit at one table to agree and reject disagreement, and to deny the opportunity to those who want to distort and tamper with our constitutional system.

"Dear Prime Minister brother Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, everything mentioned is an internal work that can be achieved, God willing, if the intentions are sincere and it there is will and determination. But on the other hand, how do you work with external circumstances?

"Is it actually more influential and important, given the seriousness of regional and international developments? Accordingly, one of the most important duties of your new government is to give issues of external affairs and security a top priority in the list of your concerns, your agenda, and your next

"One of the forms of strategic interest in this aspect is institutional dealing with crises and dangers, which is a long-awaited project, and is required at this sensitive stage, so it is proposed to establish a specialized body to manage crises and risks in accordance with global experience, and some members of the National Assembly have previously presented proposals for a law in this regard that can be benefited from. Let this be the first achievement of your new government.

"In conclusion, we ask God to grant success to the new Prime Minister and those working with him for the good of the country and the people, and to guide their visions and steps, and that God grants Kuwait and its people all the best, security, stability and prosperity.'

"In educational circles, the month of Ramadan is a golden opportunity to instill religious and spiritual values in the hearts of children. However, the greatest challenge lies in how to continue these obedience and deeds after this holy month has ended," columnist Nada Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf, wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"In this article, I would like to provide a set of tips that help educators keep the flame of spirituality burning in the hearts of children throughout the

"Promoting the correct understanding of worship -- It is very important to teach children that worship is not limited to Ramadan only, but rather it is an essential part of a Muslim's life at all times. Their understanding of the concept of worship in its broad sense should be strengthened, which includes every action that brings them closer to God, whether it is prayer, charity, honoring

one's parents, or even smiling at others.
"Setting spiritual goals -- Encourage children to set spiritual goals that can be achieved after Ramadan. These goals can be as diverse as choosing to hold one of the prayers in the mosque in a group, reading part of the Qur'an daily, or even doing a simple good deed once a week. This will help them feel accomplished and keep them motivated.

"A good role model -- Be a good role model for your children to follow. Nothing affects children more than seeing their parents living the values they preach. Continue practicing worship and good deeds with the same enthusiasm that you had in Ramadan.

"Exploiting technology positively --In our time, technology can be exploited to encourage children to continue on the path of obedience and worship. There are many applications that provide prayer times reminders, Qur'an recitations, and religious lessons that enhance

young people's spiritual awareness.
"These are some recommendations that I ask God Almighty to help you and us to continue obedience to our children after Ramadan. There is no doubt that Islamic values are among the most important values that develop and refine the personality, especially in the educational context.

"Focusing on the future of Kuwait... The eras that passed in the homelands witnessed failures, decline, corruption and the corrupt. Their economies collapsed and centers of influence were strengthened, causing their societies to disintegrate. There are many examples in this era, the most prominent of which are Malaysia and Singapore, as they benefited from the bitter experience, worked hard to develop themselves, and emerged from a state of collapse to one of the largest economies in the world within some years," Major General M. Faisal Al-Jazzaf wrote for Al-Seyas-

"Today, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir -- may Allah protect him -- who stressed more than once the necessity of putting dots on the letters through a road map for future Kuwait in his lofty speeches, there is no doubt that the course in Kuwait will change into a path that enhances stability. It will be based on the application of laws on everyone and to stop the hand of anyone who violates the laws to advance the State after collapse, laxity, noise and absurd political conflicts continued for a long time. All are these are aimed at protecting the society from tampering, as well as from those who tamper with

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

5-years jail for Kuwaiti in stealing expat cash

By Jaber Al-Humoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Salem Al-Heid, upheld the verdict issued by the Criminal Court, which sentenced a Kuwaiti employee of a local bank to five-year imprisonment for stealing KD 100,000 from an expatriate's account.

The Public Prosecution had charged the bank employee with forging bank papers, an account statement, and transaction documents for issuing a cheque worth KD 100,000, and seizing the amount after making the victim believe it was invested in a deposit.

The accused took advantage of the victim's lack of knowledge of the Arabic language, as he was of Iranian nationality, and persuaded him to invest and earn monthly profits in a deposit scheme. He had him sign papers, including a cheque to the accused for the aforementioned amount.

As per the surveillance cameras in the bank, the testimony of the victim's witnesses, and the investigations of the police, it was proven that the accused c rried out the crime against the victim. Earlier, the Criminal Court had sentenced the accused to five-year imprisonment, and this ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeals after hearing the defense's arguments and confirming the validity of the appealed ruling.



Municipality inspectors at the store accused of altering the country of origin status.

Origin status of food items altered

The Ministry of Commerce recently took action against a vegetable and fruit store in the Al-Ardiya Al-Herfiyya area, uncovering a case of commercial fraud. The store was found guilty of altering the country of origin labels and tampering with the division of food commodities. Such actions directly contravene the regulations set forth by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reports Al-Jarida daily. The Jahra and Farwaniya emergency team spearheaded this operation, and legal procedures are now underway against the perpetrators. This incident underscores the Ministry's commitment to upholding fair trade practices and ensuring consumer confidence in the market.

Jail, ouster in making fake 'disability' docus

Petitions contesting poll rise

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: In the case of falsifying disability certificates, the Criminal Court sentenced two expatriate employees of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) to sevenyear imprisonment followed by deportation. It also sentenced 13 other defendants to two-year imprisonment, and ordered that 35 defendants not be punished and a fine of KD 500 be imposed.

Lawyer Abdulaziz Arab said the majority of those accused of forgery had "good faith" and that the complaint submitted by PADA was aimed to strengthen its position.

He said the ruling is not final and efforts are continuing to amend it before the Court of Appeals, adding that the defense must be unified when filing an appeal against the ruling according to the law, with a statement of the absence of crimi-

Lawyer Arab indicated that PADA is still reducing disabilities unjustifiably, and this ruling does not allow it to continue canceling the rights owed to those who are actually disabled.

Petitions keep rising: The number of petitions against the 2024 National Assembly elections submitted to the Constitutional Court has increased to three. This includes the petitions on the invalidity of the 2024 National Assembly elections and the invalidity of MP Ahmad Nabil Al-Fadhel's victory.

Yesterday, Lawyer Hani Hussein submitted two petitions to the Constitutional Court, demanding in the first petition that the decree of necessity No. 4/2024 regarding the election of members of the 2024 National Assembly is unconstitutional. In the second petition, he stated that the membership and victory of MP Ahmed Nabil Nouri Al-Fadhil is invalid.

It is noteworthy that the candidate for the first constituency Lawyer Nasser Al-Nasrallah was the first to submit a elec-

Tobacco from Gulf

2.5m sachets seized

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Customs officers at Shuwaikh Port intercepted approximately two and a half million sachets of chewing tobacco into the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a statement issued by customs authorities, the Customs Inspection and Warehouse Department suspected two 40-foot containers arriving from a Gulf country, which according to the bill of lading contained a cargo of 'blankets'

Upon inspection, the first container was found to contain 672 cartons, each containing 20 bags, with each bag holding 25 packets of tobacco weighing 50 grams each.

In the second container, 366 bags were found, with each bag containing 100 packets, and each packet holding 60 bags of tobacco, with a weight of 2.3 grams per bag. The total weight of the seized tobacco amounted to 5,050.8 tons.

Accident victim dies: A security source said an unidentified person who was admitted to Al-Jahra Hospital Wednesday afternoon in serious condition, following the double collision on Abdali Road, has succumbed to his injuries, reports Al-Anba daily.

born in 1995. With this tragic development, the death toll from the collision, has now risen to three fatalities, including two expatriates who were traveling in one vehicle.

The deceased is a Kuwaiti citizen

In another incident, firefighting teams responded to a vehicle fire in the Ali Sabah Al-Salem area. This incident resulted in the death of one individual.

toral petition in which he demanded the invalidation of the election results.

The Constitutional Court may witness several electoral petitions invalidating the 2024 Council elections. A number of candidates who ranked 11th in the electoral constituencies intend to file electoral petitions against the vote-counting.

Marijuana plants grown under cover.

Man caught growing pot at home, selling

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Based on the directives of the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, officers from the Drug Control General Department (DCGA) arrested a Kuwaiti citizen who was cultivating marijuana in his home in Salwa. They also confiscated 45 seedlings and four kilograms of marijuana that were ready to be sold, as well as about 37 kilograms of precious metals, money earned from the sale, and bags ready to be packed.

The Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced that it is part of the ongoing security efforts of the Criminal Security Sector and the intensification of search and investigation operations into drug dealers and peddlers to protect the public from this dangerous scourge. This comes in direct follow-up from the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Now Hiring For Al Hala Industrial Co.

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

To apply, please send your CV to hr@halakw.com

Now Hiring For Almuna Advertising

Sales Manager

To apply, please send your CV to hr@almuna.org

Encroachments removed

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has confirmed the implementation of a massive campaign in South Sabah Al-Ahmad to remove encroachments on State properties along Umm Safaq Road, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the department revealed that the Violations Removal Team in the Municipality branch in Ahmadi Governorate removed private reserves surrounded with barbed wire and random fodder stores.

The department affirmed the continuation of such campaigns to remove encroachments on State properties throughout the country, and other violations.

Now Hiring

For Al Hadaf Press

- CTP Operator (FujiFilm Luxel V8)
- **GTO Operator**

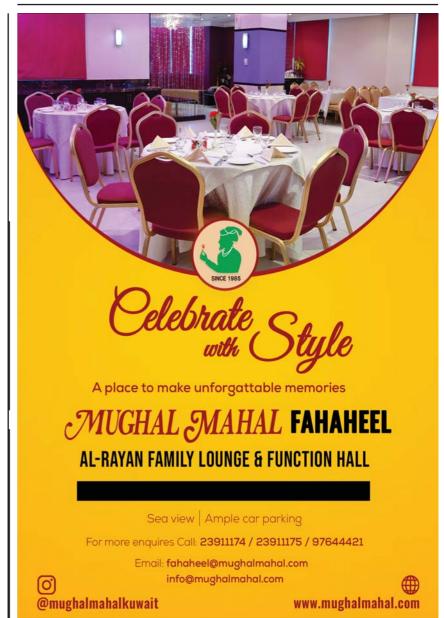
To apply, please send your CV to hr@alhadafkuwait.com

Now Hiring

For al Seyassah Newspaper

- IT Support
- IT Supervisor
- Senior Social Media Officer/Executive To apply, please send your CV to

hr@alseyassah.com



Award aims to highlight distinguished media models in Arab world

Kuwait chairs Arab Media Excellence Award panel meeting

KU addresses social media concerns over alleged Holy Quran questioning

CSC advances central employment plan for Kuwaitis

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Prof. Dr. Fayez Munshar Al-Dhafiri, the Acting Secretary General of Kuwait University and the university's official spokesman, has issued a statement addressing concerns raised on social media regarding a member of the academic body allegedly questioning the Holy Quran, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Dhafiri emphasized that Kuwait University is closely monitor-

ing the situation and will take all necessary legal measures to investigate the matter thoroughly.

The university is committed to clarifying the facts and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to uphold the institution's integrity and academic standards.

Furthermore, Al-Dhafiri stressed Kuwait University's unwavering commitment to respecting religious values and the sanctity of the Holy Quran, as well as the divine and prophetic figures associated with it. The university administration is dedicated to upholding the law and preserving the university's reputation and

the reputation of its members.

The Kuwait University is determined to address this issue in a manner that upholds academic integrity, respects religious sensitivities, and ensures adherence to legal principles.

Central employment plan: The Civil Service Commission has reported significant progress in its efforts to implement the central employment plan for Kuwaiti citizens within ministries and government departments, reports Al-Qabas daily

Since January 2023, a total of 25,624 Kuwaiti men and women have undergone nomination and appointment procedures.

Of this figure, 23,406 individuals have been appointed through the central employment system, while the appointment procedures for an additional 2,218 candidates are currently underway. The Commission has emphasized its ongoing coordination with government agencies to address their job requirements for the fiscal year 2024/2025. This collaborative effort ensures that new batches of nominees are selected in accordance with each agency's needs and within the available vacancies outlined in their budget allocations.



Al-Qabas photo EU Ambassador to Kuwait Koistinen with promising young Kuwaiti women.

EU ambassador hosts promising Kuwaiti women

The European Union Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen expressed her pleasure at hosting eight promising and talented young Kuwaiti women at her residence, where she discussed with them how skilled and professional Kuwaiti women from all walks of life can contribute to building a better future for their country, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Ambassador Koistinen added, "I was pleased to meet inspiring and talented young Kuwaiti women, who have professional experience in various fields, and invest their time and efforts to make their country a better place."

She added: "This meeting came based on a series of events that we organized last February in Kuwait. To support women's empowerment, it is a testimony to the European Union's commitment to supporting women's participation at all levels of society, in Europe, Kuwait and the world, including leadership positions."

albander
hotel & resort

فریدل عروض الغرف

A D P R ROOM PROMOTION

ROOM PROMOTION

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

Promo period from 20th – 30th April 2024

مدة العرض من ۴ أبريل حتى ٣ أبريل ٢٠٢٤

Terms & conditions apply*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | 👬 @ @albanderhotelandresort

CAIRO, April 20, (KUNA): Arab League General Secretariat announced Saturday that the Arab Media Excellence Award jury will hold a three-day meeting as of Monday headed by Kuwait with the participation of representatives of committee

Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Media and Communication Sector of the League Ambassador Ahmed Khattabi said in a statement that the meeting comes within the framework of implementing the recommendations issued by the (18) regular session of the Executive Office of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, held in Libya on December 24, related to the item "Encouraging Quality" to enhance capabilities of Arab media professionals.

He added that the slogan of the committee is "Communicating Crises, Disasters

and Risks" comes in line with the crises and disasters that the Arab region has recently witnessed, including the Israeli aggression on Gaza and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions it has left behind.

He pointed that the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Information Ministers has so far received nearly 100 works in the various categories of the award, including television, radio, journalistic, and digital media works.

This award aims to highlight distinguished media models in the Arab world and support their appreciated efforts in the media field, especially highlight their constructive contributions that concern the Arab nation.

The jury includes representatives from Egypt, Bahrain, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Somalia and Morocco.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Youth Authority team during the UN Youth Forum 2024.

Environ issues and youth role top agenda Kuwait's Youth Authority stresses

importance of UN Youth Forum '24

NEW YORK, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Youth Public Authority affirmed on Thursday UN Youth Forum 2024 was an important event positively contributing to the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

Speaking to KUNA, Acting Director General of the Youth Public Authority Nasser Al-Sheikh told KUNA that Kuwait's participation in the event, held on April 16-18, reflected the state interest in sharing the world's youth inspirations and concerns.

He indicated that the Kuwaiti delegation to the event took part in sideline meetings such as the regional meeting for Arab countries, which focused on supporting youth in the region through numerous strategies and plans of action.

On the issues discussed during the forum, the Kuwaiti official indicated that environmental issues and the youth role in bolstering sustainable development took center of discussions in addition to other important matters. He noted that influence of AI on youth as well as preparations for the upcoming UN Future Summit in September were discussed during the course of the youth forum.

Al-Sheikh thanked the Kuwaiti mission at the UN headquarters in New York for facilitating the Youth Public Authority's participation in the forum.

The forum saw the participation of various officials, including UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, and organizations from across the globe.



Photo by Mohamed Morsi is conference.

Ibrahim Al-Baghli (center) with others during the press conference.

Winners' names announced

12th Al-Baghli Award recognizes virtue and excellence in students

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli for the Righteous Son Foundation has announced the names of the winning students in the 12th edition of the Al-Baghli Award for the Righteous Son competitions that were held for the students of the Ministry of Education's schools for the current academic year. A total of 89 male and female students participated in these competitions.

The competitions were held under the patronage of the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani. The closing ceremony will be on May 8 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel's Al Baraka Hall.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the foundation Ibrahim Al-Baghli, the Chairman of the Kuwait Scouts Association Dr. Abdullah Al-Tariji, the President of the Kuwait Girl Guides Association Hind Al-Houli, and the Director of the School Activities Department at the Ministry of Education Maryam Al-Enezi participated in the press conference to announce the winners Wednesday. A number of teachers and figures active in the field of educational and volunteer work, including individuals and civil society institutions, were also present.

Pleasure

Al-Baghli expressed his pleasure in bringing together the male and female students of the 12th academic year in a row through his sponsorship of the award competitions

He affirmed the importance of translating the directions and aspirations of the Minister of Education in the necessity of activating the ministry's role in promoting and developing the virtue of righteousness within the student community. Al-Baghli highlighted the role of the competition and its contribution to strengthening and confirming the policy and philosophy of the Ministry of Education, and supporting the measures taken by the Minister of Education to implement the strategic plan related to

educational programs and activities directed to students for the public benefit.

He explained that it contributes to the formation of a balanced personality through the diversity of activities and programmes, including contributing to creating an appropriate educational environment to avoid learners' academic burden and psychological pressure.

The foundation's approach in implementing the Al-Baghli Award for the Righteous Son project for the students of the Ministry of Education is consistent with the ministry's philosophy in society regarding consolidating the basic values, goals and trends adopted by the student community, stemming from its faith and heritage, and the formula it accepted for its social and political system and which was expressed in its basic charters.

Strengthening

Al-Baghli expressed keenness to continue strengthening community partnership programs with the Ministry of Education, and to work on organizing many events under the Al-Baghli Award for the

Righteous Son project.

He highlighted the organization of the short story competition and the volunteer work competition for middle school and high school students in coordination with the Educational Development, Activities and General Technical Guidance Sector for the Arabic Language and the School Activities Administration and General Technical Guidance for Scouting Education at the Ministry of Education for the current academic year. This aimed at consolidating the sublime Islamic morals and values of parents and grandparents among students, developing their spirit of cooperation and positive attitudes and behaviors, spreading the culture of volunteering and motivating students.

In addition, the Chairman of the award's Supreme Committee Ali Hassan extended his sincere appreciation and gratitude to the honorable Ibrahim Al-Baghli for his distinguished efforts in encouraging charity and volunteer work in Kuwaiti society especially among members of the student com-

Letter addressed to competent department required

PAHW announces registration, accreditation for cos and institutes

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Administrative Development and Training Department at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has announced that the registration and accreditation for companies and training institutes will commence on April 21 and end on May 2, reports Al-Anba daily.

The required documents include a letter addressed to the competent department to request accreditation of the company or institute; license obtained from the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training; registration at the Civil Service Commission; and registration at the Central Agency for Information Technology for the computer programs, administrative structure, employee names and job titles, and names of full-time and part-time lecturers and their academic degrees and specializations, and the government and private entities that the company or institute has been dealing with from 2019 till date, in addition to some other documents.

on it without fear. Also, the legislative au-

thority should learn from the experiences of

the past, so it does not repeat its previous

wastage of time. Despite the delay, the op-

portunity is still there, and in the past, they

those who will assume executive responsi-

bility ministerially as well as the MPs, that

we are facing a leadership that has commit-

ted itself to returning Kuwait to the fore-

front, irrespective of the cost. He will not

accept any excuses in this regard, and he

knows better than anyone else that nothing

of responsibility and be convinced that it is

time for work, not for shenanigans, whether

The saying remains - May Allah be of

your assistance O Amir, may He appease

you and grant you success in your endeavor

to return Kuwait, despite all the difficulties,

The ban imposed on the movement of

The Director General of PAM may is-

sue administrative decisions and circulars

regarding the implementation of the pro-

visions of this decision, particularly the

conditions and controls for granting or sus-

The Board of Directors of PAM must

direct its affairs to prepare a study on the

effects of implementing this decision be-

fore one year has passed from the date of its

implementation, and present it to the con-

cerned minister along with any recommendations that the board deems appropriate.

- Suspending the provisions of ministeri-

al Resolution No. 12/2017 regarding adding

fees to employers who meet the conditions

in the event of recruiting workers in excess

- Suspending the provisions of ministerial Resolution No. 26/2018 regarding the

fees applied on employers holding second-

ter One regarding "Categories of Permits"

from part two of the list of rules and proce-

dures for granting work permits referred to,

during the validity period of this decision mentioned in Article 7 below.

projects and small and medium enterprises

for holders of licenses registered with the

Business Owners Service Department are

excluded from the application of the provi-

This decision shall be effective starting

from June 1, 2024 for a period of one year,

and shall be published in the official gazette.

The concerned authorities shall be informed

and shall implement what is stated therein.

East region, Secretary General of the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al-Bu-

firmed the GCC unwavering and supportive

stance to Palestinians' rights to self-deter-

mination and the establishment of their in-

dependent state based on June 4 1967 with

to work decisively and immediately to en-

sure the recognition of Palestine's state and

enable Palestinians to get their main and le-

gal rights in accordance with the UN resolu-

cil should take serious and necessary steps

to re-assess international mechanisms of

peace in a way that ensure maintaining peo-

ples' rights, and international and regional

and international organizations to stand

with justice, back efforts to restore rights

The GCC chief also urged all countries

Al-Budaiwi said the UN Security Coun-

He called on the international community

In a news statement, Al-Budaiwi af-

Continued from Page 1

- Excluding government contracts and

- Suspending the provisions of Chap-

of the number allocated to them.

labor outside the sectors referred to in the

decisions issued by PAM will continue in

accordance with its procedures.

Continued from Page 1

to be the jewel in the crown of the Gulf.

Therefore, everyone must have a degree

said it is better late than never.

is impossible if there is a will.

ministerial or parliamentary.

Two-month

Article 4 -

pending permits.

Article 5 -

Article 6 -

class work permits.

sions of this decision.

Kuwait renews

East Jerusalem as its capital.

tions and international law

security and stability.

Article 7 -

daiwi said Friday.

The situation can no longer tolerate any

Today everyone must realize, especially

Continued from Page 1

O leadership,

Kuwait loses top writer

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Walid Abdullah Al-Ghanem, the Assistant Un-

dersecretary at the

Ministry of Jus-

tice and esteemed

writer, has passed away. He was

widely admired

for his gentle de-

meanor, unwaver-

ing dedication, and

sincere commit-

ment to his work,

reports Al-Qabas



Al-Ghanem

His legacy will be remembered not only for his professional contributions but also for the kindness and integrity he demonstrated throughout his career.

should pressure their government so humanity and the voice of justice may prevail."

'This unprecedented subjugation of the international community to the criminal entity devoids the law of credibility and gives way to the law of force to prevail, with all its ramifications on the whole world community," he said in his sharp criticism of super powers' failure to deter Israel from the mass killing of Palestinians, particularly the Gazans.

Iraq investigates

Continued from Page 1

The explosion at the PMF base came a day after a suspected Israeli strike in Iran. An umbrella group of Iran-backed militias calling itself the Islamic Resistance in Iraq said Saturday that it had launched a drone attack against the Israeli Red Sea town of Eilat in response to what it described as Israel's "violation of Iraqi sovereignty in its treacherous targeting of the Popular Mobilization Forces camps.

There were no reports in Israel of an attack on Eilat and no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Israel and Iran on Friday both played down an apparent Israeli airstrike near a major air base and nuclear site in central Iran, signaling the two bitter enemies are ready to prevent their latest eruption of violence from escalating into a full-blown regional war.

But the indecisive outcome of weeks of tensions - which included an alleged Israeli strike that killed two Iranian generals, an unprecedented Iranian missile barrage on Israel and the apparent Israeli strike early Friday in the heart of Iran - did little to resolve the deeper grievances between the foes and left the door open to further fighting.

"It appears we're closer than ever to a broad regional war, despite the fact that the international community will most likely make a great effort to de-escalate tensions, wrote Amos Harel, the military-affairs commentator for the Israeli daily Haaretz.

Kuwait unveils

Continued from Page 1

- Developing sustainable financing strategies for the health and education sectors. ■ Updating educational curricula to align
- with labor market needs. ■ Enhancing training and professional de-
- velopment to bolster workforce capabilities. ■ Implementing performance indicators to monitor and improve government service
- Enacting laws to address demographic imbalances and enhance social and economic stability.
- Strengthening the rule of law, integrity, and judicial systems to combat corruption and promote social trust.

The World Happiness Index 2024, issued by the United Nations, ranks countries based on factors like social support, income, health, freedom, generosity, and absence of corruption. Kuwait ranked 13th globally and first in the Arab world.

Key components influencing Kuwait's ranking include:

- 9th globally in freedom to make life deci-
- 17th globally in per capita GDP.
- 41st globally in social support.
- 32nd globally in healthy life expectancy.
- 33rd globally in generosity.
- 46th globally in absence of corruption. These findings highlight Kuwait's overall high level of well-being and the need to continue efforts to sustain and enhance citi-

MPs slam

issued by an interim minister. He added the decision targeted Al-Baidan who is known for his integrity and efficiency.

In another developyment, several MPselect have emphasized the need to take action against a professor at Kuwait University if proven that he discussed certain issues with students in order to make them doubt the Islamic teachings and the Holy Quran.

MP-elect Fahd Bin Jame'e disclosed that he contacted Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani who told him the abovementioned allegation has yet to be confirmed and that he will investigate the issue to uncover the

Bin Jame'e also contacted the Kuwait Teachers Association, which stated the issue is under the jurisdiction of the Legal Affairs at Kuwait University and the department will take the necessary measures.

whoever doubts the Islamic teachings and the Holy Quran does not deserve the honor of teaching students. "If the allegation is proven true, the professor in question must be dismissed and a case should be filed against him to deter anyone who might follow in his footsteps," he concluded.

Kuwait in 'Gifted Arabs' initiative, fostering excellence in education

Kuwait achieves 12 advanced rankings at Arab world level

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Education, has made significant strides in nurturing and empowering young talents through its participation in the "Gifted Arabs" initiative, reports Al-Anba daily.

In the third session of the current academic year 2023-2024, Kuwait achieved 12 advanced rankings at the Arab world level, demonstrating its commitment to fostering excellence in educa-

Kuwaiti students Saud Jassim Muhammad Al-Otaibi, Hassan Ali Abdul-Rasoul Bushahri, and Sarah Abdullah Saad Al-Humaidi received the prestigious "gifted" classification.

Joining them were students Abdul-Mohsen Abdul-Aziz Abbas Hassan, Sheikha Turki Salem Al-Jumaiah, Batoul Reda Ahmed Al-Abbas, Maria Muhammad Nasser Al-Ajmi, Tayba Abdul Rahman Fouad Al-Sharrah, Dakhil Muhammad Dakhil Al-Tawala, Adnan Mansour Adnan Al-Ateeqi, Mubarak Mishari Mubarak Al-Jadaei, and Abdullah Saad Al-Rashidi, who were classified as "Promising Talent."

The Ministry of Education highlighted that approximately 705 male and female students from 15 Arab countries participated in the initiative. Eligible students were those who completed the ninth grade and were transitioning to the tenth grade, aged between 14 to 16 years old.

Criteria for participation included outstanding academic achievement scores ranging from 95% to 100%, exceptional performance in science and mathematics, and notable achievements in science and technology competitions, research, or innovations.

Students competed remotely through the Mawhiba platforms of Saudi Arabia, showcasing their talents among peers from various Arab nations. The ministry emphasized its dedication to investbuild a prosperous and sustainable

By supporting and empowering gifted individuals, Kuwait seeks to harness their potential for societal development and contribute to the nation's progress through educational and developmental

Writers help enrich Arabic content: KWA

MUSCAT, April 20, (KUNA): Hamidi Al-Mutairi, Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti Writers Association (KWA), emphasized the pivotal role of writers in enriching Arabic content and highlighting Arab issues. He stressed the importance of incorporating these themes into literary works and discussing them in cultural

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during his leadership of the Kuwaiti Writers Association delegation at the general conference meeting of the Union of Arab Authors and Writers in Muscat, Al-Mutairi highlighted the association's commitment to representing Kuwaiti culture on Arab and international platforms. He also emphasized the role of Kuwaiti intellectuals in supporting crucial Arab issues.

Al-Mutairi called for the translation of Arabic books and literature into foreign languages to promote Arab culture positively. The conference agenda included the election of the Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Authors and Writers, as well as discussions on organizational and coordination proposals.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, Al-Mutairi stated that it is a central concern for every Arab writer and a fundamental topic in literary and cultural forums. To show solidarity with the people of Gaza, a major intellectual symposium titled "The Role of Cultural Resistance in Supporting the Palestinian Cause" was planned, along with a poetry fes-

Although the conference was scheduled to start earlier, weather conditions in Oman delayed the arrival of Arab delegations, leading to a postponement of the conference activities.



Volunteers distributing Kuwaiti aid to those affected in the northern Gaza Strip.

KUNA photos



Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Jordan, Hamad Al-Merri, and the Director General of the Arab Planning Institute, mediate among the participants in the training program.

Palestine cause top priority for Kuwait, says ambassador

Kuwait-funded aid convoy reaches N. Gaza

GAZA, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Rahma Worldwide organization announced Thursday that its humanitarian aid convoy, the largest since February, reached northern Gaza as part of a campaign aiming to support Palestine. Speaking to KUNA, head of the

Kuwaiti charity in the Gaza Strip Shadi Thatha said the Kuwaiti convoy included meat, foodstuff and groceries which meet the needs of thousands of Gazans.

He added that the organization moved to northern Gaza and started distributing the relief items to those vulnerable and displaced

He lauded Kuwait's big humanitarian role in aiding those vulnerable in Gaza, Palestine and countries all over the world.

He affirmed continuation of sending urgent relief aid convoys to Palestinian people that include thousands of tons of medical supplies and food baskets as well as fuel, meals, clothes and tents through 22 flights and some

In another development, Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Merri said Thursday his country maintains special deep-rooted relations with Palestine, affirming that the Palestine question is a top priority for the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people. "The State of Kuwait continues

supporting the Palestinian people through funding socio-economic development projects," he said in statements to KUNA after the closing ceremony of a training program on "building the capacity of Palestinian entrepreneurs.'

The program was organized by the Arab Planning Institute (API) in collaboration with the Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR) in Amman.

"Kuwait spares no effort to advance the Palestine cause which is a central issue for Kuwait and all Arab countries," Ambassador Al-Merri pointed out.

On the just-ended training program, the Kuwaiti diplomat noted

On a similar note, API Director General Dr. Abdullah Al-Shami said the training program aimed to help the Palestinian entrepreneurs and cadres lead the development

drive more effectively.

that his country spearheads the

efforts to realize socio-economic

development in the sisterly Arab

countries and improve the living

Appreciating the role of the

API, Ambassador Al-Merri said

the institute offers a variety of ac-

tivities, including training courses,

research and consultancy to pro-

mote sustainable development and

human development in the Arab

of Arab citizens.

countries.

"The program is one of the main activities of the API to empower the Arab young entrepreneurs, particularly the Palestinians," he

On his part, PECDAR Director-General Mohammad Abu-Awadh said the training program, the sixth of its kind, gathered 150 Palestinian trainees who will help advance the Palestinian labor market.

Female students shine in Fadia Al-Saad AlSabah Scientific Contest

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): The Al-Saad Foundation for Knowledge and Scientific Research has announced the commencement of the arbitration process for competitive projects in the Fadia Al-Saad AlSabah Scientific Competition for Research and Projects by Female Public Education Students for Innovation for the 2023-2024 Academic Season. This competition is open to female students at all three levels of education (secondary, middle school, and primary school). Sheikha Nabila Salman Al-Hamoud Al-Sabah, the head of the competition, informed the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the judging committee, consisting of experts and specialized university professors, is evaluating the projects to select the top three winners. The winners will be announced at the end of this month. The competition received 13 projects from secondary schools, 15 from middle schools, and 18 from

elementary schools. This stage of the competition serves as the final qualifier for participants from Kuwait, with the winners advancing to compete at the



one of the jury members.

Arab level. Participants underwent a training program to prepare them for the competition, which involved meticulous arrangements and preparations over the past period.

The competition aims to build and design scientific projects using artificial intelligence based on the STEAM approach. It provides female students with essential skills to create scientific projects that align with cognitive and technological advancements. Sheikha Nabila Al-Sabah emphasized the importance of expanding cooperation with state agencies and institutions

to increase the competition's reach and participants. She expressed the commitment to continue supporting the competition and nurturing promising young talents with methodological thinking and scientific creativity.

Sheikha Nabila Al-Sabah praised the role of participants, including female students, teachers, and Ministry of Education supervisors, in fostering talent and creativity. She highlighted their efforts in providing a scientific environment to cultivate the future generation, guiding them toward quality work and unique excellence.

Dr. Ali Al-Kandari, the competition advisor, mentioned that the judging process was characterized by scientific neutrality. All judging criteria were applied to the students' presentations and discussions, resulting in positive outcomes where students demonstrated distinguished scientific knowledge. The current session of the competition focuses on artificial intelligence, which has transitioned from research labs and science fiction novels to become an integral part of daily life, benefiting

and build a better future for the region and world's nations, according to the statement. Elsewhere, President of the Arab Parlia-

ment Adel Al-Asoumi on Saturday condemned "the shameful and blatant stances" that have been taken by "many Western governments" toward the crimes and the terrorist acts undertaken by the flagrant Israeli occupation in Gaza.

Al-Assoumi, addressing the third general session of the Arab Parliament's third legislative term, said, "The real bet is on the free peoples that can no longer tolerate this abhorrent international hypocrisy, and they

Continued from Page 1

the decision is unreasonable because it was

MP-elect Hamdan Al-Azmi asserted that

World News Roundup

Europe

50 Ukrainian drones shot down - Moscow: Ukraine launched a barrage of drones across Russia overnight, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said Saturday, in attacks that ap-



peared to target the country's energy infrastructure.

Fifty drones were shot down by air defences over eight Russian regions, including 26 over the country's western Belgorod region close to the Ukrainian border. Two people - a woman with a broken leg and the man caring for her - died during the barrage, after explosions sparked a blaze that set their home alight, Belgorod Gov Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote on social media.

Drones were also reportedly destroyed over the Bryansk, Kursk, Tula, Smolensk, Ryazan, Kaluga regions across Russia's west and south, as well as in the Moscow region.

Ukrainian officials normally decline to comment about attacks on Russian soil. However, many of the drone strikes appeared to be directed toward Russia's energy infrastructure.

The head of the Kaluga region, Vladislav Shapsha, said Saturday that a drone strike had sparked a blaze at an electrical substation, while Bryansk Gov Alexander Bogomaz and Smolensk Gov Vasily Anokhin also reported fires at fuel and energy complexes.

In recent months, Russian refineries and oil terminals have become priority targets of Ukrainian drone attacks, part of stepped-up assaults on Russian territory.

Ukrainian drone developers have been extending the weap-ons' range for months, as Kyiv attempts to compensate for its battlefield disadvantage in weapons and troops. (AP)

'Give more Patriot missile systems to Ukraine': NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Friday pressed member countries to give more Patriot missile systems to Ukraine as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy repeated Kyiv's almost daily appeals for more Western air defense equipment.

'NATO has mapped out existing capabilities across the alliance and there are systems that can be made available to Ukraine," Stoltenberg told reporters after an online meeting of defense ministers from the 32-nation alliance, which Zelenskyy took part in remotely.

Russia's air force is vastly more powerful than Ukraine's,

but sophisticated missile systems provided by Kyiv's Western partners are a major threat to Russian aviation as the Kremlin's forces slowly push forward along the around 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line in the war.

Kyiv is seeking at least seven Patriot batteries. Stoltenberg declined to say which NATO nations have air defense systems or how many might be available, saying that this is classified information, but he insisted that he expects the countries to make new announcements of support soon, not only Patriots.

Orbán launches EU election campaign: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Friday painted a grim picture of a continent teetering on the edge of armed conflict in a speech opening his party's campaign for European Union elections. He called for a changing of the guard among the bloc's

As Orbán addressed members of his Fidesz party at the closed-door event in Hungary's capital Budapest, he lashed out at the EU. He characterized it as an oppressive force that had made its member countries active participants in the war

"They see the war as their own war, and they fight it as if it's their own war," Orbán said of EU leaders. No EU country has

engaged its soldiers in the war in Ukraine.
"The leadership in Brussels has to go," Orbán said. "It does not deserve another chance. There must be change in Brussels." The long-serving Orbán goes into June's EU elections facing significant challenges at home and abroad, including the recent resignations of senior Hungarian officials and a battered economy struggling under the weight of billions in funding the EU has withheld from Hungary over rule-of-law and corruption concerns. (AP)

Croatia top court rules Milanovic can't be PM: Croatia's Constitutional Court on Friday banned President Zoran Milanović from becoming prime minister in case his centerleft party manages to garner a majority after this week's highly contested parliamentary election.

The ballot on Wednesday ended inconclusively. The governing center-right Croatian Democratic Union, or HDZ, won the most votes but not enough to rule alone. Although it finished second, Milanović's Social Democratic Party is also trying to muster a coalition in the 151-member parliament. Milanović made a surprise announcement that he would run

for prime minister just hours after calling the election for April 17. The Constitutional Court warned him last month that he had to resign first, a warning that he ignored.

"The Constitutional Court established that with his statements and behavior the president ... brought himself in the position that he can neither be the prime minister-designate of the future government nor the future prime minister," the ruling said. (AP)

UN agency tells Cyprus to stick to law: The United Nations' refugee agency said Friday that Cypriot efforts at sea to stop numerous Syrian refugee-laden boats departing Lebanon from reaching the European Union-member island nation mustn't contravene international human rights laws or put pas-

sengers at risk. Cypriot authorities have reportedly dispatched police patrol vessels just outside Lebanese territorial waters to thwart boat loads of Syrian refugees from reaching the island about 110

miles (180 kilometers) away. The Cypriot government says a crumbling Lebanese economy coupled with the uncertainty brought on by the Israeli-Hamas war and the recent tit-for-tat strikes between Israel and Lebanon has resulted in a huge number of rickety boats overloaded with migrants - almost all Syrians - reach-

Earlier this week, Cypriot patrol craft reportedly intercepted five boats carrying hundreds of Syrian refugees and migrants. The boats turned back and the passengers disembarked safely. UNCHR spokesperson in Cyprus Emilia Strovolidou told The Associated Press that according to testimonies of passengers' relatives, Cypriot authorities "forcibly pushed back" the boats using "violence" and "techniques to destabilize the boat." (AP)

Investigate genocide claim: A human rights organization representing ethnic Armenians submitted evidence to the International Criminal Court, arguing that Azerbaijan is committing an ongoing genocide against them.

Azerbaijan's government did not immediately comment on the accusations. The neighboring countries have been at odds for decades over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, and are already facing off in a separate legal case stemming

Lawyers for the California-based Center for Truth and Justice say there is sufficient evidence to open a formal investigation into Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and other top leaders for genocide. They have submitted a so-called Article 15 communication urging the court's chief prosecutor Karim Khan to look into alleged atrocities.

Khan's office will now consider the evidence submitted and determine if the court will open an investigation, a decision expected to take months. (AP)

Court drops charges against rescue ship crews: An Italian court on Friday dismissed a long-running case against rescue ship crews of three humanitarian organizations, drop-ping charges accusing them of collaborating with smugglers as they helped rescue thousands of migrants at sea.

The judges in the Sicilian city of Trapani decided not to proceed to trial against 10 crew members involved in the so-called Iuventa case, named after the rescue vessel operated by German nonprofit Jugend Rettet.

Staff members from Jugend Rettet, Save The Children and Doctors Without Borders were fully acquitted of all charges of aiding and abetting illegal immigration. (AP)



Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, (left), Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima, (center), and Crown Princess Amalia, (left), pose for a picture during a visit to STRAAT museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands on April 18. (AP)



Former Arizona Rep.Gabby Giffords kisses the hand of Columbine survivor Anne Marie Hochhalter during a vigil remembering the 25th anniversary of the Columbine High School mass shooting on April 19 in Denver. (AP)



Crabtree

America

Students, teacher remembered: A girl who wrote in her diaries, a boy with learning disabilities who was just learning to like who he was and a teen who would spend every free minute fishing were among the 13 victims of the Columbine High School shooting remembered during a vigil Friday on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the shooting that was the worst the nation had seen at the time.

As small candles flickered on 13 empty chairs, short biographies of Columbine students Rachel Scott, Kyle Velasquez and Corey DePooter and the other victims were read one by one. After each, the crowd of about 150 people replied together "never forgotten" and a bell tolled.

The youngest killed in the attack that has inspired dozens of copy cat shootings was Steven Curnow, 14. The oldest was teacher Dave Sanders, 47, who shephered students out of the cafeteria to safety and was shot as he tried to get students upstairs into classrooms. (AP)

Man who set self on fire dies: A man who doused himself in an accelerant and set himself on fire outside the courthouse where former US president Donald

Trump is on trial has died, police said. The New York City Police Department told The Associated Press early Saturday that the man was declared dead by staff at

an area hospital. The man was in Collect Pond Park around 1:30 pm Friday when he took out pamphlets espousing conspiracy theories, tossed them around, then doused himself in an accelerant and set himself on fire, officials and witnesses said.

A large number of police officers were nearby when it happened. Some officers and bystanders rushed to the aid of the man, who was hospitalized in critical condition. (AP)

Ex-officer pleads guilty: A fired Philadelphia police officer pleaded guilty Friday to murder in the shooting of a fleeing 12-year-old boy, who prosecutors have said was on the ground and unarmed when the officer fired the fatal shot.

Edsaul Mendoza also pleaded guilty to possession of an instrument of crime as part of a plea deal with the Philadelphia

Politics

Trump forced to listen silently to people insulting him

Senate passes reauthorization of FISA

WASHINGTON, April 20, (AP): After its midnight deadline, the Senate voted early Saturday to reauthorize a key U.S. surveillance law after divisions over whether the FBI should be restricted from using the program to search for Americans' data nearly forced the statute to lapse.

The legislation approved 60-34 with bipartisan support would extend for two years the program known as Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It now goes to President Joe Biden's desk to become law. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Biden "will swiftly sign the bill.'

"In the nick of time, we are reauthorizing FISA right before it expires at midnight," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said when voting on final passage began 15 minutes before the deadline. "All day long, we persisted and we persisted in trying to reach a breakthrough and in the end, we have succeeded."

US officials have said the surveillance tool, first authorized in 2008 and renewed several times since then, is crucial in disrupting terror attacks, cyber intrusions, and foreign espionage and has also produced intelligence that the US has relied on for specific operations, such as the 2022 killing of al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri.

"If you miss a key piece of intelligence, you may miss some event overseas or put troops in harm's way," Sen Marco Rubio, the top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said. "You may miss a plot to harm the country here, domestically, or somewhere else. So in this particular case, there's real-life implications.'

Renew

The proposal would renew the program, which permits the US government to collect without a warrant the communications of non-Americans located outside the country to gather foreign intelligence. The reauthorization faced a long and bumpy road to final passage Friday after months of clashes between privacy advocates and national security hawks pushed consideration of the legislation to the

brink of expiration.

Though the spy program was technically set to expire at midnight, the Biden administration had said it expected its authority to collect intelligence to remain operational for at least another year, thanks to an opinion earlier this month from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which receives surveillance applications.

Still, officials had said that court approval shouldn't be a substitute for congressional authorization, especially since communications companies could cease cooperation with the government if the program is allowed to

House before the law was set to expire, US officials were already scrambling after two major US communication providers said they would stop complying with orders through the surveillance program, according to a person familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private negotiations.

Attorney General Merrick Garland praised the reauthorization and reiterated how "indispensable" the tool is to the Justice Department.

Collect

"This reauthorization of Section 702 gives the United States the authority to continue to collect foreign intelligence information about non-US persons located outside the United States, while at the same time codifying important reforms the Justice Department has adopted to ensure the protection of Americans' privacy and civil liberties," Garland said in a statement Sat-

But despite the Biden administration's urging and classified briefings to senators this week on the crucial role they say the spy program plays in protecting national security, a group of progressive and conservative lawmakers who were agitating for further changes had refused to accept the version of the bill the House sent over last week.

The lawmakers had demanded that Majority Leader Chuck Schumer allow votes on amendments to the legislation that would seek to address what they see as civil liberty loopholes in the bill.

In the end, Schumer was able to cut a deal that would allow critics to receive floor votes on their amendments in exchange for speeding up the process for passage

The six amendments ultimately failed to garner the necessary support on the floor to be included in the final passage

One of the major changes detractors had proposed centered around restricting the FBI's access to information about Americans through the program. Though the surveillance tool only targets non-Americans in other countries, it also collects communications of Americans when they are in contact with those targeted foreigners. Sen. Dick Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the chamber, had been pushing a proposal that would require US officials to get a warrant before accessing American communications.

Also:

NEW YORK: He seems "selfish and self-serving," said one woman.

The way he carries himself in public "leaves something to be desired," said another.

His "negative rhetoric and bias," said another man, is what is "most harmful."

Over the past week, **Donald Trump** has been forced to sit inside a frigid New York courtroom and listen to a parade of potential jurors in his criminal hush money trial share their unvarnished assessments of him.

It's been a dramatic departure for the former president and presumptive GOP nominee, who is accustomed to spending his days in a cocoon of cheering crowds and constant adulation. Now a criminal defendant, Trump will instead spend the next several weeks subjected to strict rules that strip him of control over everything from what he is permitted to say to the temperature of the room.

"He's the object of derision. It's his nightmare. He can't control the script. He can't control the cinematography. He can't control what's being said about him. And the outcome could go in a direction he really doesn't want," said **Tim O'Brien**, a Trump biographer and critic.

District Attorney's Office. A sentencing comment Friday. date has not been disclosed. Mendoza had been charged with first-

The Associated Press left a voicemail message for Mendoza's lawyer seeking

and third-degree murder and voluntary manslaughter in the shooting of Thomas "T.J." Siderio in March 2022, with the Philadelphia District Attorney's office saying at the time that video contradicted the officer's version of events. Mendoza, a five-year veteran of the force, was fired a week after the shooting by then-Police Commissioner Danielle

Outlaw, who said his conduct violated department policy. (AP)

Prison warden arrested: The warden of an Alabama prison was arrested Friday on drug charges, officials with the state prison system confirmed.

Chadwick Crabtree, the warden at Limestone Correctional Facility, was charged with the manufacturing of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana, possession of a controlled substance, and possession of drug paraphernalia, according to a statement from the prison system. Court records show that manufacturing charge accuses him of growing psilocybin mushrooms, a

hallucinogenic. Court records did not show if Crabtree

has an attorney to comment on his behalf. The Alabama Department of Corrections said its law enforcement division, along with a state SWAT team and the Limestone County sheriff's office, executed search and arrest warrants at Crabtree's home. Crabtree and his wife were both taken into custody. (AP)



In this image taken from video, bystanders react after witnessing a man who lit himself on fire was extinguished, on April 19 in a park outside Manhattan criminal court in New York. A man who doused himself in an accelerant and set himself on fire outside the courthouse where former US president Donald Trump is on trial has died, police said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Candidates dead in Mexico

Oppn picks González to 'challenge' Maduro

CARACAS, Venezuela, April 20, (AP): Venezuela's main opposition coalition agreed Friday to unite behind former diplomat Edmundo González as its challenger to President Nicolás Maduro in this summer's election, acting one day before the deadline to formal-

The decision was reached unanimously by the 10 parties in the Unitary Democratic Platform, Omar Barboza, the coalition's executive secretary, said after a five-hour meeting that included discussions of other possible candidates.

The bloc had been allowed to provisionally register González on March 26 after the government came under a wave of criticism when opposition leaders said they were blocked from registering their candidate of choice. Saturday was the deadline to make his candidacy



Maduro

ed to replace its first candidate, María Corina Machado, who easily won a primary organized by the bloc in October but was barred by the government from running after the ruling party-controlled State Comptroller's Office disqualified her from holding public office for

The opposition group need-

Maduro's administration has cracked down on the opposition before the July 28 presidential election despite promises to pave the way to fair elections in exchange for sanctions relief. The Biden administration on Wednesday reimposed crushing oil sanctions, criticizing Maduro's moves.

have expressed concern, and Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo accused Maduro's government of "consolidating an anti-democratic system. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil has called

The governments of Colombia and Brazil also

the criticism a "gross interference in matters that only concern Venezuelans. Maduro, a self-proclaimed socialist leader. official-

ly launched his candidacy last month for a third term that would last until 2031.

The election is likely to have more than 10 candidates, but except for the main opposition coalition, none are expect to pose a threat to Maduro's power

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Two mayoral candidates in Mexico were found dead Friday, bringing to 17 the number of contenders slain in the lead-up to the June 2 election.

One candidate was killed Friday in the northern Mexico border state of Tamaulipas. Noé Ramos Ferretiz was running for a coalition of the opposition National Action Party and Institutional Revolutionary Party, which had governed Mexico until 2000. He was running for reelection as mayor of the city of Ciudad

Another mayoral candidate in the southern state of Oaxaca was found dead a day after he was reported missing. Alberto García was running for mayor of the Oaxaca town of San José Independencia.

Oaxaca state prosecutors said García was found dead, apparently beaten to death, on an island in a reservoir near the town. In the past, drug gangs have been active in the area.

The June 2 national elections that are shaping up to be the country's most violent on record.

Prosecutors in Tamaulipas said Ramos Ferretiz was attacked on Friday, but did not give details beyond saying they're investigating.

Local media reported he had been stabbed and posted photos showing a bloodied body lying on a sidewalk. Tamaulipas has long been riven by drug cartel turf wars. Ciudad Mante is located in the southern part of the state, relatively far from border cities like **Rey**nosa and Matamoros.

"We will not allow violence to decide these elections," PRI party leader Alejandro Moreno wrote on social media, where he confirmed the "cowardly assassination" of Ramos Ferretiz.

In Oaxaca, the state electoral board condemned the death of García, who went missing along with his wife - the current mayor of San José Independencia - earlier this week. The wife was found alive.

The electoral board called García's death a "killing," and said such crimes "should not occur during elections.'

In early April, mayoral candidate Bertha Gaytán was gunned down, hours after she requested protection and started campaigning. Gaytán was fatally shot on a street in a town outside the city of Celaya, in the north-central state of Guanajuato. She had just launched her campaign for Celaya mayor.

Mexico's drug cartels have often focused assassination attempts on mayors and mayoral candidates, in a bid to control local police or extort money from municipal governments.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador acknowledged in early April that drug cartels often seek to determine who will serve as mayor - either by running their own candidate or eliminating potential ri-

MEXICO CITY: Mexico City police said late Friday they are investigating a murder suspect as a possible serial killer after bones, a saw, blood and the ID cards of missing women were found at rooms he rented.

Mexico City prosecutors did not identify the suspect by name, but said that he was being held over for trial on charges of murder and attempted murder of two women. Those charges stemmed from a brazen attack

Tuesday in which the suspect apparently waited for a woman to briefly leave her apartment. He then rushed in and sexually abused and strangled her 17-year-old

The mother returned and saw him leaving, but he slashed her in the neck and fled. The mother survived but her daughter did not.

Because the suspect lived near the scene of the crime, he was quickly identified and caught. In keeping with Mexican law, police identified him only by his first name, Miguel. When investigators carried out a search of an apart-

ment he rented nearby, they found shocking evidence "that clearly indicate we are looking at a possible serial killer of women," according to city prosecutor Ulises Lara.

Lara said that during the search of the apartment, detectives found "biological material" - he did not specify whether that was flesh - blood stains, bones, a

saw, cell phones and missing women's ID cards.

Most chilling, they found "a series of notebooks that may well be narrations of the acts that Miguel carried out against his victims," Lara said.



Members of an instrument orchestra of east China's Nanjing University perform during a UN Chinese Language Day event in Nairobi, Kenya on April 19. The United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) and the Chinese Embassy in Kenya celebrated UN Chinese Language Day on Friday with a vibrant event which included calligraphy, lectures and a musical performance. The ceremony featured traditional music from the instrument orchestra of east China's Nanjing University and was attended by senior UN officials, diplomats, students and faculty members from local universities. (Xinhua)



People walk inside the Westfield shopping mall at Bondi Junction in Sydney on April 19. The Sydney shopping mall reopened for business on Friday for the first time since it became the scene of a mass stabbing in which six people died on April 13. (AP)



Africa

US attempts deal with Niger: The United States is attempting to create a new military agreement with Niger that would allow it to remain in the country, weeks after the junta said its presence was no longer justified, two Western officials told The Associated Press Friday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, said Washington was actively working on options for a revised deal aimed at retaining its foothold in the West African nation.

Niger plays a central role in the US military's operations in Africa's Sahel region, Washington is concerned about the spread of jihadist violence where local groups have pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State groups. Niger is home to a major US airbase, in the city of Agadez, some 920 kilometers (550 miles) from the capital Niamey, using it for manned and unmanned surveillance flights and other operations. The US has also invested hundreds of millions of dollars in training Niger's military since it began operations there in 2013. (AP)

Kenya's general dies in crash: Kenya's military chief Gen Francis Ogolla died in a helicopter crash west of the country, President **William Ruto** announced and declared three days of na-

tional mourning.

The helicopter was carrying 11 people, including Gen Ogolla, when it crashed Thursday and caught fire in a remote area near the border with Uganda, killing nine people onboard, the president said. It is unclear what caused the crash.

Gen Ogolla, 61, was on a tour of the country's troubled western region that has seen frequent attacks by local bandits. He was appointed Kenya's Chief of Defense Forces in April last year after

Gen. Robert Kibochi retired. Political controversy surrounded Ogolla even before his appointment, when he was accused by the country's electoral commission chairperson as being part of a national security council delegation that tried to influence the outcome of the 2022

general election against President Ruto. Ruto later explained that he called Gen Ogolla before his appointment and said that, despite the election controversy, he was the most qualified for the job. (AP)

Zimbabwe frees prisoners: Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa **Asia**

Japan, US confirm cooperation over Pyongyang

N.Korea tests cruise missile warhead

SEOUL, South Korea, April 20, (Agencies): North Korea said Saturday it tested a "super-large" cruise missile warhead and a new anti-aircraft missile in a western coastal area as it expands military capabilities in the face of deepening tensions with the United States and South Korea.

North Korean state media said the country's missile administration on Friday conducted a "power test" for the warhead designed for the Hwasal-1 Ra-3 strategic cruise missile and a testlaunch of the Pyoljji-1-2 anti-aircraft missile. It said the tests attained an unspecified "certain goal."

Photos released by the North's official Korean Central News Agency showed at least two missiles being fired off launcher trucks at a runway.

North Korea conducted a similar set of tests Feb 2, but at the time did not specify the names of the cruise missile or the anti-aircraft missile, indicating it was possibly seeing technological progress after testing the same system over weeks.

KCNA insisted Friday's tests were part of the North's regular military development activities and had nothing to do with the "surrounding situation.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest in years, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dialing up his weapons demonstrations, which have included more powerful missiles aimed at the U.S. mainland and US targets in the Pacific. The United States, South Korea and Japan have responded by expanding their combined military training and sharpening their deterrence strategies built around strategic US assets.

Cruise missiles are among a growing collection of North Korean weapons designed to overwhelm regional missile defenses. They supplement the North's vast lineup of ballistic missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles aimed at the continental United States.

Also:

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield on Friday confirmed their continued cooperation in dealing with North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues, and towards the full implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, Japan's Foreign Ministry

granted clemency to more than 4,000 pris-

oners, including some who were on death

Zimbabwe marked 44 years of inde-

row, in an independence day amnesty.

1,300 people from Myanmar flee into **Thailand after clashes 'erupt' in town**

BANGKOK, April 20, (Agencies): About 1,300 people have fled from eastern Myanmar into Thailand, officials said Saturday, as fresh fighting erupted at a border town that has recently been captured by ethnic guerillas.

Fighters from the Karen ethnic minority last week captured the last of the Myanmar army's outposts in and around Myawaddy, which is connected to Thailand by two

bridges across the Moei River.
The latest clashes were triggered in the morning when the Karen guerillas launched an attack against Myanmar troops who were hiding near the 2nd Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, a major crossing point for trade with Thailand, said police chief Pittayakorn Phetcharat estimated about 1,300 people fled into Thailand.

More than 1,200 evacuated: More than 2,100 people living near an erupting volcano on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island were evacuated Friday due to the dangers of spreading ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and the possibility of a tsunami.

During their talks in Tokyo, Kishida and Thomas-Greenfield also agreed on closer coordination on a wide variety of areas such as the situation in the Middle East and UN Security Council reform, the ministry said in a press re-

"The leadership by Japan and the US is more important today than ever to lead the world to cooperation, not to division or confrontation," Kishida said, stressing Japan's intention to deepen its cooperation with the US in the UN, including in the Security Council.

Thomas-Greenfield, who became the first US cabinet member to visit Nagasaki, stressed the importance of dialogue and diplomacy amid a growing nuclear threat in the region.

pendence from white minority rule, which

ended in 1980 after a bloody bush war.

The country's name was changed from

Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.

Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitiga-

the maximum height of the eruption column reaching 1,200 meters (3,900 feet). An international airport in Manado city, less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the erupting Mount Ruang, is still temporarily closed as volcanic ash was spewed into the

tion recorded at least three erup-

tions since Friday afternoon, with

Teenager charged: A 16-year-old boy accused of stabbing two Christian clerics during a Sydney church service has been charged by police with terrorism offenses.

Authorities said the stabbing was declared a terrorist act because o the teenager's suspected religious motivation and that the boy traveled up to 90 minutes from his home to the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Sydney's western suburbs.

The teen stabbed Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and the Rev. Isaac Royel during Monday night's Assyrian Orthodox service. He was later overpowered by parishioners, sustaining severe hand injuries.

MALE, Maldives: A court in the Maldives threw out former President Abdulla Yameen's 11-year prison sentence on money laundering and bribery charges and ordered a retrial. The development comes two days

ahead of parliamentary elections in this Indian Ocean archipelago nation, known as an exclusive tourist destina-

The ruling, which was broadcast on the court's YouTube channel, is seen as a potential boost to President Mohamed Muizzu's party, which is seeking to secure a majority in the 87-member Parliament. Yameen and Muizzu have long been political allies.

The High Court ruled on Yameen's appeal and said in its decision that his 2022 trial before the Criminal Court was unfair and released him.

The presidential amnesty, the second in less than a year, benefits female, older and juvenile inmates, the terminally ill and some who were originally sentenced to death. (AP)

Burkina Faso expels 3 diplomats: The military Junta ruling Burkina Faso have expelled three French diplomats for alleged subversive activities, according to a govern-

ment document posted on social media. The Junta named the three diplomats, two of whom are political advisors, and declared they were persona non grata in Burkina Faso, according to the document signed by the ministry of foreign affairs Tuesday. They have 48 hours to leave Burkina Faso.

The document did not give details about the alleged subversive activities.

The French foreign ministry said in a statement that it regretted the decision to expel its diplomats and rejected the accusations, stating its activities in Burkina Faso were within the United Nations framework for diplomatic and consular relations.

The expulsion comes amid deteriorating relations between Burkina Faso and its former colonial ruler, France. The military junta severed military ties with France in 2023, ordering hundreds of French troops to depart the West African country within a month, following in the path of neighboring Mali, also headed by a coup leader. (AP)



A Thai military armored vehicle takes a position with sounds of explosions and gunshots along the Moei river, under the 2nd Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge in Mae Sot in Thailand's Tak province on April 20. Ábout 1,300 people have fled from eastern Myanmar into Thailand, officials said Saturday, as fresh fighting erupted near a border town that has recently been captured by ethnic guerillas. (AP)

Acting Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Waleed Al-Bahar said Friday Kuwait, represented by the fund, is eager to attend annual meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) to promote economic and social development cooperation.

Speaking to KUNA, he said Kuwait, which has been bound with close relations with the WBG since 1960, supports the goals and operations of the WBG and IMF by regularly contributing to their development resources.

He added that he had already held meetings with government representa-tives, ministers of finance, planning and international cooperation, and chiefs of development institutions on the sidelines of the two UN bodies' spring meetings that last until April 20.

The meetings, he elaborated, focused on aspects of cooperation in the areas of promoting economic and social development worldwide amid mounting challeng-

es developing countries are facing.

He noted that he had also participated

in the meeting of joint development meeting of the WBG and IMF, which defines their general trends and strategic trends.

The meeting looked into the WBG's development roadmap and regulations in the context of the fresh vision that was adopted by the two bodies' board of governors during their annual meetings in 2023, he said.

Earlier in the day, the KFAED inked a memorandum of understanding for development cooperation with the International

Labor Organization.

The MoU was co-signed by KFAED's

Acting Director General Waleed Al-Bahar and ILO's Assistant Director-General for External and Corporate Relations, Laura Thompson, on sidelines of the 2024 spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

KFAED said in a statement that the MoU aims at establishing a framework of technical cooperation and coordinating joint action in the realms of economic and social funding in developing countries, in addition to mutual coordination for the sharing of expertise.(KUNA)

oil rises

Kuwait crude oil edged up by 23 cents to settle at USD 88.38 per barrel on Friday compared with USD 88.15 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Saturday.

Benchmark Brent futures edged down by 18 cents to settle the price at USD USD 87.29 pb and those of the West Texas Intermediate moved downward by 41 cents, putting the price at USD 83.14 pb. (KUNA)

Market Movements

20-04-2024

PAKISTAN KSE 100 Change Closing pts

JAPAN - Nikkei 225 PHILIPPINES - PSEi

Change Closing pts -33.61 4,174.56 -1,011.35 37,068.35

Business

Boursa Kuwait witnesses significant jumps in indices with high liquidity

General market index marks largest increase in months

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Boursa Kuwait witnessed significant jumps in its indices during the final transactions of the week, accompanied by high liquidity, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index marked its largest increase in months, climbing by 1.26 percent or 87.00 points to close at 6997.12 points, with a trading volume of 83.7 million dinars traded over 290.4 million shares across 20,549 transactions. Of the 119 shares traded, 64 gained, 39 lost, and 16 remained unchanged.

Similarly, the Premier Market Index surged by 1.51 percent or 113.36 points to close at 7,642.99 points, with a liquidity of 73.2 million dinars and 191.1 million shares traded through 16,056 deals. Out of the 33 shares traded, 24 gained, 8 lost, and one remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, the main market index recorded a modest gain of 0.06 percent or 3.30 points, closing at 5835.53 points, with a liquidity of 10.5 million dinars. Trading volume reached 99.2 million shares through 4493 transactions, with 40 gaining shares, 31 losing shares, and 15 remaining unchanged.

Trading on the Boursa Kuwait commenced with positive momentum, witnessing growth in leading stocks and robust liquidity, par-ticularly in Agility, KFH, National

Average earnings per share stands at 17 fils

Growth in net income, shareholders' equity & total assets by end of 2023

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Xper Consulting Company's research gives insights into the performance of companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange up to the end of 2023, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The total income of listed companies amounted to approximately 2.5 billion dinars. Despite a notable growth in net income over the last three years (89.1%), there was limited growth in 2023, only reaching 5.3%.

The industrial and banking sectors demonstrated significant growth in net income, at 294% and 190% respectively.

The banking sector dominated total income, accounting for 1.5 billion dinars until 2023.

The Shareholders' equity experienced robust growth, increasing by 33.6% since 2020 to about 28.2 billion dinars by 2023. The insurance and banking sectors stood out for their growth in shareholders' equity, growing by 68.6% and 56.5% respectively.

The book value to capital ratio indicates that total shareholders' equity is twice the invested capital, reflecting positive market growth expectations and the insurance and industrial sectors had prominent book value ratios of 3.3 and 2.9 times respectively.

Total assets of listed companies grew by 29.3% over the last three years, amounting to 153.6 billion dinars by 2023.

Growth in total assets in 2023 was 3.9%, with sectors like banking and insurance contributing significantly to asset size, growing by 38.6% and 32.6% respectively.

Earnings Per Share (EPS) -- Earnings per share (EPS) for listed companies averaged 17 fils per share.

The insurance sector led in terms of EPS, at 38 fils per share, followed by the industrial sector at 32 fils per

The average trading price of shares on the Kuwait Stock Exchange reached 320 fils per share.

The profitability ratio for listed companies in the Kuwaiti market stood at 39.5 times, as per Xper Consulting's research.

Real Estate, and NBK shares. Agility stock notably recovered from previous losses, surging by 8 percent alongside strong liquidity and continuous buying activity. Other leading stocks also saw gains, including KFH, National Bank, Zain, and Gulf Bank, while only limited stocks experienced losses.

The positive sentiment was attributed to news suggesting a potential postponement or cancellation of Israel's response to Iran's recent attacks, which alleviated concerns about a broader conflict in the Middle East. This news also contributed to a decrease in oil prices by one percent, with Brent settling at \$88 per barrel.

Moreover, the return of Equipment Holding Company and Jiyad Holding Company shares to trading on the stock exchange was announced by the Capital Markets Authority. This decision reflects the Authority's commitment to ensuring investor protection and adherence to regulatory provisions.

Overall, the Kuwait Stock Exchange concluded the week with strong performance, marking one of the best performances in recent months. In the Gulf region, varying increases were observed in the GCC market indices, with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia leading the gains.

Other Voices

'Stability' in oil markets amidst regional turmoil

By Kamel Al-Harami Independent Oil Analyst

DESPITE the recent military

attacks on Iran, which is an oilproducing nation that is located in the heart of the Arabian Gulf and a member of OPEC+, there has been no significant changes.

Iran is a crucial supplier of over 20 million barrels per day to the world. The current situation is highly precarious and could

potentially sow chaos and disruption worldwide, with limited recourse available.

Despite the military attack occurring

Al-Harami less than 12 hours ago, the markets have remained largely unaffected, with oil prices remaining static and even dropping below \$90 a barrel. Currently, they stand at less than \$88 a barrel. As the time for peak demand for this year

is quickly running out, further weakening is anticipated. Even though the two oil producing countries - Iran and Russia - are on the brinks of war, oil prices have remained relatively stable. Russia's crude oil production has decreased, and its refineries are operating at almost 50% capacity, resulting in limited oil products available for export, particularly to its European neighbors. Yet, the oil market has shown little reaction to these developments.

Last week, Iran was subjected to an attack, but fortunately, it did not target its oil production or exporting facilities. This resulted in a situation where damage was limited, which was a fortunate outcome.

So what is happening to the oil markets? Is it simply because of the sufficient or plentiful supply? There's approximately 6 million barrels of spare capacity, with around 3 million barrels falling under the OPEC+ quota system.

Newcomers among the producing countries are maximizing their output at the current level, and under the protection of OPEC+ production. The USA, Brazil, Canada, and Guyana are pouring more volume and testing the markets, while searching and exploring new outlets for their new oils.

This will bring us once again to OPEC+ and its protectionist policy for the sake of stable oil prices, but at a level that covers their breakeven budget level of \$ 88 and above.

We in Kuwait are in need of a level of \$92-\$94 per barrel. This could be far fetched one year from now.

In conclusion, the oil markets are experiencing a rare stability despite the turmoil in major oilproducing nations and key exporting regions like the Arabian Gulf.

Is the spare capacity of available crude oil the answer? Ensuring a constant oil price is the

answer. **Email:** naftikuwaiti@yahoo.

Silver, platinum & palladium also see gains

Gold prices rise on weaker dollar, offset concerns over interest rates

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Gold prices experienced an uptick, buoyed by a dip in the dollar's value, which offset concerns about a potential decrease in US interest rates this year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Spot gold rose by 0.8 percent to \$2,379.33 per ounce, following its recent peak at \$2,431.29 last Friday. Similarly, US gold futures saw a 0.2 percent increase, reaching \$2,393.70. Analyst Xiao Fu from Bank of Chi-

na International noted that the dollar's decline has bolstered precious metals across the board, citing additional supportive factors such as geopolitical tensions and central banks' diversification

The dollar weakened for the second consecutive day following a rare warning from the finance ministers of the United States, Japan, and South Korea regarding significant declines in other currencies.

A weaker dollar enhances the appeal of gold for holders of alternative currencies. On the geopolitical front, Israel hinted at responding to recent attacks by Iran, though specifics were not disclosed. European Union leaders also resolved to intensify sanctions against Iran.

In terms of US monetary policy, Federal Reserve officials have adopted a more cautious approach regarding the timing of interest rate cuts. Chairman Jerome Powell suggested that interest rates may remain elevated for an extended period. Higher interest rates diminish the attractiveness of holding gold, which lacks yield.

In addition to gold, other precious metals experienced gains: silver rose by 0.8 percent to \$28.42 per ounce, platinum increased by 0.4 percent to \$941.75, and palladium saw a 0.3 percent uptick to \$1,028.80 per ounce.



KUNA photo

Kuwait economic fund inks coordination MoU with ILO.

Joint efforts to cover statistics & policies

Kuwait economic fund inks coordination MoU with ILO

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has inked a memorandum of understanding for development cooperation with the International Labor Organization.

The MoU was co-signed by KFAED's Acting Director General Walid Al-Bahar and ILO's Assistant Director-General for External and Corporate Relations, Laura Thompson, on sidelines on sidelines of the 2024 spring meetings of the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

KFAED said in a statement that the MoU aims at establishing a framework of technical cooperation and coordinating joint action in the realms of economic and social funding in developing countries, in addition to mutual coordination for expertise swap.

The MoU, of a five-year renewable mandate, focuses on cooperation in activities that meet the two sides' objectives in the developing countries where they have a presence.

NBK leads in net provision charge on loans growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Underlining the sustained resilience of the banking sector in the region, KPMG published the ninth edition of the GCC listed banks results. The report, titled Adaptation and growth, offers a succinct analysis of the leading listed commercial banks' financial results for the year-ended 31 December 2023 versus the previous year (year-ended

31 December 2022). The solidity of the GCC economies shined through despite global economic challenges as the region lodged double-digit growth (23.1%)in terms of net profit to reach USD53.2bn in 2023. Total assets and share prices in the region were also among growth,

increasing by 8.1% and 7.7%, respectively. Also, in the green, albeit marginal, were capital adequacy ratio, cost-to-income ratio, net interest margin (NIM), return on equity and return on assets. The region saw a decrease in the overall non-performing loan(NPL) ratio, driven by banks conservative approach to credit risk management.

Findings from the report highlighted that these numbers were a result of eight primary financial trends that reflected in KPMG's analysts' outlook of the GCC region's banking sectors. They were: (i) robust asset growth; (ii) significant profitability increase; (iii) improved NIM; (iv) lower NPL ratio; (v) reduced loan impairment; (vi) stability in costto-income ratio; (vii) strengthened capital adequacy;

and (viii) rising share prices.

Bhavesh Gandhi, Head of Financial Services,



Bhavesh Gandhi

KPMG in Kuwait, said, "Kuwait's banking sector witnessed healthy year-on-year growth, observing notable increase across multiple identified KPIs such as net provision charge on loans, capital adequacy ratio, and coverage ratio on stage 3 loans. While more work remains to be done on a regional level, the results points at the efficacy of Kuwaiti banks' forward-looking approach and offer more reason for them to continue building onit in 2024."

Kuwait exhibited the best year-on-year (y-o-y) growth in terms of net provision charge on loans (28.8%), capital adequacy ratio (1.0%), and coverage ratios on stage 3 loans (2.7%). According to the analysis, Kuwait also registered the highest growth by value in terms of stage 3 loans subject to expected credit loss (ECL) (1.5%).

On a banklevel, National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P. had the highest y-o-y growth in net provision charge on loans (1324.1%), nearly four times that of the bank that came in second. In terms of coverage ratios on loans, Kuwait International Bank K.S.C.P. had the highest y-o-y growth (20%) among all 52 banks included in the report. When it came to growth by value, Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. performed the best w.r.t coverage ratios on loans (110.2%) and Boubyan Bank K.S.C.P. w.r.t stage 3 loans subject to ECL (1.0%).

The report drives home the point that effective government support, coupled with banks' proactive and in-time initiatives, propelled the continued resilience of the GCC region's banking sector. The main highlight of the report remained the positive trend in each of the identified financial KPI, helmed by effective management, digital transformation, and improved return on investments.

Looking ahead, KPMG professionals predict effective NPL management, rapid balance sheet growth, healthy NIMs and measures to maintain cost control. They also anticipate that, in 2024, the banking sector will see a rise in the prominence of ESG, focus on AI and Regtech, and consolidation.

This edition of the publication aims to offer insights and predictions to support putting in place measures and strategies that will help shape the future of the banking industry in the GCC region.

World Bank unveils co-financing platform to improve development impact

WASHINGTON, April 20, (KUNA): A coalition of 10 multilateral development banks (MDBs) launched a new co-financing platform that will enable them to channel additional capital for development scale and impact.

The Global Collaborative Co-Financing Platform will consist of the digital Co-Financing Portal which will create a secure platform for registered co-financiers to share project pipelines," according to a statement released by the World Bank on Friday.

This tool, hosted at the World Bank, will increase efficiency and transparency and make it easier for MDBs to share information and identify opportunities for co-financing.

The platform also includes the "Co-Financing Forum," which will provide a space for participants to discuss cofinancing opportunities, best practices, and common issues, and will support ongoing efforts to coordinate policies to reduce the burden on partner coun-

For countries, the new platform will reduce the administrative burden and transaction costs, and enable better coordinated financing in line with their priorities-resulting in greater develop-

By leveraging partnerships and promoting transparency, the platform will enable MDBs, partner agencies, and client countries to address global challenges more effectively and efficiently. Strengthening partnerships is a key

element of the World Bank Group's new playbook aimed at boosting impact. Co-financing has been identified as

an effective way to improve strategic alignment, crowd in concessional resources, promote efficiency, and strengthen coordination, the statement MDBs that will be part of the new

co-financing platform include: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, New Development Bank, and the World Bank Group.

The new financial instruments designed to boost lending capacity and enable the World Bank Group to take on more risk for shared global challenges have received a significant en-

A set of 11 countries announced

commitments today for the Portfolio Guarantee Platform, hybrid capital mechanism, and new Livable Planet Fund totaling USD 11 billion, according to the statement.

The World Bank Group's unique leveraging capability enables the resources pledged to hybrid capital and the Portfolio Guarantee Platform to be multiplied six to eight times over 10 years. Under certain conditions, the leverage amount could reach tenfold.

The resources pledged today could provide up to \$70 billion in urgently needed funds, which can be deployed to address cross-border challenges and advance development goals.

"We worked hard to develop these new financial instruments that boost our lending capacity, multiply donor funds, and ultimately allow us to improve the lives of more people," said Ajay Banga, World Bank Group President.

"The generosity of these countries is both an endorsement of the progress we have made to reform the Bank, and a sign of their shared commitment to development globally," Banga added. Belgium, France, Japan, and the

United States pledged to the Portfolio

Guarantee Platform, while Denmark,

ed by the G20 Expert Group. These reforms include: Adjusting the loan-to-equity ratio to secure \$40 billion over 10 years from the IBRD's balance sheet.

Germany, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands,

Norway, and the United Kingdom made

Japan is committed to providing the

The World Bank Group has imple-

mented a series of reforms and devel-

oped innovative financial instruments

as part of the Capital Adequacy Frame-

work review, which was recommend-

first contribution to the new Livable

commitments to hybrid capital.

Planet Fund.

Increasing the bilateral guarantee limit by USD 10 billion. Working to maximize callable capi-

tal benefits by publishing a detailed report for rating agencies to better assess its potential value and the Bank's financial capacity Introducing hybrid capital, giving

shareholders and partners an opportunity to invest in bonds with special leveraging potential. Developing the Portfolio Guaran-

tee Platform that provides a shared approach to risk that will make World Bank financing more widely avail-

China's e-commerce trade up 9.6 pct in Q1

China's cross-border e-commerce trade rose 9.6 percent year on year to 577.6 billion yuan (about 81.3 billion U.S. dollars) in the first quarter of this year, data from the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) showed.

During the period, the country's e-commerce imports and exports with Silk Road e-commerce partner countries such as Hungary, the United Arab Emirates, Cambodia and Brazil, saw rapid growth, the ministry said.

The pace of international cooperation

opment paths, features high-tech, high

cornerstone for the low-altitude economy, offering comprehensive infor-

mation services that include lifecycle

management, intelligent decision sup-

port, security, and AI-assisted drone

the safe and efficient operation of low-

altitude flights, a burgeoning sector

within the economy and an example

of developing new quality productive

driven by revolutionary technological

breakthroughs, innovative allocation

of production factors, and deep indus-

trial transformation and upgrading. A

prime example is the emergence of fu-

the innovation and development of

humanoid robots as part of efforts to

encourage development of new quality

productive forces, said Shan Zhongde,

vice minister of industry and informa-

Securities said the humanoid robot

market is expected to surpass the tril-

lion-yuan mark in market scale in the

future, with 6G playing a significant

role in this growth. It will be capable

of supporting intelligent dialogue and

training for robots by gradually en-

boast features such as ultra-high speed,

ultra-low latency, global coverage,

massive connectivity, ultra-high reli-

ability, and ultra-low energy consump-

tion. It is expected to fuel development

of game-changing technologies like

nology and main focus that will enable

the transformation of China's manufac-

turing industry from being large in scale

to becoming stronger in capability and

frastructure including moderately and

proactively planning for the deploy-

ment of information infrastructure

such as 5G, computing power, and

optical interprovincial backbone net-

work officially became commercially

tion of backbone networks, its trans-

mission bandwidth has increased by

four times, and the energy consump-

tion per bit has been reduced by 65

percent. Data volumes that would pre-

viously take ten minutes to transmit

can now be completed in just over two

minutes thanks to the new network de-

It is expected that by mid-2024, the

company will fully realize high-speed

interconnection between the eight hubs

of an initiative channeling computing

resources from the country's east to

the west, establishing the world's larg-

est 400G all-optical interprovincial

cial operation of the 400G network

will better support the efficient inter-

connection of computing power and

data elements across entities, types,

China has built the world's largest and

An industry report from a broadband development alliance indicates that

Zhao emphasized that the commer-

veloped by China Mobile.

backbone network.

and regions.

Compared to the previous genera-

In March, the world's first 400G all-

mobile Internet of Things (IoT).

available in China.

To this end, China is improving in-

Smart manufacturing is the core tech-

quantum communication.

competitiveness, said Shan.

The research suggests that 6G will

hancing their level of intelligence.

A research note from Guosheng

The MIIT and several other departments have issued a guideline on

New quality productive forces are

These capabilities are essential for

supervision.

forces

turistic industries

tion technology.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has report-

efficiency and high quality.

in e-commerce has accelerated, the MOC said, noting that for the first time, it organized Chinese e-commerce platforms to conduct roadshows in foreign countries. Through such an initiative, Chinese e-commerce firms connected with more than 60 small and medium-sized enterprises in Italy,

according to the ministry.

In the first quarter, the national online retail sales reached 3.3 trillion yuan, an increase of 12.4 percent year on year, with service consumption continuing to lead the growth, the MOC said. (Xinhua)

foreign holdings of Chinese bonds see net increase

Foreign investors saw a net increase of 41.6 billion U.S. dollars in their holdings of China's domestic bonds in the first quarter of 2024, official data showed on Thursday.

This figure is notably higher than the total net increase of 23 billion U.S. dollars registered in 2023.

"Recently, overseas institutions' investment in domestic bonds have increased significantly," Wang Chunying, deputy director and spokesperson of the State Administration of Foreign

Exchange, told a press conference.

By the end of March, more than 1,100 overseas institutions from over 70 countries and regions entered the domestic bond market. Their bond holdings have exceeded 570 billion U.S. dollars, accounting for around 2.6 percent of the total domestic

points from the end of last year. Overseas investment in domestic bond market sustains reasonable structure and stable returns. Wang

bonds in custody, up 0.2 percentage

said. Overseas central banks and fi-nancial institutions have increased their investments in treasury bonds, policy financial bonds, and other medium- to long-term bonds.

Looking forward, Wang expects over-seas institutions' investment in domestic bonds to sustain a steady growth momentum backed by a sound macroeconomic environment, a stable renminbi exchange rate, and an increase in the use of renminbi in global cross-border transactions. (Xinhua)

Research suggests that 6G will boast features such as ultra-high speed

Next-gen telecom to turbocharge China's new productivity

BEIJING, April 20, (Xinhua): China is pushing for the convergence of next-**EU** wants to boost competitiveness generation communication with technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence (AI), aiming to empower various industries and development of new quality productive forces. With innovation playing the leadto close the 'gap' with US and China ing role, new quality productive forces means advanced productivity that is freed from traditional economic growth mode and productivity devel-

'There is no time to waste'

ed that 5G applications have been successfully integrated into 74 of the 97 major sectors of the national economy. BRUSSELS, April 20, This includes significant advancements in key areas such as industry, (AP): European Union mining, power, and healthcare, where leaders on Thursday debat-5G is being promoted on a large scale. ed a new "European Com-Zhao Zhiguo, chief engineer of the MIIT, stated that 5G is currently propetitiveness Deal" aimed at gressing towards 5G-Advanced (5GA) helping the 27-nation bloc or 5.5G, and there is an increased focus close the gap with Chinese on the research and development of 6G and terabit optical networks. and American rivals amid According to a research by Zhongtai fears the region's indus-Securities, 5G-A is poised to become a tries will otherwise be left

> behind for good. In a volatile geopolitical landscape redefined by the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and increasing tensions in the Middle East that create new economic challenges, EU leaders believe

there is an urgent need for action. China, the U.S. and the European Union are the three largest economies in the world, but the EU's share has diminished over the past 30 years. Europe is now feeling pressure amid U.S. and Chinese efforts to support investment in domestic production through subsidies and tax breaks, particularly in renewable energy and green tech-

Before the summit in Brussels, the former president of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, said the EU did not pay enough attention to "external competitiveness as a serious policy question" and insisted Europe's biggest economic rivals "are no longer

playing by the rules." "In the face of a new geopolitical reality and increasingly complex challenges, the European Union is committed to strengthening its strategic sovereignty and acting decisively to ensure its long-term competitiveness prosperity and leadership on the global stage," leaders were expected to agree at their summit in Brussels, according to a draft of conclusions seen by The Associated Press.

Leaders will hear a proposal for an EU-wide effort to subsidize industrial companies in response to the Biden administration's support for investment in environmentally friendly technology through the Inflation Reduction Act, and to China's subsidies for electric cars and solar panels.

The proposals, contained in a report from former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta, are in response to widespread concern that U.S. subsidies, which favor domestic production in the U.S., are drawing investment from Europe and threatening the loss of industrial jobs on the continent.

"Competitiveness means prosperity for our citizens," Letta said. "We're in danger of falling out of touch. There is no time to waste. The gap between the European Union and the U.S. in terms of economic performances is becoming bigger and bigger."

According to his report, GDP per capita in the U.S. increased by almost 60% from 1993 to 2022, while in Europe the increase was less than 30%.

Draghi said the EU lacks a clear strategy to answer the challenges proposed by Chinese and American rivals in key industries.

"Today we invest less in digital and advanced technologies than the U.S. and China, including for defense, and we only have four global European tech players among the top 50 worldwide," he said. "We are lacking a strategy for how to shield our traditional industries from an unlevel global playing field caused by asymmetries in regulations, subsidies and trade policies.'



From left: Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, European Council President Charles Michel, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, author of the High-Level Report on the future of the Single Market Enrico Letta and Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo speak during a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels, Thursday, April 18, 2024. (AP)

Home-grown brands have become a hit among consumers

Roaring consumption powers China's economy ahead

BEIJING, April 20, (Xinhua): China's consumption played a vital role in bolstering economic growth in the first quarter of the year, underscoring the country's steady transformation toward a domestic

consumption-driven economy.
China's GDP expanded 5.3 percent year on year in the first quarter (Q1), with domestic consumption contributing 73.7 percent to economic growth, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed earlier this week.

Booming service consumption, especially festival-related consumption, and the continuing structural upgrading of household consumption were among the major highlights of the consumption sector.

New Forms Of Consumption

China has witnessed a rapid development of new consumption patterns across a wide range of sectors from entertainment and tourism to the digital industry. For instance, city walks have be-

come a trending pastime for Chinese. The walks involve immersive exploration of the city on foot to discover historic landmarks, cultural sites and unique spots.

"City walks allow me to deeply experience local culture. It's really a good choice," said a traveler surnamed Chen from Anhui Province.

Home-grown brands have also become a hit among Chinese consumers. Sales of horse-face skirts and neo-Chinese jewelry rose 6.3 times and 1.7 times from a year earlier during the first two months of 2024.

The rise of a new "Made in China" is just the start of a revolution, fueled HONG KONG, April 20, (AP): Apple not commonly used in China.

said it had removed Meta's WhatsApp messaging app and its Threads social media app from the App Store in China to comply with orders from Chinese authorities. The apps were removed from the store

on Friday after Chinese officials cited unspecified national security concerns.

Their removal comes amid elevated tensions between the U.S. and China over trade, technology and national security.

The U.S. has threatened to ban TikTok over national security concerns. But while TikTok, owned by Chinese technology firm ByteDance, is used by millions in the

by a young generation that have grow-

ing love for the country, analysts said.

thrived with rising public health awareness. Sales of running shoes,

quick-dry clothes and other outdoor

sports equipment are booming in first

tern should not be misinterpreted as a 'consumption downgrade'," said Xu

Guangjian, deputy head of the Price

"The change in consumption pat-

and second-tier cities.

Association of China.

Besides, the sports economy has

U.S., apps like WhatsApp and Threads are

from App Store on Beijing's orders

Apple pulls WhatsApp and Threads

Instead, the messaging app WeChat, owned by Chinese company Tencent, reigns supreme.

Other Meta apps, including Facebook, Instagram and Messenger remained available for download, although use of such foreign apps is blocked in China due to its "Great Firewall" network of filters that restrict use of foreign websites such as Google and Facebook.

"The Cyberspace Administration of China ordered the removal of these apps from the China storefront based

Continued urbanization and rising in-

By the end of 2023, approximately

66.2 percent of the total population in

China lived in cities, still lower than

the average level of around 80 percent

It is estimated that every one percent-

age point increase in the urbanization rate

will translate to an additional 200 billion

come levels are the main drivers of Chi-

na's sustained consumption resilience.

Sustained Resilience

in developed countries.

yuan of consumption demand.

on their national security concerns," Apple said in a statement.

We are obligated to follow the laws in the countries where we operate, even when we disagree," Apple said. A spokesman for Meta referred to

Apple for comment." Apple, previously the world's top smartphone maker, recently lost the top spot to Korean rival Samsung Electronics. The U.S. firm has run into headwinds in China, one of its top three markets, with sales slumping after Chinese government agencies and employees of state-owned companies were ordered not

to bring Apple devices to work. At present, there are still 170 million

members who have not yet gained permanent residency in cities. If they are granted urban residency and enjoy the same basic public services as urban residents, their consumption levels are expected to rise by 30 percent in real terms, studies have shown. China's resident income growth has basically kept pace with the country's economic growth, and the income gap between

migrant rural workers and their family

France asks retailers to alert customers to cases of 'shrinkflation'

technologically leading "dual-gigabit" network infrastructure, achieving giga-PARIS, April 20, (AP): The French bit access in every city, 5G access in government announced a new rule on every county, and broadband access in Friday that will require stores to tell every village. customers when a product becomes The telecom industry in China has smaller but its price stays the same or developed rapidly in recent years. As increases, a practice known as "shrinkof the end of March, the cumulative

flation.' Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire announced the measure to tackle the common but often criticized method. which has become an international buzzword. He said that from July 1, such cases will need to be clearly communicated to shoppers.

Le Maire called shrinkflation a "scam" and stressed the importance of transparency. "Consumers must understand the real price evolution of products when their sizes change," he said in a statement.

Retailers at medium to large supermarkets will have to display specific information about the price per unit and any changes in quantity next to the affected products. It must be visible as signs on store shelves for two months following any changes to a product. This requirement applies to a wide range of goods, including food and household items. The Finance Ministry said there would be exceptions for unpackaged food items and

The French government is highlighting the new rule's consumer protection aspect. Consumers who notice pricing discrepancies are now encouraged to report them through France's

SignalConso website or app. Consumer watchdogs welcomed the

"This is great news, as shrinkflation is shifty and misleading because it is done behind the customer's back. It's high time to act, as we have less money and prices are rising," said Camille Dorioz, campaign director at

"It's perhaps very French that the government is stepping in to help the consumer. It's a French way not to let the markets rule on this problem," he added, saying that France is simply reinforcing a European law that forbids misleading packaging

and products. Dorioz said that most shoppers don't notice when a product they

buy is 2 grams less, but "over time, it soon adds up, and when people are alerted to it, they understandably get Retailers are less excited about the

new rules, saying they'll be hard to

implement and that the burden should be placed on manufacturers instead. Dominique Schelcher, head of su-

urban and rural residents has narrowed.

permarket chain Systeme U, said in a post on X that shrinkflation should be tackled, but added: "Why ask retailers to do this and not demand it of manufacturers, who ... have all the necessary

The issue has also come up in the U.S. presidential campaign. President Joe Biden called out "shrinkflation" during his State of the Union speech as part of a broader strategy to reframe how voters think about the economy before the November election.

number of 5G base stations built nationwide has reached 3.647 million, with a 5G user penetration rate exceeding 60 percent, according to MIIT data. As China continues to lift market access restrictions in the manufacturing sector, it will also promote the opening up of sectors including telecommunica-

tions to create more trade and investment

opportunities for foreign investors.

What's On





Photos from the event

the fun atmosphere.











Photos by lehab Qurtal

Four ASEAN nations celebrate New Year festival

The embassies of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand in Kuwait organized a joint celebration of the traditional New Year festival with the aim of enhancing friendly cooperation among the members of the ASEAN Committee in Kuwait.

A press release issued on the occasion said Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand share a common religious, cultural and

This initiative

aims to streamline home-buying

by offering swift

approval process-

es without the

need for custom-

ers to travel. The

mortgage loan, available through

Al Shaab branch

in Kuwait, serves

against residen-

tial properties in

Key highlights

of the newly introduced mort-

gage loan pro-

gram include up

to 80% financing

of the property

value; and flexi-

bility in repay-

allowing for peri-

terms,

secured

as an installment

linguistic heritage.

They also share the traditional New Year festival celebrated in mid-April as it marks the beginning of a new solar year in the traditional calendars of those coun-

This means the beginning of the traditional new year in 4 countries -- Maha Songkran in Cambodia, Pi Mai in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thingyan in Myanmar, and Songkran in Thailand.

delicious food and drinks and water splashes.

The New Year Festival represents a period of joy and

This festival is an occasion to celebrate happily and

joyfully with family, friends and community members,

as people from all walks of life come together to enjoy

celebration characterized by exciting colours, lively mu-

sic, beautiful cultural performances, traditional games,

This traditional New Year celebration is the result of

collective efforts of the four embassies to share their exciting and vibrant cultures and express our best wishes to everyone.

This celebration in Kuwait not only reflects the harmony, unity and friendship between the four countries. but also reflects the spirit of ASEAN 10 and ASEAN Plus 3 including China, Japan and Korea and cooperation with the State of Kuwait as a partner of ASEAN

'Up to 80% financing'

Al-Othman unveils exclusive rewards for banking customers

UAE 'mortgage' loan program

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: In an endeavor to continue to enhance its portfolio of innovative banking solutions, ABK-UAE has unveiled a mortgage loan program tailored to facilitate home purchases for customers wishing to have a real estate in the



Omar Wahby



Johair Marafi

ods of up to 25 years. Omar Wahby, CEO of ABK-UAE, expressed his enthusiasm for the dynamic evolution of the UAE real estate market, which has surged for-

ment

ward at an unprecedented pace. He said, "ABK UAE's mortgage offering is a pivotal milestone for the Bank, symbolizing our unwavering dedication to excellence. Real estate activity continues to gather formidable strength, and this exceptional product shall serve as a catalyst, propelling the Bank's growth to new heights."Wahby further emphasized that this unparalleled offering will elevate ABK's repertoire of services.

Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, highlighted the Bank's commitment to fulfilling customers' dreams. She said, "Owning a second home is a dream for every individual. With the launch of the new mortgage loan program in the UAE, we aim to make this dream

come true. Marafi underscored ABK's dedication to staying at the forefront of the banking sector through continuous improvement of its product offerings. She emphasized, "This program reflects the Bank's unwavering commitment to evolving in tandem with customer demands and delivering top-tier services.'

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.

For more information, interested applicants are encouraged to contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit the UAE desk at AlShaabbranch.



ABK unveils UAE mortgage loan program

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait unveils NBK announces first winner of Al Jawhara Grand Prize draw worth KD 1 mln for 2024

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Amidst festive atmospheres and remarkable audience, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) held a special event 1 Friday at the 360 Mall, which extended for more than 3 hours and featured a variety of highly engaging activities, marking the announcement of the first draws of AlJawhara and Al-Jawhara Junior grand prizes for

The event was attended by a number of NBK executive leaders and officials



Al-Othman

representative of the Ministry Commerce Industry, and as well as a representative of Deloitte, revealed Al Jawhara Account holder Abdullatif Saad Abdullatif Al Dosaryas the lucky winner of the KD 1 million prize,

where the draw,

which was con-

ducted in the

presence and

oversight of a

making him the first millionaire in Al Jawhara Account for this year. In addition, Al Jawhara Junior Account holder Fatima Mohammed Abdulwahab Al Zalzalah was announced as the winner of the grand prize worth KD 10,000. The grand prize draws for both Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior Accounts is conducted 3 times

The event of announcing the winners featured many engaging entertainment activities and games for children and adults, in addition to the Gergasha comedy show for children. It also included a number of competitions and



draws on valuable prizes for the audience, including complimentary one night stay at the Waldorf with spa & restaurant vouchers, in addition to McLaren driving experience for a full weekend, and a free yacht trip for 6 hours to enjoy wonderful moments with friends and family.

The event also hosted many booths showcasing NBK's premium offerings for Private and Privilege Banking Customers.

Savings culture and financial inclusion

Commenting on this occasion, Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, CEO-Consumer and Digital Banking at National Bank of Kuwait said,"Today, we are pleased to celebrate the announcement of the first millionaire in Al Jawhara grand prize draws for this year, as well as the winner of Al Jawhara Junior grand prize. These prizes come

within our customer rewarding strategy, while Al Jawhara Account serves as a key tool for promoting a culture of savings and financial inclusion."

Photos from the event

"NBK always seeks to deliver a top-notch banking experience for its customers, integrating the best products and services with a package of exclusive, unmatched benefits and rewards. To this end, the bank has increased the total amount of the AlJawhara Account prizes to KD 5 million starting this year," he added.

"Seeking to elevate the benefits and rewards provided to Al Jawhara Account holders, NBK always strives to introduced valuable offerings including Al Jawhara Junior Draws for Al Jawhara Account holders below the age of 21 with 7 winners of monthly draws (KD 1,000 for 3 winners and KD

500 for 4 winners) in addition to 1 winner of KD10,000 prize with each grand prize draw," he mentioned.

"Furthermore, NBK provides the new exclusive Al Jawhara Saver Account, offering customers a bonus interest rate up to 1.5% for the first year, in addition to the chance to enter the monthly and grand draws if savings reach KD5,000 and above. The bank is also offering customers who have been banking with it for more than 2 years double chances in case they were not eligible to earn the existing double chances," he explained.

NBK has already increased Al Jawhara prizes by more than the double in early 2023, making it the biggest in Kuwait, with KD 20,000 prize weekly, KD 125,000 monthly, and grand prizes worth KD 1,000,000 each, three times a vear.

KFH's secure & swift money transfer with Western Union gains strong momentum

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that the number of transactions on Money Transfer with Western Union service available on KFHOnline app has risen significantly.

KFH has recently launched this service in partnership with Western Union for convenient cross-border transactions.

The partnership between KFH and Western Union offers a convenient money transfer service. Customers can easily send money via cash or bank account to recipients worldwide through Western Union's vast network. KFHOnline allows secure access to bank accounts and facilitates swift international money transfers. With a presence in over 200 countries and territories, Western Union is a global leader in money transfer, enabling payments to bank accounts, digital wallets, and cards in over 110 countries. Bank transfers are instant in 100 countries.

KFH launched the service earlier this year with the goal of offering its customers top advantages. This includes secure, reliable, and fast transfers that meet customer expectations. The service allows customers to access the full Western Union network when sending remittances and expands digital application capabilities to ensure financial services are accessible to all.



The campaign poster

It is worth noting that KFH provides a range of digital banking solutions via the KFHOnline app. These include a set of new services such as submitting a personal finance application online through KFHOnline, opening a gold account with options for selling and buying, gold delivery service, cheque book request, instant cheque printing, instant debit card issuance via QR code, and cheque deposit. Customers can also view investment plans, make local and international transfers, and create investment deposits.

Al-Sarhan thanks stakeholders for support of KIB's initiatives

KIB honored as 'Best Bank in Financial **Literacy Program MENA 2023' by CFI.co**

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is pleased to announce that it has been recognized as the "Best Bank in Financial Literacy Program – MENA 2023" by the prestigious Capital Finance International (CFI.co) magazine awards. This win highlights KIB's unwavering commitment to promoting financial literacy and empowering individuals to make informed financial decisions.

KIB was selected as the award recipient following a decision by the CFI.co judging panel. The evaluation decision was based on the Bank's multiple initiatives and efforts to spread financial literacy, including organizing information sessions at high-traffic venues to engage directly with the public, advocating for the benefits of conscientious savings and investment practices, promoting cyber safety and fraud prevention, presenting products to suit personal circumstances and aspirations, highlighting customers' financial rights and responsibilities, and participating in major industry conferences. The judges stated that while KIB remained on an impressive growth trajectory, its educational outreach activities deserved special attention at the annual awards.

Expressing gratitude for the recognition, Fahad Al-Sarhan, Senior Manager - External Communication, Marketing and Corporate Communication, said: "We are honored to be chosen for CFI. co's Best Bank in Financial Literacy Program in the Middle East and North Africa region. Winning this award is a testament to KIB's dedica-



Al-Sarhan

the wider community. Motivated by the belief that financial literacy is a key factor in a country's economic stability and growth potential, over the years, the Bank has been launching a series of initiatives and programs that strive to equip individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed finan-

cial decisions."

Al-Sarhan extended his appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and all regulatory authorities for their ongoing support and distinct regulatory role in the banking sector. He also thanked the Chairman, members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Management, and all of KIB's employees for their efforts and contributions to the success of the Bank. Furthermore, he highlighted KIB's constant support of the "Let's Be

Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks.

Concluding his remarks, Al-Sarhan asserted: "KIB continues its unwavering dedication to making a meaningful and lasting impact on the financial well-being of individuals and families throughout the MENA region. The Bank remains committed to furthering financial education and empowerment to help its customers achieve their



Dickey Betts, Allman Brothers legend, passes away at 80

LOS ANGELES, April 20, (AP): Dickey Betts, who died Thursday at age 80, really was born a ramblin' man.

He left home at 16 to join the circus and became a renowned guitarist touring the world with the Allman Brothers Band. He wrote the group's biggest hit, "Ramblin' Man," and remained on the road until he reached the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Betts died at his home in Osprey, Florida, his manager of 20 years, David Spero, said by phone. He had been battling cancer for more than a year and had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Spero said. "He was surrounded by his whole family and he passed peacefully. They didn't think he was in any pain," he said.

Betts shared lead guitar duties with Duane Allman in the original Allman Brothers Band to help give the group its unique sound and create a new genre, Southern rock. The band blended blues, country, R&B and jazz with '60s rock to produce a distinct sound that influenced a host of major acts, including Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZ Top, Phish, Jason Isbell and Chris Stapleton, among many others.
"My first concert was Dickey Betts at Coleman's in Rome, New

York in 1983," blues-rock guitarist Joe Bonamassa said in an Instagram post Thursday, crediting Betts with inspiring his favorite electric guitar model. "Blew my mind and made me want a Les Paul." Other tributes came from members of the Allman Brothers Band's

extended family. Guitarist Derek Trucks and his wife and bandmate, Susan Tedeschi, posted on their Instagram account that Betts was "one of best to ever

Trucks joined the Allman Brothers Band in 1999. His uncle Butch

Trucks was one of the band's two founding drummers.

Bassist Berry Duane Oakley, son of Allman Brothers founding bassist Berry Oakley, honored his "Uncle Dickey" on Facebook, saying: "If not for him, I don't think I would be a touring musician. The cat in the hat will never be forgotten, and will always be honored not only for

the wonderful life he lived, but the wonderful music he has left behind for all of us to share and remember.'

Founded in 1969, the Allmans were a pioneering jam band, trampling the traditional formula of three-minute pop songs by performing lengthy compositions in concert and on record.

The band was also notable as a biracial group from the Deep South. Duane Allman died in a motorcycle accident in 1971, and Berry Oakley was killed in a motorcycle crash the following year. That left

Betts and Allman's younger brother, Gregg, as the band's leaders, but they frequently clashed, and substance abuse caused further dysfunction. The band broke up at least twice before reforming, and has had more than a dozen lineups.

The Allman Brothers Band was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 and earned a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award in 2012. Betts left the group for good in 2000. He also played solo and with his own band Great Southern, which included his son, guitarist Duane Betts

Forrest Richard Betts was born Dec. 12, 1943, and raised in the

Bradenton, Florida, area, near the highway 41 he sang about in "Ramblin' Man." His family had lived in area since the mid-19th century.

A descendant of Canadian fiddlers, Betts was listening to string bands before he even started school. He developed a fondness for country, bluegrass and Western swing, and played the ukulele and banjo before focusing on the electric guitar because it impressed girls. But he

usually did his songwriting on an acoustic guitar. Betts changed schools often because his father worked construction, and those memories later inspired him to write "Ramblin' Man." His

first big road trip came when he joined the circus to play in a band. He returned home, and with Oakley joined a group that became the Jacksonville, Florida-based band Second Coming. One night in 1969, Betts and Oakley jammed with Duane Allman, already a successful session musician, and his younger brother. Together they formed the Allman Brothers Band.

Betts "excelled at anything that caught his attention," according to a statement posted Thursday on the Allman Brothers Band's official website. "He was passionate in life, be it music, songwriting, fishing, hunting, boating, golf, karate or boxing.

The group moved to Macon, Georgia, and released a self-titled debut album in 1969. A year later came the album "Idlewild South," highlighted by Betts' instrumental composition "In Memory of Elizabeth

Reed," which soon became a concert favorite.

The 1971 double album "At Fillmore East," now considered among the greatest live albums of the classic rock era, was the Allmans' commercial breakthrough and cemented their performing reputation by showcasing the unique guitar interplay between Allman and Betts.

Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Alisha Weir in a scene from the film 'Abigail.' (AP)

Film

LONDON: Prince Harry, the son of King Charles III and fifth in line to the British throne, has formally confirmed he is now a **US** resident.

Four years after Harry and his American wife, Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, decamped to a villa in Southern California, a travel company he controls filed paperwork this week informing British authorities that he has moved and is now "usually resident" in the United States.

underscores the prince's increasing estrangement from Britain, after he and Meghan walked away from royal duties to pursue lucrative media deals in America. Since then, Harry has repeatedly criticized the royal family, including allegations of unconscious racism that were included in a Netflix series and the prince's autobiography, "Spare."
The paperwork was filed by

75% owned by Harry and which was founded in 2020 to "to promote global awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism." The documentation was received Monday by Companies House, the government agency that oversees the incorporation of U.K. companies.

The filing further separates Harry from his role as one of the king's counselors of state - members of the royal family who can be deputized to carry out the duties of the monarch if he is unwell or out of the country.

While Harry formally remains a counselor of state, the crown informed Parliament in 2022 that "in practice" only working members of the royal family would be called

Although Harry and Meghan, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have put down roots in the wealthy enclave of Montecito, where they are raising their young son and daughter, Harry is also facing scrutiny about his U.S. residency. (AP)

NEW YORK: Fady Joudah, a Palestinian American poet who has said he writes for the future because "the present is demolished," has received a \$100.000

Joudah is this year's winner of the Jackson Poetry Prize, given to an American writer of "excep-

The formal acknowledgment

Travalyst Ltd, a company at least

upon to fill in for the monarch.

award from Poets & Writers.

A gleeful genre-smashing romp

Heists and monsters collide in 'Abigail'

By Mark Kennedy

If you always thought your garden-variety heist movies could do with a bit more blood-sucking vampire, have we got a flick for you.

"Abigail," featuring a 12-year-old tutu-wearing member of the undead, is way better than it should be, a gleeful genre-smashing romp through puddles of gore.
Directors Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett and

producer Chad Villella - part of Radio Silence Productions - have cracked the modern horror code with such hits as "Ready or Not," "Scream" and "Scream VI." They do not disappoint with "Abigail," even perhaps opening a new, bloody revenue stream. (And wait for

the phone call scene, a nod to "Scream.") "Abigail" starts with an odd assortment of mercenaries - played by "Scream" veteran Melissa Barrera, "Downton Abbey" star Dan Stevens, Kathryn Newton, Kevin

Durand, William Catlett and the late Angus Cloud. The six - representing the muscle, sniper, computer expert, getaway driver, medic etc - are hired to kidnap a rich preteen (nicknamed "Tiny Dancer") and hold her for ransom. The rules are: No names. No backstory. No grabass, which is a weird request, if we're being honest. All this group needs to do is detain the target for 24

hours until rich dad pays \$50 million in ransom. Why are six professional underworld characters needed to snatch and detain a sweet preteen, still wearing her tutu? That's easy: Not all of them are going to survive to claim their share of \$7 million. That's because Abigail (Alisha Weir, awesome, stay away from me, no seriously) is really into, well, neckwork.

"I'm sorry about what's going to happen to you," Abigail sweetly tells the kidnappers. We have some idea - and it's going to be great. Suddenly, the rambling estate they're holding her becomes a prison. The tables

The script written by Stephen Shields ("The Hole in the Ground") and regular Radio Silence collaborator Guy Busick ("Ready or Not" and the "Scream" movies) - gleefully mines humor in the horror. Laughing a moment after a body fully explodes is normal here.

'This whole thing is a trip," says one of the gang. Believe them. "Something doesn't add up," says another.

Believe that guy, too. Garlic, sunlight, spears and crucifixes are employed to try to stop Abigail, who has hijacked the heist movie and turned it into a run-for-your-life thriller. She's a very smart 12-year-old who turns hardened mercenaries against each other.

Barrera, who had been so central to the life of the "Scream" franchise, shows why she's so good at horror - funny, sarcastic, vulnerable, athletic, soulful and very

convincing with a stake in her hand. Stevens, who famously left the aristocratic "Downton Abbey" for better roles, may wonder what he's doing here now, bathed in blood fighting a preteen vampire,

but does an admirable job, definitely in on the camp. But it's Weir in the titular role who carries it, doing pirouettes and leaps as she chases the bad-guys-nowgood guys to the theme of "Swan Lake" with blood dripping down her throat, rotten teeth and feathers in her hair. "I like to play with my food," she says.

Run faster! "Abigail," a Universal Pictures release that hit theaters Friday, is rated R for "strong bloody violence and gore throughout, pervasive language and brief drug use." Running time: 110 minutes. Three stars out of

Also:

DALLAS: The first model of the USS Enterprise - used in the opening credits of the original "Star Trek" television series - has boldly gone back home, returning to creator Gene Roddenberry's son decades after it went

The model's disappearance sometime in the 1970s had become the subject of lore, so it caused a stir when it popped up on eBay last fall. The sellers quickly took it down, and then contacted Dallas-based Heritage Auctions to authenticate it. Last weekend, the auction house facilitated the model's return.

Eugene "Rod" Roddenberry, CEO of Roddenberry Entertainment, said he's thrilled to have the model that had graced the desk of his father, who died in 1991 at

Joudah's books include "The

Earth in the Attic" and "Tethered

"This is not going home to adorn my shelves," Rod-

denberry said. "This is going to get restored and we're working on ways to get it out so the public can see it and my hope is that it will land in a museum somewhere."

Heritage's executive vice president, Joe Maddalena, said the auction house was contacted by people who said they'd discovered it a storage unit, and when it was brought into their Beverly Hills office, he and a colleague "instantly knew that it was the real thing."

They reached out to Roddenberry, who said he appreciates that everyone involved agreed returning the model was the right thing to do. He wouldn't go into details on the agreement reached but said "I felt it important to reward that and show appreciation for that."

Maddalena said the model vanished in the 1970s after Gene Roddenberry loaned it to makers of "Star Trek: The Motion Picture," which was released in 1979. "No one knew what happened to it," Rod Rodden-

The 3-foot (0.91-meter) model of the USS Enterprise was used in the show's original pilot episode as well as the opening credits of the resulting TV series, and was the prototype for the 11-foot (3-meter) version featured in the series' episodes. The larger model is on display

at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. The original "Star Trek" television series, which aired in the late 1960s, kicked off an ever-expanding multiverse of cultural phenomena, with TV and movie

spinoffs and conventions where a fanbase of zealous and devoted Trekkies can't get enough of memorabilia. This USS Enterprise model would easily sell for more than \$1 million at auction, but really "it's price-

less," Maddalena said. "It could sell for any amount and I wouldn't be surprised because of what it is," he said. "It is truly a cul-

tural icon. Roddenberry, who was just a young boy when the model went missing, said he has spotty memories of it,

"almost a deja vu." He said it wasn't something he'd thought much about until people began contacting him after it appeared on eBay. "I don't think I really, fully comprehended at first

that this was the first Enterprise ever created," he said.

tional talent. He was chosen by a panel of three poets: Natalie Diaz, Gregory Pardlo and Diane Seuss.

The judges' citation, released Thursday, noted Joudah's "significant and evolving body of work, distinguished by his courage to speak in the face of the unspeakable, in poems of lyric concision and intensity.'





to the Stars," along with Englishlanguage translations of the Palestinian poet **Mahmoud Darwish**. His other honors include winning the Yale Series of Younger Poets a PEN USA Literary Award. (AP)

was 47. competition, in 2007, and receiving

NASHVILLE, Tenn.: Mandisa, a contemporary Christian singer who appeared on "American Idol" and won a Grammy for her 2013 album 'Overcomer', has died. She

A representative for the singer told The Associated Press that the singer was found dead in her home in Nashville, Tennessee, on

Thursday. The representative said the cause of Mandisa's death was not yet known

Mandisa, whose full name was Mandisa Lynn Hundley, was born near Sacramento, California, and grew up singing in church. She gained stardom after finishing ninth on "American Idol" in 2006. (AP)

People & Places

Art

Gibson confronts history

Artwork highlights dialogue, empathy

VENICE, Italy, April 20, (AP): A pair of nude feet - dirty, wounded and vulnerable - are painted on the façade of the Venice women's prison chapel. It's the work of Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan and part of the Vatican's pavilion at the Venice Biennale contemporary art show in an innovative collaboration between inmates and artists.

That Cattelan is the lead artist is striking, given that his provocative life-size wax statue of Pope John Paul II lying on his side, crushed by a massive meteorite, shocked Catholics when it was displayed at the 2001 Biennale. The new work, titled "Father," is considered a thematic counterpoint to a performance piece he produced for the 1999 Biennale titled "Mother," during which a religious

ascetic was buried under sand, with only his hands clasped in prayer showing.



The Vatican's culture minister, Cardinal Jose Tolentino de Mendonca, praised the work, which he said recalled the naked, dirty feet of Caravaggio's saints, while also being highly symbolic of the journey behind the Holy See's pavilion, showing "the desire to dirty one's feet, to show that whoever has feet has a carnality.'

Tolentino de Mendonca, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, said the Vatican did not want to shy away from artists or works that might be considered iconoclastic, or critical of institutions like the Catholic church.

"Pope Francis calls us to dialogue. Dialogue is not just with the people who are mirrors of ourselves, he told The Associated Press. "We did not seek out easy artists. We sought real artists. Cattelan's work is very interesting under a religious point of view, because there is something iconoclastic in his work, but also in the mystic there is something that can be called iconoclastic, in the sense of deconstructing the religious representation.'

Pavilion

Pope Francis, who met with over 200 artists in the Sistine Chapel last year, will see for himself when he visits the pavilion April 28, meeting inmates and artists, and according to the prefect not just the ones participating in the pavilion.

Cattelan, who wandered by the work as preview tours continued this week, declined to discuss his contribution but said the feet would be reproduced on a church in Rome in the future.

Cattelan's artwork can be viewed by anyone who makes the trek to the Giudecca island prison. Those who want to see the other works will be guided through the prison on four daily tours by inmates, leaving bags and mobile phones in lockup.

Closed Wednesdays, a maximum 600 people will view the pavilion each week during the Biennale's run from April 20-Nov. 26. The 60th International Art Exhibition comprises 88 national pavilion s along with a main show curated this year by Brazilian Adriano Pedrosa.

On a recent tour, three inmates wearing elegant black and white smocks made by prison seamstresses guided journalists through an installation by Simone Fattal who transformed inmates' poems into small ceramic plaques hung along a brick alleyway

The tour continued to a prison coffee bar decorated with posters by onetime Catholic nun Corita Kent and into a gallery where Claire Tabouret has painted images from photographs provided by inmates of them-

selves and loved ones. The conceptual artistic duo known as Claire Fontaine provided a neon eye with a slash through it for an outdoor corridor, and another neon sign that reads: "Siamo con voi nella notte," ("We are with all of you

That sign, in a courtyard where the inmates can gather during the day, provides a reassuring blue glow into the overlooking cells where they sleep.

"When we read this writing, it gives us encouragement, because there is someone with us day and night," said one inmate named Manuela, who like the others declined to give their full names. "At night, we see the blue light, so we know it is there.'

The tour ended with a 15-minute film by Italian director Marco Perego starring his wife, actor Zoe Saldana, both of whom tagged along. Saldana plays an inmate in her final hours before release, and she took inspiration from the inmates who appeared in the film. To protect their privacy, the film can only be seen within the prison walls.

"What we wanted to provide for them was just a little bit of visibility, and to add a little bit of levity through art, which is exactly what we accomplished,' Saldana said.

Their desire for visibility was expressed in letters that the women gave the couple each night after filming, and through requests to pose with the couple for photos, which Saldana said they printed as keepsakes for the women.

Chiara Parisi, the director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz and one of the curators, said the project created a unique synergy between artists and inmates that opened lines of empathy. After the pavilion closes at the end of the Biennale, she said a coat of paint would likely cover Cattelan's work, while the other pieces will find other venues; she said she hoped its larger legacy would be other similar initiatives.

VENICE, Italy: Jeffrey Gibson's takeover of the US pavilion for this year's Venice Biennale contemporary art show is a celebration of color, pattern and craft, which is immediately evident on approaching the bright red facade decorated by a colorful clash of geometry and a foreground dominated by a riot of gigantic red podiums.

Gibson, a Mississippi Choctaw with Cherokee descent, is the first Native American to represent the United States solo at the Venice Biennale, the world's oldest contemporary art show. For context, the last time Native American artists were included was in 1932.

Gibson, 52, accepts the weight of the honor, but he prefers to focus on how his participation can forge greater inclusion going forward. "The first is not the most important story," Gibson

told The Associated Press this week before the pavilion's inauguration on Thursday. "The first is hopefully the beginning of many, many, many more stories to come."

The commission, his first major show in Europe, comes at a pivotal moment for Gibson. His 2023 book "An Indigenous Present" features more than 60 Indigenous artists, and he has two major new projects, a facade commission for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and an exhibition at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.



This cover image released by Republic Records show 'The Tortured Poets Department' by Taylor Swift. (AP)



Uma Thurman, a cast member in 'Pulp Fiction,' poses at a 30th anniversary screening of the film on the opening night of the TCM Classic Film Festival at the TCL Chinese Theatre, Thursday, April 18, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Hutchins



Baldwin

Variety

ALGIERS: The Kasbah of Algiers, known as the House of the Sultan, is located in the center of Algiers, where It was built in 1516 by the Turkish leaders and was completed in 1591.

It was considered one of the largest palaces built by the Ottomans during their rule in Algeria, where it was the official place to receive guests of Algerian rulers in that period.

The castle was originally a military fortress until the ruler of Algiers Ali Khoja decided to move his residence and the province headquarters from Janina Palace in 1817, due to the violence and disturbance by the Ottoman army.

In 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed Kasbah of Algiers a World Cultural Heritage Site, as there are the remains of the citadel, old mosques and Ottoman-style palaces, as well as the remains of a traditional urban structure associated with a deep-rooted sense of community. (KUNA)

SANTA FE, N.M.: An attorney has been added to the special prosecution team that is pursuing an involuntary manslaughter charge against actor Alec Baldwin in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the set of the Western movie "Rust," court officials confirmed Thursday.

The district attorney for Santa Fe has appointed Erlinda Johnson as special prosecutor to the case, which is scheduled for trial in July. She was sworn in Tuesday Baldwin has pleaded not guilty to an

involuntary manslaughter charge in the shooting of Halyna Hutchins during an October 2021 rehearsal at a movie-set ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe.

Music

Experts weigh in on 'The Tortured Poets Department'

Is Taylor Swift's latest album poetic?

NEW YORK, April 20, (AP): Taylor Swift has released her 11th studio album, "The Tortured Poets Department.

But just how poetic is it? Is it even possible to close read lyrics like poems, divorced from their source material?

The Associated Press spoke to four experts to assess how Swift's latest album stacks up to poetry.

Allison Adair, a professor who teaches poetry and other literary forms at Boston College, says yes.

"My personal opinion is that if someone writes poems and considers themself a poet, then they're a poet,' she says. "And Swift has demonstrated that she takes it pretty seriously. She's mentioned (Pablo) Neruda in her work before, she has an allusion to (William) Wordsworth, she cites Emily Dickinson as one of her influences.'

She also said her students told her Swift's B-sides - not her radio singles - tend to be her most poetic, which is true of poets, too. "Their most wellknown poems are the ones that people lock into the most, that are the clearest, and in a way, don't always have the

mystery of poetry.' Professor Elizabeth Scala, who teaches a course on Swift's songbook at the University of Texas at Austin, says "there is something poetical about the way she writes," adding that her work on "The Tortured Poets Department" references a time before print technology when people sang poems. "In the earliest stages of English poetry, they were inseparable," she says. "Not absolutely identical, but they

have a long and rich history together that is re-energized by Taylor Swift."

"It's proper to talk about every songwriter as a poet," says Michael Chasar, a poetry and popular culture professor at Willamette University.

"There are many things musicians and singer-songwriters can do that poetry cannot," Adair says, citing melisma, or the ability to hold out a single syllable over many notes, as an example. Or the nature of a song with uplifting production and morose lyricism, which can create a confusing and rich texture. "That's something music can do viscerally and poetry has to do in different ways.'

"She might say her works are poetry," adds Scala. "But I also think the music is so important - kind of poetry-

Literary

As for current US poet laureate Ada Limón? "Poetry and song lyrics aren't exactly the same (we poets have to make all our music with only words and breath)," she wrote to the AP. "But having an icon like Taylor bring more attention to poetry as a genre is exciting."

Scala sees Swift's influences on "The Tortured Poets Department" as including Sylvia Plath, a confessional poet she previously drew inspiration from on songs like "Mad Woman" and

"Fortnight" uses enjambed lines (there's no end stop, or punctuation at the end of each line) and Scala points out the dissonance between the music's smoothness and its lyrics, like in the line "My mornings are Mondays stuck in an endless February." "It kind of encapsulates boredom with the ordinary and then she unleashes a kind of tension and anger in the ordinary in those verses," she says. In the verses, she says Swift "explodes the domestic," and that fights up against the music, which is "literary.

Swift's lyrics, too, allow for multidimensional readings: "I touched you" could be physicality and infidelity in the song, Scala says, or it could mean it emotionally - as in, I moved you.

Swift has long played with rhyme and unexpected rhythm. "She'll often establish a pattern and won't satisfy it - and that often comes in a moment of

emotional ache," says Adair. On "Fortnight," it appears in a few ways. Adair points out that the chorus is more syncopated than the rest of the song - which means Swift uses many more syllables for the same beat. "It gives this rushed quality," she says.
"Rhyming 'alcoholic' and 'aesthet-

ic,' she plays a lot with assonance. It is technically a vowel-driven repetition of sounds," she adds. There's a tension, too, in the title "Fortnight," an archaic term used for a song with contemporary devices. "There's an allusion to treason, and some of the stuff is hyper romantic, but a lot of it is very much a kind of unapologetic, plain speech. And there's something poetic about that.'

"From the perspective of harnessing particular poetic devices, this kind of trucks in familiar metaphors for one's emotional state," Chasar says of "Fort-

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for "Rust," was pointing a gun at Hutchins during rehearsal when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

Johnson's experience as a criminal defense and personal injury attorney include representing former New Mexico Secretary of State Dianna Duran, who resigned in 2015 amid revelations she used campaign



Visitors look at the installation 'Topak Ev,' by artist Nil Yalter at the 60th Biennale of Arts exhibition in Venice, Italy, Tuesday, April 16. The Venice Biennale contemporary art exhibition opened Saturday for its six-month run through Nov. 26. (AP)

funds to fuel a gambling addiction. Duran received a 30-day jail sentence after pleading guilty to embezzlement and money laundering charges.

Johnson previously worked as a federal prosecutor on drug enforcement and organized crime investigations after serving as assistant district attorney in the Albuquerque area. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Netflix gained another 9.3 million subscribers to start the year while its profit soared with the help of a stillemerging expansion into advertising, but caught investors off guard with a change that will make it more difficult to track the

video streaming service's future growth. The performance announced Thursday demonstrated that Netflix is still building on its momentum of last year, when a crackdown on free-loading viewers relying on shared passwords and the rollout of a lowpriced option including commercials revived its growth following a post-pandemic lull.

million subscribers last year - the second largest annual increase the service's history. Netflix's gains during the January-March period more than quadrupled the 1.8 mil-

The strategy resulted in Netflix adding 30

lion subscribers that the video streaming service added at the same time last year, and was nearly three times more than analysts had projected. (AP)

Natural alternative to controversial experiments

Scientists use gut bacteria to prevent mosquito-borne diseases

BEIJING, April 20, (Xinhua): Chinese scientists have developed a more natural strategy to prevent mosquito-borne diseases by changing insects' gut microbes, which might be used as an alternative to controversial experiments that see genetically-modified mosquitoes released in Florida.

Mosquito-borne viruses, such as dengue and Zika, cause several potentially fatal human viral infections. Dengue viruses infect approximately 390 million each year globally.

An epidemic survey over the past decade documented frequent dengue outbreaks in Xishuangbanna and Lincang, both in southwest China's Yunnan Province. But few have been reported in neighboring cities of Wenshan and Pu'er.

The very different prevalence stimulated the curiosity of researchers from Tsinghua University and Yunnan Academy of Animal Science and Veterinary Sciences.

Microbes

The team's field investigation on thousands of bloodsucking female mosquitoes revealed that mosquitoes from two different habitats carry different symbiotic bacteria in their guts, the first tissue organ usually infected by viruses.

Among the 55 strains isolated, a kind of bacterium called Rosenbergiella_YN46 was abundant in mosquito guts in Wenshan and Pu'er, but not in Xishuangbanna and Lincang, according to the study published on Friday in the journal

Then, the researchers colonized the strain in the intestines of two common disease-transmitting mosquitoes -- Aedes albopictus and Aedes aegypti.

Those mosquitoes did become less likely to be infected with dengue and Zika via blood bites, according to the study. The further analysis suggested that an enzyme secreted

by the bacteria can convert glucose into gluconic acid and rapidly acidify the intestines of blood-sucking mosquitoes. The mosquito-borne viruses will be neutralized in acid environment.

The team made an experiment in the wild to breed "good

mosquitoes" that do not transmit viruses. They added Rosenbergiella_YN46 bacteria to the water where mosquitoes eggs were laid and hatched.

Encouragingly, the intestinal colonization proved a suc-

cess at a site in Mengla County of Xishuangbanna and the colony persistently resided in the guts of Aedes mosquitoes.

The researchers also proposed another potential interventional description.

tion strategy -- the use of plants. Mosquito's gut microbes in the wild are either derived from microbes in breeding waters, or in the sap and nectar of plants.

"We are collecting a large number of plant samples in

"We are collecting a large number of plant samples in Wenshan, where the bacterium was isolated, in order to find plants that are enriched with this bacterium," said Cheng Gong from Tsinghua, the corresponding author of the paper. "Transplanting and cultivating this plant to the infected area may intervene in the ability of mosquitoes to carry and transmit the virus."

"If those plants are shrub or herbaceous plants, they can be grown in your backyard or residential compound," added Cheng.

"Rosenbergiella_YN46 is derived from the natural environment and its potential environmental risk is relatively low, and will not make mosquitoes resistant to the drug, nor affect their survival in nature," commented Xu Jianguo from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, who did not participate in the study.

Meanwhile, the team is conducting a study in Leizhou Peninsula in south China's Guangdong Province, where the mosquito population is large but there is no dengue, to discover more bacteria that could inhibit the spread of mosquito-borne viruses. Affordable care

World Bank plan: Health coverage to 1.5bn by '30

WASHINGTON, April 20, (KUNA): The World Bank Group Thursday announced an ambitious plan to support countries in delivering quality, affordable health services to 1.5 billion people worldwide by 2030.

This is part of a larger global effort to provide a basic standard of care through every stage of a person's life: infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, the bank said in a statement.

in a statement.

For decades, the World Bank Group has helped provide health services for women and children in more than 100

health services for women and children in more than 100 countries.

A focused effort to become faster, work better with part-

ners, and bring in the private sector has enabled the 80-yearold institution to pursue greater scale and impact. The strategy to reach 1.5 billion people is focused on three core elements: Expanding focus from maternal and child health to include coverage throughout a person's lifetime,

including non-communicable diseases, it noted. Expanding operations to hard-to-reach areas, including remote villages, cities, and countries.

Working with governments to cut unnecessary fees and other financial barriers to health care. To be counted toward this goal, a person must be seen and treated by a health-care worker via an in-person visit or telehealth.

Standard

"Providing a basic standard of care for people throughout their lives is critical for development," said Ajay Banga, World Bank Group President.

"This ambition won't be realized with a solo effort. It will require partners, a coalition of public and private sector, working together to expand access to health care services."

Today, around two billion people face severe financial hardship when paying for health services. Intertwined challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, conflicts, societal aging, and a projected shortfall of 10 million health-care workers by 2030, exacerbate the cycle of poverty and inequality.

The World Bank Group will combine financing, knowledge, and partnerships to address this challenge.

All elements of the Bank's financing capabilities are positioned to be called upon depending on a country's unique need and stage of development to reach 1.5 billion people. For countries most in need, the International Development

Association (IDA) financing will make it possible to bring health-care workers into communities where people may otherwise have no access to services.

In middle-income countries, the International Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) will deploy financing to incentivize government investments in health and regulations that move a country forward, it stated.

"The spread of Zika and epidemic encephalitis B might be contained if more bacteria can be found," said Cheng.

This study has shown that the use of bacteria-colonized field mosquitoes could offer a feasible biocontrol strategy for reducing virus transmission and prevalence in nature, said the researchers.



A Long March-8 rocket, carrying the relay satellite Queqiao-2 for Earth-Moon communications, blasts off at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province, March 20, 2024. (Xinhua)

Quegiao-2 enters orbit to facilitate lunar mission

'Bridge' in place, China ready to sample on moon's far side

BEIJING, April 20, (Xinhua): As China is determined to drive economic growth via sci-tech innovations, it also casts its wisdom and courage in exploring Earth's closest neighbor -- the moon. This year, it plans to retrieve lunar samples from the far side of the moon for the first time in human history.

To carry out this unprecedented mission, it first launched Queqiao-2, a new relay satellite, on March 20 to provide Earth-Moon communications services. The satellite has recently entered its target elliptical orbit around the moon and completed in-orbit communication tests, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

Queqiao, meaning magpie bridge, derives its name from a Chinese folktale, in which magpies formed a bridge across the Milky Way with their wings to help a separated couple reunite. In reality, Queqiao-2 is expected to serve as a vital communication link between Earth-based controllers and the Chang'e-6 probe, which will be launched in the first half of this year to collect samples from the mysterious far side of the moon.

As the moon's revolution cycle is the same as its rotation cycle, the same side always faces Earth. The other face, most of which cannot be seen from Earth, is called the far side or "dark side" of the moon. This term doesn't refer to darkness but rather to the mystery shrouding the moon's largely unexplored terrain.

In order to unravel the mystery, China launched the Chang'e-4 probe, which realized the first-ever soft landing and roving on the far side of the moon at the beginning of 2019. Before that, all relevant knowledge came from speculation based on remote-sensing images.

Communications

China launched its first Queqiao satellite in 2018 to support communications and data transmission between Chang'e-4 and Earth. But the first relay satellite has exceeded its designed lifespan. Now, the more powerful Queqiao-2 satellite will take over its communications relay services.

As a backup of the Chang'e-5 probe, Chang'e-6 is set to collect approximately 2 kilograms of lunar samples by shoveling and drilling. The probe will also conduct scientific investigations within the designated landing zone situated in the South Pole-Aitken Basin.

The mission will demand a series of breakthroughs in key technologies, such as automatic sample collection, take-off and ascent from the far side of the moon.

Scientists believe that samples from the far side of the moon have greater research value. Unlike the relatively low-lying and flat terrains found on the near side, the far side has higher elevations and is more densely covered with craters. It suggests that the far side has been subjected to a longer history of impacts, indicating an older geological age for in-depth exploration.

eological age for in-depth exploration.

Li Ting and her research team from the Beijing Re-

search Institute of Uranium Geology, a subsidiary of the China National Nuclear Corporation, discovered from the Chang'e-5 samples a new mineral, Changesite-(Y). She is much looking forward to samples from the moon's "fresh and unfamiliar" far side.

"If Chang'e-6 can get some older lunar samples exposed after impacts or residues of meteorites and asteroids, it may bring us more deep space information," said Li.

Humans have been curious and imaginative about the moon since ancient times. Li Bai, a renowned poet from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), once wrote a poem to ask when the moon appeared in the blue sky. In fact, the origin of the moon has not only inspired romantic sentiments among literati and scholars throughout history, but also remained a focus of research in the field of lunar science.

Exploration

In the 16th century, people started using telescopes to observe the moon. In January 1959, the Soviet Union launched the Luna 1 probe, the world's first lunar exploration satellite. In October 2007, China achieved a milestone with the successful launch of the Chang'e-1 satellite, marking the country's inaugural lunar exploration mission.

From the United States' Apollo 11 mission in 1969 to China's Chang'e-5 mission in 2020, humans have accomplished a total of 10 lunar sampling missions. The initial nine samplings all took place during the 1960s and 1970s. Following a 44-year hiatus, Chang'e-5 retrieved 1.731 kilograms of lunar samples, opening a new chapter in cutting-edge lunar research.

The lunar rocks and soil encapsulate the key to decoding the mysteries of billions of years of transformations on the moon. Nearly all our understanding of the moon's inception and development stems from the study of lunar samples, said Yang Wei, researcher with the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

A widely accepted theory in the scientific community believes that approximately 4.5 billion years ago, a Marssized celestial body known as Theia collided with nascent Earth. The collision caused debris to be ejected into space, which eventually coalesced around Earth to form the moon. This hypothesis owes much to the analysis of lunar samples collected during the United States and Soviet Union lunar missions, Yang said.

Different from previous nine missions which focus on low-latitude areas, Chang'e-5 targeted mid-latitude regions of the moon. With advanced microanalysis technologies, scientists have made groundbreaking discoveries from the study of lunar soil retrieved by Chang'e-5.

According to the CNSA, one of the most notable research results dated the youngest rock on the moon at around 2 billion years in age, extending the "life" of lunar volcanism 800-900 million years longer than previously known.

Eligible for Superfund cleanup

EPA labels 2 forever chemicals as hazardous

WASHINGTON, April 20, (AP): The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday designated two forever chemicals that have been used in cookware, carpets and firefighting foams as hazardous substances, an action intended to ensure quicker cleanup of the toxic compounds and require industries and others responsible for contamination to pay for its removal.

Designation as a hazardous substance under the Superfund law doesn't ban the chemicals, known as PFOA and PFOS. But it requires that releases of the chemicals into soil or water be reported to federal, state or tribal officials if they meet or exceed certain levels. The EPA then may require cleanups to protect public health and recover costs that can reach tens of millions of dollars.

PFOA and PFOS have been voluntarily phased out by US manufacturers but are still in limited use and remain in the environment because they do not degrade over time. The compounds are part of a larger cluster of forever chemi-

cals known as PFAS that have been used since the 1940s in industry and consumer products including nonstick frying pans, water-repellent sports gear, stain-resistant rugs and cosmetics.

The term PFAS is short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. The chemicals can accumulate and persist in the human body for long periods. Evidence from animal and human studies indicates that exposure to PFOA or PFOS may lead to cancer or other health problems, including liver and heart damage and developmental problems in infants and children.

The final rule issued Friday follows strict limits set by the EPA on certain PFAS in drinking water that will require utilities to reduce them to the lowest level they can be reliably measured. Officials say the drinking water rule, announced April 10, will reduce exposure for 100 million people and help prevent thousands of illnesses, including capters.

including cancers.

Last year, three chemical companies

announced they had reached a \$1.18 billion deal to resolve complaints of polluting many U.S. drinking water systems with PFAS. DuPont de Nemours Inc., The Chemours Co. and Corteva Inc. said they would establish a fund to compensate water providers for contamination.

And earlier this month, chemical manufacturer 3M Co. announced it will begin payments to many U.S. public drinking water systems as part of a multibillion-dollar settlement over contamination with forever chemicals.

President Joe Biden's administration "understands the threat that forever chemicals pose to the health of families across the country," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said. "Designating these chemicals under our Superfund authority will allow EPA to address more contaminated sites, take earlier action and expedite cleanups all while ensuring polluters pay for the costs to clean up pollution threatening the health of communities."







Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp.Police station - Farwaniya www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

A new global chess record

A Nigerian chess champion plays the royal game for 60 hours

Sotutu powers Blues to win over **Brumbies in Super Rugby Pacific**



Connor Garden-Bachop (center), of the Highlanders is tackled by Jordan Petaia (left), and Jock Campbell of the Queensland Reds during their Super Rugby Pacific game at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

Blues scrumhalf Funaki sin-binned

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, April 20, (AP): Hoskins Sotutu scored two tries to help the Aucklandbased Blues rout the ACT Brumbies 46-7 on Saturday, highlighting a gulf between top New Zealand and Australian teams in Super Rugby Pacific.

The Blues and Brumbies came into the match jointly in second place behind the unbeaten Hurricanes. But after an indecisive first 10 minutes, the Blues simply overwhelmed their opponents in wet and slippery conditions and posted their largest-ever win over the Canberra-based Brumbies.

In the final match of the ninth round on Saturday, the Perth, Australia-based Western Force beat the Christchurch. New Zealand-based Crusaders 37-15 the first win by the Force over the Crusaders in 11 years.

After a day of torrential rain in Auckland, the match seemed likely to become a kicking contest. Instead, the Blues kept the ball in hand and the Brumbies, who are the best of Australia's teams, couldn't compete against the Blues' big ball runners, among them Sotutu and Caleb Clarke.

By halftime, the Blues had scored three tries including Sotutu's double and the Brumbies had been forced to make four times as many tackles as their opponents. Sotutu is the top tryscorer after nine rounds of the tournament with eight tries.

The second half didn't get any easier. The Blues scored within five minutes of the restart, then twice more

FIFA's Infantino seeks to curb player agent fees

ZURICH, April 20, (AP): FIFA has called on lawmakers to help control payments to player agents in the multibillion dollar soccer transfer market, and targeted the world's richest league in England.

English clubs paid 500 million euros (\$530 million) in fees to agents in the year to February, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Friday, while paying just 6% of that amount - 30 million euros (\$32 million) - to foreign clubs "that trained and developed the players signed.'

'Most of this money is leaving football," Infantino said of the agent fees in a statement on his Instagram account

FIFA has faced multiple legal cases in Europe brought by agents trying to block the soccer body's plan for tighter regulations in the transfer market. FIFA wants to cap agent commissions

inside the third quarter as the Brumbies frittered away their poor share of pos-

session through poor handling. "I think from the beginning of the season we've been building a lot, and coming out of the bye week we had to pick up where we left off," Sotutu said.

"We know that we can play the carry, clean game really well and we knew with the weather it was going to be a strong point."

The Brumbies should have scored in the sixth minute when winger Ollie Sapsford was given space in a oneon-one with his Blues marker but was tackled.

The Blues scrumhalf Taufa Funaki was sin-binned in the course of the movement but, in a turning point in the at 10% of transfer fees when they acted for the selling club, and from 3% to 10% of salaries of players they repre-

Rules intended to take effect last October stalled after agents won a key legal ruling in England - by far the most lucrative market where agencies have earned tens of millions of dollars from transfers of elite players to Premier League clubs.

The tribunal in London ruled that if the English Football Association implemented the FIFA rules it would be an abuse of dominant position in breach of competition law.

FIFA knows the value of transfer and agent fees from deals between clubs in different countries which must be processed through its financial clearing house in Paris. The FIFA system also directs money from those deals toward clubs which train and

match, Sotutu scored his first try while

the Blues were down a man. Clarke ran off his left wing to score as first receiver from a five meter scrum in the 32nd minute, then Sotutu completed his double just before halftime and after a period of chaos for the Brumbies.

RUGBY

Sapsford knocked on a kick from Cole Forbes in front of his own goalline. The Brumbies defended the scrum but after winning a goalline dropout, flyhalf Noah Lolesio put the ball out on the full, giving the Blues another scrum from which Sotutu scored.

The Blues led 24-0 at halftime and kept up the pressure in the second half, helped by a yellow card in the

50th minute to veteran Brumbies prop

nurture players earlier in their career

"The compensation and solidarity

payments are imposed by FIFA regu-

lations and are vital for thousands of

less privileged clubs who struggle to

generate sufficient revenue," Infantino

said, citing the need for "transparency,

accountability and better redistribu-

some agents but FIFA will continue to

"Because of that we were sued by

"I call on governments and lawmak-

ers to join us and play an active role in ensuring the funds generated in

transfers are kept within football and

are shared with clubs from all around

The FIFA leader added the less

wealthy clubs "are absolutely key for

current and future generations of foot-

and are entitled to a share.

tion" in the transfer market.

defend its position in court.

the world."

James Slipper. Backrower Dalton Papali'i and hooker Ricky Riccitelli scored from lineout drives after penalties as the Blues lead expanded to 41-0. The Brumbies finally got on the board with Luke Reimer's 64th minute try.

Replacement hooker Kurt Eklund scored the last of the Blues' tries just before fulltime.

On Friday, the Hurricanes stretched their winning start to the season to eight games with a 38-15 win over the Fijian Drua and the Queensland Reds beat the Dunedin-based Highlanders 31-0.

NEW YORK, April 20, (AP): A Nigerian chess champion and child education advocate played chess nonstop for 60 hours in New York City's Times Square to break the Guinness World Record for the longest chess marathon.

Tunde Onakoya, 29, hopes to raise \$1 million for children's education across Africa through the record attempt that began on Wednesday.

He had set out to play the royal game for 58 hours but continued until he reached 60 hours at about 12:40 a.m. Saturday, surpassing the current chess marathon record of 56 hours, 9

CHESS

minutes and 37 seconds, achieved in 2018 by Norwegians Hallvard Haug Flatebø and Sjur Ferkingstad.

The Guinness World Record organization has yet to publicly comment about Onakoya's attempt. It sometimes takes weeks for the organization to confirm any new record. Onakoya played against Shawn Martinez, an American chess champion, in line with Guinness World Record guidelines that any attempt to break the record must be made by two players who would play continuously for the entire duration.

Support had been growing online and at the scene, where a blend of African music kept onlookers and supporters entertained amid cheers and applause. Among the dozens who cheered Onakoya on at the scene was Nigerian music star Davido.

The record attempt is "for the dreams of millions of children across Africa without access to education,"

said Onakoya, who founded Chess in Slums Africa in 2018. The organization wants to support the education of at least 1 million children in slums

across the continent. "My energy is at 100% right now because my people are here supporting me with music," Onakoya said Thursday evening after the

players crossed the 24-hour mark. Ón Onakoya's menu: Lots of water and jollof rice, one of West Africa's best-known dishes.

For every hour of game played, Onakoya and his opponent got only five minutes' break. The breaks were sometimes grouped together, and Onakoya used them to catch up with Nigerians and New Yorkers cheering him on. He even joined in with their dancing sometimes.

A total of \$22,000 was raised within the first 20 hours of the attempt, said Taiwo Adeyemi, Onakoya's manager.

The support has been overwhelming from Nigerians in the U.S., global leaders, celebrities and hundreds of passersby," he said.

Onakoya's attempt was closely followed in Nigeria, where he regularly organizes chess competitions for young people living on the streets.

More than 10 million school-age children are not in school in the West African country - one of the world's highest rates.

Among those who have publicly supported him are celebrities and public office holders, including Nigeria's former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, who wrote to Onakoya on the social media platform X, "Remember your own powerful words: 'It is possible to do great things from a small place.'

Rahul, De Kock pace team chase

Super Giants beat Super Kings in IPL

LUCKNOW, India, April 20, (AP): Lokesh Rahul and Quinton de Kock brilliantly paced Lucknow Super Giants' chase to beat Chennai Super Kings with an over to spare in the Indian Premier League.

Rahul's and De Kock's opening partnership of 134 runs set up Lucknow to reach 180-2 in reply to Chennai's 176-6 and win by eight wickets.

Both teams have four wins from sevens games, but Chennai was third and Lucknow fifth on net run rate. Skipper Rahul scored 82 off 53 balls

with nine fours and three sixes. He was out with only 16 runs needed. De Kock scored 54 off 43 balls and fell in the 15th over. They made full use of the power

play, plundering 54 runs in the first six overs. Their partnership reached 100 off only 65 balls. De Kock reached 50 off 41 balls,

hitting five fours and a six, before he was caught behind off Mustafizur Rahman. It was a poor bowling display from

Chennai, however. The spinners weren't able to exploit a slow-paced track, partly owing to the dewy condi-

Rahul stroked his way to a 31-ball half-century. Rahul fell before the finish line but the promoted Nicholas Pooran finished off Lucknow's first win in three games. He was 23 not out Put into bat, Chennai lost opener

Rachin Ravindra for a golden duck. Ajinkya Rahane ra 36 off 24 balls, while skipper Rituraj Gaikwad scored

The Lucknow pacers were on top at the beginning. Mohsin Khan dismissed Ravindra and Yash Thakur got rid of captain Rituraj Gaikwad. Ajinkya Rahane (36) fell to spin.

Ravindra Jadeja was promoted to No. 3 to counter Lucknow's spin bowling and the move worked as he

CRICKET

batted to his first half-century this season off 34 balls.

Jadeja didn't get support until Moeen Ali arrived at 90-5. The lefthanded pairing rescued Chennai with a combined 51 off 33 balls for the sixth wicket. Ali was out caught with 13 deliveries left.

Veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni walked in to a loud cheer and smacked 28 not out off nine deliveries, including three fours and two sixes.

Jadeja finished 57 not out off 40 balls. Krunal Pandya took 2-16 and Marcus Stoinis 1-7.



Lucknow Super Giants' Quinton de Kock plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants in Lucknow, India. (AP)

WADA and World Aquatics were notified of the positive samples

23 Chinese swimmers were allowed to compete at Tokyo Olympics despite positive doping tests

SYDNEY, April 20, (AP): An Australian newspaper says 23 Chinese swimmers were cleared to compete at the Tokyo Olympics despite testing positive to doping because world governing bodies agreed with Chinese authorities and ruled that the tests had been contaminated.

The Daily Telegraph in Sydney said Saturday that the swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine, a heart medication, at a training camp held months

OLYMPICS

before the start of the 2020 Tokyo Games, which were delayed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chinese anti-doping authorities found the results of the tests were Adverse Analytical Findings (AAF) but cleared the swimmers without any penalties after finding that the samples were flagged as positive as a result of

contamination. The 30-member Chinese swim won six medals in Tokyo, including three

The newspaper said that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and World Aquatics - then called FINA were both notified of the positive sam-

ples but that both groups agreed the results of the tests were caused by contamination and did not sanction any of the athletes who tested positive.



In this file photo, a Chinese flag is unfurled on the podium of a swimming event final at the 2020 Summer Olympics, on July 29, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan. (AP)

"World Aquatics is confident that these AAFs were handled diligently and professionally, and in accordance with all applicable anti-doping regulations, including the World Anti-Doping Code," the newspaper quoted World Aquatics as saying.

It also quoted WADA's senior director of science and medicine, Professor Olivier Rabin, as saying that WADA's science department reviewed the case in the months leading up to the Tokyo Games.

We even sought pharmacokinetic and metabolism information from the manufacturer of (trimetazidine) in assessing the plausibility of the contamination scenario that was presented to WADA," Rabin said.

"Ultimately, we concluded that there was no concrete basis to challenge the asserted contamination. Indeed, the contamination scenario was further supported by the combination of the consistently low concentrations of (trimetazidine) as well as no doping pattern with several athletes presenting multiple samples collected over the course of several days which fluctuated between negative and positive (and vice versa).

Rybakina ends Swiatek's Stuttgart reign

STUTTGART, Germany, April 20, (AP): Elena Rybakina defeated topranked Iga Swiatek 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to reach the Porsche Grand Prix final and end Swiatek's hopes of a third consecutive title on Saturday.

Rybakina, the world No. 4, hit 10 aces and saved 11 of the 13 break points she faced to win the first semifinal at the clay-court tournament in 2 hours, 49 minutes.

It's Rybakina fourth win in six meetings with Swiatek. The Pole was bidding to become the first three-time champion in Stuttgart since Maria Sharapova from 2012-14.

The final is on Sunday.

Meanwhile, two-time major cham-pion Garbiñe Muguruza announced she's retiring from professional tennis at age 30 after an extended time away from the court.

"I feel that it is time to retire and open up a new chapter in my life," the former world No. 1 told a news conference in Madrid on Saturday

Muguruza beat Serena Williams in

the 2016 French Open final and Venus Williams in the 2017 Wimbledon final, making her the only player to defeat each Williams sister in a Grand Slam title match.

The Spanish player earned 10 career titles and was also the runner-up at 2015 Wimbledon and the 2020 Australian Open. She earned nearly \$25 million in prize money - 13th on the all-time list - and finished with a win-loss record of 449-238.

Her last important victory was the 2021 ATP Finals.

Muguruza has not played since January 2023. In April that year, she announced she was extending her hiatus from playing and said, "Spending time with my family and friends (has) really been healthy and amazing.'

Born in Caracas to a Spanish father and Venezuelan mother, Muguruza moved to Barcelona when she was a child to continue her tennis training. She became the first Spanish woman to lift a Grand Slam trophy since Arantxa Sánchez Vicario at the 1998 French Open.

Juventus rescue late point in draw with Cagliari

Ekitiké scores winner as Eintracht Frankfurt beat Augsburg

GENOA, Italy, April 20, (AP): Cagliari scored two first-half penalties but gave up a late own goal for Juventus to draw 2-2 in a thrilling Serie A game.

Gianluca Gaetano opened the scoring for the home side after half an hour and Yerry Mina got a second with an almost identical spot kick six minutes later.

Juventus had a first-half goal from Dušan Vlahović disallowed after a video review but the Serbian forward got one back in the 61st minute with a swerving free kick.

SOCCER

Just when it looked like Cagliari would get the win and distance itself from the relegation zone, Alberto Dossena put the ball into his own net with three minutes left.

Juventus was five points behind second-placed AC Milan and 19 behind champion-elect Inter Milan. Juve has won only one of its last seven league games.

Cagliari was five points above the relegation zone but still in a dogfight. Only six points separated Sassuolo in 19th place and Lecce in 13th.

With Salernitana almost certainly going down, two others will join it. A second-half goal from Luis Alberto gave Lazio a 1-0 win at

Genoa and moved the capital club into sixth and within touching distance of a Champions League spot. The result snapped Genoa's fourgame unbeaten run and was another

good result for a visitor which has won four of its last five league games. Lazio was one place and one point ahead of Atalanta, which has two games in hand.

The top five teams in Serie A are guaranteed a place in next year's

and the clearance fell to Marmoush, who ran 70 yards to put the ball in The result opened a six-point gap

between Frankfurt in sixth and Augsburg in seventh.

Frankfurt's first win in five games further put the brakes on Augsburg's recent good run.

In Madrid, Athletic Bilbao drew with Granada 1-1 in a Spanish league match that won't satisfy either club

for different reasons. Bilbao need points to secure a Champions League place but the draw left it three behind Atletico

Madrid, which has a game in hand. Atletico has fourth place, with the top four guaranteed places in next

year's Champions League. 'The Champions League spot is the dream," Bilbao's Nico Williams said. "It's frustrating when the ball won't go in, but we have to keep

plugging away.' At the other end of the table, Granada is in serious relegation danger. With six matches remaining, it is seven points behind third-to-last Cadiz. Almeria is in last place.

Granada's hopes of a fourth win of the season were raised early in the first half when a Gerard Gumbau corner kick took the slightest of touches off Bilbao's Iñaki Williams and flew in

But the home side drew equal after 23 minutes. Gorka Guruzeta showed the poacher's instinct that has brought him 13 league goals when he pounced on a loose ball and fired into the roof of the net.

Gorkueta had a goal bound shot cleared off the line by Ignasi Miquel few minutes later and Iñaki Williams almost made up for his earlier mistake but his late volley flashed wide of the post

In Nice, Nice beat Lorient 3-0 to record just its second win in eight French league games and send the visitor to second to last on the table Mongolia emerge victorious

Kuwait clinch second place in the Men's Ice Hockey WC fourth level

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Kuwaiti ice hockey team clinched second place in the Men's Ice Hockey World Cup for the fourth level. They secured their position by defeating Indonesia with a narrow 8-7 win, relegating the Indonesian team to third place. The tournament saw Mongolia emerge as champions after a dominant performance against Malaysia, resulting in a resounding 14-2 victory.

The intense match between Kuwait and Indonesia, held at the Kuwait Winter Games Club hall, kept spectators on the edge of their seats throughout all three rounds. Both teams showcased exceptional skill and determination,

with the lead constantly shifting before the Kuwaiti team, ultimately clinched victory by a single goal, thanks to the outstanding efforts of all their players.

This triumph propelled the team to a total of 6 points in the tournament, overseen by the International Federation of Ice Hockey, with two wins and a loss.

In another fixture, Mongolia claimed the title by defeating Malaysia 14-2, securing a perfect 9-point score, while Malaysia exited the tournament without registering any points.

Fahid Al-Ajmi, the president of the club and chairman of the tournament organizing committee, expressed pride

in Kuwait's hosting of the event, which showcased significant progress in Kuwaiti ice hockey both technically and organizationally. He highlighted the team's improved international standing, aiming for the championship title in the next tournament, and commended the players for their stellar performance.

Al-Ajmi also extended gratitude to the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Daoud Marafi, for their patronage, which added significant momentum to the tournament. He

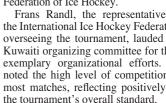
ICE HOCKEY

also acknowledged the support of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and the General Sports Authority, which greatly facilitated the organization of the event, earning praise from the International Federation of Ice Hockey.

Frans Randl, the representative of the International Ice Hockey Federation overseeing the tournament, lauded the Kuwaiti organizing committee for their exemplary organizational efforts. He noted the high level of competition in most matches, reflecting positively on the tournament's overall standard.

with two minutes remaining to com-

Lorient was below Metz on goal dif-



ward and open the scoring midway plete the rout. The result left Lorient only four through the first half. Jérémie Boga made it two seven minutes into the points ahead of last-placed Clermont.

ference.

defender on the goal-line. Substitute Evan Guessand scored

allowed Morgan Sanson to stride for-

second period with a low drive off a

Women's Champions League semis

Nice was fifth.



The captain of the Kuwait Ice hockey team receives the runner-up trophy.

on Friday.

Poor defending away from home cost Lorient dear and not for the first time this season. The Brittany club has conceded at least one goal in each of its last 14 away games.

A mix up in the Lorient midfield

Cuthbert scores

Chelsea top Barcelona in 1st leg of

BARCELONA, Spain, April 20, (AP): Erin Cuthbert fired Chelsea to a 1-0 win over Barcelona in the Women's Champions League semifinal first-leg match on Saturday, handing the defending champions their first home loss in five years.

Two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas missed a glorious chance to equalize when she shot wide right from close range on the last play of the game at Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium to send Emma Hayes' team back to Stamford Bridge with the advantage.

SOCCER

The visitors stifled Barcelona's attack, taking away the time and space that the Catalan club normally enjoys in its domestic league.

The high pressure led to Chelsea's goal in the 40th minute when forward Mayra Ramirez forced a turnover, setting up Sjoeke Nüsken's pass to Cuthbert, who beat a defender and fired the ball into the top right corner.

Chelsea has never won the Women's Champions League or its predecessor, the UEFA Women's Cup. In its only final appearance, Hayes' team was routed by Barcelona 4-0 in 2021.

Barcelona, which also eliminated Chelsea last season en route to its second title, was set for a penalty after a 52nd-minute handball on Blues defender Kadeisha Buchanan, but it was overturned after a video review because Salma Paralluelo was offside.



Barcelona's Fridolina Rolfo jumps for the ball with Chelsea's Johanna Rytting Kaneryd (left), during the women's Champions League semifinals, first leg, soccer match between FC Barcelona and Chelsea FC at the Olympic Stadium, in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Barcelona is going for its third title in four years but has work to do in next Saturday's second-leg match in Lon-



Dutchman extends F1 dominance, Hamilton 18th

Juventus's Dusan Vlahovic cel-

ebrates scoring during the Serie A

soccer match between Cagliari and

Juventus at the Unipol Domus sta-

dium in Cagliari, Italy. (AP)

expanded 36-team Champions League.

Sixth spot could be enough if Roma or

Genoa remained in 10th place.

In Berlin, Hugo Ekitiké scored his

first goal for Eintracht Frankfurt to

help it to a 3-1 come-from-behind

win over Augsburg in the Bundesliga.

(\$3.7 million) loan from Paris Saint-

Germain in January, the center for-

ward finally broke his duck in his

Ekitiké's goal was a low shot in

off the post from 15 yards out. The

strike an hour in came six minutes

after Fares Chaibi canceled Ruben

Vargas' 13th-minute opener for

Omar Marmoush completed the

scoring in stoppage time with a dra-

matic third. The Augsburg goalkeep-

er had gone forward for a corner kick

12th appearance.

Signed on a 3.5 million euros

Atalanta win the Europa League.

Verstappen takes pole for Chinese Grand Prix

SHANGHAI, April 20, (AP): Max Verstappen of Red Bull has completed a Formula 1 double, taking the pole Saturday for the Chinese Grand Prix just hours after winning the first F1 sprint of the season.

Teammate Sergio Perez will start alongside Verstappen on Sunday on the front row with Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and Lando Norris of McLaren on the second row. Verstappen turned 1 minute 33.660 seconds on his fastest lap, 0.322 ahead of Perez.

Superlatives fail. The three-time defending F1 champion is unassailable - the sport's best driver in the quickest car. The Dutchman has won 22 of the last 26 GPs and three of the first four this season. Only a brake failure in Melbourne, Australia, probably kept him from sweeping all four races.

Look for more of the same on Sun-

day.
"If the car is even only half as good
the sprint then I think as what it was in the sprint then I think we'll be all right," Verstappen said.

This season he's won every pole, and his start from that spot on Sunday will be the 37th of his career - it's the 100th pole for Red Bull as a team - as he chases his 58th victory.

"Of course, that's an incredible achievement for the whole team," Verstappen said.

From my side, it's been a really good start to the year," he added in understatement. "I feel very confident in qualifying compared to last year. Just shame of course that we retired in Melbourne, otherwise I think we could have had already a very strong lead."

Alonso, who won season titles in 2005 and 2006, is still going strong. He turns 43 this summer, just signed a contract extension with Aston Martin and remains one of F1's quickest drivers.

"These kind of laps and moments are very encouraging for the future," the Spaniard said. He said on race day he's likely to finish "seven, eight or nine" but no matter.

"We are qualifying extremely well this year and we'll take it." Qualifying was run under dry condi-

tions with similar weather expected for

MOTOR RACING

Verstappen leads the F1 season standings with 85 points, 15 clear of teammate Perez and 21 clear of Charles

Leclerc of Ferrari. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes, who dominated the sport before Verstappen, is without a win in 49 races - the last in 2021. He will start 18th on the grid after finishing second in the sprint.

The track, located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of central Shanghai, has been a mystery for teams to solve. This is the first F1 race in China in five years, scratched from the calendar by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The biggest unknown is the racing surface, which has had a thin "seal coating" applied - described as liquid asphalt. Tire supplier Pirelli said it had not been fully aware of the changes. In steady rain on Friday, Verstappen said driving in those conditions was like "driving on ice."

Adding to the intrigue, two small grass fires broke out on at the edge of the track in Friday practice. The circuit was built on a marshy area, and a methane gas leak is suspected.



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz of Spain during the sprint race at the Chinese Formula One Grand Prix at the Shanghai International Circuit, Shanghai, China. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Duplantis sets world record:

Armand Duplantis broke his own world record in the pole vault when he cleared 6.24 meters Saturday at the season-opening Diamond

League meet in China. Sweden's Duplantis told a premeet news conference that he never puts limits on himself and was always capable of a record.

The Olympic and two-time world champion proved that Saturday night, setting a world record for the eighth time in his career as he surpassed the mark of 6.23 he set last September at the Diamond League meet in Eugene, Oregon.

"This is my first time in China and it's exciting to get my season going," the 24-year-old Duplantis said.

Known as Mondo, Duplantis entered the competition at 5.62 meters and also cleared 5.82 and 6 meters before attempting the record and clearing it at his first try.

Sam Kendricks placed second at 5.82, followed by Huang Bokai at

The first night of the outdoor season finished off with Christian Coleman winning the 100 meters in 10.13 seconds from fellow American Fred Kerley, who placed second in 10.17. Ackeem Blake of Jamaica was third in 10.20.

Gudaf Tsegay, who holds the world record in the women's 5,000 meters, ran the third-fastest time in the history of the women's 1,500-meters to win in 3 minutes, 50.30 seconds. Her fellow Ethiopians Birke Haylom and Worknesh Mesele

were second and third. In an upset in the women's 200 19-year-old Australian Torrie Lewis beat 100-meter world champion Sha'Carri Richardson in a tight finish. (AP)

Pride remain unbeaten: Summer Yates scored in the 26th minute and the Orlando Pride beat the San Diego Wave 1-0 in the National Women's Soccer League.

The Wave were scrambling for the equalizer in the 81st minute when Alex Morgan went down with what appeared to be a right leg injury. The U.S. national team forward was helped up and limped to away, winc-

ing with each step. She did not return. The Pride (2-0-3) are one of three undefeated teams in the league. They opened with three straight draws before a 1-0 victory last

weekend at Utah. The Wave (1-2-1) had not lost

since their season opener. Zambian forward Barbra Banda came in off the bench, making her debut for the Pride. Banda, acquired last month for a club-record transfer fee, joined the team this past week after helping Zambia qualify for the Paris Olympics.

The game was played amid reports that the Wave had acquired Maria Sanchez from the Houston Dash, a move the club had yet to announce. The NWSL trade window was set to close at 11:59 p.m. EDT on Friday. (AP)



Celtic's Luis Palma (center) battles with Aberdeen's Jack Milne (left), and Shayden Morris during the Scottish Cup semifinal match between Celtic and Aberdeen at Hampden Park, Glasgow, Scotland. Celtic won 6-5 on penalties after a 3-3 draw

OFTS

Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com



Kuwait Youth Team celebrates after beating Oman.

KUNA photo

Kuwait continue winning run in the First GCC Youth Games

DUBAI, April 20 (KUNA): Kuwaiti youth team secured a 1-0 victory against Oman in its second match of

SOCCER

the First Youth GCC Games to maintain its unbeaten streak. Fawaz Al-Dawood netted the sole goal in the 65th minute mark, sealing the win for Kuwait. Oman now holds the second position with three points, closely followed by the UAE hosts, who also have three points but fewer goals scored. The Kuwaiti team had previously triumphed over Bahrain with a 1-0.



Kuwait's Abdul Rahman Al-Taweel tries to dribble pass an Afghan

Kuwait and Afghanistan share points

Bv Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff BANGKOK, April 20: Kuwaiti futsal team drew 3-3 with Afghanistan, a crucial match for qualification to the World Cup in Uzbekistan in the second round of the Asian Cup finals' Group D competitions held in Bangkok.

Ranked 41st globally, Kuwait earned 4 points with this draw, while Afghanistan secured its first point of the tournament.

Afghanistan took the lead from Farzad Mahmoudi, but Kuwait swiftly responded with two goals from Nasser Al-Alaban and Omar Al-Mansour, end-

ing the first half with a 2-1 lead. In the second half, Afghanistan,

FUTSAL Coach David Marin deployed goalkeeper Mohamed Al-Hazeem in the "Power Play" tactic, but despite efforts, the match ended in a 3-3 draw.

Kuwait faces Iran in their final group stage match, aiming to secure a spot in

boasting professional players from the

Iranian league, equalized through Reza

Hosseinpour. Kuwait briefly regained

the lead with a goal from Saleh Al-

Fadil, but an error by Badr Al-Mansour

resulted in a direct free kick, allowing

Afghanistan's Bor to score the equal-

the quarter-finals.



New Orleans Pelicans guard Trey Murphy III (25) misses his slam dunk in the first half of an NBA basketball play-in tournament game against the Sacramento Kings in New Orleans. (AP)

Heat headed to Boston after ousting Bulls in play-in finale

Ingram, Valanciunas lift Pelicans past Kings and into playoffs

MIAMI, April 20, (AP): Tyler Herro scored 24 points and was an assist shy of a triple-double, rookie Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 21 points and the Miami Heat grabbed the last spot in the Eastern Conference playoffs, running away from the Chicago Bulls 112-91 in a play-in tournament elimination game.

Kevin Love scored 16 and Bam Adebayo added 13 for Miami, which gets this as a reward: a rematch of the last two East finals against the Boston Celtics. It's Round 1 this time, the Heat set to be huge underdogs against the runaway favorite to win the NBA title.

BASKETBALL

The Heat won't have Jimmy Butler against Boston because of his injured right knee and played again without point guard Terry Rozier, still out with

No matter. They took control over the Bulls with a 19-0 run in the first quarter, and a 14-0 run midway through the second half ended all doubt. Herro finished with 10 rebounds and nine assists, and the Heat eliminated the Bulls in the last East play-in game for the second straight year.

DeMar DeRozan scored 22 points for the Bulls, who got 16 points, 14 rebounds and five assists from Nikola Vucevic. Coby White scored 13 for Chicago, which was trying to become the fifth team in the last 35 years to make the playoffs after not spending a single day all season over the .500

The 19-0 run - which matched Miami's longest run of consecutive points all season, done two other times - put the Heat on top, turning an 11-6 deficit into an early 25-11 lead. Jaquez and Nikola Jovic combined for 11 points in the burst, which fueled Miami taking a 17-point lead after one quarter and pushing it to 20 in the second quarter.

It was a rare stretch of decent offense on a gritty, gutty, win-or-go-

The Heat managed only 13 points in the second and still went into the half with a 47-37 lead, because the Bulls were even colder from the field. Chicago started 4 for 5, then went 8 for 39 over the rest of the half. The Heat started 8 for 9, then finished the half by going 9 for 35.

This is how bad it was: Chicago missed 14 of 15 shots in one stretch, while Miami had spans of 0 for 8 and 0 for 6. But the Heat had the two big runs - and now are back as the No. 8 Five medals won

Kuwait dominate fourth day of GCC Youth Games

DUBAI, April 20, (KUNA): On the fourth day of the First Youth GCC Games held in the UAE, the Kuwaiti national team added five more medals to their tally. Yasmine Walid clinched gold with a remarkable 1.60-meter high jump performance. Abdullah Al-Yalous secured gold in the 110-meter hurdles event, while Fahid Hamada dominated the 3000-meter race to claim gold for

Dina Rashid triumphed in the 400-meter hurdles race, earning yet another gold medal for the team. Dalal Al-Azmi's impressive hammer throw earned Kuwait a silver medal. The Kuwaiti delegation, comprising 210 talented athletes competing in 19 different sports, has been actively participating since the tournament com-

YOUTH GAMES

menced on April 16.

The event is scheduled to run until May 2, featuring a total of 3,500 male and female athletes representing all GCC countries.



KUNA photo

One of the Kuwaiti medalists celebrates with the national flag.

the NBA Finals last season. It'll be far more difficult this time against a Boston team that won an NBA-best 64 games this season and is likely still smarting from losing a Game 7 of last year's East finals to the

Heat at home. Brandon Ingram scored 24 points, Jonas Valanciunas added 19 points and 12 rebounds, and the New Orleans Pelicans booked a spot in the NBA playoffs with a 105-98 victory over the Sacramento Kings in a play-in tournament elimination game.

seed, the one they rode all the way to

The Pelicans won without leadingscorer Zion Williamson, who strained his left hamstring right as he reached the 40-point mark in a play-in loss to the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday

Undaunted, New Orleans used a balanced approach to improved to 8-5 this season without Williamson in the lineup. Six players scored 10 or more points, including reserves Larry Nance Jr. (13), Naji Marshall (11) and Jose Alvarado (10)

Trey Murphy III, starting because of Williamson's absence, added 16 points for New Orleans.

De'Aaron Fox scored 35 points for

Sacramento, and Domantas Sabonis had 23 points and 14 rebounds.

The game was a test of the Pelicans'



Chicago Bulls guard Dalen Terry (rear), attempts to steal the ball from Miami Heat guard Tyler Herro during the first half of an NBA basketball play-in tournament game in Miami. (AP)

or-die game after squandering two previous chances to lock up a playoff berth

New Orleans lost to the Lakers in their regular-season finale on Sunday, missing a chance to lock up the sixth seed, before losing again to the Lakers on Tuesday. They entered their matchup with the Kings facing the possibility of becoming the first 49-win team in more than 50 years (Phoenix in 1972) to miss the NBA playoffs.

Instead, New Orleans improved to 6-0 against Sacramento this season, becoming the first team to go 6-0 in a season (without a playoff series) against an opponent since Denver against Minnesota in 1994-95.

The Pelicans also prolonged a streak of No. 7 seeds never missing the playoffs since the play-in tournament was adopted by the NBA in 2020. Because of their loss to the Lakers on Tuesday, the Pelicans will open the playoffs as an eighth seed on Sunday at top-seeded Oklahoma City.

The Pelicans were sloppy early, committing six first-quarter turnovers that led to 11 Kings points. Sacramento led 24-17 after a turnover by Herb Jones led to a layup by Fox, who scored 18 points in the first half.

ARAB (* TIME!

Editor-in-Chief Airport Road, Shuwaikh **AHMED AL JARALLAH**

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267

Advertising: Tel: 24813815 Fax: 24845708 P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

Annual Subscriptions: Individuals KD 45/- Companies and Official Departments KD 75 Airmail charges extra for Fax: 24839487

Tel: 24849144