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Opinion

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Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Iran must reconsider its positions

TEHRAN did well by deciding to withdraw its military forces from Yemen and halt its support for the Houthi group. If this decision is true, Iran will be realigning its course and creating an opportunity for regional cooperation that could restore the country's vitality. It will also open the door to restoring communication channels, not only with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) capitals but also with many other Arab countries.

Since 1979, when the Iranian regime adopted the slogan of "exporting the revolution" and worked on establishing groups like Hezbollah in the Arab world, Tehran followed a trajectory that diverged from the hopes of Arab and Gulf nations.

From that moment onward, Iran abandoned its developmental ambitions, particularly those laid out since 1969, which sought to position the country as the factory of the Gulf and neighboring Asian countries, as well as a prime tourist and service destination, which reflected its status as a major regional power.

There is no doubt that Iran holds major influence at various levels, provided it follows a path that does not conflict with the global community. However, the country's vision has often been shaped by unrealistic goals stemming from a temporary revolutionary mindset, rather than a permanent approach. The Iranian regime has sought to prolong this revolutionary status, which contradicts the logical framework of a modern state, particularly when it is built on sectarian foundations in an environment that is culturally distinct from

Since the Battle of Dhi Qar nid Empire by the Arabs, Iranian nationalism has often been characterized by hostility toward its victorious neighbors.

Thus, the relationship has al-

ways been subject to ebbs and flows. Nevertheless, since the beginning of Islam, it has remained grounded in a spirit of cooperation. For most of history, the relationship was defined by a shared understanding that external threats to Islam required a unified response. This situation continued until the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which changed the equation and introduced a new hostility based on

more harm than progress. Over the past four decades, the Iranian Revolution has sought to impose its will on the countries of the region. Terrorist operations in several Gulf states, particularly the Makkah bombings in the late 1980s, along with Iran's targeting of some Gulf countries, have once again fueled divisions, seemingly reviving Sassanian nationalism.

sectarian ideology, resulting in

This Iranian approach does not reflect true Islamic principles. Instead, it rekindles a sense of vengeance for the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah in 636 AD, a historical event that Iranian intellectuals often reference to justify the current regime's position.

This sentiment has reignited the conflict, now with the added dimension of inciting sectarian tensions at their worst. As a result, the region has had to approach its troublesome neighbor with considerable caution, especially given Tehran's lack of positive response to the Gulf governments' attempts to open a new chapter of good relations.

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Kuwait requires degree checks for work permits

PAM launches automated system for academic verification

By Fares Al-Abdan Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi recently issued a circular approving the implementation of the procedures regarding the academic qualifications and professions of migrant workers, those from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Bedoun workers in terms of the issuance, renewal and amendment of various types of work permits at labor departments through the Ashal portal for employers

or the Sahel Business app.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular; stating that the workers' academic qualifications have three determinants: educational level like doctorate, master's, bachelor's or diploma; field of specialization like Commercial Law or Biochemistry; and status of the qualification like unrecognized, preliminary recognition, administrative recognition or accreditation based on the Ministry of Higher Education equivalency.

The manual stipulates that the employees' duties include verifying the compatibility between the field of specialization and profession specified in the application, while the educational level and accreditation status are verified through the automated system. The academic qualification attachment is verified only if the system requires the employer to upload it along with the work permit related application.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfig

A serene scene by the Kuwait Towers with beachgoers cooling off in the waters under a cloudy sky on Saturday.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the recent attacks by the Israeli occupation forces on Syria which left several casualties and extensive material damage.

The attacks, part of a chain of flagrant violation of the international law and legitimacy, risk escalating the tension and violence in the region, the Ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

It urged the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to shoulder their responsi bility and put an end to the crimes of the Israeli occupation and bring the

culprits to justice. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Airways (KAC) said Friday "a technical glitch" forced rescheduling its Flight (KU502) coming from Beirut airport.

Promising to offer all necessary facilities to the passengers during their stay in **Lebanon**, the national flag carrier said in a press release that the passengers will receive SMS specifying the new time of the flight.

It advised them to contact the customer service center for any inquiries via the International Line 0096524345555 and the Extension No. 171, or WhatsApp No. 0096522200171. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: US deputy special envoy for the Middle East Morgan Ortagus met on Saturday at Baabda Palace with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun to discuss the latest developments in southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese Presidency in a statement that President Aoun welcomed Ortagus as the discussion focused on southern Lebanon and the Israeli occupation troops' withdrawal. The talks also covered the Lebanese-Syrian border. (KUNA)

SANA'A: A US airstrike has killed 70 members of the Houthi militia, including prominent field commanders and experts from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Yemen's internationally-recognized government announced Friday.

The strike, carried out on Tuesday, targeted a Houthi gathering in Al-Fazah, a coastal area in the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, according to Yemen's Minister of Information Moammar al-Eryani. (Xinhua)

MEW announces 4-hour power outages in 20 areas for a week

By Mohammed Ghanem Al-Sevassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy announced maintenance work on several secondary transformer stations in all six governorates, following a suspension during the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that the maintenance work of these transformer stations will result in power outages in some parts of 20 residential areas, starting from Saturday, April 5 to Saturday, April 12. The outages will last for four hours from 8:00 am.

The power outages will affect parts of the following areas: Jaber Al-Ahmad, Saad Al-Abdullah, Hawally, Salwa, Sabah Al-Nasser, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Fintas, Mangaf, Salmiya, Andalous, Sabah Al-Salem, Abu Al-Hasaniya, Fahaheel, Khaldiya, Ishbiliya, Qurain, Adan, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Mansouriva. and Messila.

Kuwait's envoy to UK presents credentials to King Charles III

LONDON, April 5, (KUNA): Bader Al-Munaikh presented to King Charles III, of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms, his credentials as residing Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United Kingdom.

During a ceremony, hosted at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, Ambassador Al-Munaikh conveyed to King Charles III the best

regards of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing him everlasting wellbeing and the bilateral ties more growth.

Speaking to KUNA following the ceremony, he said King Charles III, in return, asked him to convey his best wishes to His Highness the Amir.

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Kuwaiti Ambassador Bader Al-Munaikh shakes hands with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace during the presentation of his

Gaza death toll surpasses 50,000

Kuwait slams Israeli attack on Gaza school

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (Agencies): Kuwait has strongly condemned the recent Israeli occupation aggression on the Palestinian territories which resulted in the killing of many civilians.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the Israeli occupation assault on Dar Al-Argam School in Tufah district in eastern Gaza and its destruction of a medical and relief supplies warehouse in Gaza affiliated to the Saudi Cultural and Heritage.

These attacks are a flagrant violation international law and the relevant UN charters and present a new evidence of the absence of international accountability mechanisms, the ministry

It affirmed Kuwait's position stressing the need for the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility



A young Palestinian girl who was injured in an Israeli airstrike, is brought for treatment at the Baptist Hospital in Gaza City, on Thursday, April 3, 2025. (AP)

in maintaining international peace and security through putting an end to this catastrophe facing the brotherly Pales-

It called for pressing the Israeli oc-

cupation to end its aggression on Palestine's territories, and opening all

Death toll and injuries since March 18, when the occupation violated the ceasefire agreement, has reached 1,309 martyrs and 3,184 wounded.

crossings for delivery of humanitarian

Meanwhile, medical authorities an-

nounced Saturday that death toll in Gaza Strip rose to 50,669 since Octo-

ber 7, 2023, most of them are children

Palestinian News Agency (WAFA)

quoted medical sources as saying

that more than 115,225 injuries were

reported while many victims still un-

reachable under the rubble due to diffi-

cult circumstances and lack of medical

The sources said that 60 martyrs and

162 wounded arrived at Gaza Strip

hospitals over the past 24 hours.

aid to the Gaza Strip.

crews and ambulances.

and women.

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Kuwait backs '15% for 15%' disability inclusion principle

Berlin-Amman Declaration endorsed

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah announced Saturday Ku-

wait's endorsement of the Berlin-Amman Declaration on Persons with Disabilities, adopted during the third Global Disability Summit held recently in Berlin, Germany.

a statement to Kuwait Agency

(KUNA), Minister Al-Huwailah said Kuwait's endorsement of this significant international declaration reaffirms its historical commitment to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Al-Huwailah

promoting their active participation and full inclusion in society through developmental policies ensuring a dignified and sustainable life.

She emphasized Kuwait's support for the principle of "15% for 15%, which calls for allocating at least 15 percent of international development programs for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, who constitute approximately 15 percent of the world's population. She stressed that Kuwait will actively engage organizations representing persons with disabilities at all stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring of these programs.

Minister Al-Huwailah also highlighted the importance of collecting accurate data and statistics necessary for formulating comprehensive development policies serving this important segment of society, while creating an

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Kuwait Shopping Festival 'Ya Hala' concludes



Al-Fulaij emphasizes NBK's financial expertise and strong regional presence in driving major development projects

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to

moderate freshening at times northeasterly wind to northwest-erly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a

Weather chance for rising dust.

By Night: Mild to rather cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Min Rec Station **Max Exp Kuwait Airport** 22 23 21 22 22 Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Jal Aliyah Nuwaisib Wafra

KFAED singled out for assisting global communities

Kuwait role in helping countries develop, providing aid to needy lauded



KUNA photo Germany's Minister of State at the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Niles Allen, and Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah. BERLIN, April 5, (KUNA): A senior German official has expressed admiration of the State of Kuwait's leading role in aiding countries' development and providing humanitarian aid to the needy on the world stage.

Niles Allen, the Minister of State at the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, singled out the prime role of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in supporting nations and communities in need.

His remarks came in a statement issued, on Friday, by the State of Kuwait Embassy that also indicated that they were made during a meeting with the visiting Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah and the State of Kuwait Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled.

The German minister expressed Berlin's aspiration to broaden cooperation with Kuwait

in the economic and development sectors, according to the embassy statement,
The meeting, held following the Third Global Disability Summit earlier this week, ad-

dressed means of boosting the mutual cooperation at the humanitarian and development levels as well as in the human rights sector.

Kuwait has for long years dispatched various forms of aid to limited income peoples, nations in crises, to those suffering from catastrophes or wars.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah met Manager of the Technical Secretariat of the Global Disability Fund (GDF) Ola Abul-Ghaib on the fringes of the third Global Disability Summit (GDS) in Berlin on Thursday.

The meeting focused on cooperation between Kuwait and the UN agency in the field of human rights, particularly the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs), Ambassador Jawaher told KUNA. "We have also discussed the initiatives and programs aiming to improve the PWDs' access to social services," she noted.

On her part, Abul-Ghaib appreciated Kuwait's outstanding contributions, notably those of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to social development worldwide. Founded in 2011, the GDF - formerly the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) - is a unique partnership that brings together UN entities, governments, OPDs and broader civil society to advance the rights of persons with disabilities around the world.



Germany's Minister of State at the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Niles Allen, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah and Kuwait Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled.

Kuwait eyes skills to battle kids ailments

Hematology, oncology symposium begins Monday

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Chairperson of Kuwait Children's Association and Head of the Department of Hematology, Pediatric Cancer and Stem Cell Transplantation at the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Specialized Children's Hospital Dr. Sondos Al-Sharida has announced that the Second Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Symposium will be launched on Monday, under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad AlAwadhi.

In a press statement, Al-Sharida disclosed that the three-day symposium builds on the success of the first edition; indicating it brings together a select group of doctors, consultants and specialists from Kuwait, United States of America, Spain, England, Italy and Egypt.

She said the symposium will focus on the latest developments in the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric hematology and oncology thereby, contributing to the exchange of medical and research expertise.

She pointed out that the symposium is considered an advanced scientific platform for developing the skills of medical personnel and quality of healthcare for sick children, while keeping pace with the latest global developments in this field to improve performance and recovery rates.

She revealed the agenda of the



Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi

symposium consists of numerous specialized lectures and workshops on the latest treatment protocols and clinical trials, in addition to deliberations on the challenges that medical



Dr. Sondos Al-Sharida

teams in this vital specialization are currently facing.

She confirmed the participation of several international hospitals and medical centers, indicating that the visiting physicians will tour the NBK Hospital in order to observe patients and explore ways to improve the treatment services.

She then underscored the importance of supporting scientific symposiums aimed at enhancing the position of Kuwait as a leading center for specialized pediatric medicine in the region.

She also affirmed that international cooperation and continuous monitoring of medical developments are two essential pillars for the advancement of pediatric healthcare services. The conference is a great opportunity to establish partnerships and cooperate with international experts, she remarked.

MoH launches new update: The Ministry of Health has launched a new update to the 'Smart Fingerprint' system in its employee shift management program, as part of its ongoing efforts to develop work systems and improve scheduling efficiency, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The ministry has invited all em-

ployees to log into the program to

complete the required update. A new menu will appear, which will allow users to select their shift classification based on their work location. According to the issued instruc-

tions, employees must select the appropriate classification as follows:

Nursing staff within hospitals should select "Hospitals"

■ Employees in administrative general directorates should select 'Directorates".

■ Employees in primary care centers should select "Primary Care Centers".

The update is important for ensuring data accuracy and facilitating a smooth workflow in various work sites.

Kuwaiti citizens 31 percent: PACI

CMA working on stringent policies

Indians top census as Kuwait population hits 4.9mn in 2024

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The latest statistics issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) for the year 2024 revealed that Kuwait's population reached 4.9 million last year, with a near-equal gender ratio among Kuwaitis (49 percent male and 51 percent female), reports Al-Rai daily.

However, it revealed a huge disparity among non-Kuwaitis, with males comprising 66 percent and females 34 percent. About 17 percent of the population is under the age of 15, and 80 percent fall within the working-age group of 15 to 64 years. Only three percent of the population is aged 65 and older.

Kuwaitis

Kuwaitis represent 31 percent of the country's population. The largest non-Kuwaiti community in Kuwait is the Indian community, making up 20 percent of the population, followed by Egyptians at 13 percent. Kuwaitis under the age of 15 make up 32 percent of the total Kuwaiti population. Those aged 15 to 64 represent 64 percent, while five percent of Kuwaitis are aged 65 and above.

Meanwhile, the statistics revealed high population concentrations in five areas of

Kuwait - Salmiya, Farwaniya, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Hawally, and Mahboula. These areas are the most densely populated, due to which there is a need to enhance efforts in improving infrastructure and public services. Salmiya leads with the highest population at 321,190, followed by Farwaniya in second, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in third, Hawally in fourth, and Mahboula in fifth with a population of 218,153.

Regarding labor market data, the statistics revealed that the total number of workers in both the public and private sectors reached 2,247,029. Of these, approximately 517,022 work in the public sector (23 percent), and 1,730,007 are employed in the private sector (77 percent).

In the public sector, Kuwaitis constituted 77.52 percent of the workforce. The highest percentage of non-Kuwaitis working in the public sector are Egyptians, representing 7.25 percent of the total workforce, followed by Indians at 4.42 percent.

In the private sector, Indian workers ranked first, making up 31.1 percent of the workforce, followed by Egyptians at 25.4 percent. Kuwaitis accounted for 4.1 percent of the private sector workforce

Bid to combat money-laundering, terror financing KUWAIT CITY, April 5: As part of its ongoing efforts to implement all recommended meas-

ures from the current mutual evaluation process by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on the State of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) is working on establishing proportionate and deterrent enforcement policies for entities under its supervision in the event of violations related to combating money laundering and terrorist financing. This includes the provisions of Book Sixteen (Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) in the

Executive Regulations of Law No. 7/2010 on

establishment of CMA and regulations on securities activities, along with its amendments.

According to a press release issued by CMA, it has adopted a mechanism for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as its executive regulations. This mechanism includes a wide range of enforcement powers and procedures mentioned in Article 15 of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Law.

CMA confirms that the penalties imposed on violating entities will be consistent and appropriate, selected in accordance with Article 15 of the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Law. The severity of the violation, its impact, and the frequency of recurrence will determine the penalties applied.

CMA remains committed to its oversight role in dealing with money laundering and terrorist financing, with the aim of correcting any weaknesses in operations, procedures, systems, or controls within the entities it supervises.

It also stressed its keenness to deal with all observations contained in the Mutual Evaluation Report of the State of Kuwait from FATF.

Plan underway to retrieve 'social aid' taken by fraud

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: According to sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs, efforts are ongoing to review assistance files to ensure eligibility for disbursement, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They explained that, under the guidance of Minister Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and acting Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, no financial aid will be disbursed except to those legally entitled to it. The ministry recently contacted the Fatwa and Legislation Department for a legal opinion on recovering social aid from individuals whose citizenship was revoked due to fraud.

The Family Welfare Department, which is responsible for disbursing social assistance, has submitted a report on the matter to the ministry's Legal Affairs Sector. This report was then forwarded to the Fatwa and Legislation Department for further consultation on potential measures to recover assistance granted to individuals whose citizenship was revoked for fraudulent reasons.

Nationalities

The disbursement of aid will continue for individuals whose nationalities were revoked under Article 8, with the latest payment of KD 95,000 made to approximately 1,792 eligible cases in March 2025.

The disbursements will be immediately suspended for any individual proven to be involved in forging nationality, as well as for cases under Article 8 where the nationality of the individual's husband has been revoked.

Also, the sources stated that if it is determined that any Article 8 case, whose citizenship was recently revoked, has remained outside Kuwait since the revocation date, their assistance will be suspended until their return to

They said cases of individuals who have been abroad for extended periods with a valid excuse, such as receiving overseas treatment, will be eligible to resume receiving assistance if they submit the necessary documents proving their travel for treatment.

KCCI, KCB link to ease transactions

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance business efficiency and expedite procedures, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has announced an automated link with the Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB).

In a press release issued by KCCI, it explained that this new link is aimed at facilitating the exchange of information between the two parties, which will contribute to accelerating business operations and improving the quality of services offered to its members.

KCCI affirmed that this initiative is a major step in its digital transformation journey. The automated link will allow for the rapid and accurate exchange of data, reduce errors and ensure the accuracy of information. This collaboration highlights Kuwait's commitment to enhancing the business environment and ensuring greater integration between the public

KCCI invited its members to explore this new initiative, which marks an important move toward sustainable development and strengthening the national economy.



Motor enthusiasts with their sleek, latest model sports cars turned up in huge numbers at the Marina Beach opposite the Kuwait Towers. Young Kuwaitis and expatriates were amused and admired the vehicles show.

Liquor in mineral water bottles Arab expat hangs himself to death

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: An Arab committed suicide by hanging inside a building

in Farwaniya, reports Al-Anba daily. The body was referred to the Forensics Department at the Interior Ministry. A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances that prompted the Arab to end his own life by tying a rope around his neck

and then hung himself inside the building.

Local liquor seized: Jahra support patrols arrested an Asian for the possession of local liquor inside plastic water bottles, reports Al-Anba daily. A security source said the support patrols deployed in Jahra Governorate, specifically in Waha, got suspicious of the driver of a Japan-made vehicle. When the driver was asked to stop, he appeared confused.

The officers then discovered 65 plastic water bottles containing locally manufacture liquor. The suspect is now under police custody pending deportation.

Many hurt in accidents: A collision on the road leading to Doha Interchange resulted in multiple fractures to two citizens born in 2006, reports Al-Anba daily. Both citizens were transported by ambulance to Sabah Hospital. The emergency and traffic patrols dealt with the incident.

In addition, an Asian was rushed to a nearby hospital after being run over in Hawally. His condition has been reported to be stable. The individual who caused the accident is now detained and a case has been registered against him.

diwaniya 🗽 چيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

This is life ... absence makes the heart grow fonder... wait for it!

"THIS is life ... let things come to you on their own and examples are given in the following paragraphs," Ahmad Al-Dawas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"1. The price of eggs rose in Argentina, so the people left them alone until the merchants behaved accordingly and vowed not to repeat such action. The merchants then lowered the

price.
"Did the story end there? No, the people did not buy the eggs.

The merchants were very upset, because the losses were accumulating. Finally, agreed to sell the eggs at a quarter



peat what had happened. "This is where the story ended, and the conscious Argentinean people won their battle with the merchants.

of the pre-increase price; along with a

formal apology to the people published

in the newspapers, promising not to re-

"2. The price of tomatoes rose in Saudi Arabia, so the people left them alone. The price then fell back to its previous price, an acceptable purchase price.

"For my part, I was paying the British magazine, The Economist, \$430 per year as a subscription. I was annoyed by the huge amount, so I stopped and relied on cheaper American newspapers, each of which I paid a subscription fee of \$100 per year. What happened?

"The Economist kept calling and saying 'we have given you a discount, we have given you a discount, just pay such and such an amount.' I ignored them. On July 8, 2024; they said, 'okay, do not pay. You get a whole month free.' Yet, I did not read their articles.

"The magazine continued to contact me, mentioning the 50 percent discount so I can pay them about \$170 per year. They even offered me a month of free reading of their articles. My opinion, after fine-tuning my language, remains: No, I won't subscribe, even if the subscription fee is KD6 or \$20 per year. They have not stopped writing to me up to this day.

"The issue is not limited to food. If a man attempts to approach a woman with honorable intentions, such as wanting to marry her, and repeatedly calls her on the phone, she will lose interest in him and may even hate him. When he stops calling, we find her rushing to him, ask-

ing, 'what's wrong?' and vice versa.
"By analogy, if everyone stops buying sea bream, for example, its price will

"So, let things come to you on their own."

Also:

"Hadhramaut is one of the major regions in the Arabian Peninsula, located in the south-central part of Yemen,' Kuwaiti writer Dr. Hamoud Al-Hattab wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Currently known as 'Hadhramaut Region', it is part of the Hadhramaut Governorate in Yemen. Hadhramaut Governorate is located in the East of the Republic of Yemen, occupying 36 percent of its area and comprising 28 districts. Its capi-

tal and largest city is Al-Mukalla.
"On the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, Hadramis in Kuwait celebrated this happy occasion, as their custom during holidays, by performing folk shows to the tune of drums. They used wooden poles or clubs in movements resembling the advance and retreat in a war -- in my opinion -- at the Savings Fund Hall in Hawally.

"In the Hadrami dialect, a distinguished Hadrami, who did not have the opportunity to participate in the 'Hadramiyah Returnees' as they call their gathering, said: A poetic dedication from the homeland of Hadramout Al-Khair to the fifth Hadrami Returnees in beloved Kuwait, your friend and broth-

er, Butamim Al-Hindwan. "Despite the distance, the ports and the borders, I will never forget the customs in which I have a presence

From my homeland, Al-Ahqaf, I composed words and sent them with love, suffering for you

Towards the proud Kuwait, the land of the leopards

A country that encompasses all gener-

osity, pride and existence If I were to describe it, the ink would

dry up
Its rulers have left their mark since

ancient times In every good situation, it sends del-

egations This is the Kuwait of goodness, and

the world bears witness I am a Hadrami, my origin and my lineage are like the flag, flapping proud-

ly above all the peaks According to the annual gathering, on

the same promises I will participate with you, but from across the border

Finally, pray for the one who sent you

this message.

Mercy from the Most Merciful, who

intends to guide you
May Allah's prayers be upon me in my bowing and prostration.

Upon the caller, 'My nation...my nation on the Day of Promise.' "The Hadramis in Kuwait are among the peaceful communities, disciplined, and have values and morals. They de-

serve to be crowned with dignity, respect and appreciation. "'Hadram' is a term applied to all those who trace their ancestry to Hadhramaut in the southern Arabian Peninsula. They converted to Islam in the

seventh year of the Hijra, when their delegation visited the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) in Makkah. "They are the ones who spread the light of Islam to Far East Asia due to mi-

gration and adherence to their customs and religion. As the emir of eloquence,

Shakib Arslan, said: The history of the Hadramis and their true glory lie outside their homeland. Shakib Arslan intended to write a book entitled, 'The Overflowing Flood in the History of the Hadramis'. This information was relayed by Sheikh Abdullah Balkhair, but Šhakib Arslan

passed away before he could do so. "The Hadramis have played a significant role in the literary, economic and political life of modern Kuwait. They contributed to the literary renaissance that Kuwait witnessed since the early beginnings of the last century. Wellknown Kuwaiti writer and poet Ahmad Mohammad Al-Saqqaf, whose lineage goes back to the Al-Saqqaf Hadrami Family spread across many Arab countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar and others), had a clear imprint in enriching the history and culture of the State of Kuwait . He, along with his colleague Abdul Hamid Al-Sayegh, established the first general literary and cultural magazine issued and printed in Kuwait called 'Kazma'.

"He also contributed to printing valuable manuscripts for the State of Kuwait, in cooperation with the League of Arab States. He undertook the completion of the huge dictionary (Taj Al-Arousa), and continued to serve the State of Kuwait. In early 1958, in cooperation with Dr. Ahmed Zaki Akef and others, he issued the largest Arab magazine, 'Al-Arabi' Magazine.

"He was appointed Undersecretary of the Ministry of Guidance and News (currently Information) in 1958. He was appointed with the rank of ambassador to the General Authority for the South and the Arabian Gulf -- an authority concerned with social services in both parts of Yemen, the South and the North, before the unification. He was appointed a member, then Secretary General of the Writers Association until 1984. It was a 20-year term.

"That is enough for now ... and there's more to come, God willing."

"Is every citizen in Kuwait truly a vigilante? In other words, do we, as citizens, bear responsibility for the wrongdoings, legal violations, and noticeable issues we encounter daily because of their negative impact and irrational nature? Are we really expected to take on the role of vigilant protectors in our country?" columnist Iqbal Al-Ahmad

wrote for Al-Qabas daily. "I know the answer will undoubtedly be "yes." However, when I act as a vigilant guardian of my country and tirelessly point out every mistake and violation, do I find a responsive ear from the authorities responsible for address-

'As a writer, I use my platform to express what I reject based on the law and what I feel goes against the best interests of our nation. Sadly, I must admit that I rarely receive a prompt or meaningful response from the relevant authorities to indicate that they are paying attention, cooperating, and are committed to following up. Even when they do respond, it is often without the urgency or seriousness needed to rectify the issue.

"I am almost certain that there are several issues that I and others have written about repeatedly but were only resolved after many years, unfortunately.

"When the recent fraud in the lottery withdrawals was uncovered, it was by a vigilant citizen - a simple individual who receives no salary for taking on the responsibility of tracking mistakes and holding wrongdoers accountable.

"The individuals involved in the corruption network in this case were not caught by the relevant authorities or employees in the concerned department, but by an ordinary citizen.

"This does not mean that all employees are neglecting their duties; in fact,



most of them perform roles admirably. However, corruption that has been uncovered, and continues to expand daily, unfortunately highlights importance of the conscientious citizen's role. This person

Iqbal Al-Ahmad

seeks nothing but the welfare of the nation, and brings attention to errors or failures without any malice. This role, in itself, requires someone to listen, care, and follow up seriously.

"Personally, like many others, I am not one to take the "not my problem" approach. If I come across a mistake, violation, or transgression during my day, I often report it to the relevant authority, and document the time, date, and location.

"Phenomena such as standing on sidewalks, parking in spots designated for specific groups like the elderly or disabled, or exploiting positions of power to verbally abuse or mistreat clients, are things I cannot ignore. One phenomenon that has caught my attention recently, and unfortunately continues, is what I consid-

er an insistence on defying the law. "Some regular and large commercial stores, especially those in well-known malls, continue to display their products without showing the prices. I have spoken to the sellers and managers several times, and they often claim that they have just finished restocking and will put the prices up soon. However, I always make sure to revisit these stores but only to find the situation unchanged. Since this behavior violates the regula-tions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and because I consider myself a "vigilant citizen", I contacted the relevant authorities to draw attention to the issue, but I did not receive a response.

> — Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty



The man who fled police after assaulting another person is arrested by police.

Man seen fleeing on video arrested

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Jaber Al-Ahmad Police Station, which is under the Capital Governorate Security Directorate, arrested the person who appeared in a video circulating on social media while fleeing from police officers, according to a press release by the Ministry of interior

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior revealed that its Operations Unit received a report about the person who threatened and assaulted another individual.

However, the suspect fled upon the arrival of police officers at the scene. An investigation ensued, revealing that he is wanted by the Correctional Institutions General Department for evading arrest and prosecution. He was subsequently arrested and referred to the competent authority for

The ministry affirmed that it remains committed to intensifying efforts to apprehend individuals wanted by law and those proven to have violated the laws of the country, as well as to take legal measures against anyone who attempts to disrupt security or endanger the society.

Police find special needs child, hand over to family

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Ministry of Interior fulfilled its humanitarian duty by providing care for a lost child with special needs and safely delivering her to her family after following the necessary procedures, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to security sources, security authorities were able to locate the family of a child with special needs who was found on Friday in Jahra. After taking the necessary procedures, the child

was handed over to her family. The Ministry of Interior affirmed its commit-

ment to handling such cases with promptness, and expressed appreciation for the cooperation of citizens and residents in reporting and assisting. The General Department of Security Media re-

vealed that security personnel responded to a report about the lost child, took her into custody at Al-Qasr Police Station, and provided her with the necessary care.

Hunt for owner: A citizen informed the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior that he found cash amounting to more than KD2,000 in front of a bank, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source disclosed that the citizen told the Operations Unit about the envelope containing the abovementioned amount. He handed over the money to Saad Al-Abdullah Police Station and the search for the owner is ongoing.

MoE caught napping as absent teacher gets salary for 20 years

Foul play ruled out as KD 105,000 stay intact

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Between August 2004 and May 2024, a total of KD 105,000 was transferred as salary to the bank account of an expatriate teacher even though she was absent from school and did not perform any work, reports Al-Rai

The Public Prosecution ruled out the possibility of theft of public funds, as the funds remained in the teacher's account until they were recovered by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education had filed a complaint with the Public Prosecution regarding the incident, alleging that the teacher had been absent from work for fifteen consecutive days without an excuse from September 4, 2005, which was the scheduled start of the 2004/2005 academic year. As a result, she unlawfully received her salary from the date of her absence until May 24, 2024. The teacher had been appointed on August 24, 2004, as an Arabic language teacher at an elemen-

tary school.

When questioned, the school principal ex-

plained that the teacher had not been employed at the school since assuming administrative duties in 2015. The teacher's name remained listed in the integrated systems. The principal had contacted the Personnel Affairs Department and the Elementary School Supervisor multiple times to have her name removed. While her name had been removed each time, this issue occurred every aca-

After the fingerprint system was implemented on February 11, 2024, it was revealed that the teacher's name was still listed in the integrated systems, despite her prolonged absence from work. As a result, an administrative investigation was conducted, leading to the suspension of the teacher's salary and the termination of her ser-

The director general of the concerned educational zone issued a notice to suspend the teacher's salary due to her absence from work starting on August 24, 2004. The notice also calculated all unjustly received salaries, from the date of her absence until May 23, 2024. These salaries, totaling KD 105,331, were transferred monthly to the teacher's account.

Upon contacting the bank, it was confirmed that

remained there. The Central Bank subsequently recovered the full amount and deposited it into the Ministry of Education's account. The Central Bank also concluded that no damages were incurred to the Ministry of Education's funds.

The investigation revealed that the teacher had

not used her salary account at the bank since her absence from work, which suggests that she had no criminal intent to seize public funds. A review of the entry and exit records from the

Ministry of Interior revealed that the defendant left Kuwait on June 14, 2005. The investigation found no evidence or indication that officials at the teacher's place of employ-

ment intentionally facilitated her receipt of ministry funds, nor that the ministry had deliberately allowed the funds to be seized.

Further investigations with Ministry of Education officials revealed that it was impossible to identify the individual responsible for the teacher's salary disbursements. She had been appointed in 2004, during a time when paper documents were being manually approved and recorded, and some of these documents had been lost.

As a result, the Public Prosecution decided to withhold the case and cease the search for the de-

Decision upheld, man acquitted of insulting wife's mom

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Appeals Court upheld the decision of a lower court to acquit a citizen of insulting his mother-in-law.

According to the case file, the defendant's mother-in-law filed a com-

plaint alleging that he verbally abused her. This was after the mother-in-law, her daughter and other witnesses were referred to the police station following a complaint filed by the defendant against his wife when he saw her with a stranger on the street. They then followed his wife to her mother's house, quickly entering it.

The citizen's lawyer, Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, appeared in court to defend him and argued that there is no conclusive evidence to support the accusation against his client. He pointed out that the case documents, the subject of the accusation, are devoid of evidence with legal merit. Al-Qattan said the Public Pros-

ecution presented evidence to prove the charge against his client, "which consisted of the complainant's allegations that were not without malice and fabrication.'

He stressed that his client denied all the accusations hurled at him, and that he neither insulted nor defamed the complainant.



The suspect and the contraband seized.

Bedoun arrested with 16 kilos of 'Shabu' narcotics

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Criminal Security Sector's Drug Control General Department arrested an illegal resident (Bedoun) in possession of a large quantity of the narcotic substance referred to as "Shabu", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This operation was part of intensified search and investigation efforts targeting drug smugglers and deal-

The authorities, after discovering that the suspect was involved in drug trafficking, arranged a fake deal to buy a certain quantity of Shabu from him. He was caught redhanded with approximately 16 kilograms of the drug, valued at over KD 250,000.

It was also revealed that the accused had a history of importing and trafficking narcotics and had recently been released from Central Prison. After he confessed that the seized drugs were in-

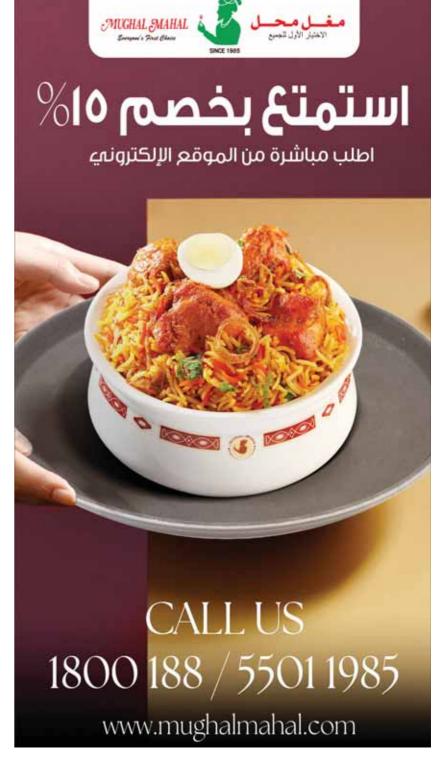
tended for trafficking, he was referred with the confiscated items to the concerned authorities for further

Guns found in possession of three Kuwaiti citizens

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The weapons collection investigation patrols arrested three citizens with hunting weapons (shotguns) in their possession and referred them to the relevant authorities, reports Al-Anba daily. A security source disclosed that during a search of

in which the driver's companion was seen removing a weapon from the window. Upon stopping the driver, the officers searched the vehicle thoroughly and discovered the weapons.

the southern desert, the patrol officers spotted a vehicle



Other Voices

Belgium rekindles economic ties with Kuwait after 23 years

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

fter several years, Belgium is set to renew its A ner several years, Bergian is see a final Aeconomic ties with Kuwait through an Economic ic Mission scheduled for 29-30 April 2025. The last such visit was in 2002, marking this upcoming mission as a significant milestone in Belgian-Kuwaiti relations. This renewed engagement underscores the strong potential and mutual interest in deepening bilateral economic cooperation.

Led by the Economic and Commercial Counsellor at the Belgian Embassy in Kuwait, Ms. Laurence Heyblom, the mission will bring together 44 Belgian companies spanning 12 key sectors, with the aim of exploring business opportunities and fostering new commercial partnerships. The sectors represented include engineering and industrial, healthcare and medical, technology and ICT, security and safety, energy and sustainability, construction and real es-

tate, retail and trade, education and training, legal and compliance, and food and beverages.

"This mission is not just about trade - it's about building lasting relationships," Ms. Heyblom emphasized during a recent meeting. "We want to introduce Kuwait to the diversity and innovation of Belgian companies, and also help Belgian businesses better understand the



Kuwaiti market." Despite Belgium's strong global economic footprint - boasting a GDP of approximately □600 billion and exports comprising 85% of its economic output - its products remain relatively unknown to most Kuwaitis beyond the well-loved Belgian waffles, fries, and chocolate. This mission seeks to change that narrative.

Key Belgian firms such as DEME (a global leader in dredging and marine infrastructure), John Cockerill (specialized in industrial engineering and environmental technology), and GSK Biologicals (a pharmaceutical leader in vaccine production) will be among the participants, showcasing Belgium's world-class innovation and ecofriendly solutions.

Highlighting Belgium's logistics strength, Ms. Heyblom noted that the Port of Antwerp is Europe's second-largest and the world's second-largest petrochemical hub, positioning Belgium as a strategic trade and industrial gateway to Europe.

Trade between Belgium and Kuwait already demonstrates promise. Belgium's main exports to Kuwait include chemicals (40%), food (18.6%), and machinery (11%). Meanwhile, imports from Kuwait are dominated by mineral products, making up 97.6% of total imports.

Through this mission, Belgium aims to not only enhance its trade volumes with Kuwait but also plant the seeds for long-term partnerships. With a diverse set of industries and a clear commitment to collaboration, the Economic Mission 2025 is set to open new doors and elevate bilateral relations to a new

Electricity Ministry's budget hits KD3.106 billion for FY 2025/2026

KD72 million increase to fund key operations and projects

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The total estimated budget of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for fiscal 2025/2026 is KD3.106 billion - an increase of **KD72** million compared to the final 2024/2025 budget that amounted to KD3.034 billion, say reliable sources.

Sources confirmed that the abovementioned amount shall cover all budget items like compensation for employees, fuel for the operation of power plants, project implementation payments and others.

Sources disclosed that the allocation for

goods and services reached KD1.740 billion -an increase of KD23 million compared to the final budget, in which the estimated amount allocated for this item reached KD1.717 billion. Sources said this covers the oil, gas and oil needed for the operation of power and water distillation plants within the aforementioned fiscal year.

Sources said the amount allotted for one of the important budget items -- employee compensation -- reached KD787.860 million. They pointed out this is an increase of KD40.437 million compared to the estimated amount of KD747.423 million in the final budget. They added this item covers salaries, bonuses and allowances of employees in technical and administrative sectors.

Sources indicated that the estimated amount to cover capital expenditures reached

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Room Promotion

KD577.525 million -- an increase of KD12.171 million compared to the estimated amount of KD565.354 million in the final budget. Sources stated that this item covers the costs related to the implementation of projects like payments to contractors, maintenance and other works.

On the other hand, the ministry announced Friday that it will carry out maintenance works in some secondary transformer stations in the six governorates; adding that this will result in a four-hour power outage in certain parts of 20 residential areas starting at 8:00 am on Saturday.

The affected areas include Jaber Al-Ahmad, Saad Al-Abdullah, Hawally, Salwa, Sabah Al-Nasser, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Fintas, Mangaf, Salmiya, Andalus, Sabah Al-Salem, Abu Al-Hasaniya, Fahaheel, Khaldiya, Ishbiliya, Al-Qurain, Adan, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Mansouriya and Messilah.

Salmi Road seeing crucial upgrades

MPW focuses extensive high-impact repairs for 16 areas and 9 highways

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Months after the launch of extensive road maintenance work, both highway and internal road users remain hopeful for the repair of deteriorating streets to bring them back to the original state when Kuwait's roads were renowned for their precision and beauty, reports Al-Rai daily.

In the past few months, not a week has passed since the launch of maintenance on Salmi Road without the Ministry of Public Works or the Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) announcing new major maintenance projects in various areas. These efforts follow a detailed plan and timeline to be completed over the next three years. By the end of January, the number of areas undergoing maintenance had reached 16, in addition to six contracts for highway upgrades.

Anyone visiting a maintenance site in one of the areas under repair will hear the roar of bulldozers scraping the surface layers and smell the asphalt mixed with bitumen, as giant machines specially designed for the task lay the new surface.

During a visit to an asphalt-laying site in Jabriya, it was discovered that the location was buzzing with activity, as workers from

the contracting companies and supervision teams were working tirelessly, racing against time to complete tasks in their assigned areas before moving on to the next, for ensuring each contract's goals are met on time and with the required quality standards.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

Salmi Road... A transformation in the making

At a rapid pace, the Ministry of Public Works has made huge progress in the major renovation of Salmi Road. The first phase of the project, stretching from the Salmi border post to Kilo 95 mark towards Jahra, has been completed. The engineering teams continue to work on the remaining maintenance for the road.

The site supervisor Engineer Arefa Mohamed said, "The maintenance teams are working continuously to complete the entire Salmi Road. The teams are removing the old asphalt layer, and then installing a gravel base, a concrete layer, a mixed subbase, and then three additional layers. Salmi Road will look completely different once the comprehensive maintenance is finished. The ministry's teams are closely monitoring the project's execution, with engineers overseeing the development contracts."

He affirmed that the Salmi Road project

is progressing well, with meticulous attention to the execution plan, work progress, and thorough treatment of the asphalt.

16 areas and 9 highways undergoing

major maintenance Major road maintenance is currently ongoing in 16 areas in all six governorates, including Abdullah Mubarak, Jabriya, Aqila, Mangaf, Bayan, Ardiya, Faiha, Saad Al-Abdullah, Subhan, Al-Qasr, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Farwaniya, Hawally, Ahmadi,

Egaila, and Jaber Al-Ahmad. In addition, nine highways are also being extensively renovated through six separate contracts. These are Salmi Road, sections of Sixth and Seventh ring roads, sections of First and Fourth ring roads, Fahaheel Road,

Abdali-Jahra Road, and Subiya Road. Citizens willing to endure for road re-

Several citizens indicated that any inconvenience caused by lane closures for asphalt work is minor when it comes to repairing Kuwait's roads.

They said, "For years, especially since 2018, we have been dealing with deteriorating roads, particularly the internal roads in Kuwait's residential areas. We live with the hope that one day, Kuwait's roads will be free from potholes and bumps.

We appreciate the fact that the road maintenance program is prioritizing the most damaged areas without any favoritism. This approach is something we truly value from the Minister of Public Works and the ministry's officials.

Roads... supervision and strict adher-

ence to standards and specifications Director of the Public Authority for

Roads and Transportation (PART) Engineer Khaled Dawi announced that maintenance work has officially commenced on all six highway contracts. He said, "Minister of Public Works Dr.

Noura Al-Mashaan has personally inspected the maintenance projects multiple times, which demonstrates her commitment to ensuring that the work is completed to the highest standards of quality and efficiency. The maintenance work began with the

Salmi Road project, followed by repairs on the Seventh and Sixth ring roads, and then the Fahaheel Road. Afterward, the maintenance work on Abdali-Jahra Road and sections of the Fourth and First ring roads began. This was followed by the launch of maintenance work on Subiya Road. PART, through its dedicated supervi-

sion teams overseeing the asphalt laying process, has been keen about ensuring the work is completed according to the agreed standards and specifications

In addition, Eng. Dawi highlighted the coordination between PART and the Ministry of Interior, particularly the General Traffic Department, to manage lane closures at work sites and ensure smooth traffic flow without disruptions.

Dr. Al-Mashaan's on-site presence overcomes obstacles

Assistant Undersecretary for Planning at the Ministry of Public Works and the ministry's official spokesperson Eng. Ahmed Al-Saleh stressed Minister Dr. Al-Mashaan's keenness to ensure comprehensive road maintenance projects are carried out with the required quality and efficiency.

He indicated that her frequent visits to various work sites reflect her dedication, attention, and active follow-up on all ongoing maintenance efforts.

Eng. Al-Saleh said, "The road maintenance projects are part of the ministry's strategic plan to improve the road network and provide a safe, sustainable environment for both citizens and residents, in line with urban development and the increasing transportation needs. Ministry officials, along with all super-

every stage of the project, from design to completion. They adhere to internationally recognized quality standards and technical specifications to guarantee the highest levels of road performance and durability. Minister Al-Mashaan's commitment to the road maintenance project is clear

vision teams overseeing the execution of

these contracts, ensure close monitoring at

through her regular site visits, where she closely monitors progress, coordinates to resolve any issues, and ensures that the work is proceeding as planned. In her statements regarding the minis-

try's announcements on the launch of maintenance work in various areas throughout Kuwait, she consistently highlights the political leadership's focus on the road maintenance initiative, considering it as one of the top priorities.'

Supervising engineers

Supervising engineers play a major role in overseeing the maintenance work, and ensuring its quality at every stage of the

In conjunction with the start of maintenance work, a committee was formed to select the engineers responsible for supervising the tasks.

Several supervising engineers at different maintenance sites explained that the process begins with a thorough inspection of the area by the supervising team before any work commences. This inspection ensures the integrity of the rainwater drainage network before the surface layer is removed. Any cracks are fixed before laying down the new asphalt.

They said, "Based on the directives of Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and other ministry officials, priority is given to repairing the most damaged streets in each area. The extent of wear and tear varies from street to street and from one area to

The engineers asked residents of the maintenance areas to be patient and cooperate with the authorities to ensure the work is completed on schedule.

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PAFN carries out inspections in Al-Qurain

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Inspectors from the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Inspection Department of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), led by the acting Deputy Director General for Inspection and Control Affairs Dr. Saud Al-Humaidi Al-Jalal, conducted a field inspection tour of food establishments in Al-Qurain Markets, which resulted in the issuance of eight citations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The violations for which citations were issued included non-compliance with health regulations and approved requirements, visible mold on food products, expired products, and the absence of health licenses or health certificates for workers. Necessary legal action was taken against the violators, and one establishment was immediately closed.

PAFN urged all food establishment owners to comply fully with health requirements and cooperate with inspection teams to safeguard public health

Dr. Al-Jalal affirmed that PAFN will not tolerate any violations of laws and regulations in food establishments in order to ensure the health and safety of consumers.

He highlighted that inspection tours will continue and are conducted regularly in various areas.

Top officials oversee final draws

Kuwait Shopping Festival 'Ya Hala' concludes

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The ninth and 10th draws of the Kuwait Shopping Festival, 'Ya Hala', were held under the supervision of a committee from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and in the presence of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Public Relations Director for the festival Abdulrahman Al-Badah confirmed the formation of a committee under the supervision of the ministry to conduct the final draws -- ninth and 10th draws for the festival that ran from Jan 21 to March 31.

Al-Badah said more than 350 boxes of coupons were collected from shopping malls and centers throughout the



Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel supervised the ninth and 10th (final) draws of the Kuwait Shopping Festival dubbed as 'Ya Hala'.

Crown Prince, PM extend best wishes

Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Senegal President on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable on Friday to the President of Senegal, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, congratulating him on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Senegalese leadership and people continued progress and develop-

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent

a cable of congratulations to President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on the occasion of Senegal's national day.

In his message, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed his best wishes for further progress and prosperity to the President and the Senegalese people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on the occasion of his country's national day.

Kuwait mourns loss of beloved patriotic icon Rawdan Khaled Mishari Al-Rawdan

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Kuwait lost one of its loyal and patriotic citizens on Friday, Rawdan Khaled Mishari Al-Rawdan, the head of the Rawdan family, who passed away at the age of 86. Throughout his life, he dedicated himself to public service, especially in the fields of security, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Rawdan family mourned the loss of their beloved patriarch, and had announced that his body will be laid to rest after the afternoon prayer on Friday.

Born in 1939 in Sharq, Al-Rawdan attended the Al-Sharqiya



Al-Seyassah photo The late Rawdan Khaled Mishari Al-Rawdan, the head of the Rawdan family

School before enrolling in the Police College, where he graduated as a lieutenant in 1959.

He began his career as a traffic officer in the General Traffic Department. Over time, he rose through the ranks, eventually becoming head of the Licensing Department and later its director. He retired in 1982 to focus on his business ventures.

In this time of sorrow, the daily extends its heartfelt condolences to the family and relatives of the deceased. We pray that God grants him mercy, places him in His eternal gardens, and comforts his family and loved ones with pa-

KCCC's Al-Shatti joins renowned US medical training

Kuwaiti professionalism gains global recognition in organ transplantation

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: In a remarkable achievement that proves the growing expertise of Kuwaiti professionals on the global stage; Head of the Immunology and Tissue Matching Unit for Organ and Stem Cell Transplantation at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) Nada Jassim Al-Shatti, who also serves as Director of the Immunology Program at Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS), has been selected as



a faculty member for the prestigious annual training program of the American Society for Tissue Matching for Organ and Stem Cell Transplantation (ASTM), reports

This prestigious program is one of the leading educational initiatives worldwide in the fields of organ and stem cell transplantation. It gathers top experts and scientists from around the world to explore the latest advancements and technologies in tissue matching and clinical

Al-Shatti's inclusion in this esteemed faculty is a manifestation of her exceptional scientific and professional expertise, affirming her good reputation both locally and internationally in this critical area of modern medicine.

This milestone not only showcases the personal achievements of Al-Shatti; but also reflects the significant strides made by Kuwaiti medical professionals in vital healthcare fields, reinforcing Kuwait's growing influence in global scientific forums.

Continued from Page 1

Iran must

To add salt to the injury, Iran has established terrorist cells in most Gulf countries and the Arab region.

It is important to reiterate that Iran is a great country with the potential to play a pivotal role in the region. Iran could serve as a gateway for neighboring Asian countries, benefiting not only Gulf industries but also contributing to the establishment of a developmental economic axis akin to the Chinese Silk Road. However, these achievements will remain out of reach unless Iran abandons its expansionist projects and stops threatening its neighbors.

Today, Iran is grappling with a crippling international blockade, and its people are suffering from the worst crisis in the country's history. The drums of war are echoing from the international community against Iran. It would be wise for Iran to open its doors for cooperation with all parties, rather than boasting about its control over four Arab capitals and turning these countries into failed states, as seen in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. While these countries have begun to recover, they still have a long road ahead.

The Iranian regime is mistaken if it believes that relying on political minorities, rather than just sectarian ones, will enable it to achieve such an ambitious program as changing societies' cultures and the regimes of sovereign states

In Yemen, for instance, the Houthis, as a political entity, make up only about four percent of the total Yemeni forces. Similarly, Lebanese Hezbollah constitutes no more than 15 percent of Lebanon's forces. However, the reason for Hezbollah's cancerous growth is the lack of serious efforts to limit weapons to the Lebanese army. Many have benefited from the continuation of this abnormal situation in Lebanon in one way or another.

On the other hand, the irony is that mercenaries always lose everything in the end. This is what all those who sold themselves to the Iranian regime failed to realize, as if they had never read history or learned the lesson of figures like Abu Raghal, General Yaqoub, who betrayed the Egyptians in favor of the French campaign and collaborated with Napoleon, or the Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta'sim, who was killed by the Mongols under the feet of their horses. The fates of mercenaries have always been tragically

These examples of those who sold out their people and nations for a cheap profit confirm that Iran's aban-

donment of the Houthis, its growing distance from Hezbollah, and its previous abandonment of Bashar al-Assad reveal a harsh reality - When a country no longer has use for its mercenaries, it discards them. Like an officer tossing a small bag of gold coins on the ground, forcing the mercenary to kneel and collect them, this scene represents the bitter humiliation of those once used as pawns, while the benefiting country saves itself by sacrificing its mercenaries.

Kuwait's envoy

Recalling His Highness the Amir's visit to Scotland in 2024 and his own visits to Kuwait, King Charles III wished Ambassador Al-Munaikh success in his mission to strengthen the friendly relations between both

His Highness the Amir visited the UK four times in his former capacity as crown prince before his first visit as Amir to King Charles III home in Scotland in January 2024 under a royal invitation, the Kuwaiti diplo-

On her part, Victoria Busby, Director of Protocol and Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, said the UK and Kuwait enjoy deep-rooted friendly relations that kept growing in the course of

Ambassador Al-Munaikh assumes his responsibilities at a time when both countries are marking the 120th anniversary of their relationship, she

Commending the growing defense cooperation, Busby noted that Kuwait hosted the joint Desert Warrior 8 drills in last February.

The two countries inked a memorandum of understanding on joint investment in 2023 in synchronization with the celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of Kuwait Investment Office in London, she went on.

The ceremony gathered dozens of senior officials and diplomats, including Dean of Diplomatic Corps in the UK and Ambassador of Honduras Ivan Romero-Martinez as well as the diplomatic staff of Kuwait Em-

Kuwait requires

For engineering professions, approvals are verified automatically through the system. Applications that do not have the required approval are automatically rejected. An electronic attachment is automatically added to the application to confirm that the employee received approval.

For non-engineering professions that require prior approval for permit and work permit services, the employer is required to upload a copy of the approval as an attachment to the application.

A number of services are automatically accredited. These include renewing work permits for expatriates, renewing work permits for Gulf nationals and renewing work permits for those residing legally in Kuwait; provided the renewal is for the same profession. These services do not require attachment of approvals or academic qualifications to the application.

Kuwait backs

appropriate environment supporting their effective participation in the development process and ensuring equal opportunities.

She affirmed that this step clearly reflects Kuwait's approach toward promoting social justice and equality among all segments of society, translating the wise political leadership's directives toward achieving comprehensive sustainable development.

Al-Huwailah further added that Kuwait has always been at the forefront of adopting humanitarian initiatives, continuing its national and international efforts to activate the provisions of the declaration, transforming them into tangible realities that guarantee a better future for persons with disabilities.

Kuwait slams

Israeli strikes killed more than a dozen people in the Gaza Strip early Friday, as Israel sent more ground troops into the Palestinian territory to ramp up its offensive against Ha-

At least 17 people, some from the same family, were killed after an airstrike hit the southern city of Khan Younis, according to hospital staff. Hours later, people were still searching through the rubble, looking for

The attack came a day after Israeli strikes killed at least 100 Palestinians. Hundreds more have died in the past two weeks, as Israel has intensified operations, intended to pressure Hamas to release remaining hostages it took during its attack on Israel in October 2023. On Friday, Israel said it had begun ground activity in northern Gaza, in order to expand its

MoE preps for final exams as schools end Ramadan break

Grade 12 registration opens

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Students returned to schools on Sunday to complete the remaining days of the academic year after a 'forced' two-week break that started in the last 10 days of Ramadan and continued until the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

This happened while the academic sector is racing against time to complete the curricula in preparation for the exams period.

The countdown to the end of the school year started on April. Teachers are keen on making up for delays caused by student absences during the last 10 days of Ramadan, which led to a prolonged disruption of the educational process.

As the exams period approaches, schools are working hard to complete the curricula before starting the exam procedures for subjects excluded from the curricula in order to fully prepare for the end-of-year exams.

In a related development, the Ministry of Education has announced the commencement of registration procedures for Grade 12 students applying for high school exams. Student records will be retrieved from the student record system starting April 13 and it will continue until April The ministry said the school

administrations will collect the lists of regular Grade 12 students, while the Examinations Supervision and Student Affairs Department in the educational districts will collect the lists of students under the home-school system. These lists will be reviewed and verified before being sent to the Control Center for official ap-

The ministry confirmed that it will issue the official lists of students taking the exams, as well as review and amend several data points such as the list of missing names in English, missing places of birth, missing nationality; list of exempted students; list of students who do not have Grade 10 or Grade 11 certificate; list of religious education students whose sect has not been specified; and list of religious education students whose foreign language has not been specified.

It stressed the need to submit the necessary documents to make the required amendments before issuing the seat numbers to ensure the smooth conduct of

The ministry set April 24 as the deadline for receiving dropout reports among Grade 12 students. These reports will be sent to the concerned exam control center, along with the required documents for amendment before the issuance of seat numbers.

This is part of the ministry's preparations to make sure that all the required data are ready before the high school exams period.

Al-Awadhi launches survey to tackle Ministry employees' daily challenges

of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has launched a survey on the daily challenges that ministry employees are facing and to explore possible improvement opportunities through modern digital solutions, reports Al-Anba daily.

In his message to the employees, Al-Awadhi stressed that employee

KUWAIT CITY. April 5: Minister participation in this survey is pivotal to the success of such effort, as it will contribute to drawing an accurate picture of the current situation and enable decision-makers to take practical steps based on the actual needs of employees; thereby, ensuring a more efficient work environment, while providing better health

Al-Awadhi urged all the employees to participate in the survey, and disseminate it among officials and executive employees in various sectors. He said the opinions and comments provided by participants are considered the cornerstone of improvement efforts.



JOINT OPERATIONS



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 6 APR 2025 up to **29 APR 2025** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on Tuesday, 6 MAY 2025 @ 09:00 A.M.

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	034113	AIR COMPRESSORS	5
2	034114	CONTROL ROOM, YOKOGAWA OR EQUIVALENT	35
3	034115	CONTROL VALVES	5
4	034247	S/F BENTLY NEVADA SYSTEM	5
5	034250	WATER DISPOSAL PUMP	50

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Tel No.: 23983639 - Ext.: 2502 - 3477

Trump's policies are a disaster: Schumer

US Senate GOP approves framework for Trump's tax breaks, spending cuts

WASHINGTON, April 5, (AP): US Senate Republicans plugged away overnight and into early Saturday morning to approve their multitrillion-dollar tax breaks and spending cuts framework, hurtling past hardened Democratic opposition toward what President Donald Trump calls the "big, beautiful bill" that's central to his agenda.

The vote, 51-48, fell along mostly party lines, but with sharp dissent from two prominent GOP senators. It could not have come at a more difficult political moment. The US economy is churning after Trump's vast tariff scheme sent stocks plummeting, and experts are warning of soaring costs for consumers at home and threats of a potential recession. Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Rand Paul of Kentucky both voted against.

But with a nod from Trump, GOP leaders held on, determined to march ahead. Approval paves the way for Republicans, in the months ahead, to try to power a tax cut bill through both chambers of Congress over the objections of Democrats, just as they did in Trump's first term with unified party control in

"Let the voting begin," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-SD, said Friday night.

The evening kicked off what's called vote-a-rama as Democrats were intent on making the effort as politically painful as possible, with action on some two dozen amendments to the package that GOP senators will have to defend before next year's midterm elections.

Among them were proposals to ban tax breaks for the super-wealthy, end Trump's tariffs, clip his efforts to shrink the federal government and protect Medicaid, Social Security and other services. One, in response to the Trump national security team's use of Signal, sought to prohibit military officials from using any commercial messaging application to transmit war plans. They all failed, though a GOP amendment to protect Medicare and Medicaid was accepted.

Democrats accused Republicans of laying the groundwork for cutting key safety net programs to help pay for more than \$5 trillion tax cuts they say dis-



US Sen Ben Ray Lujan, D-NM, (from left), Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, and Sen Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn, speak to reporters before the start of a voting marathon as Senate Republicans push the next step to pass President Trump's budget agenda, at the Capitol, in Washington on April 4. (AP)

proportionately benefit the rich.

'Trump's policies are a disaster," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, as is Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency. "Republicans could snuff it out tonight, if they wanted."

The Republicans framed their work as preventing a tax increase for most American families, arguing that unless Congress acts, the individual and estate tax cuts that Republicans passed in 2017 will expire at the end of this year.

The Senate package pulls in other GOP priorities - including \$175 billion to bolster Trump's mass deportation effort, which is running short of cash, and another \$175 billion for the Pentagon to build up the military - from an earlier

Sen. John Barrasso, the No. 2 ranking GOP senator, said voters gave Republicans a mission in November, and the Senate budget plan delivers.

"It fulfills our promises to secure the border, to rebuild our economy and to restore peace through strength," Barrasso said.

The framework now goes to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., could bring it up for a vote as soon as next week as he works toward a final product by Memorial Day.

The House and Senate need to resolve their differences. The House Republicans had already approved their version, with \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks over 10 years and some \$2 trillion in budget cuts pointed at changes to Medicaid,

food stamps and other programs, and some have panned the Senate's approach. Throughout the day, the debate was generally one-sided, as Democrats took full advantage of the all-night voting frenzy. Pizza was wheeled in on a cart, for Republicans. Tacos, for Democrats.

Republicans used their majority to swat back the Democrats' amendments, often in rambunctious voice votes. A few Democratic proposals, however, did draw some GOP support, including those to protect health care, Social Security and the bargaining rights of federal workers, a potential sign of unrest ahead.

Collins said she voted against the full package because potential Medicaid cuts in the underlying House bill "would be very detrimental to a lot of families and disabled individuals and seniors in my state."

And Paul questioned the math being used by his colleagues that he said

would pile on the debt load. "Something's fishy," he said.

One Republican, Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, expressed his own misgivings about tax breaks adding to the federal deficits and said he has assurances that Trump officials would seek the cuts elsewhere.



Flood waters cover the entryway to the Weather Stone subdivision off Russellville Road in Bowling Green, Kentucky on April 4 after excessive rainfall Thursday into Friday drenched southcentral Kentucky with more than four and a half inches of rain. (AP)

More torrential rain and flash flooding expected in South, Midwest

Another round of torrential rain and flash flooding was expected to hit Saturday in parts of the South and Midwest already heavily waterlogged by days of severe storms that in some cases spawned deadly tornadoes.

Round after round of heavy rains have pounded the central US, leading to rapidly rising waterways and prompting a series of flash flood emergencies Friday night in Missouri, Texas and Arkansas. Meanwhile, many communities were still reeling from tornadoes that destroyed entire neighborhoods and killed at least seven people earlier this week.

In Frankfort, Kentucky, floodwaters swept a 9-yearold boy away while he was walking to a school bus stop Friday morning, Gov. Andy Beshear said on social media. Officials said Gabriel Andrews' body was found about a half-mile from where he went missing.

The downtown area of Hopkinsville, Kentucky - a

city of 31,000 residents 72 miles (116 kilometers) northwest of Nashville - was submerged Friday. A dozen people were rescued from homes, and dozens of pets were moved away from rising water, a fire official said. (AP)

President Trump's elections order

Washington and Oregon sue over US

and Oregon on Friday became the latest states to ask a court to reject President Donald Trump's efforts to overhaul elections in the US a day after Democratic officials in 19 others filed a similar lawsuit.

Washington Attorney General Nick Brown said the two states sued separately because they conduct elections entirely by mail and would be particularly harmed by the president's efforts.

'Neither the Constitution nor any federal law gives the president authority to set rules for how states conduct elections," Brown, a Democrat, said during a news conference. "It is the states that decide how voters are registered. It is the states that decide how ballots are counted."

Friday's lawsuit in US District Court in Seattle is the fifth against the executive order since it was issued last week. The order includes new requirements that people provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote and a demand that all mail ballots be received by Election Day. It also puts states' federal funding at risk if election officials don't comply.

That could disenfranchise hundreds

of thousands of voters in the Pacific Northwest, where ballots must be postmarked - but not necessarily received - by Election Day. Washington



US State Rep Sharlett Mena, D-Washington, speaks during a news conference in which the state attorney general announced a federal lawsuit challenging President Donald Trump's executive order attempting to overhaul elections in the US, in Seattle on April 4. (AP)

Secretary of State Steve Hobbs noted at the news conference that more than 300,000 ballots in Washington arrived after Election Day last year.

"President Trump's executive order is nothing more than a blatant attempt to rig the system and suppress votes," Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield said in a news release. "He's trying to make it harder for people to

vote. It's a direct assault on the Consti-

tution and a brazen attempt to act like a king, dictating how states should run their elections.

The lawsuits from the states follow earlier ones against the executive order by nonprofit voting groups and the Democratic National Committee. They say the order could disenfranchise voters because millions of eligible votingage Americans do not have the proper documents readily available.

'You cannot annex another country', Danish **Premier Frederiksen tells US over Greenland**

NUUK, Greenland, April 5, (AP): Denmark's prime minister has told the US during a visit to Greenland that "you cannot annex another country," even with the argument that interna-

tional security is at stake. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, meanwhile, said on Friday that Washington will respect Greenland's self-determination and Copenhagen "should focus on the fact that the Greenlanders don't want to be a part of Denmark."

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was wrapping up a three-day visit to the strategically critical Arctic island on Friday as US President Donald Trump seeks control of Greenland. He argues that Greenland, a semiautonomous territory belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark, is critical to



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, (left), Greenland's acting head of government Múte Bourup Egede, (right), and newly elected head of government, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, (center), prepare to embark on a trip with a Danish Navy Sea Hawk helicopter from the Danish Navy inspection ship Vaedderen, in the waters around Nuuk, Greenland on April 3. (AP)

A week ago, Vice President JD Vance visited a remote US military base in Greenland and accused Den-

mark of underinvesting in the territory. Frederiksen pushed back against the US criticism as she spoke on Thursday alongside Greenland's incoming and outgoing leaders on board a Danish naval ship. She argued that Denmark, a NATO ally, has been a reliable friend.

Speaking in English, she said that "if we let ourselves be divided as allies, then we do our foes a favor. And I will do everything that I can to prevent that from happening."

"When you ask our businesses to invest in the US, they do. When you ask us to spend more on our defense, we do; and when you ask of us to strengthen security in the Arctic, we are on the same page," she said.

"But when you demand to take over a part of the Kingdom of Denmark's territory, when we are met by pressure and by threats from our closest ally, what are we to believe in about the country that we have admired for so many years?"

"This is about the world order that we have built together across the Atlantic over generations: you cannot annex another country, not even with an argument about international security," Frederiksen said.

The Danish leader said that, if the U.S. wants to strengthen security in the Arctic, "let us do so together."



NATO foreign ministers attend a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in foreign ministers format at NATO

Europe and Canada to spend more on defense, but cool on US demands

BRUSSELS, April 5, (AP): European NATO allies and Canada on Friday said they are willing to ramp up defense spending but are cool on American demands for the size of their military budgets, particularly given US President Donald Trump's readiness to draw closer to Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

US allies have spent billions of dollars more on defense since Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago, but almost a third of them still don't meet NATO's target of at least 2% of their gross domestic product. Trump has said that US allies should commit to spend-

ing at least 5%, but that would require investment at an unprecedented scale. According to NATO figures, the US was projected to have spent 3.38% last year, the only ally whose spending has dropped over the last decade. "It is important that we all agree that Russia is a

threat. If not, I don't know why we should always increase more and more defense spending," Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly told reporters at NATO

headquarters in Brussels.

NATO leaders said at a summit last year that Russia "remains the most significant and direct threat to Allies"

Trump's public rehabilitation of Putin, who had become an international pariah indicted for war crimes, has disturbed US allies, and they believe that the decision to rule out NATO membership for Ukraine weakened Kyiv's hand at the negotiating table before peace talks have even begun.

Beyond that, Europe and Canada were alarmed last month when the United States split with European allies by refusing to blame Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in votes on three UN resolutions seeking an end to the

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that Washington isn't insisting that its allies hit the 5% spending target overnight, but "we think that's what NATO allies need to be spending for NATO to face the threats that

itself has identified and articulated.'

Russian missile strike in central Ukraine kills 18

KYIV, Ukraine, April 5, (AP): The death toll from a Russian missile strike in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih has risen to 18, including nine children, regional governor Serhii Lysak said Saturday.

A further 61 people were injured in Friday's attack, ranging from a 3-month-old baby to elderly residents. Forty remain hospitalized, including two children in critical condition and 17 in serious condition. "There can never be forgiveness for this," said Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the city's defense council. "Eternal memory to the victims." Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of Ukrainian President Vo-

lodymyr Zelenskyy. "The missile struck an area right next to residential buildings - hitting a playground and ordinary streets," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. Local authorities said the strike damaged about 20 apartment buildings, more than 30 vehicles, an educational building and a restaurant. The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Friday that it had

carried out a high-precision missile strike with a high explosive warhead on a restaurant where a meeting with unit commanders and Western instructors was taking place. Russian military claimed that the strike killed 85 military

personnel and foreign officers and destroyed 20 vehicles. The military's claims could not be independently verified. The Ukrainian General Staff rejected the claims. A later drone strike on Kryvyi Rih killed one woman and

wounded seven other people.

Zelenskyy blamed the daily strikes on Russia's unwillingness to end the war: "Every missile, every drone strike proves Russia wants only war," he said, urging Ukraine's allies to increase pressure on Moscow and bolster Ukraine's



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, a car burns following a Russian missile attack that killed more than a dozen people, including children, in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine on April 4. (AP)

America

'7 years in jail for Santos': Prosecutors are seeking more than seven years in prison for

disgraced former US rep George Santos after he pleaded guilty to federal fraud and identity theft charges.

The US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York argued in a court filing Friday that a significant sentence was warranted because the New York Republican's "unparalleled crimes" had "made a mockery" of the country's election system.

"From his creation of a wholly fictitious biography to his callous theft of money from elderly and impaired



donors, Santos's unrestrained greed and voracious appetite for fame enabled him to exploit the very system by which we select our representatives," the office wrote. (AP)

Two officers charged: Two US border inspectors in Southern California have been charged with taking thousands of dollars in bribes to allow people to enter the country through the nation's busiest port of entry without showing documents, prosecutors said.

US Customs and Border Protection officers Farlis Almonte and Ricardo Rodriguez were assigned to immigration inspection booths at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

They were charged after investigators found phone evidence showing they had exchanged messages with human traffickers in Mexico and discovered unexplained cash deposits into their bank accounts, according to a criminal complaint unsealed Thursday. (AP)

Cambodia's leader presides at ceremony for upgrade of naval base with help from China

SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia, April 5, (AP): Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Saturday presided over the opening of an expansion of his country's main naval base, which analysts and the U.S. government suspect will be used as a strategic outpost by

Construction of a new pier to accommodate much larger ships, a dry dock for repairs and other features was completed in recent weeks at the Ream Naval Base in southern Cambodia, on the Gulf of Thailand.

The project has drawn great attention mainly because Washington - noting that China is Cambodia's closest ally and main source of investment and aid - believes that Beijing has been secretly granted special and exclusive privileges to use the base, a claim repeatedly denied by Cambodian offi-

Hun Manet at the inauguration noted that the ceremony was taking place two weeks ahead of a visit to Cambodia by Chinese President Xi Jinping. He praised Xi's government for help in building the expansion and other projects, describing bilateral relations

as good and strong. At the same time, he declared that the Ream base expansion was not hidden from other countries, and said warships from all friendly countries can visit the base and hold joint military exercises, except for very big warships that cannot be physically accommo-

"I would like to take this opportunity to make it clear that the Cambodian government led by the Cambodian People's Party has no intention, in the past or today or in the future, of violating its Constitution by allowing any country's troops to establish exclusive bases on Cambodian territory,"

China's Defense Ministry, in a statement issued in Beijing, said the China-Cambodia Ream Naval Base Joint Support and Training Center - part of the facility that was officially opened Saturday - will support a wide range of joint operations.

Areas of cooperation will include counterterrorism, disaster prevention and relief, humanitarian assistance and joint training, the ministry said in a

"Necessary personnel from both countries will be stationed at the site to ensure smooth operation of the center. The center's establishment and operation are based on mutual respect and equal consultation between China and Cambodia," the statement said.

Cao Qingfeng, a visiting senior member of China's Central Military Commission, said in a speech that the base "will surely become a new starting point to continuously promote the relationship between the two armies and consolidate the development." A contingent of at least 100 Chinese sailors who have been on temporary duty at the base also took part, marching and singing.



Cambodian navy officers walk for attending an official inauguration of the Ream Naval Base in Sihanoukville, southwestern of Phnom Penh, Cambodia on April 5. (AP)

'It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our nation'

Yoon removed as South Korea's president over short-lived martial law

SEOUL, South Korea, April 5, (AP): South Korea's Constitutional Court unanimously removed Yoon Suk Yeol from office Friday, ending his tumultuous presidency and setting up a new election, four months after he threw the nation into turmoil with an ill-fated declaration of martial law.

The verdict capped a dramatic fall for Yoon, a former star prosecutor who became president in 2022, just a year after he entered politics.

In a nationally televised hearing, the court's acting chief Moon Hyungbae said the eight-member bench found Yoon's actions were unconstitutional and had a grave impact.

"By declaring martial law in breach of the constitution and other laws, the defendant brought back the history of abusing state emergency decrees, shocked the people and caused confusion in the society, economy, politics, diplomacy and all other areas," Moon said.

"Given the negative impact on constitutional order caused by the defendant's violation of laws and its ripple effects are grave, we find that the benefits of upholding the constitution by dismissing the defendant far outweigh the national losses from the dismissal of the president," the justice concluded.

Anti-Yoon protesters near the court erupted into tears and danced when the verdict was announced in the late morning. Two women wept as they hugged and an old man near them leapt to his feet and screamed with joy. The crowd later marched

through Seoul streets.

Outside Yoon's official residence. many supporters cried, screamed and yelled at journalists when they saw the news of the verdict on a giant TV screen. But they quickly cooled down after their organizer pleaded for calm.

"We will absolutely not be shaken!" a protest leader shouted on stage. "Anyone who accepts this ruling and prepares for an early presidential election is our enemy.

No major violence has been reported by late afternoon.

"Political risks related to domestic polarization and policy instability remain," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "But the Constitutional Court's unanimous ruling has removed a major source of uncertainty. Korean government institutions have withstood a volatile mix of legislative obstruction and executive overreach that posed the greatest challenge to democracy in a generation.

An election will be held within two months for a new president. But a festering divide over Yoon's impeachment could complicate South Korea's efforts to deal with crucial issues like President Donald Trump's tariffs and other "America First" pol-

icies, observers say. Yoon said in a statement issued via his defense team that he deeply regrets failing to live up to the public's expectations, but stopped short of explicitly accepting the verdict. There have been fears he would incite efforts to resist his removal, as he



A supporter of ousted South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol shouts slogan during a rally supporting him after the Constitutional Court removed him from office on Friday, in Seoul, South Korea on April 5. The words, right, read 'It's Free, Republic of Korea'. (AP)

earlier vowed to fight to the end.

He added that he will pray for the country and its people. "It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our nation," Yoon said.

Yoon's ruling People Power Party said it would accept the decision, but one of Yoon's lawyers, Yoon Kapkeun, called the ruling "completely incomprehensible" and a "pure political decision.

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's acting leader, vowed to maintain public safety and order and ensure a smooth transition to the next administration

Surveys show Lee Jae-myung, leader of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, is the early favorite to win the upcoming presidential by-election, though he faces several trials for corruption and other charg-

"It will be an uphill battle for the conservative party to win a snap presidential election," said Duyeon Kim, a senior analyst at the Center for a New American Security in Washington. "If Lee wins, South Korea's foreign policy will likely look very different from what the U.S. and like-minded countries have enjoyed

during Yoon's presidency because of the demands of the progressive base.' Lee welcomed the ruling and cred-

ited the South Korean people for "protecting our democratic republic."
Martial law lasted only six hours, but left behind a political crisis, rattling financial markets and unsettling

the country's diplomatic partners. After announcing martial law late at night on Dec. 3, Yoon, a conservative, sent hundreds of soldiers to the liberal opposition-controlled National Assembly, election offices and other sites. Special operations soldiers smashed windows at the assembly and scuffled with protesters, evoking traumatic memories of the country's past military rules among many South Koreans.

Enough lawmakers, including some from the ruling party, managed to enter the assembly to vote down Yoon's decree unanimously.

Some senior military and police officers sent to the assembly testified Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to block the vote on his decree or to detain his political rivals. Yoon says the troops were deployed to the assembly simply to maintain

Yoon was impeached by the National Assembly on Dec. 14. The assembly accused him of violating the constitution and other laws by suppressing assembly activities, attempting to detain politicians, and undermining peace across the country.

In his final testimony at the Constitutional Court hearing, Yoon said his decree was a desperate attempt to draw public support of his fight against the "wickedness" of the Democratic Party, which had obstructed his agenda, impeached top officials and slashed the government's budget bill. He earlier called the National Assembly "a den of criminals" and 'anti-state forces.'

The Constitutional Court ruled Yoon infringed upon the assembly's right to demand martial law be lifted, the freedom of political party activities and the neutrality of the military. It also said Yoon's political impasse with the opposition wasn't the type of emergency situation that required martial law and that Yoon's decree lacked required legal procedures such as deliberation by a formal Cabinet

Yoon has been indicted on charges of rebellion in connection with his decree, a charge that carries the death penalty or a life sentence if convicted. He became the first South Korean president to be arrested or indicted while in office.

Yoon was released from jail in March after a Seoul district court cancelled his arrest. That allows him to stand trial without detention.

His removal from office also costs Yoon the presidential immunity that protected him from most criminal prosecutions. This means he could face other criminal charges, such as abuse of power, in connection with his martial law decree, some observ-



Relatives of miners look out from rubble after an explosive attack near the Hijos de Ingenio gold mine in Yani, Bolivia on April 3. (AP)

Blast at standoff between rival gold miners in Bolivia kills 5

A powerful explosion killed at least five people, including a pregnant woman and 1-year-old baby, during a standoff between rival groups of gold miners in northwestern Bolivia, police said, a rare instance of territorial disputes between the nation's mining cooperatives turning fatal.

The blast thundered through the Yani mining camp as two rival mining groups dispute access to the gold mine near the mountain town of Sorata, some 150 kilometers (about 90 miles) northwest of the country's administrative capital of La Paz, said Col. Gunther Agudo, a local police officer. Several gold deposits straddle the re-

Agudo had initially reported six people killed but revised the toll to five after firefighters finished recovering the bodies from under the rubble. The dead included three men.

a pregnant woman and an infant,

Bolivia's deputy interior minister, Jhonny Aguilera, said the suspected perpetrator of the attack was killed by the explosion, which was detonated by remote control.

The predawn explosion at the mine struck a three-story house and set cars and tractors alight. The fires wrecked several other structures and cut electricity. (AP)

Costa Rica looks to El Salvador's gang crackdown for path to stopping violence

TECOLUCA, El Salvador, April 5, (AP): Costa Rica's security minister toured El Salvador's maximum-security gang prison on Friday as part

Salvador has taken to reduce violence caused by powerful street gangs dur-

of his review of the measures that El ing a now three-year offensive under a



Costa Rica's Justice and Peace Minister Gerald Campos Valverde, (left), tours the Terrorist Confinement Center in Tecoluca, El Salvador on April

state of emergency.

Costa Rica Justice and Peace Minister Gerald Campos Valverde said he was visiting on orders of President Rodrigo Chaves to "see the good practices of the Salvadoran people with the goal of combating crime and to returning rights to all citizens."

In November, Costa Rica bestowed its highest diplomatic honor on El Salvador President Nayib Bukele for his success in lowering levels of violence during his three-year campaign against

powerful street gangs.
El Salvador has lived under a state of emergency that suspends fundamental rights like access to a lawyer. Some 84,000 people have been arrested, accused of gang ties.

Homicides have plummeted in El Salvador and the improved security has fueled Bukele's popularity.

"El Salvador's rescue from those nefarious claws is also helping the peace in our region," Chaves said when he presented Bukele with the recognition



COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, April 5, (AP): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated construction work on a solar plant in neighboring Sri Lanka and witnessed the signing of energy and defense agreements seen as efforts to consolidate New Delhi's influence in the debt-stricken island

India has been concerned about China's increasing presence in Sri Lanka, which is located on one of the world's busiest shipping routes in what India considers part of its strategic backvard.

Beijing has provided Sri Lanka with billions of dollars in loans for development projects. But Sri Lanka's economic collapse in 2022 changed the country's priorities and provided an opportunity for India, as New Delhi stepped in with massive financial and material assistance. At the same time, China's support for restructuring its infrastructure loans is vital for Sri Lanka.

Modi on Saturday held talks with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanavake and the two virtually inaugurated construction work on an Indianfunded 120-megawatt solar power plant, which is being built as a joint venture between the two countries.

Sri Lanka faced a severe power shortage in 2022 after being unable to pay for oil and coal to power its electricity plants. It has also set ambitious goals of reducing its dependence on fossil fuel.

Modi welcomed the agreements on defense cooperation and said both sides agreed to work together on security cooperation in the Indian Ocean through a regional grouping called the Colombo Security Conclave, which also includes Bangladesh, Maldives and Mauritius.

"I am grateful to President Dis-

In this image made from video, Ugandan President

Yoweri Museveni, left, shakes hands with his South

Sudan counterpart Salva Kiir in Juba, South Sudan on

April 4. (AP)



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, center, and Sri Lankan president Anura Kumara Dissanayake, center right, walk during an official welcome ceremony in Colombo, Sri Lanka on April 5. (AP)

sanayake for his sensitivity towards India's interests. We believe that we have shared security interests. The security of both countries is interconnected and co-dependent," Modi said.

He said India has a special place for Sri Lanka in its "Neighbourhood First Policy" and has fulfilled its duties as a truly friendly neighbour when Sri Lanka was in difficulty.

Modi was awarded "Sri Lanka Mi-

tra Vibhushana," the highest award presented to a foreign leader.

Dissanayake said that he reiterated during talks with Modi that Sri Lanka's territory will not be used for any acts that could harm India's security and as well as the stability of the region.

China plans to build a \$3.7 billion oil refinery near Hambantota port, which was taken over by Beijing after Sri Lanka failed to pay back the loan to develop the port. It gives China a key foothold in the country directly opposite India's coastline.

Both India and China have separately agreed on terms with Sri Lanka for restructuring its debt, which would enable the country to come out from bankruptcy and rebuild the tattered economy.

While the agreements were being signed, hundreds of protesters gathered opposite the capital Colombo's main rail station, claiming the agreements were a betrayal of the country to

Indian domination. Frontline Socialist Party, a radical splinter party of Dissanayake's People's Liberation Front, accused the president of backing down from his original stand on India. The leader of the party, Kumar Gunaratnam, said India had never been a genuine friend

Uganda president holds talks with South Sudanese leaders

NAIROBI, Kenya, April 5, (AP): Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni was expected to meet South Sudanese officials on the second day of his trip to the capital, Juba, as the UN has expressed concern of a renewed civil war after the main opposition leader was put under house arrest. Museveni, who is among the guarantors of a 2018 peace agreement that ended a five-year civil war, held closed-door discussions with President Salva Kiir on Thursday. South Sudan's Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdallah Goc said that the country's leadership had assured Museveni of its commitment to implement the peace agreement.

South Sudan's political landscape remains fragile and recent violence between government troops and armed groups allied to the opposition has escalated tensions. Uganda last month deployed troops to South Sudan to support the government, but it was criticized by South Sudan's main opposition party SPLM-IO, whose leader Riek Machar is under house arrest on charges of incitement.

OPEC+ boosts May oil output by 411,000 bpd

VIENNA, April 5, (Xinhua): The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, collectively known as OPEC+, announced on Thursday that they will increase oil output by 411,000 barrels per day (bpd) in May, exceeding expectations According to a statement on the OPEC website, the decision was made during a virtual meeting where member countries, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman, assessed global market conditions and future prospects.



Other Voices

OPEC+ to increase oil production

Oil prices drop to \$65 amid trade uncertainty

By Kamel Al-Harami Independent Oil Analyst

BRENT oil prices dropped to \$65 a barrel by the end of Friday, with uncertainty about how much further the decline will con-

This drop is a direct result of the U.S. administration imposing tariffs on all goods imported into the country, ranging from ten percent to as high as 46 percent and 49

percent on goods from Vietnam and Cambodia. This led to huge decline in stock values, sparking panic in global markets as investors brace for the potential fallout on Monday.



Al-Harami

In Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the tariff rate stands at a relatively low ten percent.

While trade with the U.S. is limited primarily to oil and gas, which are exempt from the tariffs, the impact of these new import taxes is still being felt. A tariff on oil and gas imports would have disastrous impact for U.S. gasoline consumers, which is why it did not seem to be the right moment for such a measure

OPEC+ finds itself in a difficult position, and is uncertain how to respond. The group recently decided to increase oil production starting next month and is considering pumping even more crude into the market from June onward. The decision aims to protect market share

and boost domestic economies by increasing oil revenues. However, with oil prices at \$65 a barrel, there seems to be little appetite for further price declines.

Even though OPEC+ has made its decision, it might reconsider as the situation evolves. The timing of this move may not be ideal, and we must wait and see how things unfold.

There is limited demand for more oil right now, and inflation is expected to rise, creating an unclear economic outlook. Every country will need to prioritize domestic issues, face inflationary pressures, and tighten their belts.

In these uncertain times, everyone needs to tighten their belts and save until the economic picture becomes clearer. Saving and reducing expenses is the wise choice right now.

With inflation impacting the global economy, including the USA, which has been at the center of many economic challenges, the future remains unpredictable. Oil prices are expected to decrease, with \$60 per barrel potentially being a target if OPEC+ increases production.

The next six months will be critical, as countries negotiate and explore new trade alliances. China is expected to emerge as the primary beneficiary of these shifts. Global trade is in turmoil, but this presents an opportunity to reshape the trade map. New global alliances and partnerships will form, with China taking center stage as a major player in world trade.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com



The Burgan Bank team at the press conference announcing the launch of Academy X.

Academy X 2025 set to inspire young women in tech and entrepreneurship

Burgan Bank sponsors CODED's Academy X in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: In a new bid to be at the forefront of Kuwait's advancement toward realizing its Vision 2035, Burgan Bank announced its strategic sponsorship of Academy X, the biggest women's empowerment initiative in Kuwait's tech industry, led by CODED Academy with the support of Kuwait University (KU). This sponsorship comes as part of Burgan's yearlong comprehensive social responsibility program, further aligning with its commitment to women's empowerment and embedding the highest standards of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) into its practices and operations.

"Following the great joint success, we achieved with Burgan Lab Academy, we are delighted to renew our partnership with CODED as strategic sponsors of their outstanding women in tech and entrepreneurship empowerment initiative, Academy X, whichechoes our devoted strategy for investing in Kuwait's aspiring talents through innovative learning and development programs," commented Mr. Bashar Al Qattan, Executive Manager-Learning & Talent Development at Burgan Bank.

Burgan Bank.

He added: "As a business that grows around the market's evolving modern needs, our success relies greatly on leveraging our tech-driven national talents' innovative creativity and problem-solving prowess. Nonetheless, our envisioned success cannot be fully realized until we guarantee a fair opportunity for talents of both genders to lead our technology and digital transformation efforts; a fair opportunity that begins with early access to

advanced tech education and training."
On her part, Ms. Fatma Ahmad,
Senior Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank, said: "We
believe that holding spaces where
women can learn together and inspire
one another can have a fundamental
long-term impact on the sustainable
development of our institution, sector, and economy. That's why, as part



Mr. Bashar Al Qattan, Executive Manager- Learning & Talent Development at Burgan Bank.

of our Empower Her program, and in compliance with the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Kuwait's Vision 2035, we strive to continue playing an active role in achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls in Kuwait through valuable partnerships and forward-looking learning and development initiatives, such as Academy X. Our sponsorship of Academy X also comes as an extension of Burgan's 'Teach Them Young' initiative for preparing future tech leaders."

Meanwhile, Hashim Behbehani, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at CODED Academy, said: "We are proud of our partnership with Burgan Bank in supporting Academy X, which represents a true alignment between our mission to empower young women and the Bank's unwavering commitment to supporting women through its initiatives. Burgan's contribution to the program reflects a genuine dedication to creating meaningful social impact and opening new development opportunities that support the ambitions of Kuwaiti girls in tech and entrepreneurship. This partnership paves the way for promising career paths in



Ms. Fatma Ahmad, Senior Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank.

an evolving digital world, and we take pride in working with an organization that places women's empowerment at the heart of its social strategy."

Building on the success of its first edition, Academy X, with the support of Burgan Bank, is preparing to roll out its 2025 round where it continues to inspire and guide young women with an aptitude for IT development and entrepreneurship. The one-year program, which extends for six days per cohort, is set to introduce the 2025 applicants to the principles of successful user interface and user experience design (UI/UX), the latest artificial intelligence (AI) tools, the foundations of entrepreneurship, as well as leadership and soft skills

The program's interactive, handson nature guarantees that participants have an opportunity to translate their newly acquired knowledge into individual and group projects that rely on tools such as TelePort, UiZard, Gamma, Adobe Logo Maker, and Adalo. In addition, the program's 2025 edition will also include engaging talks delivered by some of Kuwait's most prominent female leaders in tech innovation and entrepreneurship, for a chance to



Mr. Hashim Behbehani, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at CODED Academy.

Academy X participants and give them personalized feedback on their startup ideas and how they present them to the market.

As part of its sponsorship, Bur-

relay their experiences first-hand to the

As part of its sponsorship, Burgan Bank aims to aid Academy X in achieving its goals of increasing the program registrations from 340+ in 2024 to 500 in 2025, as well as encouraging more students to launch their startups through post-program mentorship and introducing more AI tools to fully utilize participants' innovative and creative energy.

It serves to note that, as a certified Great Place to Work®, Burgan Bank has a long track record of initiatives and programs dedicated to enabling women in the workplace and preparing young women for a prosperous career in banking and finance. These efforts include, but are not exclusive to, the Lean-In Circle for Women Empowerment program, which explores and addresses women-specific challenges in the workplace; and the Empower Her summer internship program for undergraduate young women wishing to pursue a career in

'OPEC Fund' approves \$600 mln for global development projects

DUBAI, April 5: The OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC Fund) has approved over US\$600 million in new development financing to support sustainable infrastructure, private sector development, food security and human capital in partner countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The new projects were approved during the institution's 191st Governing Board meeting in Vienna today and during the first quarter of 2025. The new commitments reflect the OPEC Fund's efforts to promote inclusive and resilient growth in line with its

strategic priorities.

OPEC Fund President Abdulhamid Alkhalifa said: "These engagements area significant demonstration of our commitment to building resilience and enabling inclusive development. From transport corridors to vocational training and financing small businesses the OPEC Fund is supporting practical solutions that align with our partners' priorities and deliver tangible results. We remain focused on driving sustainable development across regions and sectors."

The latest approved projects in-

Public Sector Operations

Costa Rica: A €180 million loan will co-finance the "Expansion and Improvement of the San Jose – San Ramon Road Corridor Project" with the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI). The project will improve traffic flow and road safety along Route 1 of the Inter-American Highway, supporting trade, connectivity and inclusive economic growth.

Nepal: A US\$100 million loan will co-finance the "South-Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Electricity Transmission and Distribution Strengthening Project" with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The project will enhance the reliability and efficiency of the electricity supply in Nepal and promote cross-border power trade in the region.

Rwanda: A US\$27.95 million loan will co-finance the "Center of Excellence in Aviation Skills Project" with the African Development Bank (AfDB). The initiative will raise Rwanda's national aviation training capacity to international standards, contribute to human capital development and support the country's ambinion to become a racional aviation but.

tion to become a regional aviation hub. Senegal: A €25 million loan will help finance the "Water Valorization for Value Chains Development Project- Phase 2 (PROVALE – CV2)" together with AfDB and other partners to promote the sustainable increase of agricultural production, jobs and incomes. The project is also helping to combat the impact of climate change on agricultural and livestock production. It will directly benefit 57,000 households.

Tanzania: A US\$75 million loan -as the first tranche of a US\$150 million facility -will support the "Regional Standard Gauge Railway Project (Uvinza–Malagarasi Section)", co-financed with AfDB and other partners. The project will enhance regional connectivity and stimulate trade between Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Private Sector Operations:

Côte d'Ivoire: A €30 million loan will expand access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), helping to strengthen entrepreneurship, promote job creation and stimulate economic growth.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: A US\$20 million loan, as part of a larger financing package with development partners, will support on-lending to critical sectors of the economy.

Nicaragua: A US\$20 million loan will promote financial inclusion by facilitating access to credit for businesses in agriculture sector.

Regional (Africa): A US\$40 million participation in a US\$240 million trade finance facility will finance the import and export of agricultural commodities across multiple African countries.

Rial falls to 1,043,000 per dollar

Iran's currency hits record low against US dollar amid tensions

TEHRAN, April 5, (AP): Iran 's rial currency traded Saturday at a record low against the U.S. dollar as the country returned to work after a long holiday, costing over 1 million rials for a single greenback as tensions between Tehran and Washington likely will push it even lower.

The exchange rate had plunged to over 1 million rials during the Persian New Year, Nowruz, as currency shops closed and only informal trading took place on the streets, creating additional pressure on the market.

But as traders resumed work Saturday, the rate fell even further to 1,043,000 to the dollar, signaling the new low appeared here to stay.

On Ferdowsi Street in Iran's capital, Tehran, the heart of the country's money exchanges, some traders even switched off their electronic signs showing the going rate as uncertainty loomed over how much further the rial could drop.

"We turn it off since we are not sure about the successive changes of the rate," said Reza Sharifi, who works at one exchange.

Kuwait Credit Bank disburses KD 37.2 million in real estate and social loans in March 2025 KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The total amount disbursed by the Kuwait amounted to KD 1.95 million. The loans for the expansion and renovation could be considered as a second of the constant of the cons

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The total amount disbursed by the Kuwait Credit Bank for real estate loans, women's loans, grants, and social loans and grants in March 2025 reached KD 37.2 million, while portfolio loans amounted to KD 155,000, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to statistics issued by Kuwait Credit Bank, the value allocated for the construction of private plots was KD 731.7 thousand. Loans for government plots totaled KD 32.1 million. The purchase of houses

amounted to KD 1.95 million. The loans for the expansion and renovation of government houses reached KD 488.9 thousand. The expansion and renovation of private housing amounted to KD 395.3 thousand. Grants for people with disabilities totaled KD 1.53 million. The value of loans granted to portfolio loan applicants for the same month was KD 155,000, with KD 140,000 allocated for expansion and renovation, and KD 15,000 for renovation only.

Successful fulfillment of auditing procedures and certification requirements

KFH receives ISO certification for Business Continuity Management

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has attained ISO 22301 certification for its Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS) after successfully completing the required auditing procedures and meeting all certification standards in record time.

Commenting on this achievement, KFH Executive Manager Business Continuity Management, Faisal AlMulla, said thatthis certification demonstrates KFH's sustainability approach to maintaining operations during crises at the highest international standards. He further noted that it reflects the bank's proactive capacities and preparedness to face potential risks, ultimately ensuring reduced downtime and continuous banking services despite unforeseen circumstances.

He further explained that the ISO 22301 certification highlights KFH's efficient operations, its structured approach to managing potential crises, and its strong ability to withstand future challenges. Moreover, he noted that this certification proves the bank has successfully adopted leading practices to ensure stability and continuity across all its operations.

"KFH, a world-class leading banking entity, always seeks to maintain a solid and effective system for business continuity management. KFH also maintains a robust and effective strategy for crisis man-



Faisal AlMulla

agement, supported by a cutting edge digital-based ecosystem, ensuring a seamless continuation of KFH's services and core operations. This approach has led to KFH being awarded this certification by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)," AlMulla explained.

He affirmed that ISO 22301 represents a milestone for the efforts of the Bank's different departments in

their pursuit of applying the best international standards in risk management and business continuity. He also highlighted KFH's endeavors in achieving a significant leap toward digital transformation in risk management by adopting the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and advanced analytics to enhance risk measurement, monitoring, and early detection capabilities. This was accomplished in accordance with the best global practices, allowing KFH to build effective, developable and proactive measures to face unforeseen challenges and ensure its business continuity considering the geopolitical changes surrounding the region and the world.

"Furthermore, the risk appetite framework for the Group and subsidiaries was comprehensively updated to align with the evolving economic and financial conditions, ensuring alignment with the Group's risk strategy and its overall strategy," AlMulla remarked.

It serves to note that the ISO 22301 certification determines the Business Continuity Management (BCM) requirements and provides a comprehensive framework that enables organizations to foresee, prepare for and recover from business disruptions effectively. Additionally, an effective BCM system allows organizations to detect potential threats and mitigate its implications ensuring their business continuity.

Bank strategically positioned to play a leading role in PPPs

Al-Fulaij emphasizes NBK's financial expertise and strong regional presence in driving major development projects

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Salah Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer of National Bank of Kuwait - Kuwait, emphasized that despite global economic uncertainties – including oil price fluctuations, geopolitical tensions, and inflationary pressures – the bank remains resilient, leveraging its strong balance sheet, diversified revenue streams, and prudent risk management to navigate market volatility effectively, while maintaining resilience.

In an interview with Global Finance, Al-Fulaij highlighted that regulatory reforms, both local and global, such as heightened standards for transparency, antimoney laundering, and cybersecurity, demand significant investments in compliance and technological upgrades. He also emphasized that NBK is leveraging digital tools to ensure operational efficiency and adhere to evolving standards.

He added that Kuwait's ambitious sustainability goals also present both opportunities and challenges as scaling up green projects and aligning stakeholders on long-term ESG priorities require significant coordination.

"Another element we have to keep up with is the rapid pace of technological advancement and the need for continuous innovation. Customers increasingly demand seamless, secured, and personalized banking experiences, prompting us to expand our digital banking platforms, invest in fintech collaborations, and adopt emerging technologies," Al-Fulaij said.

He also highlighted that attracting and retaining skilled talent, especially in fields liketechnology and ESG, remains a persistent challenge across various industries. In this regard, NBK has established programs, such as NBK Academy and NBK Tech Academy, to equip local talents with the necessary skills and expertise.

Reforms & Opportunities

When asked about the opportunities arising from Kuwait's economic reforms, Al-Fulaij stated: "Rreforms provide a pivotal platform to capitalize on transformative opportunities, particularly in digitalization, ESG efforts, and public-private partnerships (PPP)".

Furthermore, he statedthat the government's emphasis on smart infrastructure, fintech innovations, and regulatory enhancements, has created an enabling environment for NBK to accelerate its digital transformation journey. He further highlighted that the bank's investments in advanced digital banking solutions, automation, and cutting-edge analytics equip it to offer seamless, secure, and scalable financial services. These initiatives not only elevate customer experiences but also enable SMEs to thrive, supporting the national agenda of fostering financial inclusion and private sector growth.

"NBK is also strategically positioned to play a leading role in PPPs, particularly in sectors like renewable energy, healthcare, and infrastructure. By leveraging our financial expertise and strong regional presence, we contribute to the successful execution of large-scale de-



Salah Al-Fulaij



Global finance

velopment projects that drive economic diversification," Al-Fulaij added.

On the ESG front, Al-Fulaij explained that Kuwait's reforms are opening doors for sustainable growth, indicating that NBK was the first bank in Kuwait to issue green bonds last year, a milestone that underscores the bank's leadership in sustainable finance and its deep commitment to supporting green financing and sustainable infrastructure projects.

Moreover, he NBK continues to embed ESG considerations into its financing solutions, thus empowering clients to adoptsocially responsible investment strategies.

Al-Fulaij emphasised that reforms aimed at enhancing entrepreneurship and innovation create new opportunities for NBK to expand its retail and wealth management services, explaining that by incorporating ESG into the Bank's product offerings, it empowers clients to make socially responsible financial decisions, aligning their investments with Kuwait's broader vision for sustainable development.

Promising Sectors

When asked about the sectors that have the biggest growth potential, Al-Fulaij responded: "In line with Ku-

■ Reforms provide a pivotal platform to capitalize on transformative opportunities, particularly in digitalization, ESG efforts, and public-private partnerships

■ NBK is strategically positioned to play a leading role in PPPs

■ The Bank is a key partner in financing mega logistic projects

Staying at the forefront of technological advancements and fostering continuous innovation remains a core priority for NBK

■ NBK continues to lead in digital banking by developing advanced solutions and forging strategic partnerships with Fin-Techs

■ The Bank plays a crucial role in financing healthcare projects, including hospitals and specialized medical facilities

 Economic reforms that promote entrepreneurship and innovation create new opportunities for expanding retail and wealth management services

■ Locally, promising growth prospects exist in renewable energy, technology, health-care, logistics, and contracting

While Kuwait's ambitious sustainability agenda presents significant opportunities, it also comes with inherent challenges.

■ NBK's resilience is underpinned by its strong balance sheet, diversified revenue streams, and disciplined risk management approach.

The Bank remains committed to empowering future generations by supporting initiatives that foster innovation, skill development, and entrepreneurshi.

wait Vision 2035, NBK identifies high growth potential in renewable energy,technology, digital transformation, healthcare, logistics, and contracting".

He explained that with Kuwait prioritizing clean energy initiatives, including solar and wind projects, NBK actively supports this transition by offering green financing solutions and partnerships to reduce carbon emissions and promote energy efficiency.

"Investments in fintech, e-commerce, and smart infrastructure are unlocking opportunities across industries. NBK continues to lead by enhancing its digital banking offerings, enabling seamless financial services, and supporting tech-driven businesses. The bank's digital initiatives include partnerships with FinTechs, cashless payment solutions, digital onboarding and the recent acquisition of a 51% stake in Kuwait's leading payment service provider, UPayments," Al-Fulaij emphasized.

Speaking of Kuwait's healthcare sector, Al-Fulaij noted that it was on the cusp of significant growth, referring toNBK's instrumental role in financing large-scale healthcare projects, including hospitals and specialized medical facilities.

As for logistics services, Al-Fulaij highlighted Kuwait's strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, underscoring the significant growth opportunities in transportation and warehousing. He pointed out that this is particularly evident with the focus on mega projects such as Mubarak Al Kabeer Port, the modernization of Shuwaikh and Shuaiba ports, and the expansion of Kuwait International Airport's new terminal.

He noted that NBK has played a pivotal role as a key financial partner in supporting these projects, adding that their advancement is expected to have a positive impact on the contracting sector as well.

Social Contributions

In response to a question about the bank's social contributions over the past year, Al-Fulaij reaffirmed NBK's commitment to empowering future generations by supporting initiatives that foster innovation, skills development, and entrepreneurship among Kuwaiti youth. Highlighting the bank's key social initiatives, he stated: "Bankee is a pioneering program that integrates financial literacy into the curriculum, equipping students in Kuwait with the necessary tools to make informed financial decisions and grasp fundamental financial concepts. Additionally, NBK partners with educational institutions to support specialized workshops focused on entrepreneurship."

He highlighted that the bank launched hackathons and mentorship programs, cultivating a culture of innovation and self-reliance. Moreover, for the fifth consecutive year, NBK sponsored the TAMAKAN Program, providing participants with specialized courses to enhance their career readiness. This ongoing commitment reflects NBK's dedication to supporting young national talent and equipping them with the skills needed for future success.

"We are actively engaged towards women empowerment with our landmark program for women leadership, NBK Rise, which consists of various training modules to develop leadership, strategic communication, and interpersonal skills preparing women for higher leadership roles," Al-Fulaij added.

Al-Fulaij expressed NBK's pride with its ongoing commitments to the healthcare sector and most importantly its contributions to the "NBK Children's Hospital" which has been recently witnessing unprecedented medical achievements in the area of stem cell transplant.

China slaps 34% tax on all US imports

Move in retaliation for Trump's tariffs

BANGKOK, April 5, (AP): China announced Friday that it will impose a 34% tax on all U.S. imports next week, part of a flurry of retaliatory measures to U.S. President Donald Trump's new tariffs that delivered the strongest response yet from Beijing to the American leader's trade war.

The tariffs taking effect Thursday match the rate that Trump this week ordered imposed on Chinese products flowing into the United States. In February and March, Trump slapped two rounds of 10% tariffs on Chinese goods, citing allegations of Beijing's role in the fentanyl crisis.

The U.S. stock market plunged Friday following China's retaliatory moves. They include more export controls on rare earth minerals, which are critical for various technologies, and a lawsuit at the World Trade Organization over what Trump has dubbed reciprocal tariffs.

China also suspended imports of sorghum, poultry and bonemeal from six U.S. companies, added 27 firms to lists of companies facing trade restrictions, and launched an antimonopoly investigation into DuPont China Group Co., a subsidiary of the multinational chemical giant.

sidiary of the multinational chemical giant.

Trump posted Friday on Truth Social: "CHINA PLAYED IT WRONG, THEY PANICKED - THE ONE THING

THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO DO."

Yet he also indicated he could still negotiate with China on the sale of TikTok even after Beijing pressed pause on a deal following the new tariffs. On Friday, he extended the deadline for the social media app to divest from its Chinese parent company, per a federal law, for another 75 days.

"We hope to continue working in Good Faith with China, who I understand are not very happy about our Reciprocal Tariffs," Trump posted on his social media site. "We look forward to working with TikTok and China to close the Deal."

Beijing's response is "notably less restrained" than during the recent two rounds of 10% tariffs on Chinese goods, and that "likely reflects the Chinese leadership's diminished hopes for a trade deal with the U.S., at least in the short term," wrote Gabriel Wildau, managing director of the consultancy Teneo.

He said Beijing's tough response could trigger further escalation, with no sign that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump might meet soon or get on the phone to ease the tensions.

If China's previous responses were scalpels, this time it drew a sword, said Craig Singleton, senior China fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based think tank.

"China's new tariffs stop short of full-blown trade war, but they mark a clear escalation - matching Trump blow-forblow and signaling that Xi Jinping won't sit back under pressure," Singleton said.

But the escalation also is squeezing out space for diplomacy, he warned.

"The longer this drags, the harder it becomes for either side to deescalate without losing face," Singleton said.

In Beijing, the Commerce Ministry said it would impose more export controls on rare earths - materials used in high-tech products such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries. Included in the list was samarium and its compounds, which are used in aerospace manufacturing and the defense sector. Another element called gadolinium is used in MRI scans.

China's customs administration said it had suspended imports from two U.S. poultry businesses after officials detected furazolidone, a drug banned in China, in shipments from those companies. It said it found high levels of mold in the sorghum and found salmonella in the bonemeal feeds from four other U.S. companies.

The Chinese government said it also added 16 U.S. companies to the export control list, subjecting them to an export ban of dual-use products. Among them are High Point Aerotechnologies, a defense tech company, and Universal Logistics Holding, a publicly traded transportation and logistics company.

An additional 11 U.S. companies were added to the unreliable entity list, including the American drone makers Skydio and BRINC Drones, banning them from import and export activities as well as making new investments in China.

In announcing its WTO lawsuit, the Commerce Ministry said Trump's new tariffs move "seriously violates WTO rules, seriously damages the legitimate rights and interests of WTO members, and seriously undermines the rules-based multilateral trading system and international economic and trade order."

The ministry called the tariffs "a typical unilateral bullying practice that endangers the stability of the global economic and trade order."

In February, in response to Trump's first 10% tariff, China announced a 15% tariff on imports of coal and liquefied natural gas products from the U.S. It separately added a 10% tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery and large-engine cars.

A month later, Beijing responded to Trump's second round with additional tariffs of up to 15% on imports of key U.S. farm products, including chicken, pork, soy and beef. Experts then said Beijing exercised restraint, leaving room for negotiations with Washington.

By now, dozens of U.S. companies are subject to controls on trade and investment, while many more Chinese companies face similar limits on dealings with U.S. firms.

While friction on the trade front has been heating up, the two sides have maintained military dialogue.

U.S. and Chinese military officials met this week for the first time Trump took office in January to share concerns about military safety on the seas. The talks held Wednesday and Thursday in Shanghai were aimed at minimizing the risk of trouble, both sides said.

S&P 500 down 6% and Dow falls 2,231 pts

Markets plunge after Beijing retaliates against Trump tariffs

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Wall Street's worst crisis since COVID slammed into a higher gear Friday.

The S&P 500 lost 6% after China matched President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs announced earlier this week. The move increased the stakes in a trade war that could end with a recession that hurts everyone. Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, which is usually the economic highlight of each month, was enough to stop the slide.

The drop closed the worst week for the S&P 500 since March 2020, when the pandemic ripped through the global economy. The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 2,231 points, or 5.5% and the Nasdaq composite tumbled 5.8% to pull more than 20% below its record set in December.

So far there have been few, if any, winners in financial markets from the trade war. Stocks for all but 14 of the 500 companies within the S&P 500

index fell Friday. The price of crude oil tumbled to its lowest level since

2021. Other basic building blocks for economic growth, such as copper, also



Specialist Michael Pistillo works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Friday, April 4, 2025. (AP)

saw prices slide on worries the trade war will weaken the global economy.

China's response to U.S. tariffs caused an immediate acceleration of losses in markets worldwide. The Commerce Ministry in Beijing said it would respond to the 34% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from China with its own 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products beginning April 10. The United States and China are the world's two largest economies.

Markets briefly recovered some of their losses after the release of Friday morning's U.S. jobs report, which said employers accelerated their hiring by more last month than economists expected. It's the latest signal that the U.S. job market has remained relatively solid through the start of 2025, and it's been a linchpin keeping the U.S. economy out of a recession.

But that jobs data was backward looking, and the fear hitting financial markets is about what's to come.

US consumers rush to buy big-ticket items

WASHINGTON, April 5, (AP): John Gutierrez had been thinking about buying a new laptop for the past year. The Austin, Texas, resident needed a computer with faster processing and increased storage for his photography work and had his sights set on a product for a product of the process of th

uct from a Taiwanese brand.

Then President Donald Trump announced expansive new import tariffs Wednesday, including a 32% tax on imports from Taiwan. That same day, Gutierrez ordered the laptop, with a base price of \$2,400, from a retailer in New York specializing in photo and video gear.

"I thought I'd bite the bullet, buy it now, and then that way I'll have the latest technology on my laptop and don't have to worry about the tariffs,"

Gutierrez was among the U.S. consumers rushing to buy big-ticket items before the tariffs take effect. Economists say the tariffs are expected to increase prices for everyday items, warning of potentially weakened U.S. economic growth.

The White House hopes the tariffs prod countries to open their economies to more American exports, leading to negotiations that could reduce tariffs, or that companies increase their production in the U.S. to avoid higher

Rob Blackwell and his wife needed a new car that could handle long drives

from Arlington, Virginia, to their son's college. Their current electric vehicle is older with a limited range, and it will soon be used by his daughter, who is on the verge of getting her driver's license.

"I have been telling my wife that

"I have been telling my wife that for some time we were going to need to do it," he said, "and I was watching to see what the president did with tariffs."

Blackwell wanted another EV, but said leasing made more economic sense because the technology is everchanging. He had his eye on the new General Motors Optiq; it's an American car but made in Mexico, which could be subject to tariffs on supply chains that might increase the cost.

After hearing that tariffs would be announced, they made plans the weekend before to lease the car. He said the dealership honored the agreement they worked out before the tariffs were finalized. And although he said the salespeople were a pleasure to deal with, Blackwell sensed a shift in their stance.

"They know what we know, which is suddenly it flips from a buyer's market to a seller's market very quickly," Blackwell said, adding that he is happy with his choice.

"It was just a simple rational decision," he said. "If this is what the government's going to do, I need to get my act together."

Business





Stocking up helps, but experts caution against panic buying

How Trump's latest tariffs could affect your wallet



A hand-embroidery dress fabric made in India, costing a couple hundred dollars per yard, is sold at the Francia Textiles fabric store in the Fashion District in Los Angeles on Thursday, April 3, 2025. (AP)

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): President Donald Trump has unveiled his latest tariffs, and they could have significant implications for your wallet.

Trump's sweeping new tariffs, on

Trump's sweeping new tariffs, on top of previous levies and retaliation worldwide, are expected to increase prices for everyday items. The trade wars have already roiled financial markets and plunged businesses into uncertainty - all while economists warn of potentially weakened economic growth and heightened inequality.

Which impacts will be felt by consumers and workers first? And what can households do in the face of so much uncertainty? Here's what you need to know:

Tariffs are taxes on goods imported from other countries. Companies buying foreign products pay the tariffs imposed on them - and, as a result, face higher costs that are typically passed on to customers.

Trump has argued tariffs will protect U.S. industries from unfair foreign competition and raise money for the federal government. But since so much of what we buy today relies on a global supply chain, steeper tariffs mean you'll likely see more expensive prices from the grocery aisle to your next car repair.

"It is going to affect everything in the economy," said Josh Stillwagon, an associate professor of economics and chair of the Economics Division at Babson College. "There's this immediate price increase that's going to be passed on to consumers here, basically as soon as the retailers have to buy new product."

No. Experts warn that these tariffs could escalate inequities. Lowincome families in particular will feel the costs of key necessities, like food and energy, rise with fewer savings to draw on - significantly straining budgets.

Low-income households often

"spend a larger share of their income on essential goods - whether it's food or other basic products ... (like) soap or toothpaste," said Gustavo Flores-Macías, a professor of government and public policy at Cornell University whose research focuses on economic development. Because of this, he said, "even relatively small price increases" will have disproportionate impacts.

Evidence of that disparity will only mount for big-ticket items. Dipanjan Chatterjee, vice president and principal analyst at Forrester, points to now-imposed auto tariffs, explaining that projected price hikes of thousands of dollars for a new imported car will be easier for those with larger salaries to absorb.

"That tax is more severe for people who earn less money," said Chatterjee. "So it's a regressive tax."

Beyond more immediate price pressures, experts also warn that tariffs could contribute to unemployment or lower incomes down the road. Trump has argued that tariffs will bring manufacturing back to the U.S., but if businesses take profit hits or change their supply sources, there could be layoffs worldwide.

"It's not just the price aspect and purchasing power decreasing," said Flores-Macías. "As tariffs start to work their way through the economy low-income families' jobs often will be the first to go. And those sectors of the population are most vulnerable."

Economist Susan Helper, former senior adviser for industrial strategy at the White House Office of Management and Budget, said that there are some cases where tariffs could raise wages, but this doesn't look likely to be one of them.

"There isn't enough certainty for businesses to invest and create new and better jobs," she said. "It takes a few years at minimum to profit off a new facility or factory, and I don't think people have the confidence that the tariffs will be stable enough that they will have a return on that investment."

The tariffs announced by Trump Wednesday, on top of other levies that are already in effect, tax imports from nearly all of America's trading partners. And U.S. shoppers currently rely on a lot of goods made abroad.

Fruits and vegetables, your next phone purchase, a pharmacy order, new clothes, or a trip to a mechanic

who uses auto parts made outside of the U.S. could all be impacted.

The timing of when prices will go up comes down to inventory, Stillwagon said. Much of that will also depend on how businesses prepare and respond to the new levies. While companies may have stocked up on goods in anticipation of these tariffs, he expects some stores to see more immediate price increases.

Prices on perishable groceries will likely increase first, because supermarket inventories need to be replenished more frequently. But a range of other items - like electronics, household appliances, clothing and footwear - could also be affected in the coming weeks and months.

"Annual losses for households at the bottom of the income distribution are estimated to be \$980 under the April 2 policy alone," according to John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecom and fraud at the National Consumers League, who cited an analysis from the Budget Lab at Yale. He said that tariffs will disproportionately affect clothing and textiles, with apparel prices predicted to rise 17%.

Consumers are also likely to feel the pinch of tariffs in home buying, Breyault said. The new taxes on building materials are estimated to increase the average costs of a new home by \$9,200, according to an analysis by the National Association of Home Builders.

Rerouting supply chains to reemphasize domestic production is also very complex - and could take years. Stillwagon said there are some products, like bananas and coffee, that the U.S. simply can't substitute to the same scale of production other countries provide. And even for goods that can be made in the U.S., there will still likely be inflation.

"A real worry here is that this won't just be a one-time price jump," he said.

For products like coffee, Helper predicts people will likely absorb costs, while changing their shopping choices when it comes to other products.

"I guess you could switch to Coca-Cola if all you want is the caffeine," she said, lightly. "It will probably be good for California wines."

Stocking up on what you know you need is a start - but with limits.

"If there are things that you're buying on a consistent basis - week to week, month to month - I think it's not a bad idea to try to stock up in advance," Stillwagon said. But it's important to avoid panic buying like that seen at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he and others added. That could cause shortages to emerge sooner and prices to go up faster.

You also don't want to buy a bunch of items that will eventually go to waste.

"If you do plan stock up on consumables, make sure you have a plan on how to store them properly so you don't end up having to throw out that 20-pound bag of shrimp, for example, in a few weeks," said Breyault.

It may also be time to look for substitutes. From electronics to clothing, Flores-Macías says that there could be more affordable secondhand or refurbished options to turn to. And Chatterjee noted consumers may want to start comparing prices of name-brands versus "private," or generic, labels in major retailers. Others may turn to at-home solutions, he said, such as growing their own vegetables.

Overall, experts say you'll need to evaluate your budget and consumption habits for the road ahead.

"This is not a hurricane that's going to be around for seven days and everything goes back to normal afterward. And you stock up on toilet paper (temporarily)," said Chatterjee. "For all you know, this thing could be around until a different administration comes in and changes trade policy."

Consumers should be on the lookout for even greater use of so-called "shrinkflation" on the grocery aisle, according to Breyault. Shrinkflation is a tactic consumer goods manufacturers use to hide cost increases by changing the design of packaging.

"Consumers can prepare for the inflation that the tariffs are likely to exacerbate by getting into the habit of checking the unit price of items on the grocery shelf," said Breyault. "While not all states require it, where it is required, consumers can more easily compare the per unit price of one item - cereal, for example - to another item."

S&P 500 drops 16% since February high over tariff worries

Think twice before bailing out of the stock market, financial advisers say

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): The huge swings rocking Wall Street and the global economy may feel far from normal. But, for investing at least, drops of this size have happened throughout history.

Stomaching them is the price investors have had to pay in order to get the bigger returns that stocks can offer over other investments in the long term. Here's a glimpse at what's behind the market's wild moves and what experts advise investors young and old to consider:

Wall Street's main benchmark, the S&P 500, has lost more than 16% since setting an all-time high on Feb. 19, mostly because of worries about President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Any kind of uncertainty around the economy will give Wall Street pause, but the trade war is making it more difficult for companies, households and others to feel confident enough to invest, spend and make long-term plans.

The tariffs announced on "Liberation Day" sent stocks reeling to their worst day since since the COVID crash of 2020 because they were much harsher than investors had been expecting.

They also raised the fear that
Trump may push through with
them to win long-term gains, such
as more manufacturing jobs in the

United States.

The hope among investors had been that Trump was using tariffs merely as a bargaining chip to win concessions from other countries. Some big names on Wall Street still think that's the case, and a moderation of tariffs would help stocks recover, but it's less of a certainty now.

Regularly enough. The S&P 500 has seen declines of at least 10% every year or so. Often, experts view them as a culling of optimism that can otherwise run overboard, driving stock prices too high.

Before this recent downswing, many critics were saying the U.S. stock market was too expensive after prices rose faster than corporate profits.

They also pointed to how only a handful of companies drove so much of the market's returns. A group of just seven Big Tech companies accounted for more than half of the S&P 500's total return last year, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices

Anytime an investor sees they're losing money, it feels bad. This recent run feels particularly unnerving because of how incredibly calm the market had previously been. The S&P 500 is coming off a second straight year where it shot up by more than

20%, the first time that's happened since baggy pants were last in style before the millennium.

Selling may offer some feeling of relief. But it also locks in losses and prevents the chance of making the money back over time. Historically, the S&P 500 has come back from every one of its downturns to eventually make investors whole again. That includes after the Great Depression, the dot-com bust and the 2020 COVID crash.

Some recoveries take longer than others, but experts often recommend not putting money into stocks that you can't afford to lose for several years, up to 10. Emergency funds, for things like home repairs or medical bills, should not be invested in stocks.

"Data has shown, historically, that no one can time the market," said Odysseas Papadimitriou, CEO of WalletHub. "No one can consistently figure out the best time to buy and sell."

For years, the U.S. stock market was the best by far to invest in worldwide. Now, more investors are questioning wither U.S. exceptionalism is dead.

But it could all be a reminder that

investors often do best when they have a mixed set of investments rather than going all-in on just a few. And investors may no longer be as diversified as they thought after years of sheer dominance by the Magnificent Seven over the U.S. stock market and by Wall Street over global markets.

"It is hard to roll with the punches when some days you feel like your portfolio is being pummeled," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. "But those moments should pass. A diversified strategy that is thoughtfully adapting to changing circumstances can't prevent the punches, but it can help soften the blows."

Phil Battin, CEO of Ambassador Wealth Management, advises investors to make sure they diversify their investments across regions and sectors to reduce risk. He says to lean towards "resilient sectors such as consumer staples, utilities and health care, which are less reliant on international trade."

The proliferation of online trading platforms and the ease of smartphones has helped create a new generation of investors who may not be used to such volatility.

But the good news is younger investors often have the gift of time. With decades to go until retirement, they can afford to ride the waves and let their stock portfolios hopefully recover before compounding and eventually growing even bigger.

Stephen Kates, financial analyst at Bankrate, says "now is not the

time to make emotional decisions." Young investors should "re-anchor to your (long-term) goals," and consider using a financial advisor to help navigate uncertain times. "Investors with ample time to stay invested should remember how lucrative patience has been over the last 15 years," Kates said.

Older investors have less time than younger ones to allow their investments to bounce back. But even in retirement, some people will need their investments to last 30 years or more, said Niladri "Neel" Mukherjee, chief investment officer of TIAA Wealth Management.

People who have already retired may want to cut back on spending and withdrawals after sharp market downturns, because bigger withdrawals will remove more potential compounding ability in the future. But even retirees, at least in the early part of retirement, should still be invested in stocks to prepare for the possibility of decades of spending ahead.

"You may want to slow that down and pick that back up once the market recovers," Mukherjee said, "but it all comes down to having that conversation with your adviser and your portfolio manager."

No one knows, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

• A diversified strategy... can help soften the blows. •

• It is going to affect

everything in the

economy ?

Features Arabetines Sunday, APRIL 6, 2025



Artist encourages people to return to simple living

Singer Rara Sekar draws inspiration from nature

OXFORD, England, April 5, (AP): Rara Sekar closed her eyes in meditation after performing a song that speaks of rays of light that cut through the fog as one political prisoner faced death more than six decades ago.

The song, which recalls a period of political turmoil in Indonesia, has become a symbol for the singer who has focused on encouraging people to be creative in responding to the climate crisis in Indonesia, her homeland.

The prisoner's song is "very healing," Sekar told The Associated Press after performing Thursday at the Skoll World Forum, an annual event focused on ideas for change on issues ranging from climate change to health and human rights. "When I find myself hopeless doing climate activism, or other activism, I sing it.

Sekar's campaign for a healthy environment in Indonesia focuses on a return to "low-waste life," which includes foraging in the forest for wild food and communal potlucks. Between 2022 and 2023, she organized bicycle rides on the island of Java, where erosion and flooding have engulfed homes, that she said were meant to show

locals the joys of communing with nature.

"I try to give back to nature in everything I do," she said. "Not just about the songs I write but also how I

A vast tropical archipelago stretching across the equator. Indonesia is home to the world's third-largest rainforest, with a variety of wildlife and plants, including orangutans and elephants. But environmental degradation is widespread, and the nation has faced extreme weather events in recent years that range from flooding to land-

Indonesia is consistently ranked as one of the largest global emitters of plant-warming greenhouse gases, stemming from the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, along with deforestation and fires of wetland ecosystems called peatlands.

Since 1950, more than 74 million hectares (285,715 square miles) of Indonesian rainforest - an area twice the size of Germany - have been logged, burned or degraded for development of palm oil, paper and rubber plantations, mining and other commodities, according to Global Forest Watch.

Sekar performed "Kabut Putih" at Skoll, which takes place in Oxford, England. She sang as part of the Found Sound Nation, a New York-based group that works to engage communities through music.

"Kabut Putih" - or "White Fog" - was written in 1971 by Zubaidah Nuntjik, an Indonesian woman who is believed to have died after being freed from the prison camp where she and many others had been detained. Sekar released a recording of the song in 2024, working with a group that includes families of victims and survivors of the 1965 mass killings that targeted suspected members of the Communist Party of Indonesia.

Sekar, who also performs under the name hara, said the song's spirit "gave me strength just to be hopeful" as a climate campaigner.

"Most of my songs are inspired by nature," she said. "I guess I try to incorporate ways of educating people about climate, the climate crisis, through my tour.



Rara Sekar, who goes by hara, poses for a portrait during the Skoll World Forum on Thursday, April 3, in Oxford, England. (AP)

Film

New 'MI' previewed

Cruise pays tribute to Kilmer at CinemaCon

LAS VEGAS, April 5, (AP): Tom Cruise opened his highly anticipated CinemaCon appearance on Thursday with a moving tribute to his "Top Gun" co-star, Val Kilmer, who died Tuesday in Los Angeles.

"He loved movies and he gave a lot to all of us with his performances and his films," Cruise said to a room full of movie theater owners. "I really can't tell you how much I admired his work, how much I thought of him as a human being, and how grateful and honored I was when he joined 'Top Gun' and then came back for 'Top Gun: Maverick.

Cruise called for a moment of silence, which stood in stark contrast to the otherwise action-packed presentation of Paramount Pictures' upcoming movies.

'Thank you, Val. I wish you well on your next jour-

ney," he said to the silent room.

Cruise was there to hype "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning," the eighth installment of the franchise set to hit theaters May 23.

Given that the 62-year-old is one of the rare stars who is still a near-guarantee for box office success, Cruise is an unsurprising darling of the annual convention and trade show in Las Vegas, where studios hype up cinemas and seek to convince theater owners they can lure audiences out of the house.

Most celebrity appearances throughout the convention comprise a few minutes onstage. But Cruise gave a thoughtful, off-the-prompter tribute to Christopher McQuarrie - or as Cruise calls him, McQ - who was honored as CinemaCon's director of the year.

The speech, followed by a long list of thank-yous to colleagues and the audience, lasted nearly 20 minutes before a new trailer was introduced.

Cruise talked at length about following the filmmaker's career after McQuarrie, at 26, won the Oscar for original screenplay for "The Usual Suspects."

Most people are still finding their voices at that age, but McQ had already written a film that changed the cinematic landscape," Cruise said.

Screening

The pair first worked together on the 2008 World War II drama, "Valkyrie," which McQuarrie co-wrote. "We met in LA in my screening room and we spent hours together talking about movies. And from that meeting, I knew that he was an artist that I was going to work with for the rest of my life. I absolutely knew that he was a creative brother who shares the same love and passion for cinema," Cruise said.

McQuarrie began directing the "Mission Impossible" franchise with its fifth installment, "Rogue Nation." Cruise recounted the challenges they've faced with the most recent two films, including pandemic lockdowns and Hollywood strikes, and credited McQuarrie with making the films happen.

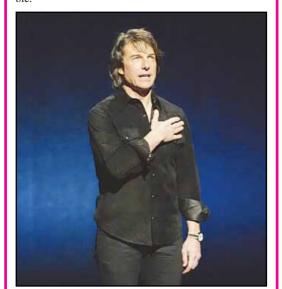
The upcoming film was the highlight of Paramount's slate. To kick off the presentation, four motorcyclists flew off ramps as smoke shot from the ground, before descending from the stage and weaving around through aisles as the iconic theme song played.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to work with you, to learn from you, and to place you in harm's way for other people's entertainment," McQuarrie joked to Cruise while accepting the award.

Though Paramount's other projects aren't expected to rival "Mission Impossible" at the box office, the studio boasted a handful of movies clearly meant to be seen on a big screen.

The first film they teased was Edgar Wright's upcoming "The Running Man," a dystopian game show thriller based on the Stephen King novel of the same name. To tease the first footage from the film, actors Glen Powell, who is also being honored as CinemaCon's star of the year, Colman Domingo and Josh Brolin hyped the film

alongside Wright. 'Now, more than ever, we need movies in the movie theaters that bring people from all different backgrounds and ideologies together, for one simple reason: to be entertained," Powell said before elaborating on the lengths to which he would go to entertain audiences. "I've fallen from buildings, I've jumped through explosions, I had get for asking Tom Cruise advice on using a stunt double." my body thrashed and smashed. This is probably what I



Tom Cruise, star of the upcoming film 'Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning, acknowledges applause during the Paramount Pictures presentation at CinemaCon at Caesars Palace on Thursday, April 3, in Las Vegas. (AP)

Television



Madeline Brewer arrives at the premiere of the sixth season of 'The Handmaid's Tale' on Wednesday, April 2, at TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Mirren takes on new role as crime family matriarch

Hardy and Ritchie reunite for gritty 'MobLand'

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Tom Hardy has collected troves of knowledge and skill throughout his journey as an actor, forming a megastar career. But any education he received from director Guy Ritchie during their time on the 2008 "RocknRolla" film was gained from afar.

"I didn't have very much to do with him ... the first time I worked with him. Gerard (Butler) was leading that film and in many elements, we were support staff," said Hardy. "So, I got to experience being on the Guy Ritchie set, and it was a bit from a position of not being a lead, and that's a different responsibility.'

But time can bring people and experiences back around, especially in Hollywood. Since that film 17 years ago, Ritchie has transitioned into esteemed directorial status. And Hardy has morphed into a box office superstar with films like "The Dark Night" as the imposing villain Bane, and the titular role for Marvel's "Venom" franchise. Now, the two have reunited for Ritchie's gritty, yet sophisticated series "MobLand."

"I was really keen to go back and work with him because he's a fellow Brit and he's done quite incredible work," explained Hardy. "I wanted to go and play with him, actually, and see what that was like now I'm older, and it was good fun.'

The Paramount+ original series follows Harry Da Souza (Hardy), an intimidating, yet calm fixer for a London-based crime family hoping to find the missing son of a rival faction to prevent a catastrophic gang war.

How did Hardy prepare to play such a menacing, yet

even-keeled character? "No acting required" he said with a big laugh. "Just turn up and, 'Oh, yeah, that makes sense' and say the lines. Don't bump into the furniture.'

The second episode of the 10-part "MobLand" series airs Sunday on Paramount+.

The series was created by Ronan Bennett, known for popular crime shows like "The Day of the Jackal" and "Top

This image released by Paramount+ shows Tom Hardy, (left), and Paddy Considine in a scene from 'MobLand.' (AP)

Boy," and written with playwright Jez Butterworth. Ritchie serves as executive producer and directed the first two episodes. The "MobLand" idea began as a spinoff from Showtime's popular "Ray Donovan" series, before becoming a stand-alone show.

Two-time Oscar-winner Helen Mirren stars as the devious Maeve, matriarch and manipulator of the crime family, while Pierce Brosnan plays her husband and mob leader, marking a reunion for the pair who worked on the 1980 film

"The Long Good Friday."

It may be hard to think of a role that Dame Mirren hasn't played, but she found one with "MobLand."

"There are always characters out there that are going to take you by surprise and ... I think, 'Oh my god, I've never done anything like that before," said the "1923" star who believes the line between shooting film and TV is now nearly nonexistent. "That's one of the sort of beauties of my job, actually, is to

LONDON: Britain's charity regulator has opened an in-

vestigation into an African charity co-founded by Prince

Harry, a week after the prince and the organization's

board of trustees resigned amid a dispute with the char-

Sentebale, which provides support for young people in

Botswana and Lesotho, has been wracked by turmoil since

constantly be entering into such very, very different worlds." Mirren said the opportunity to work with Hardy was in-

Tom's involvement in it was one of the reasons I signed up because I've admired his work over many years," Mirren said. "Different actors, you can see, 'Oh, they're a great actor' ... they can perform. But certain actors like Tom, it's an interior power that just communicates with the camera. And Tom's got that. You know what? It's called star power."

The "MobLand" cast features Paddy Considine of "House of the Dragon" fame, Joanne Froggatt, Lara Pulver, Anson Boon and Mandeep Dhillon. While this show technically reunites Mirren and Brosnan, they also shot the upcoming "The Thursday Murder Club" film prior to this

While much was unknown when Brosnan signed on, "MobLand" had all the right ingredients for the former James Bond to dive in, starting with Ritchie, who released his Netflix series "The Gentlemen" last year.

"He's naughty. He's cheeky. He's bold," said Brosnan. "I love his work. His movies. The way he's acquitted himself on the landscape of cinema. He's a unique talent all his own ... so I said yes. I wanted to go back to London. I wanted to work."

Next for Hardy is the crime drama film "Havoc" premiering later this month, and there's chatter of a potential sequel to his 2015 "Mad Max: Fury Road." A second season of "Taboo" is on the way - nearly a decade after its debut. What about a "Spider-Man" and "Venom" crossover? Hardy addressed the rumors that an alleged project fell apart, clarifying it was never in the works.

"People embellish a story. I just said I would have loved to work with 'Spider-Man,' but it never happened, which is a fact. It hasn't happened. And I'm no longer working with 'Venom' ... it is a shame because my kids would love to watch Venom and Spider-Man together," said Hardy. "I would have liked that.'

Variety

WASHINGTON: Books on the Holocaust, histories of feminism, civil rights and racism, and Maya Angelou's famous autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," were among the nearly 400 volumes removed from the US Naval Academy's library this week after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's office ordered the school to get rid of ones that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Navy late Friday provided the list of 381 books that have been taken out of its library. The move marks another step in the Trump administration's far-reaching effort to purge so-called DEI content from federal agencies, including policies, programs, online and social media postings and curriculum at schools.

In addition to Angelou's award-winning tome, the list includes "Memorializing the Holocaust," which deals with Holocaust memorials; "Half American," about African Americans in World War II; "A Respectable Woman," about the public roles of African American women in 19th century New York; and "Pursuing Trayvon Martin," about the 2012 shooting of the Black 17-year-old in Florida that raised questions about racial profiling. (AP)



ity's chairwoman.

her out.

The Charity Commission said Thursday that it was in "direct contact" with parties on both sides to gather evidence in its compliance

Harry and his co-founder abruptly re-

signed March 26, saying the relation-

ship between the board and its chair

was beyond repair. Chair Sophie

Chandauka later accused the prince

of orchestrating a campaign of bul-

lying and harassment to try to force

Harry case. "The regulator's focus, in line with its statutory remit, will be to determine whether the charity's current and former trustees, including its chair, have fulfilled their duties and responsibilities under charity law," the commission said in a statement.

Chandauka criticized Harry in an interview with Sky News on Sunday, saying that filming for the prince's latest Netflix program interfered with a scheduled fundraiser for Sentebale and an incident with his wife, Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, became a source of friction.(AP)

NEW YORK: The MTV Video Music Awards have a new home: This year, the music award show will be broadcast by CBS for the first time, organizers announced Thursday.

The three-hour show will broadcast live on CBS on Sunday, Sept. 7, from the UBS Arena just outside New York City. It will also simulcast on MTV and be available to stream on Paramount+, the platforms that aired last year's show. A one-hour, live pre-show will air across Paramount Media Networks.

CBS is home to a number of award shows, including the Tony Awards and the American Music Awards. It has aired the Grammys since 1973, though that show will head to ABC in 2027.

At the 2024 VMAs, Taylor Swift won big, taking home seven awards. That included the night's biggest prize, the trophy for video of the year, for "Fortnight" featuring Post Malone. Swift's awards haul brought her to a career total of 30, tying her and Beyoncé for the title of mostawarded musician in VMA history. (AP)

UK's studio reopens after multi-million pound refurbishment

Inside Abbey Road's Studio One: Keeping the magic alive

LONDON, April 5, (AP): In Abbey Road's Studio One, even a lick of paint could ruin everything.

Famous for hosting Adele, Harry Styles and U2, it's where the scores of "Star Wars," "Harry Potter" and "Wicked" were recorded, as well as the soundtracks of blockbuster games like "Call of Duty," "Halo" and "Final Fantasy." It's also where Ryan Gosling delivered his memorable "I'm Just Ken" for "Barbie."

Nearly a century after its opening, Studio One underwent a six-month, multimillion-pound refurbishment, with the main priority being the preservation of one very important thing: the sound.

"What we don't want to do is change the acoustics, so every minute detail in the room has been conserved and preserved, so the sound doesn't shift," said Sally Davies, managing director of Abbey Road Studios.

The reverb of the 4,844-square-foot (450-square-meter) room has been maintained at 2.3 seconds, the same as it was in the 1970s. There's been no redecorating or style makeover, leav-



Dancers rehearse at Abbey Road's Studio One in London on Thursday, March 27, 2025, (AP)

sanded and oiled, but not varnished.

Most of the upgrades, she explained,

are technological upgrades in the con-

trol room. "This room is just about pre-

serving that magic."

ing the original Art Deco wall panels untouched.

"We have simply washed down the walls to preserve that sound," said Davies, adding that the floor was re-

Opened in 1931, this hallowed hall once a nine-bedroom house on a grand suburban street in London's St. John's Wood neighborhood - became the world's first recording studio. It's where stereo was invented and it's visited every day by music fans from around the world, who are happy just to stand on the street outside.

Davies says that more than a million people a year make a pilgrimage to the crossing outside, many to recreate the cover of The Beatles' "Abbey Road" album - and that number could increase after Sam Mendes' upcoming biopics starring Paul Mescal, Barry Keoghan, Harris Dickinson and Joseph Quinn as the Fab Four.

And while John Lennon, Paul Mc-Cartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr are famously known for using Studio Two, they also made history in the larger Studio One, which they used for the world's first global live performance, a rendition of "All You Need Is Love" beamed to television sets around the world in 1967.

Before The Beatles, Studio One had already cemented its place in music history, when it was opened by British composer Sir Edward Elgar, who recorded his "Land of Hope and Glory" with the London Symphony Orchestra. It's also hosted other music greats like Maria Callas, Igor Stravinsky, Daniel Barenboim, Fats Waller and Glenn

Due to its huge size, more than double Studio Two, it can fit a 100-piece orchestra and 100-member choir at the same time - which is perfect for recording film soundtracks, and explains why six to seven out of every 10 Hollywood films are scored at Abbey Road, according to the studio.

Standing on the balcony, overlooking the 40-foot-high (12-meter-high) room, Davies points out the original screen that was used to show "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981) while musicians played along to record the

Since then, everything from "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy to Marvel's "Black Panther" and "Guardians of the Galaxy" to "Barbie" were scored in Studio One. For the last, all the musicians came in with something pink, whether a pink instrument or piece of clothing Oscar-nominated composer Daniel Pemberton has been recording in Studio One since 2009 and calls his "crea-

tive home" a "spectacular space." "Outside, it just looks like a normal house. And then you come in and you find this space in it that's like almost the size of a football pitch. In fact, I

have played football in there once," he

Pemberton is known for scoring "Spider-Man: Across the Spider Verse," "Ferrari," "The Trial of the Chicago 7" and creating the "Slow Horses" theme song and "Strange Game," with Mick Jagger.

"What's so exciting about a room like Studio One is what happens on the day is what happens for the rest of time," he says. "It's like history is being made, whether it's good history or bad history or whatever, you're making a moment then."

Pemberton notes the stories, whether personal or musical, that have unfolded within the walls of Studio One.

"The ghosts are insane in there," he

Stage



Adrienne Warren, (left), and Nick Jonas appear during a performance of the two-person stage show 'The Last Five Years,' in New York on March 17,

Nick Jonas leads the beloved musical

'Last Five Years' finally hits Broadway

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Nick Jonas was only 9 and portraying a teacup on Broadway when he first heard about a buzzy new musical playing way

"All my adult castmates were talking about how great the show was and how amazing the music was," Jonas recalls of his days in "Beauty and the "I went to the record store with my dad and picked up a copy of the cast recording and really fell in love with it.'

What he adored was "The Last Five Years," a two-person stage show with a cult-like following that he is now leading onto a Broadway stage for the first time, capping a 24-year journey. It opens Sunday.

"In a time where musicals are based off of movies, are based off records or coming from London, this is a great American piece by an American composer, writer, songwriter," says its Tony-nominated director Whitney White. "This is kind of one of our great American masterpieces.'

Jonas co-stars with Tony Award-winner Adrienne Warren in the heartbreaking look at a fiveyear marriage between aspiring novelist Jamie and budding actor Cathy from both points of view.

Her musical arc traces their relationship backward, from their parting kiss to their meeting five years earlier. Jamie's arc moves in the opposite direction, beginning with a song about his excitement at encountering the woman of his dreams, moving forward in time to the unhappy unraveling of their marriage.

"I think everyone can relate to falling in love, meeting someone, that relationship evolving to something else," says Warren. "There's marriage involved and there's breakup and heartbreak. I think we all have experienced one of those things in our lifetimes, if you're lucky enough.'

Composer and writer Jason Robert Brown's show debuted in Illinois in 2001 and then arrived off-Broadway the next year. It has become a staple in regional theaters and colleges and made into a movie starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan.

"I think the brilliant thing about the writing is that it really makes you ask a lot of questions about yourself," says Jonas. "And I certainly kind of looked inward as I've been digging into this

The marriage of Jamie and Cathy comes under stress when his career starts taking off and hers does not, exploring how imbalances can test a relationship. "Î will not fail so that you can be comfortable, Cathy. I will not lose because you can't win," he tells her.

Connect

"There was something about the way this crystallizes what it is to be a young artist in this business, or really to be a young artist in any business," says Brown. "I think that's sort of what the show is about, and I think it's why young artists connect to it as much as they do.'

White is a superfan of the show, having seen it when it premiered at the Northlight Theatre outside Chicago. She wants to celebrate its intimateness and realness.

"We all know the stresses of one partner being the earner and the other partner struggling, right? Capitalism comes into our bedrooms and affects our lives and in a very unpredictable way," she says.

Warren, who won a Tony playing Tina Turner, learned about "The Last Five Years" while studying musical theater at Marymount Manhattan Col-

"I always heard my fellow students singing it in class, and so I became a fan of the music from afar," she says. "I always thought it was an interesting piece. I just never thought it was something that I could ever perform or be a part of.'

Flash-forward to her auditioning for Brown, marking the first time she looked at the score and sang the music. "I sang two songs and he looked at me and he was like, 'I'm done. This is it.'

White, Jonas and Warren each insist they don't want the audience to side with one or the other partner on stage. They want us to invest in the

"Î have been Jamie in relationships, and I have been Cathy, so I can't judge either of them. I've been both of them at different times in my life," says White.
"I love both of these characters so equally that

I'm just trying to love on them at every beat in the story and not judge them. I feel very non-judgmental about this portrait of failure.'

To make the leap to a larger stage - the Hudson Theatre has some 977 seats - Brown has given the show a bigger sound and has updated some of the references, moving it to modern day. In some productions, the two lovers only interact once, but this new one has them reach out a lot even though they are in different timelines.

Brown says seeing it on Broadway - now starring a huge pop star beside a theater powerhouse - is a little surreal, laughing that there are cocktails named after his doomed lovers at the bar.

"I've never had ambitions for this piece to be a Broadway musical. It was always this little weird, intimate show." he says. "I'm very protective of my little show. And at the same time, I have to let it go do its thing in the world."

Variety

ATLANTA: Prosecutors in Atlanta are asking a judge to revoke Young Thug's probation and send him to prison because of his viral post that sparked an online

backlash against the district attorney's office.

The Grammy-winning rapper pleaded guilty in October to gang, drug and gun charges and was released from jail. However, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis said he "engaged in conduct that directly threatens the safety of witnesses and prosecutors, compromises ongoing legal proceedings, and warrants immediate revocation of probation.

In a court filing on Wednesday, Willis said Young Thug reposted a social media post that included a photo of an investigator in the district attorney's office with a caption that said the investigator is "the biggest liar in the DA's office." The post "quickly went viral, amassing over 2 million views, with thousands of comments and retweets.

The investigator's home address and that of her parents were posted publicly, and some posts included threats to the investigator and her family, the

filing says. One post threatened the assassination of

"I don't make threats to people I'm a good person," Young Thug posted Wednesday night on the social platform X. "I would never condone anyone threatening anyone or definitely participate in threatening anyone. I'm all about peace and love.

The rapper, whose given name is Jeffery Williams, was indicted along with more than two dozen other people in May 2022, accused of violating Georgia's anti-racketeering law. The indictment said the rapper co-founded a violent street gang that committed multiple murders, shootings and carjackings over roughly a decade and promoted its activities in songs and on social media. (AP)

NEW YORK: Bruce Springsteen knows what Bruce Springsteen fans want. And that's more Bruce

The Boss will release seven new studio albums, titled "Tracks II: The Lost Albums," on June 27. It will contain material written and re-recorded between

The news arrived Thursday morning via Instagram.

The 83-song collection is mostly previously unreleased tracks, 74 of them never-before-heard songs, in a box set that includes a 100-page hardcover book. In a short video clip posted to the social me-

dia platform, Springsteen explains that during the

COVID-19 pandemic, he began completing "everything I had in my vault," he says.



Springsteen

"The Lost Albums are records that were full records, some of them even to the point of being mixed and not released." Springsteen first teased the

records on Wednesday morning. A short video posted to his Instagram account revealed that something called "The Lost Albums" was forthcoming, along with Thursday's

date, April 3, 2025. The clip also featured text that read "What was lost has been found."

The caption urged his followers to head to www. lostalbums.net. It led to a subscription webpage and featured the dates "1983-2018." (AP)

People

'Settlement disputed'

Filmmaker Paul Schrader accused of sexual assault

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Paul Schrader, the writer of "Taxi Driver" and director of "American Gigolo," has been accused in a lawsuit of sexually assaulting his former personal assistant, firing her when she wouldn't acquiesce to advances and reneging on a settlement that was meant to keep the allegations confidential.

The former assistant, identified in court documents as Jane Doe, sued the filmmaker and his production company on Thursday. She is seeking a judge's order to enforce the agreement after Schrader said he couldn't go through with it. The terms, including a monetary payment, were not disclosed. "This is an open-and-shut settle-

ment enforcement matter," Doe's lawyer, Gregory Chiarello, wrote in court papers accompanying the breach of contract claim.

Schrader's lawyer, Philip J. Kessler, deemed the lawsuit "desperate, opportunistic and frivolous" and said many of the allegations in it are false or materially misleading.

"We absolutely deny that there was ever a sexual relationship of any kind between Mr. Schrader and his former assistant, and we deny that Mr. Schrader ever made an attempt to have a sexual relationship of any kind with his former assis-

tant," Kessler

The law-

laid bare allega-

suit, filed in

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Doe, 26, and Schrader Schrader, 78, had been intended to keep under

Doe alleges Schrader fired her last September after she again rejected his advances. Soon after, the lawsuit said, he sent her an email expressing fear that he'd become "a Harvey Weinstein" in her mind.

According to the lawsuit, Schrader agreed to the settlement on Feb. 5 but changed his mind after an illness and "soul searching." Schrader conveyed through his lawvers last month that he "could not live with the settlement," the lawsuit said. Kessler disputed that.

Legal woes intensify

Combs faces additional sex trafficking charges

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Federal prosecutors on Friday added two charges to Sean "Diddy" Combs' indictment and said they expect four accusers to testify against him, expanding on allegations that the jailed hip-hop mogul engaged in sex trafficking with multiple women and as recently as last year.

A superseding indictment accuses Combs of using force, fraud or coercion to compel a woman to engage in commercial sex acts from at least 2021 to 2024.

The indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in Manhattan, also alleges that Combs was involved in transporting the woman - identified only as "Victim-2" - and other people, including commercial sex workers, to engage in prostitution during the same period.

The new charges are in addition to racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges filed against Combs when he was arrested in September. They increase the total number of charges against him from three to five.

In a court filing, federal prosecutors said the racketeering conspiracy charge involves allegations that Combs sex-trafficked three victims and forced a fourth, one of his employees, into sexual activity with him.

British police charge Russell Brand with sexual offenses



Actor Russell Brand is seen during the Republican National Convention Thursday, July 18, 2024, in Milwaukee. (AP)

LONDON, April 5, (AP): British police on Friday charged Russell Brand with rape and sexual assault following an 18-month investigation sparked when four women alleged they had been assaulted by the controversial comedian.

London's Metropolitan Police force said Brand, 50, faces one count of rape, one of indecent assault, and three counts of sexual assault.

consensual" sexual activity. The alleged offenses involve four

Brand denied engaging in "non-

women and took place between 1999 and 2005 - one in the English seaside town of Bournemouth and the other three in the Westminster area of central London.

Police said the investigation remains open and urged anyone with relevant information to contact the force.

What menopause means for women's heart health

Hormone therapy may cut heart risk in younger women

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts

> By Matthew Nudy Penn State

Menopause can have profound effects on heart health, yet many people are unaware of this important connection.

The hormonal shifts occurring during menopause mark the end of a woman's reproductive years and contribute to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, the most common cause of death among women globally. As estrogen levels drop, changes in cholesterol, blood pressure, inflammation and fat distribution can lead to

plaque buildup in blood vessels, which is a major cause of heart disease.

Hormone therapy has long been prescribed to relieve bothersome menopausal symptoms, but research published in 2002 and 2004 raised concerns about its safety, especially regarding cardiovascular health. Those findings led to years of confusion and debate. Although hormone therapy was also previously prescribed to prevent chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, medical guidelines today no longer recommend it for this purpose based on this prior research.

As a cardiologist studying the prevention of heart disease in menopausal women, I investigate how hormone changes affect heart health and how treatments can be improved to lower cardiovascular disease risk. As research continues to shed light on menopause and heart health, it is becoming increasingly clear that hormone therapy used to treat menopausal symptoms in younger, healthy women is not only safe for the heart but may even offer some cardiovascular benefits.

Menopause, defined as 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period, marks the end of a woman's reproductive years and typically occurs between ages 45 to 55. The transition leading to menopause, known as perimenopause, can last several years and is characterized by fluctuating levels of hormones, including estrogen and progesterone. These hormonal changes often cause symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats and sleep disturbances.

What's less widely known is that menopause and lack of estrogen also drive changes to the heart and blood vessels. Estrogen has protective effects on the cardiovascular system, and its decline can lead to increased blood vessel stiffness, resulting in high blood pressure, higher cholesterol levels, more inflammation, and shifts in fat deposition, which lead to a greater risk of heart disease

One reason for this is that estrogen helps keep blood vessels flexible and supports the production of nitric oxide, a molecule that allows vessels to relax and maintain healthy blood flow. Estrogen also influences how the body processes cholesterol, helping to make changes to cholesterol to reduce plaque buildup in artery walls. When estrogen levels drop during menopause, these protective factors diminish, making arteries more susceptible to stiffening, plaque buildup and inflammation. These biological processes raise the risk of long-term cardiovascular disease.

Hormone therapy using estrogen alone or a combination of estrogen and progestin, a synthetic derivative of progesterone, restores estrogen levels and effectively treats menopausal symptoms. It comes with some risks, though, which depend on factors such as a woman's age, time since menopause began and overall health.

The medical community's view on hormone therapy has shifted dramatically over the years. In the 1970s, hormone therapy was widely promoted as a fountain of youth and was prescribed commonly to prevent age-related chronic diseases such

Guidelines

Then, in the early 2000s, the Women's Health Initiative, one of the largest clinical trials testing oral hormone therapy in women, found an increased risk of stroke and breast cancer in those who used hormone therapy. Doctors abruptly stopped prescribing it, and medical guidelines shifted their recommendations, saying the treatment had more risks than benefits.

However, additional analyses of data from the Women's Health Initiative along with results from further studies pointed researchers to a theory called the timing hypothesis, which suggests that the risks and benefits of hormone therapy depend on

According to the timing hypothesis, hormone therapy may lower the risk of heart disease in menopausal women who start it before age 60 and within 10 years of menopause onset, and who are otherwise in good health. Women who begin hormone therapy much later - after age 60 or more than 10 years after menopause onset - may instead face increased cardiovascular risks.

My research supports this idea. In a 2019 study, my colleagues and I analyzed data from 31 clinical trials of women who started hormone therapy at different ages, and we found that women under 60 who used hormone therapy tend to live longer and are less likely to die from heart disease. However, our study did find an increased risk in blood clots and stroke with hormone therapy. This risk was present in menopausal women under 60 years old and continuously increased as women

Additionally, research has shown that different methods of taking hormone therapy may affect its impact on cardiovascular health. For example, using estrogen patches worn on the skin may have a lower risk of blood clots compared with hormone therapy taken as a pill.

This is due to a phenomenon called first pass metabolism. Hormone therapy taken by mouth is processed by the liver before entering the bloodstream. The liver produces clotting factors, which raises the risk of blood clots. In contrast, estrogen patches deliver the medication into the bloodstream, bypassing the liver, and do not

Overall, we found that women who took oral hormone therapy tended to have lower cholesterol levels, and this effect persisted over many years. For healthy younger women who are within 10 years of menopause onset, hormone therapy is safe from a cardiovascular standpoint and may even provide benefit.

However, hormone therapy is still not recommended for women with existing heart disease, history of blood clots, prior stroke, gallbladder disease or certain types

Medical experts now recognize that blanket recommendations for or against hormone therapy are not appropriate. Instead, treatment decisions should be individualized, considering factors such as age, time since menopause began and overall health. If you are considering hormone therapy, discussing risks and benefits with your

health care provider is vital.

- Here are questions to consider asking your health care provider: ■ Am I a good candidate for hormone therapy based on my health history?
- What are the risks and benefits of starting hormone therapy at my age
- What type of hormone therapy, such as pills, patches or gel, is safest and most
- How long should I stay on hormone therapy? (AP)

Outbreak spreads across US, Texas sees surge

US measles cases double the 2024 total

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): The US now has more than double the number of measles cases it saw in all of 2024. with Texas reporting another large jump in cases and hospitalizations on Friday.

Other states with active outbreaks defined as three or more cases - include New Mexico, Kansas, Ohio and Oklahoma. The virus has been spreading in undervaccinated communities, and since February, two unvaccinated people have died from measles-related

The multi-state outbreak confirms health experts' fears that the virus will take hold in other US communities with low vaccination rates and that the spread could stretch on for a year. The World Health Organization said last week that cases in Mexico are linked to the Texas

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus that's airborne and spreads easily when an infected person breathes, sneezes or coughs. It is preventable through vaccines, and has been considered eliminated from the US since 2000.

Here's what else you need to know

about measles in the US.

Texas' outbreak began more than two months ago. State health officials said Friday there were 59 new cases of measles since Tuesday, bringing the total to 481 across 19 counties - most of them in West Texas. The state also logged 14 new hospitalizations, for a total of 56 throughout the outbreak

More than 65% of Texas' cases are in Gaines County, population 22,892, where the virus stated spreading in a close-knit, undervaccinated Mennonite community. The county now has logged 315 cases since late January - just over 1% of the county's residents.

New Mexico announced six new cases Friday, bringing the state's total to 54. New Mexico health officials say the cases are linked to Texas' outbreak based on genetic testing. Most are in Lea County, where two people have been hospitalized, and two are in Eddy County.

A school-age child died of measles in Texas in late February, and New Mexico reported its first measles-related death in an adult on March 6.

Kansas has 24 cases in six counties in the southwest part of the state as of Wednesday. Kiowa and Stevens counties have six cases each, while Grant, Morton, Haskell and Gray counties have five or fewer.

The state's first reported case, identified in Stevens County on March 13, is linked to the Texas and New Mexico outbreaks based on genetic testing, a state health department spokesperson said. But health officials have not determined how the person was exposed.

Cases in Oklahoma remained steady Friday: eight confirmed and two probable cases. The first two probable cases were "associated" with the West Texas and New Mexico outbreaks, the state health department said.

A state health department spokesperson said measles exposures were confirmed in Tulsa and Rogers counties, but wouldn't say which counties had cases.

Ohio reported one new measles case Thursday in west-central Allen County. Last week, there were 10 in Ashtabula County in the northeast corner of the



In this image from video provided by SpaceX, Jannicke Mikkelsen exits the Dragon capsule which carried four space tourists after splash down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California on Friday, April 4. (AP)

Crew conducts experiments

Four space tourists return to Earth after 'polar flight'

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., April 5, (Agencies): Four space tourists who orbited the north and south poles returned to Earth on Friday, splashing down in the Pacific to end their privately funded polar tour.

Bitcoin investor Chun Wang chartered a SpaceX flight for himself and three others in a Dragon capsule that was outfitted with a domed window that provided 360-degree views of the polar caps and everything in between. Wang declined to say how much he paid for the 3 1/2-day trip.

The quartet, who rocketed from NA-SA's Kennedy Space Center on Monday night, returned off the Southern California coast. It was the first human spaceflight to circle the globe above the poles and the first Pacific splashdown for a space crew in 50 years.

The Chinese-born Wang, now a citizen of Malta, invited Norwegian filmmaker Jannicke Mikkelsen, German robotics researcher Rabea Rogge and Australian polar guide Eric Philips, all of whom shared stunning vistas during their voyage.

"It is so epic because it is another kind of desert, so it just goes on and

Comprehensive Eye screening

Diabetic Retinopathy Screening

Paediatric visual assessment

Glaucoma screening

Foreign Body removal

on and on all the way," Rogge said in a video posted by Wang on X while gazing down from orbit.

Mikkelsen packed the capsule with camera equipment and spent much of her time behind the lens.

All four suffered from space motion sickness after reaching orbit, according to Wang. But by the time they woke up on day two, they felt fine and cranked open the window cover right above the South Pole, he said via X. Besides documenting the poles from

270 miles (430 kilometers) up, Wang and his crew took the first medical Xrays in space as part of a test and conducted two dozen other science experiments. They named their trip Fram2 after the Norwegian sailing ship that carried explorers to the poles more than a century ago. A bit of the original ship's wooden deck accompanied the crew to space.

Their medical tests continued at splashdown. All four got out of the capsule on their own, heaving bags of equipment so researchers could see how steady returning space crews are on their feet. They pumped their fists in jubilation.

Meningitis shots

First human bird flu case in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, April 5, (Agencies): A 3-year-old girl from the western state of Durango is Mexico's first confirmed human case of bird flu, health officials said Friday.

Type A H5N1 influenza has been spreading through animals and some people in the United States. There have been 70 cases in that country since during the past year, according to the World Health Organization, though researchers and studies suggest that's likely an undercount. In Mexico, the girl was in serious

the neighboring state of Coahuila, the health ministry said in a statement Friday. It said she had initially been treated with an anti-flu medication. It was not known how the girl contracted the virus. Investigators were

condition in a hospital in Torreon in

testing wild birds in the vicinity of the girl's home, the statement said. The health ministry said the risk to

the general population from the virus was considered low.

Meningitis: Nigeria has received more than 1 million vaccines from the Gavi-funded global stockpile to combat a meningitis outbreak in the northern part of the country, the government said on Friday.

At least 74 people have died from

the disease, with more than 800 cases reported across 23 of Nigeria's 36 states, according to the Nigeria Center for Disease Control, or NCDC. The northern region of the country has been hit hardest by the disease. Health Minister Muhammad Ali Pate

said that the arrival of the vaccines is a crucial milestone in Nigeria's response to the current meningitis outbreak.

"We have prioritized epidemic preparedness and rapid response as part of our broader health security agenda," Pate said in a joint statement by the global vaccine alliance Gavi, UNI-CEF, the World Health Organization and the Nigerian government.

The vaccine is also critical to Nigeria's long-term health security and helping prevent future outbreaks and safeguarding future generations, said Walter Kazadi Mulombo, WHO's representative in Nigeria.

'Obesity treatment cuts long-term health costs'

US gov't blocks coverage for obesity drugs

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): President Donald Trump's administration has decided not to cover expensive, high-demand obesity treatments under the federal government's Medicare program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said late Friday that it would not cover the medications under Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage. Medicare covers health care expenses mainly for people age 65 and older. Proponents of the coverage have ar-

gued that treating obesity can actually reduce longer-term costs by cutting down on heart attacks and other expensive health complications that can arise from the disease. Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden,

proposed a rule in late November after Trump won re-election that would have extended coverage of drugs like Zepbound and Wegovy. The rule was not



Donna Cooper holds up a dosage of Wegovy, a drug used for weight loss, at her home in Front Royal, Va., on March 1, 2024. (AP)

expected to be finalized until Trump

Trump returned to office in January. The Senate confirmed Dr. Mehmet Oz to lead the Centers for Medicare and Med-

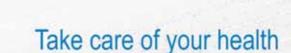
icaid Services on Thursday.

day for its decision, and federal spokespeople did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump's Health and Human Services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has been an outspoken opponent of the injectable drugs, which have exploded in popularity due to the potentially lifechanging weight loss that some patients experience. Polls show Americans favor having Medicaid and Medicare cover the costs. But many insurers, employers and other bill payers have been reluctant to pay for the drugs, which can be used by a wide swath of the population and can

cost hundreds of dollars a month. Biden's proposal was expensive: It would have included coverage for all state- and federally funded Medicaid programs for people with low incomes, costing taxpayers as much as \$35 billion







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Kiwis fast bowler Sears takes 5-34

New Zealand wins the 3rd ODI vs Pakistan by 43 runs, sweeps series

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, New Zealand, April 5, (AP): Pakistan ended a disappointing tour of New Zealand on another somber note Saturday, losing the third one-day international by 43 runs.

While Pakistan made a bold effort to chase down New Zealand's total of 264-8, it fell short again and was dismissed for 221 in a match reduced by a wet outfield to 42 overs per side.

New Zealand fast bowler Ben Sears took 5-34, his second five-wicket total in consecutive matches.

Pakistan made a strong start to its chase despite a shocking injury to opener Imam-ul-Haq, who retired hurt in the third over after being struck in the head by a throw at the stumps.

Imam was attempting a quick single when a throw to

the non-striker's end lodged in the grill of his helmet. He was clearly dazed and struggled to stand steadily before being helped from the field.

Babar Azam rallied Pakistan after the incident with a half century which, with support from Abdullah Safique (33) and Mohammad Rizwan (37), helped Pakistan to 95-1 at the midpoint of its innings.

With 10 overs remaining, Pakistan was 167-4 and well in the match: New Zealand was 165-4 at the same stage. But New Zealand took 99 runs from the last 10 overs of its innings and Pakistan couldn't match that

Tayyab Tahir made 33 from 31 balls but when he holed out in the 39th over with Pakistan 218-9 the chase was all but over.

Pakistan arrived in New Zealand with a newlook squad, eager to shrug off a disappointing performance at the recent Champions Trophy which it hosted and hoping to build towards next year's T20 World Cup.

But the fourists lost the five-match T20 series 4-1 and lost the first two matches of the three-match ODI series by 73 runs and 84 runs before Saturday's defeat. The Pakistan batters mostly struggled on fast and bouncy New Zealand pitches.

"Obviously it was a disappointing series for us," Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan said. "But if you look at the positives, Babar Azam is in very good touch. Looking at the bowling Sufiyan Muqeem was

"You have to give credit to New Zealand in all departments. They played very well for the last couple of months. They played well in Pakistan against us and they are true professionals.'

Earlier, opener Rhys Mariu and Michael Bracewell made half centuries and Daryl Mitchell passed 2,000 runs in ODIs as New Zealand batted first after losing

Mariu posted his maiden half century in his second ODI and went on to make 58 from 61 balls. Mitchell came into the match with 1,998 runs in one-day internationals with finished with 2,041 runs from 52 matches in which he averages 49.7.

Captain Bracewell finished strongly, making 59 from

Lucknow hands Mumbai third defeat



Mumbai Indians' Vignesh Puthur fields the ball during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Mumbai Indians at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Thakur, Khan kept nerves in last two overs

LUCKNOW, India, April 5, (AP): Lucknow Super Giants notched their first home win after beating the Mumbai Indians by 12 runs in the Indian Premier League.

Fast bowlers Shardul Thakur and Avesh Khan kept their nerves in the last two overs against Hardik Pandya to restrict Mumbai to 191-5 in reply to Lucknow's 203-

Thakur gave away only seven runs in the penultimate over and Khan conceded just nine runs in the final over despite Pandya smashing a first-ball six over extra cover.

Mumbai seemed to be in control of the chase as Suryakumar Yadav made 67 off 43 balls in his 100th IPL game for the Indians. But Khan dismissed Yadav off a mistimed ramp shot in the 17th over that brought Lucknow back into

"Mentally tough game," Lucknow captain Rishabh Pant said. "They did not lose a lot of wickets and kept on going but we kept our calm and finished the game.'

Lucknow has two wins and two losses. Five-time champion Mumbai has lost three of its four games

Mumbai suffered a setback when Rohit Sharma was ruled out of the game after injuring his knee in practice. Marsh capitalized on



Lucknow Super Giants' Ayush Badoni plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Mumbai Indians at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

an early dropped chance and dominated a 69-run power play with Markram taking a back seat in the absence of Sharma.

Marsh made 60 off 31 in a 76run partnership with Markram.

Marsh was dismissed by leftarm wrist spinner Vignesh Puthur, who took a smart diving return catch off a leading edge from the Australian, who hit his third halfcentury in four games.

Pandya then dismissed Nicholas Pooran and Pant cheaply with two slower short balls. Pant, who was bought for an IPL-record \$3.2 million by Lucknow, is going through a lean patch after his third single-digit score in four games.

Markram briefly took on the attack but then played second fiddle to Ayub Badoni, who made a brisk 30 off 19 balls. However, Badoni departed before the death overs when he scooped a simple catch to wicketkeeper Ryan Rickelton of Ashwani Kumar's off-cutter.

Markram completed his halfcentury off 34 balls but fell for 53 off 38 to Pandya, who bowled two overs late in the innings and chipped in with three wickets to complete a five-wicket haul.

Miller's two boundaries in the final over got Lucknow past 200, which proved just enough for the home team in the end.

"When you get a good start, you are always ahead of the game," Pant said. "The idea is to play according to the situation. The start Marsh gave helped the lower middle capitalize on that."

Yadav and Naman Dhir scored well over 10 per over after openers Will Jacks and Ryan Rickelton were out inside the first three overs of their run chase.

Dhir hit three sixes and four boundaries in his 46 off 24 balls before he was clean-bowled by Digvesh Rathi's quick leg-break in the ninth over.

Yadav and impact player Tilak Varma added 66 runs, but Lucknow came back when Yadav tried his favorite ramp shot behind the wicket but didn't time it well enough.

Varma struggled to keep up the momentum and at 25 off 23 he was retired out with Mumbai still needing 24 off the final seven

"Disappointing when you lose," Pandya said. "It is a long tournament. (If) you get a couple of wins you get into the rhythm.'

UConn routs UCLA 85-51 in Final Four

South Carolina returns to title game with rout of Texas

TAMPA, Fla., April 5, (AP): Dawn Staley has never lost a national championship game in three trips as South Carolina's coach.

Part of the key to winning those decisive games? Forgetting about what happened the last time she was there. And this time, that was only a year

Staley's defending champion Gamecocks left no doubt they would return to the title game, getting 14 points from Te-Hina Paopao and overwhelming Texas 74-57 on Friday night in the Final Four of the women's NCAA

The Gamecocks are a win away from becoming the first team to secure consecutive titles since UConn won four straight from 2013-16. South Carolina will play UConn for the championship on Sunday after the Huskies

routed UCLA 85-51 in Friday's second semifinal. Freshman Joyce Edwards added 13 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for South Carolina (35-3), which used its experience and poise to weather an early deficit, and then took control with its depth at both ends of the

Three South Carolina players finished in double figures - Bree Hall had 11 points - and the Gamecocks dominated Texas in the post with 40 points in the paint to the Longhorns' 22.

Madison Booker had 11 points with three fouls for the Longhorns (35-4), who were trying to reach their first championship since 1986. They were in the Final Four for the first time since 2003 after a dominant season, which was their first in the Southeastern Conference after coming over from the

Sarah Strong and Azzi Fudd didn't even need much help from superstar Paige Bueckers to propel UConn into the national title game, leading the Huskies to a remarkably easy 85-51 victory over UCLA in the Final Four of the women's NCAA Tournament.

Strong finished with 22 points and Fudd scored all of her 19 points in the first half for the second-seeded Huskies, who are one win away from their 12th national championship and first since the team won four straight from 2013-16, led by Breanna Stewart. The eight-year title drought is the longest for the Huskies since they won their first in 1995.

UConn will face defending champion South Carolina on Sunday for the title after the Gamecocks beat Texas 74-57 earlier Friday night. It's a rematch of the 2022 championship game, which the Gamecocks won 64-49. The teams met in February and UConn shocked South Carolina with a 29-point road victory.

Bueckers, the likely top pick in the WNBA draft on April 14, finished with 16 points after topping 30 in each of the previous three games for the Huskies (36-3).

All-America center Lauren Betts scored 26 points for top overall seed

UConn got off to a hot start with Strong and Fudd leading the way. Even when shots looked off, they found their way in. Fudd, one of the best shooters in the country whose career at UConn has been interrupted by multiple injuries, banked in a 3-pointer from the top of the key, prompting Auriemma to throw his arms in the air and smile.



South Carolina guard Te-Hina Paopao (0) strips the ball from Texas guard Jordan Lee (7) during the first half of a national semifinal Final Four game during the women's NCAA college basketball tournament in Tampa, Fla. (AP)

Müller to leave Bayern after 25 years

MUNICH, April 5, (AP): Thomas Müller will end his "incredible journey" with Bayern Munich this summer after 25 years at his boyhood club but says he wasn't ready to leave.

The 35-year-old midfielder, whose contract is set to expire after the season, made the announcement Saturday in a ioint statement with Bayern.

On Instagram, Müller wrote that he respected Bayern's decision not to offer him a new contract for next season "even if this did not reflect my personal wishes."

Müller has helped Bayern win a record 12 Bundesliga titles and two Champions League crowns - 33 trophies in total, the team said. But his playing time has been limited recent-

"It's clear that today is not like any other day for me," Müller said. "My 25 years as an FC Bayern Munich player will come to an end in the summer. It's been an incredible journey, shaped by unique experiences, great encounters and unforgettable triumphs.

Müller made his Bayern debut under Jürgen Klinsmann in 2008 and his breakthrough came under Louis van Gaal the following season. He joined the club's academy at age 10 in the summer of 2000.

He's scored 247 goals and has made a club-record number of appearances with 743 matches but his game time

has dwindled. Müller has played in 36 games in all competitions this season, most recently in Bayern's 3-1 win over Augsburg on Friday. However, he only started 12 of bench only in the final minutes.
"I feel immense gratitude and joy

that I got to make this career with my beloved club," Müller said in a club statement. "The special connection to the club and our fantastic fans will always remain. What I want as a farewell should be clear: titles we can celebrate together, and moments we'll remember fondly for a long time.'

He didn't mention retirement, leaving open the possibility he could represent another club for the first time since he left his local club TSV Pähl for Bayern a quarter of a century ago.



In this file photo, Bayern's Thomas Muller holds the trophy after winning the Bundesliga title after the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayern Munich and FC Augsburg at the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany. (AP)

León gets court date for legal fight against FIFA over Club World Cup entry LAUSANNE, Switzerland, April 5, (AP):

Sport's highest court said it will hold fast-track appeals next month as Mexican soccer club León tries to overturn a FIFA decision to expel it from the Club World Cup in the United

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said León and its sibling club Pachuca have separately filed appeals against a FIFA ruling last month that since they have the same owner they can't both play at Club World Cup.

"Club León filed an additional appeal against the decision by the FIFA secretary general to be reinstated in the competition," the court said

"The appeals will be expedited and heard during the week of May 5," CAS said.

No target was given for a verdict in the case that will decide the final place in the 32-team lineup for the month-long tournament. The Mexican clubs qualified by winning the continental club championship for the CONCACAF region in different years.

FIFA revealed plans this week for a one-game qualification playoff between Los Angeles FC and Mexican team América if its ruling is upheld

In a separate CAS process, Costa Rican club

Alajuelense is arguing its case to get the final entry, which will be worth a minimum \$9.55 million payment plus an additional share of the \$1 billion tournament prize fund based on results. The tournament starts June 14.

Alajuelense's case is being heard April 23 in Madrid, though its importance is secondary to the León appeal. León was included by FIFA in the tourna-

ment draw in December despite the pending multi-club ownership issue. It was drawn in a group with Chelsea, Esperance from Tunisia and Flamengo of Brazil. those games and has often come off the



Officials applaud participants during the closing ceremony.

NDIAN BADMINTON

Winners pose for a group photo.

IBAK Diamond League 2025 ... A knockout success

International senior badminton tourney concludes with spectacular displays of skill

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Indian Badminton Association of Kuwait (IBAK) proudly hosted the IBAK Diamond League 2025, marking a historic moment as the second-ever International Masters Doubles only Badminton Tournament under the Seniors category.

IBAK Diamond League, a premier badminton tournament in the seniors'

category, successfully concluded, showcasing remarkable talent and sportsmanship from players worldwide. The event, held at IBAK Salwa Gym, witnessed intense competition among seasoned athletes, reaffirming their passion and dedication to the sport.

Bringing together elite senior badminton players from various countries, the tournament provided a platform for players to display their skills, experience, and competitive spirit.

The matches featured spectacular rallies, strategic game play, and impressive performances that enthralled spectators and reaffirmed badminton's growing appeal among senior athletes.

From 31 March 2025 to 2 April 2025, participants competed across various categories and age groups, showcasing their skills in both Men's/Women's doubles and Mixed doubles matches.

The event highlighted the players' abilities and lifelong passion for the sport, further promoting badminton as an inclusive activity that transcends age. Badminton players from various countries like India, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Lebanon, Russia, Pakistan, and Kuwait participated in the tournament. The event was hosted in categories as follows. Mix Doubles +35, Women Doubles +35, Men Doubles +35, Men Doubles +45, Mix Doubles

Chief Guest of the tournament was Mr. Kareem Elkhelawy, Marketing Manager at Al Mulla International Exchange Company. Mr.Kareem Elkhelawy gave the medals and cash prizes to all Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medal-



Players getting ready for action.

IBAK Chairman, Dr. Manimara Chozha, expressed his gratitude, saying, We are thrilled with the turnout and the high level of competition we witnessed over the past days. It is inspiring to see senior players compete with such enthusiasm and skill.

Their dedication is a testament to the sport's timeless nature. We thank Our sponsors - Al Mulla Exchange, EagleBurgmann, Trans W bolting services, Logi Middle East Limited Company, Ooredoo, Nouri Industrial Establishment Company, Mr. ErinjeriRaphealjose(Founder, Global International General Trading & Contracting Company), Dr. Ali Jaber Al Marri (Consultant – Intervention Radiology and Pain Management, Taiba Hospital), Dr.Asma Al Kandri (Gastroenterologist & Endoscopist, Taiba Hospital) and supporters who made this event a grand success"

15

The tournament not only fostered a competitive spirit but also promoted camaraderie and international sportsmanship among senior players. With the overwhelming response and enthusiasm from participants and spectators, organizers are looking forward to an even bigger and better edition next year.

IBAK can be reached at www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

The following are the results of various individual categories.

Event	Position	Name
M: D II	1	Maggesvar Maheswaran K+ Jayashree Raghu
Mix Doubles +45	2	Jabbar Farooqui+ Shaina Ajay Kumar
+43	3	Bobby Varughese+ Cheryl Magsayo Manaytay
	1	Srinivas Reddy G + Maggesvar Maheswaran K
Men Doubles +45	2	Jabbar Farooqui+ Manimara Chozhan Regunathan
++3	3	Mathew Abraham + Chandra Mouli
Min Doubles	1	Syed Akhbar Shah + Ainur Jubail Jul
Mix Doubles +35	2	Maggesvar Maheswaran K+ Jayashree Raghu
+33	3	Jabbar Farooqui+ Olivia Oliquino Knaf
	1	Hisham Ezzi + Syed Akhbar Shah
Men Doubles +35	2	Manimara Chozhan Regunathan + Subin Varghese
+33	3	Anil Antony + Retheesh KUMAR Ps
5 11	1	Olivia Oliquino Knaf + Cheryl Magsayo Manaytay
Women Doubles +35	2	Rio Ferrer + Ainur Jubail Jul
+33	3	Jayashree Raghu + Ivy Jill T. Simene

Celtics break season 3s record, Pistons wrap up first playoff spot since 2018-19

Cavaliers close within a game of sealing East's best mark

BOSTON, April 5, (AP): Jaylen Brown scored 31 points and hit three **3-pointers and the Boston** Celtics broke the NBA record for 3-pointers in a season in a 123-103 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Friday night.

Boston was 14 of 39 from 3-point range to push its season total to 1,370. Golden State held the previous record with 1,363 in 2022-23.

After having their nine-game winning streak halted in their previous game, the Celtics coasted to

Jayson Tatum added 23 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. Kristaps Porzingis had 15 points before he walked to the locker room holding a towel to the bridge of his nose early in the final quarter after getting hit by Cody Martin's elbow while the Suns player was driving to the basket.

Pistons 117, Raptors 105

In Toronto, Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 23 points, Jalen Duran had 21 points and 18 rebounds and the Detroit Pistons beat the Toronto Raptors to wrap up their first playoff berth since 2018-19.

Malik Beasley scored 21 points for the Pistons, and Dennis Schroeder added 16. Detroit won a franchise-worst 14 games last season, enduring an NBA-record 28-game losing streak in the process.

Cavaliers 114, Spurs 113 In San Antonio, Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points, Evan



Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell, right, passes the ball as he is guarded by San Antonio Spurs forward Sandro Mamukelashvili (54) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Anto-

Mobley added 25 points and 10 rebounds and the Cleveland Cavaliers held on to beat the San Antonio Spurs to move a game away from clinching the best record in the Eastern Conference.

Cleveland never trailed and led by 23 points in winning its third straight. The Cavaliers have won six of seven and are a win or a Boston loss from clinching the East's best record for the sixth time in franchise history.

Warriors 118, Nuggets 104

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 36 points and the Golden State Warriors beat the Denver Nuggets for their fifth straight win.

Brandin Podziemski added 26 and Jimmy Butler III had 19 for the Warriors. They pulled within a half-game of the Nuggets, who

began play third in the Western Conference.

The Warriors built a doubledigit lead in the third quarter and maintained it the rest of the way. A 3-pointer by Curry midway through the quarter gave Golden State a 15-point lead, and he also completed a three-point play with under three minutes to play to keep the lead at 15.

Nikola Jokic led the Nuggets with 33 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists, after finishing with 61 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in the last game he played.

Rockets 125, Thunder 111

In Houston, Jalen Green had 34 points, Alperen Sengun added 31 and the Houston Rockets snapped the Oklahoma City Thunder's 11game winning streak.

Houston, which is second in the



Golden State Warriors guard Moses Moody (4) dives for the ball next to Denver Nuggets guard Christian Braun (0) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP

Western Conference, improved to 2-3 against the top-seeded Thunder with the win. Oklahoma City lost for

the first time since March 10. Lakers 124, Pelicans 108

In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic had 35 points, Austin Reaves added 30 and LeBron James had 27 in the Los Angeles Lakers' victory over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Doncic struggled in a 123-116 loss to Golden State a night earlier, finishing with 19 points on and being exploited several times on the defensive end, but he responded to help the Lakers maintain their grip on third place in the Western Conference ahead of Denver and the Warriors. The Lakers have won three of four.

Clippers 114, Mavericks 91

In Inglewood, Kawhi Leonard scored 20 points, Ivica Zubac had 14 points and 13 rebounds and the Los Angeles Clippers routed the Dallas Mavericks for their third

straight victory.
The teams will meet again Saturday in Inglewood.

Norman Powell added 14 points, James Harden had 13 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic and Devin Eubanks each scored 12 points. Los Angeles led by 25 points midway through the second quarter and pushed its lead to 35 points in the fourth before emptying its bench.

The Clippers are 13-3 in their last 16 games.

Kings 125, Hornets 102 In Charlotte, Zach LaVine

had 25 points and 10 rebounds, Domantas Sabonis added 24 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists and the Sacramento Kings rolled past the Charlotte Hornets to remain in 10th place in the Western Conference standings.
DeMar DeRozan added 22

points to help the Kings win for only the second time in their last nine games.

Bulls 118, Trail Blazers 113

In Chicago, Nikola Vucevic and Coby White each had 31 points, Josh Giddey had a tripledouble and the post-season bound Chicago Bulls beat the Portland Trail Blazers.

Giddey had 15 points, 19 rebounds and 12 assists for his sixth triple-double of the season. The Bulls are 10th in the Eastern Conference, the lowest position they

Pacers 140, Jazz 112

In Indianapolis, Myles Turner had 26 points, seven rebounds and six blocked shots, and the Indiana Pacers beat the Utah Jazz for their third straight victory.

Pascal Siakam scored 22 points and Bennedict Mathurin had 20, going 12 for 16 from the free

De Bruyne to leave City at end of season

MANCHESTER, England, April 5, (AP): Kevin De Bruyne has announced he will leave Manchester City - bringing an end to a trophy-laden decade with the club.

The 33-year-old Belgian playmaker is out

of contract this summer and in an emotional post on his social media channels on Friday confirmed he is in his "final months" with the Premier League champion.

"Nothing about this is easy to write, but as football players, we all know this day eventually comes. That day is here," he wrote.

De Bruyne will go down as one of the all-time Premier League greats after helping City win 16 major trophies during a period

of unprecedented dominance. Since joining from Wolfsburg for around \$71 million in 2015 he has gone on to win every major club honor, including the Champions League.

"This city. This club. These people... gave me EVERYTHING. I had no choice but to give EVERYTHING back! And guess what we won EVERYTHING," he wrote, "Whether

we like it or not, it's time to say goodbye." City manager Pep Guardiola described it as a "sad day" following De Bruyne's an-

nouncement. "In the Premier League he is one of the greatest midfielders ever to play in this country and I think in this club (there) is no doubt," Guardiola said. "His assists, his goals, his vision in the final third, that is so

difficult to replace." With 118 assists in the league, De Bruyne is second only to Manchester United great Ryan Giggs, who provided 162, on the all-

time list. He reached that total in 280 appearances, as opposed to 632 for Giggs. He has played 413 matches for City in all competitions, scored 106 goals and was twice named PFA

Player of the Year in England. While De Bruyne will go down as one of the finest players to play for City, he could have



In this file photo, Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Manchester City and Real Madrid at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

instead spent the bulk of his career at Chelsea after joining club from Belgian team Genk in 2012. But he grew frustrated after making only two league starts and eventually moved to Wolfsburg in Germany in 2014. There he revitalized his career and con-

vinced City to make him the club's record

De Bruyne did not say if he would take part in the Club World Cup, which runs through June and July in the United States.

"He has to decide, it's a new competition. I hope he can continue to play football in another place, but it depends on risk and contracts for the future," Guardiola said. "I don't know. The club has to talk to him, and he has to say what he wants to do.'





Obaid Al-Osaimi, Secretary-General of Kuwait and Arab **Shooting Federations**

DOFT

Kuwait gears up for Amir's International Shooting Championship

Kuwait Shooting Federation extends gratitude to HH the Amir for continued support

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Chairman and members of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Shooting Federation, along with all members of the Kuwaiti shooting community, expressed their sincere appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his unwavering support of the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club and his continuous encouragement of Kuwaiti shooters to pursue excellence across regional and international competitions

Obaid Al-Osaimi, Secretary-General of both the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, extended special thanks to His Highness for his generous patronage of the Amir's International Shooting Championship, which will take place from

April 11 to 20. While presiding over the meeting of the tournament's organizing committees at the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club, Al-Osaimi emphasized that hosting this prestigious championship for the twelfth consecutive year is a tremendous honor. He noted that it reflects not only the club and federation's dedication but also the boundless support Kuwaiti shooting continues to receive from His Highness the Amir. This backing, he said, has been instrumental in elevating Kuwait's global standing in the sport and in securing Olympic and international medals for Kuwaiti shooters.

During the meeting, the heads of the organizing committees presented detailed

briefings on the preparations and logistical arrangements carried out over the past period. Each committee leader outlined their team's responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, and execution plans to ensure a successful event. Al-Osaimi expressed his full confidence in the committees, praising their extensive experience in hosting major tournaments.

He also announced that the opening ceremony of the tournament will be held on Saturday at 6:30 pm at the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club, in the presence of His Highness the Amir's representative, Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah, Governor of

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr attends the inauguration of Gulf Beach Games

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (Agencies): Chair of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatics Federations Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah attended the opening ceremony of the 3rd Gulf Beach Games, which was held in Muscat on Saturday, April 5. According to a press release, Sheikh Khaled, prior to

guished sporting event and one of the most prominent competitions to be held in the Gulf countries in 2025. He expressed his full confidence in the capabilities and expertise of the sports institutions in the sisterly Sultanate of

his departure, stated that the Gulf Beach Games is a distin-

Oman to successfully organize this event. Sheikh Khaled highlighted that such events play a vital role in enhancing integration, facilitating the exchange of experiences, and elevating the technical and physical stan-

dards of athletes in the GCC countries. He stressed that the Omani Federation is one of the main pillars of Gulf Aquatics, and is always striving to exchange expertise and continuously develop the aquatics system.

Sheikh Khaled praised the tremendous efforts exerted by the relevant authorities in the Sultanate of Oman to provide all necessary facilities for the success of the Beach Games competition. This event, which brings together members of the GCC countries, will include eight sports and heritage events that will be held in a spirit of friendly competition.

He affirmed the strong cooperation between the Asian Federation and the national federations of the member states, with the aim of promoting and elevating water sports throughout Asia, so that Asia will remain a symbol of excellence in the Olympic Games and a global benchmark in the world of sports.

Meanwhile, 65 athletes from Kuwait are competing across six sports: beach soccer, beach volleyball, sailing, paragliding, athletics, and tent pegging.

The Kuwaiti air sports team kicked off its participation

with paragliding competitions at Al-Jissah Beach, where they will compete in six rounds over the next two days. The team includes talented athletes Ibrahim Al-Rashoud, Ahmad



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr

Al-Madhi, Mohammad Al-Dousari, and Talal Al-Mutawa. The event aims to foster stronger sports cooperation among Gulf countries. Kuwaiti athletes are eager to achieve top results and proudly represent their country, hoping to raise the Kuwaiti flag on the podium.

The Oman Olympic Committee has made extensive prepara-

tions for the games, ensuring a smooth event as the GCC countries, including Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, and Oatar, come together to compete in a variety of beach sports.

Founded in the early 1980s, the GCC has worked towards closer regional integration, not only in sports but across many sectors, and continues to unite the Gulf nations in sporting events like this one.

Duhok arrives for the final first leg

Al-Qadsiya eyes 3rd Gulf Champs League title

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Al-Qadsiya has launched an internal training camp in preparation for its highly anticipated clash against Iraq's Duhok in the first leg of the Gulf Champions League final, scheduled for Tuesday.

The Yellows have momentarily shifted focus away from the Zain Premier League, following a 4-2 defeat to Al-Salmiya in the first round of the league's group stage. Despite the setback, Al-Qadsiya remains in third place with 35 points, while Al-Salmiya closed the gap to just three points in fourth. Al-Qadsiya will be without Moroc-

can midfielder Mehdi Barahma and Moaz Al-Dhafiri due to yellow card accumulations. However, the squad received a boost with the return of several players to training – Khaled Ibrahim, Ismail Khafi, Abdulaziz Wadi, Abdullah Mutawa, and Adhbi Shehab

– who had missed the previous match due to injuries.

Although most of the recovering players are now fit, head coach Zeljko Petrović opted to rest them against Al-Salmiya to ensure peak performance for the Gulf final.

In their absence, Petrović gave opportunities to several up-and-coming players, including Ahmed Boudi, who marked his first senior team appearance with a debut goal. Also featuring were Faisal Al-Shatti, Abdulrahman



Al-Qadsiya's Ahmed Boudi fights for the ball with Al-Salmiya players during the Zain Premier League match.

Al-Dhafiri, Khaled Sabah, Mishaal Khaled, and Ahmed Shabib - a sign of depth and development within the

With Al-Qadsiya trailing league leader Kuwait Club by 12 points with five matches remaining, Petrović has prioritized preparation for the Gulf final over domestic competition.

Al-Qadsiya began selling tickets for the crucial encounter against Duhok via several platforms and the club's official app. The club is counting on strong fan support as it eyes a third Gulf title – having previously won the tournament in 2000 and 2005. The Gulf Champions League has returned to prominence this year after a nineyear hiatus.

Duhok's team touched down in Kuwait a day before yesterday and quickly got to work, beginning training sessions. Al-Qadsiya's Secretary, Hassan Abu Al-Hassan, along with members of the club's public relations team, warmly welcomed the Iraqi delegation and presented flowers to the visiting players.

As both teams finalize preparations, anticipation builds for what promises to be a thrilling first leg in the Gulf Champions League final.

Kuwait ready for World Cup IV after successful UAE camp



KUNA photo

ABU DHABI, April 5, (KUNA): President of the Kuwait Winter Games Club, Fehaid Al-Ajmi, affirmed that the Kuwaiti national ice hockey team is fully prepared to compete strongly in the World Cup IV, set to be held in Armenia from April 13 to 19.

In a statement to KUNA during the team's training camp in Al-Ain, UAE, Al-Aimi said that six international teams will participate in the tournament, organized by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

He emphasized that the Kuwaiti players are in excellent physical condition and full of enthusiasm as they aim for promotion to Division III of the global tournament in the

Players pose for group photo after a training session.

As part of its preparation, the Kuwaiti team recently played a friendly match against UAE champions Theebs, which ended in a thrilling 5-5 draw. Additional matches are scheduled in the coming days against two more UAE teams. ahead of the training camp's conclusion on

Kuwait will kick off its World Cup campaign against Uzbekistan, followed by matches against Indonesia, host nation Armenia, Malaysia, and Iran.

Al-Ajmi praised the players' dedication and high-level performance during the camp, also extending his gratitude to Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and the Public Authority for Sports for their unwavering sup-

He also expressed sincere appreciation to the UAE Hockey Association for itsr warm hospitality and the excellent facilities provided during the team's training stay in Al-

Arsenal title hopes falter

Everton boosts Liverpool chances

LONDON, April 5, (AP): Everton did local rival Liverpool a big favor in the Premier League title race by taking points off secondplace Arsenal on Saturday.

A 1-1 draw at Goodison Park left Arsenal 11 points behind Liverpool with seven games to play in what is looking like an increasingly forlorn task to catch the leaders.

Iliman Ndiaye converted a penalty in the 49th minute to earn Everton a point after Leandro Trossard gave the lead in the 34th to Arsenal, which left key players - like Martin Odegaard and Bukayo Saka - out of its starting team ahead of hosting Real Madrid in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Liverpool's game in hand is at Fulham on Sunday, with the Reds' task having gotten much easier as they look to secure a record-tying 20th English top-flight title. Saka came on as a halftime substitute for Arsenal, four days after making a goalscoring return to action against Fulham after 3½ months out.

Arsenal is five points ahead of thirdplace Nottingham Forest, which visits Aston Villa later Saturday. There was confusion in the final sec-

onds of the game when referee Darren England blew for full time before the four minutes of allotted stoppage time



Everton's Beto, top, and Arsenal's William Saliba battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Arsenal at Goodison Park, Liverpool, England. (AP)

had elapsed.

A few seconds later, the official realized his mistake and ordered for the game to restart, leaving Everton a free kick near the halfway line.

Nothing came of the free kick, however, as a long ball into the Arsenal area was caught by goalkeeper David

Verstappen takes pole for Japanese Grand Prix ahead of Norris and Piastri

SUZUKA, Japan, April 5, (AP): Max Verstappen of Red Bull will start from pole position in the Japanese Grand Prix after turning in the top time in qualifying on Saturday in his final attempt.

Lando Norris of McLaren will start alongside on Sunday with teammate Oscar Piastri on the second row with Charles Leclerc of Ferrari. Verstappen claimed the pole on his

final lap, setting a lap-record for the Japanese circuit of 1 minute 26.983 seconds. It was his 41st pole. Verstappen was asked how this

ranked among his many accomplish-

ments in F1.

"If you look at how our season started - even during this weekend, yeah it's very unexpected," he said, "and I think that makes it, probably, a very special one.

"It's insane," he added.

As the time was posted, mechanics in the Red Bull garage jumped, screamed and hugged each other knowing work on the car had paid off.

Verstappen gave some credit to the track itself at Suzuka in central Japan, and credit to the recent resurfacing of the circuit.

"When I enjoy the track it's even

more fun to drive," he said. "It was crazy fast."

He then added: "For us, it's a great little surprise.'

Norris and Piastri have won the first two races with McLaren threatening to run away with the season - the way Red Bull has in the last four campaigns. Norris seemed a bit in awe of Ver-

stappen's lap. "Congrats to Max," he said. "He did

a good job. It's a hats off. You have to credit something when it's that good." Piastri said he "got everything out of the car today" and also gave a nod to

"Max is going to put up a good fight," he said in understatement, reminding the weather forecast looks difficult. That means rain is predicted, which changes the equation.

George Russell took fifth and Mercedes teammate Andrea Kimi Antonelli will start sixth. Verstappen's pole position could

also set him up to win his fourth straight race in Japan. With rain expected for Sunday, the

advantage could go to Verstappen who is regarded as the best in F1 in the wet. It's also a chance for Verstappen to break out of a tiny slump. Despite be-

Advertising:

ing a four-time defending champion, he has only won two of his last 16 races. Even this weekend he has been put in the shadows by the widely covered driver swap at Red Bull. Verstappen has won 63 F1 races.

Only Lewis Hamilton with 105 and Michael Schumacher with 91 have won more.

Japanese driver Yuki Tsunoda was promoted to Red Bull last week, and Liam Lawson - who had been No. 2 to Verstappen at Red Bull - was demoted to Red Bull's second team Racing

Neither Lawson nor Tsunoda had

great qualifying. Lawson finished 14th and Tsunoda was 15th.

"There's some frustration today," Tsunoda said. "My mindset all weekend has been to enjoy the situation - the car, the team, being at Suzuka, and I felt more calm than usual. But at the same time I felt responsible to perform."

Hamilton, the seven-time champion, will start from eighth on Sunday as he still tries to settle in at Ferrari.

Norris leads the standings with 44 points. Verstappen is next with 36 points, followed closely by Russell (35) and Piastri (34).

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