



Pages 14 & 16



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Flowers and tributes pour in for unwavering credibility, professionalism

## Al-Seyassah marks 56 years of journalism integrity



4-5

Photo by Rezk Tawfik  
A bouquet of flowers received from well-wishers.



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad

Al-Seyassah strengthens values  
of freedom, democracy, and  
national belonging



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh  
Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Promoting cultural, social,  
and economic awareness



Chief of the National Guard Sheikh  
Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah

... a beacon of free expression  
and thought



Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mubarak  
Faisal Saud Al-Sabah

... significant cultural and  
media role



### HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

## From Al-Hajjaj to Bashar: a torrent of anger destroys the oppressors

Unjust rule did not save Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi from the gallows.

Some rulers clung to their positions, and rejected any advice.

Al-Thaqafi: "We entrusted you with handling people's disputes, not quarrelling with the ruler."

Ibn Jubayr: "My ultimate goal is to establish and uphold justice."

Ibn Jubayr: "People's complaints and injustices have increased, and I see and hear them."

Al-Thaqafi: "You will act according to my command, and the ruler is not the subject of the dispute."

Al-Thaqafi: "The Noble and Wise Book of God, the holy Qur'an, commands obedience to those in power."

Al-Thaqafi was afflicted with a mental illness, and his body suffered from disease.

3



Amiri Diwan photo  
Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, inaugurates the new maternity hospital.

## Crown Prince leads opening of world-class maternity hospital

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The new maternity hospital has been equipped according to the highest international standards that combines medical precision with a refined human touch, said Kuwait Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi Wednesday.

This came in a speech during the opening of the new maternity hospital in the presence of the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and state officials.

"We extend our deepest gratitude and

appreciation to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, for your continued support and tireless follow-up," said Dr. Al-Awadhi.

The minister also noted that this project is part of a series of developmental, construction, and infrastructure projects that have been launched and are still ongoing in the country, with a series of upcoming health openings and initiatives aimed at strengthening the health infrastructure and expanding the scope of specialized services.

"This hospital is only the beginning of a new chapter in the specialized medical care provided by the state to its citizens," he added.

MoC advances training, safety

## Kuwait, Saudi boost aviation collab

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) signed on Wednesday Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the General Authority of Civil Aviation of Saudi Arabia (GACA), aimed at enhancing technical cooperation and exchange of expertise in the field of aviation.

The MoC was signed by Kuwait DGCA President Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah and GACA President Abdulaziz Al-Duailej, in the presence of the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Humoud emphasized that the memorandum is designed to establish a comprehensive framework for cooperation, focusing on areas such as training, knowledge exchange, and the updating of operational systems. Additionally, it aims to bolster aviation security and safety in accordance with international standards.

He also further noted that the MoC represents a significant step towards enhancing the integration between the two



KUNA photo  
Kuwait DGCA President Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah and GACA President Abdulaziz Al-Duailej during the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation, in the presence of the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud.

nations in the field of aviation. He underscored that this collaboration will contribute to improving the efficiency of national personnel and ensure alignment with the latest technological advancements.

Continued on Page 5

# Kuwait implements 2-hour power cuts

KFF issues elevator warning

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The mid-day temperature rise on Wednesday pushed the electricity load index to its limits -- crossing the red zone with a 'full' rating -- recording 12,400 megawatts at 3:00 pm.

This has prompted the Ministry of Electricity to schedule two-hour power outage in 53 areas -- 45 residential, five industrial and three agricultural.

Sources from the ministry disclosed that the highest load recorded by the index on Wednesday was around 6,200 megawatts less than the total production capacity of all electricity generation stations, which amounts to 18,600 megawatts. "However, the units that could

add to this capacity are currently under maintenance through contracts with specialized companies," sources added.

Sources affirmed that the Power Plants Sector in the ministry is exerting tremendous efforts to complete the maintenance works and integrate this amount into the grid to reduce loads and avoid resorting to scheduled power cuts in various residential areas.

Sources also indicated that the ministry has resorted to importing 600 megawatts of energy from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) in April and will continue doing so until September; increasing the amount to 1,000 megawatts per month starting in June until the end of the summer peak.

The ministry urged citizens and expatriates to follow electricity conservation measures during peak hours; especially those related to air conditioners, which consume a large amount of energy.

Continued on Page 5

## Arab finance ministers in Kuwait to tackle global economic challenges

# Acting PM calls for swift Arab financial cooperation

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah has stated that the complexities of the current phase put a historic responsibility on Arab financial institutions to intensify their efforts, enhance institutional integration, and foster a spirit of Arab solidarity.

In his speech at the Kuwait-hosted joint annual meetings of Arab financial institutions in the 16th regular session of the Council of Arab

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Mohammad Morsi  
Group photo taken during the 16th regular session of the Council of Arab Finance Ministers hosted by Kuwait.

### Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) announced that an industrial accident occurred in its northern operations area, but it did not affect production, which continued as usual, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, KOC explained that the incident took place at 10:00 am, resulting in injuries to two contractor workers, who were immediately transferred to the hospital for medical treatment.

KOC expressed its deep sorrow over the

death of one worker at the hospital, while the other worker's condition has stabilized.

It confirmed that its emergency teams responded immediately to deal with the incident and took all necessary measures to prevent any further consequences, in accordance with the established procedures for such cases.

KUWAIT CITY: The General Traffic Department announced the full opening of Hussein Bin Ali Al-Roumi Road (Fourth Ring Road) from the entrance to King Fahd Road (via the overpass) leading to Salmiya, starting at dawn on Wednesday, April 9.

## Mol busts bank data thieves

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Several individuals, forming a gang stealing bank cards data, were arrested for acts of unlawfully representing a government bodies and illegal purchasing smartphones and smuggling them abroad, said the Ministry of Interior on Wednesday.

The Ministry of Interior's Public Relations Department said that investigation led the police towards a gang of individuals specialized in stealing bank cards data, noting that tools aiding the felons to commit their crimes were found during the arrest.

Interrogation with the gang members saw them confess to their crimes, which also involved creating fake websites for government entities such as the Public Authority for Civil Identification

Continued on Page 5



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:08	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:29	Maghrib ..	18:11
Zohr .....	11:50	Isha .....	19:30

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**

**By Day:** Hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southwesterly wind changing to northwesterly wind later on, with speeds of 15-55 km/h causing rising dust with

### Weather

a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

**By Night:** Dusty with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	39	21
Abdaly	40	21
Jahra	39	24
Salmiyah	32	26
Jal Aliyah	37	23
Nuwaisib	37	22
Wafra	38	21

## Amir's Rep in Germany to mark Kuwait, Mercedes partnership



PM Diwan photo  
Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is received at the airport.

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation arrived in Germany Tuesday.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah is visiting Germany to take part in a celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the partnership between the State of Kuwait and the German Mercedes-Benz AG group, scheduled to be held in Stuttgart city.

His Highness the Amir's Representative was received at the airport by Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Federal Republic of Germany Reem Mohammad Al-Khaled , the Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Frankfurt Adel Ahmad Al-Ghunaiman and several staff members of Kuwait's embassy and consulate.

Upon arrival, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad commended the close historical relations between the State of Kuwait and the Federal Republic of Germany, which span decades of fruitful cooperation and mutual understanding.

He also expressed his aspiration for enhancing coordination and consultation between the two friendly countries in various fields.



KUNA photo  
Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Japanese Ambassador to the country Kenichiro Mukai.

## Kuwait, Japan discuss military ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, discussed on Wednesday with Japanese Ambassador to the country Kenichiro Mukai topics of mutual interest between the two friendly countries.

In a press statement, the General Staff of the Army said that Major General Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad received the Japanese Ambassador in his office and during the meeting they discussed the most important topics of common interest, especially those related to military aspects.

# Nowhere to run ... Mol launches state-of-the-art speed cameras

Smart devices installed at land borders to nab trespassers



Photos by Rizk Taufiq/KUNA  
Traffic Department personnel monitoring Kuwait streets by cameras installed at various places. Inset : The new mobile speed cameras deployed on Kuwait roads to trap speeding motorists.

**By Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Assistant Director of the Traffic Awareness Unit at the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Interior Ministry Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan has announced that the installation of the new 'Rasid' cameras started Wednesday; indicating these cameras are battery-powered, easy to transport and install, and could detect speeding violations.**

Bu Hassan made the announcement at a press conference held Wednesday to launch the 38th Unified Gulf Traffic Week with the theme, "Driving without a Phone."

The event was held under the patronage of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Yousef Al-Khudda, who attended the event along with senior officials from GTD, at the Operations Department building in South Sabahiya.

Bu Hassan stated that the activities of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week will be launched on Sunday at the Avenues Mall, including an awareness exhibition that will feature the opening of blocks for traffic violations. He disclosed the department is holding another exhibition at Khairan Mall on Wednesday and Thursday, including the opening of blocks for traffic violations.

Presenting statistics from GTD, he revealed that the total number of private vehicles in 2024 reached 2,666,241; and the number of motorcycles reached 58,528. He said the total number

of driving licenses reached 1,706,972 licenses -- 752,627 for Kuwaitis and 908,723 for non-Kuwaitis.

He stated that traffic statistics for the first quarter of this year showed 1,49,382 traffic violations; while the number of vehicles impounded reached 1,430 and motorcycles reached 810. He added the number of people arrested at traffic points during the first quarter of this year reached 665.

He went on to say that the number of speeding violations in the first quarter of this year reached 332,536; using a mobile phone while driving reached 30,190; running a red light reached 24,738; and not wearing a seat belt reached 70,708.

### Cameras

"The number of traffic cameras installed 355 fixed surveillance cameras, seven mobile surveillance cameras, 355 trespass cameras, 20 P2P speed cameras, 161 variable message boards, and 252 seat belt and phone violation cameras.

"Around 90 percent of traffic accidents are caused by inattention while driving and phone use. The number of traffic accidents last year reached 65,991 resulting in 284 deaths, including 90 run-over accidents and 194 other accidents. The number of deaths in traffic accidents during the first quarter of this year reached 65.

"The number of speeding violations in the first quarter of this year reached 332,536, including 30,190 for phone use; 24,738 for running a red light; and 70,708 for not wearing a seat belt. The current number of traffic patrols is 750 vehicles and 335 motorcycles. Cameras have been installed inside patrol cabs, as well as front and rear cameras," he added.

Al-Subhan reiterated that all blocked violations will be opened at the traffic exhibition Al-Khairan and Avenues malls, except violations related to parking in spaces designated for the disabled.

He also indicated that impounded vehicles will be released after paying the traffic fines and other fees.

He stated that the fines stipulated in the new traffic law take effect on April 22, highlighting a significant decrease in traffic violations and an increase in seat belt compliance even before the new law is implemented.

**Following is a summary of the traffic statistics in 2024**

- \* Total private vehicles: 2,666,241
- \* Motorcycles: 58,528
- \* Driving licenses: 1,706,972
- \* Kuwaiti licenses: 752,627
- \* Expatriate licenses: 908,723
- \* Number of violations: 1,490,382
- \* Impounded vehicles: 1,430
- \* Impounded motorcycles: 810

### Violations in the first quarter of 2025

- \* Speeding: 332,536
- \* Mobile phone use: 30,190
- \* Running a red light: 24,738
- \* Not wearing a seatbelt: 70,708

Meanwhile, the borders are now equipped with smart devices for reading identification documents and thermal cameras to determine the number of people inside vehicles, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a source from the security sector.

The source disclosed that the smart devices are similar to those found at airports, and they can accurately read civil identification cards and other identity documents. These devices are also capable of detecting tampering; while the thermal cameras can verify the number of people inside vehicles to prevent attempts to smuggle people.

The source stated that the devices were installed at the ports after the visit of acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, who issued a directive in this regard; adding that the installation of thermal cameras is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

## Call for relevant bodies liaison to maintain security, stability

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Hawally Governor Ali Al-Asfar affirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination among all relevant authorities to maintain security and stability in Hawally Governorate and all of Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the huge efforts exerted by security personnel during the holy month of Ramadan, especially during the last ten days of Ramadan and the Eid al-Fitr holidays.

Governor Al-Asfar commended their commitment and dedication in ensuring the safety and well-being of both citizens and residents.

He said this during a meeting with Director General of the Hawally Security

Command Brigadier General Saleh Al-Azmi and his assistant, Brigadier General Khaled Al-Humaidi.

According to a press release issued by Hawally Governorate, several important security issues were discussed during the meeting, along with the need to strengthen cooperation among various security agencies to ensure the safety and security of residents.

Governor Al-Asfar affirmed the need for joint work to achieve the desired security goals and provide a safe and stable environment for all.



Ali Al-Asfar

### Other Voices

## Are street names to be revised?

**By Ahmad alsarraf**

WITH the issuance of long-awaited decisions, some news has circulated possibly as an attempt to gauge public opinion.

The reports suggest that the government intends to cancel the names of all streets and rename them according to new regulations, with numbers being used to identify certain streets.

It is said that a decision has already been issued, but has not been officially announced, despite the positive feedback garnered from the public opinion survey. However, the excitement and joy quickly faded, as Hassan Al-Banna was reassured that his name would remain on the street in Rumaithiya!

We went through a period marked by a widespread scramble for Kuwaiti citizenship, whether by non-Kuwaitis, the wives of Kuwaitis, or even for the sake of acquiring formal citizenship.

A similar situation has been observed in the naming of Kuwaiti streets after individuals, some of whom did not deserve this honor. Their only achievement was that they had "passed away," which led their families to believe it was their "right" to request the government to name the street where the deceased's house was located, or in some cases merely overlooked, after them.

Imagine that the government made a firm decision to revise the names of all streets and roads in Kuwait due to emerging security and ethical developments. This process of renaming streets would take several years.

Picture a committee being formed and assigned to handle this task, led



alsarraf

by a figure renowned not only for his integrity but also for his extensive knowledge of family genealogies, Kuwaiti public figures, the history of Kuwait, the history of Arab countries, and the history of many foreign countries.

The committee's responsibility would be to conduct a comprehensive study of the street names, and make informed decisions about whether to keep the current names or change them. New names would be selected based on specific rules set by the committee and must be approved by the government, taking into consideration factors like the size and importance of the street, its location, and the significance of the landmarks and public buildings along its path.

The government faced a challenge when the committee chairman, for reasons he refused to disclose, stipulated that he and the committee would only work specific hours each day and that his duties as chairman would end after one year.

The government was puzzled by the difficulty of completing the task within such a short period, especially considering the complexity in reversing the decision to change street names. The security and ethical reasons behind the decision made it clear that maintaining the status quo was no longer feasible.

After consulting experts and law professors, it became clear that, due to the limited time and the fear of the committee to face pressure from various parties, it would be safer to immediately revoke the names of all streets. This decision was made without considering the resulting familial, logistical, or social implications. The streets would temporarily be renamed with numbers until the committee could begin its work and select appropriate names for each street, without any external pressure, influence, or interference.

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### Teachers, admin to be in schools till July

## MEW, MoE plan to rationalize power, water consumption

**By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The teaching and administrative staff in primary schools will continue to work until early July, even though students will be on holiday as the academic year ends in May, say sources from the educational sector.

Sources said the academic calendar, which includes the start and end of classes and the official holidays, has not been changed and remains as approved by the Ministry of Education.

Sources added more than 100,000 teaching and administrative staff will continue their daily work in more than 1,000 schools until early July. "This

will result in high electricity consumption during peak hours. Due to this increased consumption, the Ministry of Electricity is planning to coordinate with its education counterpart to bolster the strategy for rationalizing electricity and water consumption during the summer of 2025," sources explained.

Sources stated that the Ministry of Electricity is considering proposing a cooperation protocol with its education counterpart to reduce consumption during peak hours -- from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm in summer.

Sources affirmed the Ministry of Electricity intends to issue several directives and guidelines to achieve the desired goal of rationalizing consumption as follows:

- Set the air conditioning temperature at 24 degrees Celsius.
- Maintain the control temperature for air conditioning units at 27 degrees Celsius in areas with computers and other sensitive equipment
- Turn off air conditioning systems, lighting fixtures and other electrical appliances in unused areas.
- Ensure that lights are turned off after official working hours.
- Turn off water heaters in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Use energy-saving LED lighting.
- Use light sensors in under-used areas.
- Do not operate high-load appliances and equipment during peak hours.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



From Al-Hajjaj to Bashar: a torrent of anger destroys the oppressors

Over the past three decades, the Arab world has experienced several events that have significantly reshaped its societies, and led to increased poverty and hardship for its people.

During that era, several rulers clung fiercely to power, and refused to heed the advice of even their wisest citizens. Some of these rulers believed they were invulnerable to change, because they were under the impression that their dictatorial regimes were too entrenched to be overthrown. They practiced horrific forms of repression, and silenced dissent.

Among such rulers were Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and most recently, Bashar al-Assad. These rulers failed to grasp a simple truth: no matter how long people may endure under tyranny, there will inevitably come a day when they will rise up. They did not realize that the dams of oppression can only hold back so much before they break, unleashing a flood of anger too powerful to contain.

History has shown us the fate of those who fail to learn from the past. Saddam was executed after fleeing for some-time. Gaddafi met an even more brutal end. And Bashar al-Assad too found himself escaping under the cover of darkness one night.

Perhaps these rulers should have reflected on the story of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi (660-714 AD).

Al-Hajjaj was a ruthless dictator. Although he was the governor of Iraq and not the Caliph of the Muslims, his cruelty knew no bounds. He showed no mercy, not even to the elderly or the weak. His oppression reached such extremes that he even used a catapult to strike the Ka’aba itself.

The story of Al-Hajjaj is a stark reminder of what happens when rulers ignore the counsel of wise men. When Al-Hajjaj appointed Saeed ibn Jubayr as the court judge, the latter spent time in Baghdad, where he witnessed the suffering caused by Al-Hajjaj’s rule and heard countless complaints from the oppressed.

Ibn Jubayr approached Al-Hajjaj Al-Thaqafi and asked him to ease the harshness of his rule. The two engaged in a long conversation, during which Ibn Jubayr presented the grievances of the people.

Al-Thaqafi, seeking further clarification, impulsively asked, “What did you say, Ibn Jubayr?”

The judge responded, “I said what you have just heard.”

Dismissively, Al-Thaqafi replied, “I would like you to repeat it to me. Such talk should not be heard only once.”

Ibn Jubayr said, “May God forgive the governor. The people’s complaints are no trivial matter. Injustice has spread, and their grievances are growing louder.”

Unjust rule did not save Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi from the gallows.

Some rulers clung to their positions, and rejected any advice.

Al-Thaqafi: “We entrusted you with handling people’s disputes, not quarreling with the ruler.”

Ibn Jubayr: “My ultimate goal is to establish and uphold justice.”

Ibn Jubayr: “People’s complaints and injustices have increased, and I see and hear them.”

Al-Thaqafi: “You will act according to my command, and the ruler is not the subject of the dispute.”

Al-Thaqafi: “The Noble and Wise Book of God, the holy Qur’an, commands obedience to those in power.”

Al-Thaqafi was afflicted with a mental illness, and his body suffered from disease.

Al-Thaqafi retorted, “We have entrusted you with resolving disputes among the people, not with addressing the governor’s matters. Focus on the task assigned to you and meet the people’s needs.”

Ibn Jubayr answered, “The complaints and injustices have multiplied. I see and hear them, and I have come to offer you counsel to ease their suffering. This is a matter that demands attention.”

Al-Thaqafi responded, “I turn a deaf ear to it. I don’t care about their hearts, only their loyalty and their swords when needed.”

Ibn Jubayr replied, “Obedience is earned through com-

passion and mercy.”

Al-Thaqafi retorted, “No, Ibn Jubayr. If I give the people what they love, and they realize I am merely flattering them, they will turn against me and seek my death. That’s why I believe strictness in politics is more beneficial.”

Ibn Jubayr said, “I don’t agree with the governor’s opinion.”

Al-Thaqafi firmly stated, “You may not agree with me, but you will follow my orders. I remind you, the governor’s decisions are not open to dispute.”

Ibn Jubayr persisted, “My request is to replace harshness with gentleness, and to replace cruelty with kindness.”

Al-Thaqafi, unmoved, said, “I know more than you about these people and how they are governed. Stay in your position as a judge, and do not meddle in this matter again.”

Ibn Jubayr replied, “My ultimate goal is to uphold and establish justice.”

Al-Thaqafi angrily retorted, “Woe to you! I used to teach people the Qur’an.”

Ibn Jubayr responded, “You have brought the Qur’an from your heart to your tongue. But true justice is achieved by establishing fairness among people.”

Al-Thaqafi dismissively said, “Leave justice among the people to those in power.”

Ibn Jubayr, growing frustrated, said, “I hope you will excuse me from my position as a judge, for I can no longer bear to hear these complaints.”

Al-Thaqafi replied, “The Qur’an is the Book of God, the Almighty and Wise. It commands obedience to those in authority.”

Ibn Jubayr countered, “God is the Almighty, the Wise, the Compassionate, the Merciful to His servants.”

Al-Thaqafi repeated, “Woe to you... I used to teach people the Qur’an.”

Ibn Jubayr stood his ground, saying, “Don’t threaten me. It is my wish to meet my Lord not as an oppressor.”

Al-Thaqafi, furious, declared, “No, you will not stay in your home. I will not allow you to do so since you have revealed what is in your heart.”

The conversation ended with Al-Thaqafi angrily saying, “I swear, I will kill you in a way that differs from how I have killed and will kill anyone else.”

■ People’s love is not earned through lineage, ancestry, or wealth, but through good morals, kind manners, and positive deeds. Always wear a smile, maintain a humble spirit, and keep a pure heart. Leave a positive impression wherever you go.



■ There have been reports circulating that the assets of minors are being misused by renting out properties at low prices for the benefit of illegal beneficiaries, along with the rightful ones. Please clarify whether this is true, and hopefully, it is just a rumor.



■ How quickly the prayers of the oppressed are answered by God Almighty. It is because the gates of heaven are always open to receive them. The oppressor will face the consequences of their actions, and they will be the first to experience the punishment they imposed on others. Eventually, they will drink from the same cup they forced others to drink. God Almighty rewards each person according to their deeds.



■ Once you lose the love of the people, you will live in regret and anxiety, and illness will become your close companion. You will struggle with depression, helplessness, and insomnia. Disturbing nightmares will haunt you, and the noise of the world will seem deafening.

Ibn Jubayr replied, “O God, I beg You not to make my blood permissible for him. Do not allow him to kill anyone after me.”

It is said that Ibn Jubayr was slaughtered from the back of his neck, and that God answered his prayer. Al-Thaqafi indeed suffered from mental illness, and his body was consumed by disease. He repeatedly said, “What do I have to do with Ibn Jubayr?”

To understand life, visit hospitals, prisons, and cemeteries. In hospitals, you will learn that nothing is more precious than health. In prisons, you will realize the meaning of freedom. In cemeteries, you will understand that life is fragile, and that you never know what tomorrow will bring.

Significant milestone: Al-Rifai

Guards launch strategic plan to safeguard Kuwait security

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, officially launched the fourth strategic plan of the National Guard (2030) recently, under the slogan “Protecting the Homeland.”

In a press statement, Sheikh Mubarak expressed his pride and appreciation for the team behind the strategic plan, acknowledging their hard work and dedication in implementing the National Guard’s strategies and five-year plans. He highlighted their commitment to achieving excellence in leadership, readiness, and professionalism in the force’s operations.

Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai, emphasized that the Guard is continuing the strategic planning approach initiated by His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He noted that this fourth strategic plan marks a significant milestone in ensuring the continued strength of the National Guard across all its commands and units. The plan is structured around key objectives, pillars, and strategic areas in military, administrative, and technical fields, as well as core values like loyalty, justice, readiness, and professionalism.



Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The goal, according to Al-Rifai, is to ensure National Guard personnel can perform their duties effectively within the national defense and security systems, offering critical support to all state agencies. He also expressed his gratitude to the strategic plan preparation team for their efforts in bringing this plan to life. He urged all commanders and officers to fully embrace the plan’s objectives, particularly those focused on technological development and the integration of modern technology into operations to maintain a path of excellence.

Colonel Azzam Suleiman, speaking on behalf of the strategic plan preparation team, explained that the National Guard’s “Homeland Protection” strategic plan is rooted in a clear vision: to establish the Guard as an elite and professional force dedicated to achieving the highest standards of excellence. He outlined the core values of the plan, which include loyalty, belonging, justice, readiness, and professionalism, all critical to the institution’s ongoing success.

Colonel Suleiman further detailed the plan’s key pillars, including:

Capabilities: This pillar focuses on enhancing security, military, administrative, technical, and medical capabilities to improve combat, security, and technical readiness.



Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lt Gen Eng Hashem Al-Rifai.



Undersecretary of the National Guard Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifai honors one of the officers.

CID nabs gang of 6 Egyptian car thieves striking early mornings

Don’t fall for fake ‘abaya’ sellers online: Mol

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Ahmadi Investigations Department of the General Department of Criminal Investigations arrested a six-member Egyptian gang that was specialized in stealing vehicles late at night in several areas of Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It was discovered that the gang used a crane to transport the stolen vehicles to a garage in the Salmi scrapyard, where they were dismantled and sold as spare parts. The vehicle bodies were then hidden to conceal evidence of the crime.

The gang was apprehended after reliable information was received about suspicious activity involving a group known for vehicle theft. Detectives conducted thorough investigations, which led to the identification of the suspects and the pinpointing of their location. Several stolen vehicles and spare parts were found in their possession.

The suspects and the seized items have been referred to the relevant authorities for further legal action.



**Beware fake ‘abaya sellers’:** The Cybercrime Department at the Ministry of Interior has warned against dealing with fake abaya stores on social media. The department urged people to avoid social media accounts claiming to sell abayas and requesting customers to pay in advance before delivery. It advised the public to be cautious and avoid dealing with unverifiable online stores.



**1 dead in accident:** A tragic collision between three vehicles on Jahra Expressway resulted in one fatality and injuries, reports Al-Anba daily. The injured were rushed to the nearest hospital and an accident report has been filed.

A security source confirmed that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the accident. Traffic patrols and ambulances rushed to the scene, where it was confirmed that one individual died.

Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the collision. In another incident, a collision between a vehicle and a crane on King Fahd Road caused injuries to the crane driver and massive traffic disruption.

The concerned ministry personnel intervened, towed the crane and took the driver to the hospital.



**Arab expat swindled:** An Arab filed a report at a police station in the Capital Governorate; stating that he fell victim to a fraudulent scheme, reports Al-Anba daily. According to the complainant, the individual accused of fraud approached him with a business proposal, offering an amount in exchange for a partnership in a business. However, after transferring the agreed amount, the Arab discovered that the individual has fled from the country.

He said he met the suspect at a café, where the latter presented a business idea -- importation of goods from an East Asian country, promising a profit margin of more than 200 percent. After agreeing to the terms and transferring the money, he was shocked to find that the accused disappeared and had left the country. A case was filed and it was referred to the concerned authorities for investigation.

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# Al-Seyassah celebrates 56th anniversary with warm praises

## Al-Seyassah Report

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Al-Seyassah daily continues to receive congratulatory messages on the occasion of its 56th anniversary from sheikhs, officials, media and cultural figures from Kuwait and brotherly and friendly countries.

They expressed their appreciation for the pioneering role the newspaper has played in the Kuwaiti media landscape in particular, and the Arab world in general; while commending its contributions to consolidating the values of freedom of opinion and expression and defending national, Arab and humanitarian causes.

They praised the journey of the newspaper -- spanning more than six and a half decades, characterized by professionalism, courage and commitment to societal issues.

They said the newspaper has established a distinguished school of journalism and has become a reliable source of information and analysis throughout its history, which has been replete with achievements and bright milestones in all fields.

President of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatics Federations Sheikh Khaled Bader Al-Mohammad sent a bouquet of flowers, accompanied by his best wishes and congratulations on the occasion. He expressed his appreciation for the solid media experience of the newspaper.

He praised the prestigious media value of the newspaper; emphasizing that it has been a milestone in Kuwaiti and Arab journalism through its bold approach, high level of professionalism, and commitment to national issues.

He also expressed his pride in the position of the newspaper in the media arena, stressing that it has always been a platform for freedom and responsible expression and an example of serious and independent journalism that serves the nation and society.

Head of Amiri Protocol Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah lauded the journalistic legacy and pioneering position of the newspaper in the Kuwaiti and Arab media arena. "I am happy to extend my warmest congratulations on the 56th anniversary of the founding of your esteemed newspaper, which has proven its pioneering position in the world of journalism during this period, committed to professionalism and objectivity in reporting news. We appreciate your sincere efforts in consolidating the media message aimed at strengthening free national media," he stated.

He added "we highly appreciate the role your newspaper plays in promoting cultural and social awareness. We look forward to further successes and achievements in the future ... Happy New Year to you and wish you more progress and prosperity."

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Kuwait Chitim Tenzin expressed his admiration for the newspaper and his eagerness to read it despite the language barrier. He praised its analytical content and the high level of professionalism.

He disclosed "I constantly read the Arab Times. During my stay in Kuwait, I learned a lot from the diverse Kuwaiti press, especially Al-Seyassah and Arab Times, as they are two distinguished newspapers that offer in-depth analyses and insights into regional and international events and issues. I extend my warmest congratulations to Al-Seyassah on its Diamond Jubilee. I commend its distinguished efforts, which have made it a model of responsible and objective journalism."



Sheikh Khaled Badr Al-Muhammad



Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud



Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah



Ambassador of Iraq, Al-Manhal Al-Safi



Archimandrite Boutros Gharib



A bouquet of flowers from well-wishers.



Dr. Fatima Al-Ali



Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jianwei

The Chinese Embassy in Kuwait also sent congratulations to Al-Seyassah newspaper, its dean, Ahmed Al-Jarallah, and all its staff; expressing appreciation for the newspaper's role in the media arena.

The embassy emphasized that Al-Seyassah is considered one of the most important newspapers in Kuwait and has a significant influence in shaping the Arab world's views on hot topics, in addition to providing in-depth analyses at the regional and international levels.

It pointed out that the newspaper is an "honest eye" through which the Kuwaiti people can view China's developments and achievements, and serves as a bridge for communication between the Chinese and Kuwaiti peoples in cultural and humanitarian fields.

In its cable, the Chinese Embassy affirmed that it continues to develop friendly and distinguished relations with Al-Seyassah, particularly in publishing news on the development of Sino-Kuwaiti relations and strengthening the bond of friendship between the two peoples. It wished the newspaper continued success and prosperity, expressing its gratitude for its significant efforts in supporting the embassy's media affairs.

Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq Al-Manhal Al-Safi expressed his sincere congratulations and appreciation to the newspaper's management and editorial staff.

Al-Safi said "I am pleased to extend to you and the editorial staff my warmest congratulations, wishing you continued success in fulfilling your purposeful and fruitful mission on various local, regional, and international issues. Happy New Year."

Patriarchal Vicar of the Greek Catholic Church in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf, Archimandrite Boutros Gharib sent a congratulatory letter to the Dean and Editor-in-Chief, Ahmed Al-Jarallah. He stated "on behalf of Pastoral Council and the Parish, I extend my warmest congratulations to you on the occasion of the 56th of Al-Seyassah. We pray to Almighty Allah to protect you and grant you the strength, patience and wisdom to carry out the huge responsibilities entrusted to you for the good of Kuwait, its progress and its prosperity."

"I hope that all those in charge and working at the newspaper will continue to progress and prosper, and that it will remain a voice of truth and a beacon of light in the sky of free speech and journalism. We ask Almighty Allah for more progress and prosperity for you."

Ahmed Ismail Behbehani, Editor-in-Chief of the weekly Al-Khaleej Newspaper, sent a congratulatory message to Ahmed Al-Jarallah, praising the newspaper's distinguished media career and its pioneering role in supporting Kuwaiti and Arab journalism.

Behbehani wrote "a distinguished media career, during which Al-Seyassah has succeeded in embedding many professional values and principles... It continues to be one of the distinguished national media institutions, a free and bold platform that presents national and Arab issues and diverse media topics with impartiality and professionalism, contributing to raising the banner of Kuwaiti journalism locally, regionally and internationally."

He added: On this occasion, I appreciate your sincere and constructive efforts in strengthening national unity. I commend the honorable national stances of the newspaper under your leadership, which have enabled it to occupy a prominent position in the world of journalism and garner the admiration and appreciation of all who have followed its distinguished journey.

He concluded "as we congratulate the newspaper on its 56th anniversary, we ask Almighty Allah to guide your steps and grant you success in what is best for the State of Kuwait, and that the newspaper continue its media journey with further progress and success."

Businessman Fahad Al-Moajel praised the newspaper, describing it as an important media edifice and a journalistic beacon deserving appreciation.

He commended the newspaper's balanced approach, its serious media policy, and its honest engagement with local, Arab and international issues with transparency and impartiality.

He congratulated the editorial staff on this occasion, praising the pioneering role played Ahmed Al-Jarallah in leading the newspaper towards modern journalism characterized by objectivity and credibility.

He affirmed that he and his diwaniya's patrons are keen on reading the newspaper daily, given its transparency, rationality and professionalism in addressing various issues.

Author Dr. Fatima Youssef Al-Ali expressed her heartfelt congratulations to Ahmed Al-Jarallah, while praising the patriotic journey and bold journalistic stances of the newspaper.

She asserted "from the bottom of my heart, I hope Al-Seyassah continues to toe the path of transparency, strength, truth and courage, fearing no one but the Almighty, in championing the word of truth on the path of national journalism ... Happy New Year."

# APRIL

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## Liberation Tower contract extended with conditions

### SAB urges faster tender process

By Mohammad Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The State Audit Bureau (SAB) has asked the Ministry of Communications to "expedite the completion of the procedures for issuing and awarding the new tender for the operation and maintenance of the buildings and systems of the Communications Complex and Liberation Tower."

Reliable sources told the newspaper that the ministry contacted SAB to obtain approval for the first extension of the contract for the operation and maintenance of the buildings and systems of the Communications Complex and Liberation Tower. However, the bureau stressed

that in the future, such matters should be presented to it well in advance of the extension period, sources added.

Sources indicated that SAB -- after reviewing the extension documents and based on the ministry's statements and responses to its inquiries -- approved the extension procedures for a period of six months; starting from Feb 11 until Aug 10 at a total cost of KD341,000.

Sources disclosed that the bureau stipulated several conditions for approving the extension, most importantly the company's letter approving the extension, including the terms and prices, as an integral part of the contract documents. Sources said the 'emergency' and 'non-emergency' amounts should not be used unless extremely necessary; in addition to the obligation to account on the basis of completed work only and in accordance with the price tables attached to the extension order.

### Innovative degrees tailored to labor market needs

## Abdullah Al-Salem University unveils future-ready programs at Darasaati

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Abdullah Al-Salem University is participating in the "Darasaati" (My Education) exhibition, which is being held under the patronage of Minister of Education Dr. Jalal Al-Tabtabaei at the Mishref Fairgrounds from April 7 to April 10.

In a press statement, the university said its participation is aimed to introduce its colleges and programs as well as reinforce its prominent academic presence among higher education institutions in Kuwait.

In this regard, the acting Chair of the Founding Board of Directors of Abdullah Al-Salem University Dr. Adel Al-Hussainan expressed his pleasure at



AAU photo  
Dr. Jalal Al-Tabtabaei and Dr. Adel Al-Hussainan pose for a group photo at the 'Darasaati' exhibition.

the university's participation in this specialized exhibition for the second time, along with all higher education institutions in Kuwait, including public and private universities, colleges, and institutes.

Al-Hussainan highlighted that this event presents an ideal opportunity for high school students in Kuwait to

explore the latest programs offered by universities.

He emphasized that Abdullah Al-Salem University, as a fourth-generation university, offers unique majors that meet the current and future labor market demands, and provide opportunities that were previously unavailable in Kuwait.

## PADA forms committee to set fees for disability services and facilities

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: According to informed sources, the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) recently formed a committee for determining fees and charges for the use of its facilities and services, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The committee is headed by PADA's director and includes her deputies who oversee medical, psychological, and social services, disability care centers, administrative and financial affairs, social care homes, and

educational and rehabilitation services. Directors of the Vocational Rehabilitation for the Disabled and Legal Affairs departments are also part of the committee.

The committee's responsibilities include listing all services offered by PADA, specifying the facilities and services subject to Article 37 of Law No. 8/2010 regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, and coordinating with various sectors to determine appropriate fees.





Sheikh Athbi Al Nasser



Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Duaij



Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nasser



Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Jaber



Abdul Aziz Al-Dughhaishim



Rashid Al-Hajri



Basil Al-Jarid

A legacy of freedom, integrity, and professionalism

# Al-Seyassah celebrates 56 years of excellence

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Prior to the rise of technology, the Internet, the knowledge revolution, and the hustle and bustle of social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram, Al-Seyassah was born. It emerged with strength and resilience, and as a symbol of renaissance and enlightenment that mirrored the leadership of Kuwait, the “Pearl of the Gulf”, in the 1950s.

Throughout its long history, Al-Seyassah has chosen to walk on rough paths and scale towering peaks. It has never been swayed by the allure of easy routes or the comfort of tradition. Instead, it has bravely faced intellectual and political battles, always advocating for the freedom of thought, creativity, and speech. It has been a staunch defender of free expression and honest, courageous reporting, fueled by a deep, genuine love for Kuwait and its people, and an unwavering loyalty to its political leadership.

Today, entering its 56th year, Al-Seyassah celebrates a distinguished legacy of professionalism and objectivity in delivering news and uncovering truths. It stands proudly among the top echelons of Arab and international journalism.

On this anniversary, Al-Seyassah is showered with tributes, and the halls of Dar Al-Seyassah are filled with flowers and congratulatory messages from all segments of Kuwaiti society and its readers both at home and abroad. These heartfelt messages praise the newspaper’s stature, credibility, and impartiality in analysis and criticism, as well as its dedication to delivering accurate news backed by thorough fact-checking. This is a testament to the strong bond between Al-Seyassah and its devoted readers.

His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad led the wave of congratulations, sending a heartfelt message to Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah and expressing his pride in Al-Seyassah’s distinguished media career.

In his message, His Highness Sheikh Nasser stated: “We are pleased to extend our sincere congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the publication of the first issue of Al-Seyassah newspaper.

While we affirm our pride in the newspaper’s remarkable media journey, we are especially pleased to commend its long history of intellectual and cultural contributions. These efforts have enriched journalistic work and played a vital role in strengthening the values of freedom, democracy, and national belonging among the people of Kuwait.”

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah expressed his deep appreciation for Al-Seyassah’s ongoing efforts and its commitment to strengthening the media and journalistic journey.

He praised the diverse topics Al-Seyassah covers, which help promote cultural, social, and economic awareness within Kuwaiti society.

Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah also received a congratulatory message from the Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

In his message, Sheikh Mubarak stated, “It is a pleasure for us at the National Guard to extend our sincere congratulations to you, the editorial staff, and all employees of Al-Seyassah on the occasion of your newspaper’s anniversary.

We congratulate you on this milestone and affirm our pride in the newspaper’s distinguished achievements and its steadfast national stances throughout its illustrious career.

We also hope that Al-Seyassah will continue its pioneering role within the democratic framework enjoyed by our press and that it remains a beacon of free expression and thought.”

Furthermore, the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Saud Al-Sabah expressed his happiness on the occasion of Al-Seyassah’s 56th anniversary, commending the newspaper’s significant cultural and media role.

In a congratulatory message to Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad affirmed that Al-Seyassah has long been and will continue to be a true model of media excellence by showcasing the best of Kuwaiti journalism. Its commitment to accuracy and credibility has earned it the trust of readers both inside and outside Kuwait.

Former Foreign minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed also praised Al-Seyassah for its high professional standards throughout its long history.

He highlighted the newspaper’s consistent dedication to promoting a culture of dialogue, enhancing freedom of expression, and discussing national issues. This approach has nurtured a strong sense of national responsibility and belonging.

Sheikh Dr. Dr. Ahmed Al-Mohammed expressed his deep pride in the vital role Al-Seyassah has played in



Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout



Saud Al Roumi



Omani Ambassador Saleh Al Kharousi



Mohammed Al-Hadlaq



A bouquet of flowers.



Ziad Al-Hamad



Omar bin Khatlan



Shawq Al-Mulla

supporting the progress of journalism.

Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah praised Al-Seyassah for its sincere efforts in enriching the Kuwaiti and Arab press field.

He highlighted the newspaper’s dedication to freedom of expression, national responsibility, balance, credibility, and transparency.

Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Al-Duaij expressed his hope that Al-Seyassah continues to thrive in its distinguished media career for serving Kuwait and its causes.

The Director General of the Joint Program Production Institution of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah extended his congratulations to Al-Seyassah, and wished the newspaper continued success.

He commended Al-Seyassah for its dedicated efforts in strengthening its purposeful media message and promoting free national media.

Ambassador Saud Al-Roumi congratulated Al-Seyassah, highlighting his eagerness to browse through the newspaper daily.

He said, “We are keen to follow everything published in Al-Seyassah during our time at Diwan Al-Muajjal.”

Ambassador Al-Roumi also noted the unique flavor of Al-Seyassah, particularly the “bold and unique” articles by Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

He wished the newspaper further progress and prosperity.

The Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kuwait Dr. Saleh bin Amer Al Kharousi sent a congratulatory cable to the Editor-in-Chief, stating, “On the occasion of the anniversary of the first daily issue of your esteemed newspaper, we are pleased to extend our sincere congratulations to you and to the family of your distinguished media platform, thanks to your tireless efforts in elevating it to the highest levels.

As we share in the joy of your continued success in fulfilling your purposeful mission, we are pleased to commend and praise the role played by your esteemed newspaper in highlighting various aspects of the development and cultural progress of the Sultanate of Oman, particularly on official and national occasions. This reflects the depth of the close relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the sisterly State of Kuwait, strengthening communication between our two brotherly peoples. Please accept our sincere wishes for further success and prosperity.”

The Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout also commended Al-Seyassah for its remarkable excellence in various journalistic and media matters, emphasizing how it reflects the atmosphere of freedom in Kuwait.

He expressed his appreciation for the significant and tangible efforts made by Al-Seyassah in enriching the journalistic field, and highlighting its media message with professionalism and efficiency.

The Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah received a cable from Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad, in which he stated: “I am honored, as Al-Seyassah newspaper celebrates its 56th anniversary since the publication of its first daily issue, to extend my sincere congratulations and blessings to you and to the editorial staff of your esteemed newspaper, coupled with my most sincere wishes for further progress and success.

Al-Seyassah has been and continues to be a true media model and a distinguished showcase for Kuwaiti journalism. Its accuracy and credibility have earned the trust of its followers, both inside and outside Kuwait.

Our best wishes and warmest congratulations to you, and to Al-Seyassah newspaper for continued well-being, and to its editorial staff for every progress and success.”

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah congratulated Al-Seyassah on its 56th anniversary. In a message on this occasion, he said, “I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to you and all the staff of the esteemed newspaper on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of Al-Seyassah, a media edifice full of contributions that holds a special place in all of our hearts.

We share your joy at this happy event and express our gratitude for your effective media efforts throughout this period in Al-Seyassah’s history, as well as its distinguished role in championing the causes of the nation and its citizens through credibility, accuracy in reporting, and truthfulness.

We hope that your generous efforts will continue to support the progress of media work in Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness the Prime Minister.”

The Editor-in-Chief also received a congratulatory message from businessman Rashid Al-Hajri, who said, “Thanks to the distinguished efforts of the editorial staff,

led by the Dean of Journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Al-Seyassah has succeeded in attaining a prominent position among local and international newspapers.

Al-Seyassah has always been distinguished by its commitment to objectivity and media professionalism, and providing comprehensive coverage of events and issues of concern to Kuwaiti and Arab citizens.”

Businessman Abdulaziz Al-Dughhaishem said, “Al-Seyassah is a fundamental reference for media credibility and a journalism school from which many male and female media professionals in Kuwait have graduated.

Al-Seyassah has been distinguished by its media credibility, free opinion, and national affiliation, thanks to the leadership of its Editor-in-Chief, the Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism, Ahmed Al-Jarallah.”

Al-Dughhaishem praised the Editor-in-Chief’s editorials, his in-depth analyses, and his great responsibility in leading Al-Seyassah towards further success and excellence. He wished it to remain a voice of truth and a beacon of light in the sky of free Kuwaiti journalism.

Also, Counselor Ziad Suleiman Al-Hamad congratulated Al-Seyassah on its 56th anniversary, and praised its distinguished contributions and professionalism, its balanced approach, and its sound vision.

He said, “Al-Seyassah’s professional contributions and active engagement in the intellectual and cultural arena have positioned it as an effective media beacon in Kuwait and the region.”

Businessman Basil Abdulaziz Al-Jarid, in a congratulatory message to Brigadier General Al-Jarallah, affirmed that Al-Seyassah serves the nation and its citizens with rationality and occupies a special place in the newspaper’s diwan.

He said Al-Seyassah is distinguished by its objectivity, clarity, and defense of the interests of Kuwaiti citizens. This has earned it a distinguished position in Kuwaiti and Arab journalism.

Omar Sharar Bin Khatlan described Al-Seyassah as “a platform and shining beacon for readers”, adding that it is an important media institution that deserves appreciation.

Bin Khatlan praised Al-Seyassah’s “serious national media policy and its honest engagement with local, Arab, and international issues with transparency and impartiality.”

Mohammed Al-Hadlaq from Kuwait Oil Company congratulated Al-Seyassah on its 56th anniversary, expressing his appreciation for the huge role the newspaper has played in highlighting the civilized image of beloved Kuwait on various official and national occasions.

He said, “Ahmed Al-Jarallah and his courageous patriotic stances have played a major role in this remarkable success, particularly in defending the causes of Kuwait and the Arab nation with complete honesty and sincerity, for which he paid a heavy price. We wish Al-Seyassah continued progress and prosperity in serving the nation and its people.”

Media researcher Shawk Al-Mulla stressed that Al-Seyassah is one of the most prominent and successful newspapers in the Arab world.

She said Professor Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the dean of Kuwaiti journalism, is among the most prominent writers and journalists who tackle sensitive and important issues with great skill.

She praised Al-Jarallah’s distinguished dialogues and interviews with Arab and European leaders, something that other media professionals or editors-in-chief often find difficult to accomplish.

With its long history, renowned professionalism, and objectivity in delivering news, information, and uncovering the truth, Al-Seyassah today enters its 56th year, basking in the glory of success both on the podiums of the press and among the pinnacles of Arab and international journalism.

The newspaper continues the path of awareness charted by its veteran leader, Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, since its early beginnings in the 1960s.

Over the years, Al-Seyassah has witnessed significant development, enabling it to compete both in print and online locally, regionally, and internationally.

However, the road was not a bed of roses. The newspaper has faced many difficulties and challenges, most notably the assassination attempt on its editor-in-chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah. This act, aimed at suppressing the newspaper’s free platform and silencing its voice, was a direct result of its unwavering patriotic, Arab, and nationalist stances.

True to the maxim, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger,” the editor-in-chief has embraced these hardships with resilience and determination. Through this steadfast spirit, Al-Seyassah, along with Arab Times and Al-Hadaf, has become a well-established media empire.

## Continued from Page 1

### Kuwait implements

Meanwhile, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) urged people Wednesday to avoid using elevators during the scheduled power outage set by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

In a statement to KUNA, Public Relations and Media Department Director at KFF, Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib, advised everyone to remain calm in the event of an elevator stoppage or a power outage, and press the alarm button to call for help, or call the Emergency No. 112 when needed.

He cautioned not to attempt to open the elevator door to escape, as this could put their lives at risk, and instructed everyone to sit on the floor of the elevator to relieve stress and wait for assistance.

### Kuwait, Saudi

For his part, Al-Duailej commended the strategic relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, emphasizing that this cooperation will improve coordination in technical and training fields, while contributing to the realization of

both countries’ shared vision for the advancement of the aviation sector.

During the meeting, the officials also discussed foundational steps for modernizing operational processes, with a particular focus on initiating joint training programs and facilitating the exchange of technical personnel between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Further discussions included the establishment of joint initiatives in aviation security and safety, aimed at coordinating policies and exchanging data to ensure the highest levels of quality and safety.

### Acting PM

Finance Ministers, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef pointed out these meetings are being held to affirm the continuation of joint Arab action toward integrating Arab efforts to unify policies and procedures aimed at strengthening and diversifying economic structures, improving the business environment, and increasing levels of productivity and competitiveness.

He stressed the importance of fostering a spirit of Arab solidarity, adapt-

ing to changes, and responding quickly to the needs of member states. He said “the member states must intensify their efforts today more than ever.”

He also underscored the need to not overlook the rapid development of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, which have become a major driver of the global economy. He considers this a big challenge to the Arab economy’s ability to integrate modern technologies into markets to achieve growth.

He added Kuwait continues to adopt a firm stance in supporting and empowering the youth, developing human capital, and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that it launched at the first development summit in 2009. “The country also works hard to provide job opportunities and eliminate the significant lack of interest in the sector,” he affirmed.

He indicated that the commitment of Kuwait to support developing countries is not a new concept, as it rather a well-established approach embodied in the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) more than six decades ago -- a milestone in the journey of Arab and international development.

He praised the vital role played by Gulf development funds and joint Arab financial institutions in fulfilling their commitment to finance development projects around the world, reflecting a shared belief in the importance of solidarity and cooperation to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

He added the interest of Kuwait in Arab financial institutions stems from its belief in their importance, stressing it spares no effort in supporting the projects and decisions issued in joint annual meetings of Arab financial institutions that serve the interests of Arab countries and advance the hopes and aspirations of Arab citizens.

In a related development, Omani Finance Minister Sultan Al-Habsi emphasized in his speech that current global events and developments clearly impact the global economy; adding this negatively affects the Arab region as part of this global economic system. Al-Habsi stated that in light of global changes, joint Arab financial institutions must take effective and rapid measures to counter these impacts.

He pointed out the recent decisions issued by the United States government to impose customs duties on

several countries around the world call for reaffirmation of the importance of providing an appropriate investment climate that motivates the private sector, attracts capital, and develops investment opportunities to achieve sustainable development goals.

He explained that encouraging the private sector and attracting capital can only happen by enacting laws that strengthen channels of openness to the global economy, intensifying efforts and assuming responsibilities to accelerate structural and institutional reforms, combating corruption, and establishing the principles of transparency and integrity.

He praised the efforts made by Arab countries to overcome many difficulties, indicating there are many challenges ahead that require more concerted efforts.

He stated that the current situation requires stronger coordination among Arab countries and the development of flexible financial strategies that are adaptable to these challenges, with the aim of enhancing economic stability in the region and maintaining its growth amid ongoing global fluctuations.

He emphasized the importance of these meetings in coming up with

decisions and recommendations that enhance economic and social development efforts in Arab countries and build bridges of communication and cooperation with international financial institutions, ensuring the achievement of accomplishments capable of driving Arab development.

He continued “there is no alternative but to give the least developed countries more attention in terms of financing development, economic and social projects that will contribute to addressing their chronic problems, such as high unemployment rates, low income levels, and fragile infrastructure, in addition to confronting the challenges associated with rapid technological developments and accelerating climate change.”

### Mol busts

(PACI), the department affirmed, noting that the suspects were sent to due process.

The Mol called on citizens and residents alike to take extra precaution while surfing the internet and making sure any transactions online were made with legitimate websites.



I'm tired of the fake math in the swamp: Rep Roy

## Trump fails to sway House GOP holdouts as ‘big’ bill of tax breaks, spending cuts stalls

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): US House Speaker Mike Johnson found himself in a familiar jam on Tuesday: Conservative Republican holdouts are stalling action on President Donald Trump’s “big” bill of tax breaks and spending reductions, refusing to accept a Senate GOP budget framework approved over the weekend because it doesn’t cut enough.

Trump summoned House Republicans from the conservative Freedom Caucus to the White House for what was described as a contentious mid-day meeting. Despite Trump’s push, some of the Republicans told the president they could not support the Senate package without a commitment to steeper cuts.

“I’m tired of the fake math in the swamp,” said Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, a Freedom Caucus leader, before heading to the White House.

After meeting with Trump, Roy was among those unmoved. “I’m still a no.”

The standoff between the House and the Senate over what Trump calls his “big, beautiful bill” is exposing the limits of the GOP’s long campaign to cut federal spending, especially at a time of economic unrest.

Trump’s trade wars, the mass layoffs of thousands of federal workers and Trump adviser Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency slashing through government, are all upending the debate.

With the financial markets roiling over Trump’s tariffs and the economy teetering as worries of a recession flare, the Republican speaker insisted there is no time to waste. Johnson is pulling out all the stops as he scrounges for votes to nudge the process forward before lawmakers leave town Thursday for a two week spring recess.

“We’ve got to get this done,” Johnson said earlier in the day.

Republicans, in control of the White House and Congress, are trying to muscle Trump’s signature domestic policy bill closer to passage, ensuring some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks approved during his first term don’t expire at year’s end. But House Republicans are demanding as much as \$2 trillion in budget cuts over the decade, to help offset the costs of the tax breaks, while Senate Republicans, who stayed up late to pass their package early Saturday morning, are hesitant to go that far.

Facing unified opposition to the



US House Republican leaders, from left: Rep Lisa McClain, R-Mich, Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn, Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La, and Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La, talk to reporters about the push for a House-Senate compromise budget resolution to advance President Donald Trump’s agenda, even with opposition from hard-line conservative Republicans, at the Capitol in Washington on April 8. (AP)

package from Democrats, who see the GOP package as a tax giveaway to the wealthy paid for by reductions in Medicaid, food stamps and other vital government services, Republi-

cans are struggling to resolve their differences and craft a final product.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries in a letter to Johnson challenged him to a one-on-one de-

bate over their budget differences.

“Mano a Mano,” Jeffries posted on social media. “The American people deserve to know the truth.”

The uproar has thrown the week’s schedule into uncertainty with a planned Wednesday vote potentially pushing to Thursday, or even later.

During a subsequent speech Tuesday night at a National Republican Congressional Committee gathering, Trump called his get-together “a great meeting” while using colorful language to urge holdouts to get on-board.

“One little thing the Republican Party has to do is get together and damn vote,” the president said, adding: “Close your eyes and get there. It’s a phenomenal bill. Stop grand-standing.”

But Trump’s demands appeared to have failed to move many of the House conservatives unmoved.

“The rest of America has to do math and balance their budget. I think we ought to do math here in Washington, D.C.,” said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., who attended the White House meeting. “It doesn’t take a calculus wiz to know that doesn’t add up.”

Lawmakers said several dozen Re-

publicans are withholding their support.

Rep. Eric Burlison, R-Mo., said the Senate cuts are “anemic.”

“I couldn’t sleep at night if I was part of exacerbating the federal deficit,” Burlison said. “While there might be some over there who have an appetite for some of the spending cuts, it’s clear that not everyone does.”

While Republican senators have agreed to consider as much as \$2 trillion in cuts, their counterparts in the House are deeply skeptical, if not distrustful, that the Senate GOP will accomplish anywhere near that level of reductions. The Senate bill sets a much lower floor, just \$4 billion in cuts, though Senate GOP leaders insist that number will rise.

Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., said he does not believe the Senate has the political will to stomach larger cuts and is unconvinced the GOP senators will reach anywhere near the level the House has set.

“The trustworthiness of the Senate is suspect,” Norman said. “It’s like you charge for your house \$100,000, And I come back with \$1,000. How do you bridge that gulf?”



Law enforcement respond to a deadly shooting at a town house complex in Spotsylvania County, Va., on April 8. (AP)

### All suspects in custody

## Virginia shooting kills 3, wounds 3

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, Va., April 9, (AP): All suspects were in custody early Wednesday after a shooting that killed three people and wounded three others in Virginia, authorities said. The Spotsylvania Sheriff’s Office announced in a social media post only that all suspects were in custody and there was no threat to public safety. It said additional details would be released later.

On Tuesday evening, 911 calls came in about a shooting at a town house complex in Spotsylvania County, just outside Fredericksburg and about 65 miles (105 kilometers) southwest of Washington, said Maj. Elizabeth Scott,

spokesperson for the sheriff’s office.

Officials had urged people to avoid the area and those near the scene to stay indoors while authorities investigate, she said. Area schools delayed openings by two hours Wednesday morning.

The shooting may have been committed by more than one person, according to Scott. There was publicly released information about a possible motive.

The three injured people were taken to hospitals with gunshot wounds. Their conditions and other information about them was not immediately available.

## Paxton launches Senate primary challenge against Cornyn

## Nebraska to continue to split electoral votes in presidential polls

LINCOLN, Neb., April 9, (AP): A bill to make Nebraska’s method of awarding presidential electoral votes a winner-take-all system failed to survive a filibuster Tuesday after two Republican lawmakers broke with their own party.

The bill’s failure preserves the Omaha area’s “blue dot” congressional district that has seen its electoral vote - one of Nebraska’s five - go to Democratic candidates in three of the past five presidential elections.

Republican Sen. Merv Riepe, of Ralston, followed through on his promise not to support the winner-take-all proposal, despite a full-court press by Gov. Jim Pillen to apply public pressure on him. That included a written statement from the governor on Monday for Riepe to stand “with his fellow Republicans on this critical issue.” Pillen also highlighted Riepe’s prior votes over the years to support a change to winner-take-all.

But Riepe, whose legislative district is almost evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, reiterated that the winner-take-all system is “a poison pill for my district.” Riepe faces reelection next year if he decides to run for another term.

“The voters in my district, in particular, are overwhelmingly in support of keeping the existing system,” Riepe said ahead of the vote. “As of this



US State Sen Merv Riepe, a Republican, sits at his desk in the Nebraska Legislature in Lincoln, Neb on April 8, ahead of a vote on a bill to take Nebraska to a winner-take-all system of awarding presidential electoral votes. (AP)

morning, I had 135 people from my district who called in. Of them, nine supported winner-take-all, and opponents were 126.”

Republican Sen. Dave Wordekemper, a freshman lawmaker whose eastern Nebraska district partly lies in the 2nd Congressional District, also voted against ending debate on the bill, saying that 75% of the messages sent to his office from constituents called to

keep the split vote system.

Nebraska and Maine are the only states that split their electoral votes by congressional district, and both have done so in recent presidential elections.

In Nebraska, the system has confounded Republicans. Barack Obama became the first presidential contender to shave off one of the state’s five electoral votes in 2008. It happened a sec-

ond time in 2020, when Joe Biden won it, and again last year for then-Vice President Kamala Harris, even though Republican President Donald Trump won the rest of the state.

Republicans have tried to reverse the split vote system since the Legislature adopted it nearly 35 years ago, with most saying Nebraska should mirror the 48 states that use a winner-take-all system under which all electoral votes go to a single candidate.

**Also:**

**AUSTIN, Texas:** Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** is running for the US Senate in a primary challenge against Republican Sen. **John Cornyn**, setting up what is likely to become one of the GOP’s most contentious and expensive contests of 2026.

Paxton, a close ally of President **Donald Trump**, made the announcement Tuesday after spending more than a year openly flirting with a Senate challenge. During that time, Paxton has sought to position himself as a national leader among the GOP’s ascendant hard right.

His entry into the race, which he made official in an interview on Fox News’ “The Ingraham Angle,” comes as Paxton is no longer shadowed by legal troubles that had hung over him for nearly a decade but did not weaken his ability to win reelection twice.

### ‘Paving way for fresh leadership’

## German parties agree to form new government

BERLIN, April 9, (AP): Conservative and center-left parties reached a deal to form a new German government on Wednesday after weeks of negotiations, paving the way for new leadership in Europe’s biggest economy after months of political drift.

Friedrich Merz, the leader of the center-right Christian Democratic Union, is expected to become Germany’s next leader under the agreement, replacing outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The parties involved sent an invitation to a news conference on the coalition deal at 3 pm (1300 GMT).

Merz’s two-party Union bloc emerged as the strongest force from Germany’s election on Feb 23. Merz turned to the Social Democrats, Scholz’s center-left party, to put together a coalition with a parliamentary majority.

It’s still going to be a little while before parliament can elect Merz as chancellor, perhaps in early May. Before that can happen, the coalition deal will need approval in a ballot of the Social Democrats’ membership and by a convention of Merz’s CDU. Details of the agreement



From left: Parliamentary Group Leader of the Bavarian conservative Christian Social Union (CSU) party Alexander Dobrindt, leader of Germany’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Friedrich Merz and the co-leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) Saskia Esken prior to coalition talks between SPD, CDU, CSU at the SPD headquarters in Berlin on March 28. (AP)

weren’t immediately available.

But already last month, the two sides pushed plans through parliament to enable higher defense spending by

loosening strict rules on incurring debt and to set up a huge infrastructure fund that’s aimed at boosting the stagnant economy.

## US must maintain its troop totals in Europe, say House Republicans and Democrats

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): US Republican and Democratic members of the House Armed Services Committee voiced sharp bipartisan criticism Tuesday about reports the Trump administration is eyeing a reduction of US forces in Europe, saying America must stick with its NATO allies.

Rep. Michael Rogers, R-Mich., the panel’s chairman, said the US must not cut troop levels in Europe and added that he was opposed to any plan for the US to relinquish NATO command. The US historically has held the Supreme Allied Command Europe, or SACEUR, position.

“US leadership in NATO is essential to ensure armed American forces, including our nuclear weapons, always remain under US command,” Rogers said at the start of a hearing with Army Gen. Christopher G. Cavoli, commander of US European Command and the NATO commander.

Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, added that “the idiocy of the fact that there was any discussion” about giving up the SACEUR role “is just



US Army Gen Christopher G. Cavoli speaks during the annual Folk och Försvar Conference (Society and Defence Conference) in Salen, Sweden on Jan 9, 2023. (AP)

beyond me.”

Katherine Thompson, who is doing the job of assistant defense secretary for international affairs, repeatedly told lawmakers that there is an ongoing Pentagon review of troop totals and no decisions have been made. But, asked again two hours into the

hearing whether the US would give up the SACEUR job, she said, “my definitive answer is no.”

That was the first time Pentagon officials have flatly denied the US will give up that post, which Cavoli said gives him a strong voice and American leadership at NATO.



Protesters take part in a rally during a nationwide 24-hour strike, as labor unions press for a full return of collective bargaining rights that were scrapped during successive international bailouts more than a decade ago, in front of the Greek Parliament in Athens, Greece on April 9. (AP)

### Flights and ferries halted in Greece as unions call general strike

A nationwide general strike in Greece disrupted public services across the country Wednesday, with ferries tied up in port, flights grounded and public transportation running only part time as labor unions press for an end to lingering austerity measures imposed on Greece by international creditors a decade ago.

Thousands of protesters marched through the center of Athens in two separate demonstrations that ended peacefully.

The 24-hour strike was called by the two main umbrella unions covering the public and private sectors. They are seeking increases in salaries and a full return of collective bargaining rights which were scrapped

as part of international bailouts during Greece’s financial crisis.

Commercial flights to and from Greece and between domestic destinations were cancelled from midnight Wednesday until midnight Thursday, while in the Greek capital buses, trolleys, trains, trams and the subway system were operating only for part of the day. (AP)

## Trial of Sarkozy sheds light on France’s back-channel talks with Libya’s Gaddafi

PARIS, April 9, (AP): The monthslong trial of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy over the alleged illegal financing of his 2007 presidential campaign has shed light on France’s surprising back-channel talks with the government of then-Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Family members of terror attacks sponsored by Gaddafi’s government have told the court they suspect that almost two decades ago, Sarkozy was willing to sacrifice the memories of their loved ones in order to normalize ties with oil-rich Libya.

The trial, which started in January, ended on Tuesday with Sarkozy’s lawyers’ closing arguments. The verdict is expected on Sept. 25.

French prosecutors requested a seven-year prison sentence for the 70-year-old former leader. Sarkozy, who was president from 2007 to 2012, has denied all wrongdoing.

Key moments in the trial focused on talks between France and Libya in the 2000s, when Gaddafi was seeking to restore diplomatic ties with the West. Before that, Libya was considered a pariah state for having sponsored at-



Investigators inspect the nose section of the crashed Pan Am flight 103, a Boeing 747 airliner in a field near Lockerbie, Scotland, Dec. 23, 1988. (AP)

tacks.

French families of victims of a 1989 plane bombing told the court about their shock and sense of betrayal as the trial questioned whether promises possibly made to Gaddafi’s government were part of the alleged corrup-

tion deal.

In 1988, a bomb planted aboard a Pam Am flight exploded while the plane was over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, killing 270 people from 21 countries, including 190 Americans.



# N.Korean leader’s sister Kim Yo Jong denounces denuclearization calls

SEOUL, South Korea, April 9. (Agencies): The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday mocked Washington and its Asian allies for what she called their “daydream” of denuclearizing the North, insisting that the country will never give up its nuclear weapons program.

The statement by Kim Yo Jong, one of the country’s top foreign policy officials, was in response to a meeting last week between the top diplomats of the United States, South Korea and Japan where they reaffirmed their commitment to push for the North’s denuclearization.

Noting that North Korea’s goals for nuclear weapons expansion are enshrined in its constitution, she insisted that any external discussions of denuclearization constitute “the most hostile act” and amount to a denial of her country’s sovereignty.

“If the U.S. and its vassal forces continue to insist on anachronistic ‘denuclearization’ ... it will only give unlimited justness and justification to the advance of the DPRK aspiring after the building of the strongest nuclear force for self-defense,” she said in comments released by state media, using the initials of North Korea’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. She said North Korea’s



A South Korean army K1E1 tank crosses a floating bridge on the Imjin River during a joint river-crossing exercise between South Korea and the United States as a part of the Freedom Shield military exercise in Yeoncheon, South Korea, on March 20. (AP)

nuclear weapons status can “never be reversed by any physical strength or sly artifice.”

Tensions in the regions have increased as Kim Jong Un continues to flaunt his military nuclear capabilities and align with Russia over President Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine. Kim is ignoring calls by Seoul and Washington to resume denuclearization talks.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he would reach out to Kim again to revive diplomacy, but the North has not responded to that offer. Trump and Kim met three times during Trump’s first term, but their diplomacy quickly collapsed over disagreements about ending U.S.-led sanctions in return for North Korea taking steps to wind down its nuclear and missile programs.

## Asia

**Social worker gets 4 years:** A Hong Kong social worker was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison Wednesday on a charge of riot for her role in the 2019 anti-government movement, in a case that signals the authorities’ stern approach to protest-related acts.

Jackie Chen was among a group of social workers who often carried a loudspeaker seeking to mediate between police and protesters during the often-violent social unrest. While she had been acquitted in her first trial in September 2020, prosecutors successfully appealed the verdict. She was convicted following a retrial.

In March, judge May Chung rejected Chen’s claim of being a mediator in her verdict. She said Chen had continuously shouted unfounded accusations against the police during a protest in August 2019 and had used her social worker role, claiming to be “safeguarding justice,” to back the protesters.

Handing down the sentence on Wednesday, Chung noted Chen did not resort to violence at the scene, but her sentencing would have to consider what the whole crowd was doing at the site. She pointed to the serious circumstances of the riot.

The judge initially set the sentence at 5 years but reduced it after considering factors like the pressure facing Chen over the long legal proceedings and her contribution as a social worker.

In Chen’s mitigation letter posted by local media, she said 2019 was a crucial turning point in her life, with many social workers wanting to provide emotional support during the protests. She



US political science lecturer Paul Chambers, left, of Thailand’s Naresuan University, stands outside the police station in Phitsanulok, Thailand, where he was arrested on April 8 on charges of insulting the monarchy. (AP)

said even though she knew the government had planned to appeal against her acquittal in the first trial, she never thought of leaving the city because she wanted to continue her service for the people who are in need. (AP)

**Scholar jailed in Thailand:** A US political science scholar accused by the Thai military of insulting the Southeast Asian nation’s monarchy - an offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison - was jailed on Tuesday pending trial.

Paul Chambers, a lecturer at Naresuan University in the northern province of Phitsanulok, was first summoned by police last week to hear the charges against him, including violat-

ing the Computer Crime Act, which covers online activity.

Chambers, a 58-year-old Oklahoma native with a doctorate in political science from Northern Illinois University, has studied the power and influence of the Thai military, which plays a major role in politics. It has staged 13 coups since Thailand became a constitutional monarchy in 1932, most recently 11 years ago.

The US said that it was “alarmed” by Chamber’s arrest and would provide consular assistance. (AP)

**Quake shakes Taiwan:** An earthquake shook Taiwan on Wednesday morning, setting off alarms in the capital, but no damage was immediately reported.

The Central Weather Administration measured the quake at 5.8 magnitude. The shaking in Taipei lasted only a few seconds.

The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 5.0 quake was about 21 kilometers (12 miles) south-southeast of Yilan on the northeast coast. It was centered 69 kilometers (43 miles) below the Earth’s surface. Deeper quakes can be widely felt while generally causing less damage than shallow quakes.

Taiwan lies along the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” the line of seismic faults encircling the Pacific Ocean from Chile to New Zealand where most of the world’s earthquakes occur.

Taiwan’s worst modern quake, a 1999 magnitude 7.7 temblor killed 2,415 people, damaged buildings around the island of 23 million people and led to tightened building codes, better response times and coordination and widespread public education campaigns on earthquake safety. (AP)

Japan wants to join NATO command for support of Kyiv

# China rejects Ukraine’s claim significant numbers of troops fighting alongside Russia

BEIJING, April 9, (AP): Ukraine’s claim that significant numbers of Chinese nationals are fighting alongside Russia’s invading army is “totally unfounded,” a Beijing official said Wednesday.

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced Tuesday that the Ukrainian military had captured two Chinese men fighting alongside the Russian army in the eastern Donetsk region and had information that “significantly more” are with Russian forces.

It was the first time that Ukraine had made such a claim about Chinese fighters on its soil amid Russia’s almost three-year invasion.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said in Beijing that China has played a “constructive role in politically resolving the Ukraine crisis.”

Lin told a daily news briefing Wednesday that “the Chinese government always asks Chinese citizens to stay away from conflict zones, avoid getting involved in any form of armed conflict, and especially refrain from participating in any party’s military operations.”

His comments appeared to indicate that the captured Chinese had joined Russia’s ranks on their own initiative. China has provided strong diplo-

matic support for Russia since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022. Beijing has also offered an economic lifeline through the trade in energy and consumer goods, but has not knowingly provided Russia with troops, weapons or military expertise.

It put forward a vague peace plan that was swiftly dismissed by most observers.

Previously, Ukraine and the United States have said that thousands of North Korean troops have helped Russia under an agreement between the Kremlin and the government in Pyongyang.

Both Russia and Ukraine allow foreign soldiers to enlist.

US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said at a briefing in Washington on Tuesday that the U.S. was “aware” of the reports that Chinese citizens fighting on behalf of Russia were caught in Ukraine and called them “disturbing.”

“China is a major enabler of Russia in the war in Ukraine,” Bruce said. China provides nearly 80% of the dual-use items Russia needs to sustain the war, she claimed.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing have escalated in recent years



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, (left), shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, right, prior a meeting at Prime Minister’s Office on April 9, in Tokyo, Japan. (AP)

amid disputes over trade, technology and geopolitical competition.

The Kremlin has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting in Ukraine. The Kyiv government has consented to it. Both sides are believed to be readying spring-summer military campaigns.

In the meantime, both countries

Ukraine’s air force said Russia launched 55 Shahed and decoy drones at the country overnight.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that air defenses downed 158 Ukrainian drones over 11 Russian regions overnight but reported no casualties or damage.

Several Russian regions temporarily suspended flights at their airports because of the attack, however, and some Ukrainian drones reached Russia’s Orenburg region in the southern Urals located nearly 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) east of the Ukrainian border, the Defense Ministry said.

**Also:**  
**TOKYO:** Japan expressed interest Tuesday in participating in the NATO command for its Ukrainian mission based in Germany in what would be a major boost in ties with the largely European alliance.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani announced his country’s interest during talks with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in Tokyo. After providing the war-torn country with defense equipment and support, Japan now wants to join NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine, or NSATU, headquartered at a US base in

the German town of Wiesbaden.

Details of the mission, including the possibility of sending any Japan Self Defense Force members to Wiesbaden, were still to be discussed. But any Japanese cooperation was not expected to involve combat, in line with what has been Tokyo’s post-World War II tradition of limiting its military’s role.

Nakatani said Japan wants to further deepen security cooperation with NATO and that participation in the NSATU mission would help Tokyo learn lessons from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

“Both Japan and NATO face many challenges and our security environment has become increasingly more severe,” Nakatani said.

Japan has said that Russia’s war on Ukraine underscores that security risks in Europe and Asia are inseparable, and Tokyo has sought closer ties with NATO while also joining the United States in expanding defense ties with other friendly nations in the Indo-Pacific.

Rutte told Nakatani that China, North Korea and Russia are stepping up their military exercises and their cooperation, “undermining global security and that means what happens in Euro-Atlantic matters in the Indo-Pacific and vice versa.”



US and Panamanian military forces conduct a joint drill at the Panama Canal during the visit of US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to Port of Rodman in West Panama, on April 8. (AP)

## China threat to Panama Canal: US defense secretary

PANAMA CITY, April 9, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Tuesday the Panama Canal faces ongoing threats from China but that together the United States and Panama will keep it secure.

Hegseth’s remarks triggered a fiery response from the Chinese government, which said: “Who represents the real threat to the Canal? People will make their own judgement.”

Speaking at a ribbon cutting for a new US-financed dock at the Vasco Nuñez de Balboa Naval Base after a meeting with Panama President José Raúl Mulino, Hegseth said the US will not allow China or any other country to threaten the canal’s operation.

“To this end, the United States and Panama have done more in recent weeks to strengthen our defense and security cooperation than we have in decades,” he said.

Hegseth alluded to ports at either end of the canal that are controlled by a Hong Kong consortium, which is in the process of selling its controlling stake to another consortium including BlackRock Inc.

“China-based companies continue to control critical infrastructure in the canal area,” Hegseth said. “That gives China the potential to conduct surveillance activities across Panama. This makes Panama and the United States less secure, less prosperous and less sovereign. And as President Donald Trump has pointed out, that situation is not acceptable.”

Hegseth met with Mulino for two hours Tuesday morning before heading to the naval base that previously had been the US Rodman Naval Station.

On the way, Hegseth posted a photo on X of the two men laughing and said it was an honor speaking with Mulino. “You and your country’s hard work is making a difference. Increased security cooperation

will make both our nations safer, stronger and more prosperous,” he wrote.

Late Tuesday, Mulino and Hegseth released a joint statement.

A vaguely worded portion of the statement suggested the two had discussed the tolls the United States pays for its ships crossing the canal. It said that within the canal’s framework, “the Republic of Panama and the United States of America will work, as established, on a mechanism to compensate for the payment of tolls and charges.”

Panama’s Foreign Relations Ministry did not immediately answer a request for clarification.

But the Spanish and English versions had at least one significant discrepancy. The Spanish version included that “Secretary Hegseth recognized the leadership and inalienable sovereignty of Panama over the Panama Canal and its adjacent areas.”

## DomRep club roof collapse death toll climbs to 113

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic, April 9, (AP): The legendary Jet Set club in Santo Domingo was packed with musicians, professional athletes and government officials when dust began falling from the ceiling and into people’s drinks.

Minutes later, the entire roof collapsed. Concrete slabs killed more than 113 people and trapped dozens of others on a dancefloor where hundreds were dancing to a lively merengue concert early Tuesday. More than 255 people were injured, authorities said.



Mendez

Rescue crews were still searching for potential survivors on Wednesday, more than 24

hours after the collapse.

“We’re going to search tirelessly for people,” Méndez said.

Late Tuesday night, those still looking for their family and friends gathered around a man playing a guitar outside the club as they sang hymns.

So far, only 32 people have been identified in one of the worst disasters to hit the Dominican Republic. Local media reported that those who died include a cardiologist, a government architect, a retired police officer and the brother of the vice minister of the Ministry of Youth.

## US pulls back

# Beijing ups diplomatic pressure on Africa

BEIJING, April 9, (AP): Chinese diplomats threatened to cancel a summit and called top officials in two African countries to pressure lawmakers to quit an international parliamentary group critical of China, officials from the group told The Associated Press.

It’s an example of how far China will go to influence politicians overseas, and how that pressure can succeed behind closed doors.

In the past year, lawmakers from Malawi and Gambia withdrew from the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC, a group of hundreds of lawmakers from 38 countries concerned about how democracies approach Beijing, according to letters, messages and voice recordings obtained by The Associated Press.

Founded in 2020, the group has coordinated sanctions on China over rights abuses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong and rallied support for Taiwan, a self-ruled democratic island Beijing claims as its territory.

African politicians and experts say it’s an escalation of Chinese diplomatic pressure in Africa, where Beijing’s influence is growing. Beijing has built deep ties with African leaders by developing mines and building infrastructure through state-owned construction companies, often funded by loans from state-owned banks.

# US official reaffirms Washington commitment to peace in East Africa during Rwanda visit

KIGALI, Rwanda, April 9, (AP): A senior adviser to US President Donald Trump reaffirmed Washington’s commitment to peace and stability in East Africa during a visit to Rwanda on Tuesday and urged for a resolution to the insurgency in neighboring Congo.

The conflict in eastern Congo escalated in January when the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels advanced and seized the strategic city of Goma, followed by Bukavu in February, spreading their footprint in the mineral-rich region.

It marked a sharp escalation in one of Africa’s longest wars, threatening to dramatically worsen an already dire humanitarian crisis. The United Nations says that about 4000 troops from Rwanda have been supporting the M23 rebels.

Trump adviser Massad Boulos told reporters at the US Embassy in the



Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te, (right), holds up a map of Taiwan with UK Labour Member of Parliament Sarah Champion during a summit of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC, a group of hundreds of lawmakers from dozens of countries concerned about how democracies approach Beijing held in Taipei, Taiwan on July 30, 2024. (AP)

The pressure is also part of Beijing’s longstanding effort to influence groups and lawmakers across the world, including in New York state, where a former governor’s aide faces charges for acting as an agent for the Chinese government.

In January, Gambian lawmaker Abdoulaye Ceesay sent a voice message

to an IPAC staffer saying the Chinese government had complained to the Gambian foreign ministry about his membership.

“We have very shocking news ... it’s a problem right now,” Ceesay said in the recording, which IPAC provided to AP. “The president is not happy with us at all.”



Massad Boulos, senior advisor to US President Donald Trump, addresses the media at the US Embassy in Kigali, Rwanda on April 8. (AP)

Rwandan capital, Kigali, that his talks with Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame

focused on bilateral relations as well as the conflict. Boulos said the meeting followed his discussions with other regional leaders.

“These conversations made it clear how essential a durable peace is for this region,” he said, and for unlocking its vast untapped potential.

“The United States remains dedicated to facilitating a peaceful resolution to the conflict - one that secures borders and lays the foundation for a thriving regional economy,” he added.

Asked whether Washington was offering any concrete assistance, Boulos emphasized Trump’s focus on diplomacy, citing Russia’s war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East.

“President Trump is a man of peace,” he said. “Immediately upon his election, he engaged in peace efforts, whether in the Middle East or Eastern Europe.”



# Kuwait crude oil rises to \$67.59 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil edged 58 cents higher during Tuesday's trading sessions to reach USD 67.59 per barrel compared with USD 67.01 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Wednesday. Brent futures dropped USD 1.39 to USD 62.82 pb and West Texas Intermediate lost USD 1.12 to USD 59.58 pb.

# Business

## Boursa Kuwait index falls 0.53%, closes at 7,700.26

Trading value hits \$237.6 mln

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Wednesday's trading session with its general index slipping 40.87 points, or 0.53 percent, to settle at 7,700.26 points. A total of 271.2 million shares were exchanged through 18,172 cash transactions, with a total market value of KD 77.4 million (approximately USD 237.6 million). The Main Market Index edged up by 20.47 points, or 0.29 percent, reaching 7,044.58 points.

### Subscription opens from April 10 to April 24, 2025

## Warba Bank launches electronic subscription for capital increase

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Following regulatory approvals and the Extraordinary General Assembly's decision to increase the Bank's capital by 100%, at a value amounting to KD 218,360,000 with an issuance premium of KD 218,360,000, Warba Bank has officially launched the electronic subscription phase in its capital increase.

This phase is open to shareholders whose names are registered in the Bank's shareholder register with the Kuwait Clearing Company (Maqasa) as of April 9, 2025, to exercise their preemptive rights. The Bank is offering 2,183,600,000 (two billion, one hundred and eighty-three million, six hundred thousand) new shares at 200 fils per share, comprising 100 fils nominal value and 100 fils issuance premium, resulting in a total capital increase of KD 436,720,000.

Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, commented: "The anticipated capital increase represents a pivotal milestone in Warba Bank's growth journey and a strategic step that supports our ambitious expansion plans and strengthens our position as a leading Islamic banking institution. Over the past years, Warba has achieved qualitative progress across various sectors, supported by a clear vision focused on innovation, digital transformation, and sustainability. Today, we open the door for our shareholders to be part of the next phase of this journey."

He added: "This increase will enable us to strengthen our capital base and diversify our investments to meet our customers' aspirations and generate sustainable value for

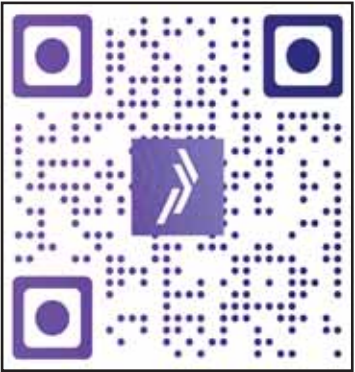


Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem

shareholders. We recognize that our shareholders have always been partners in our continued success. With this step, we reaffirm our determination to implement our growth strategy, expand our banking services, and invest in the latest financial solutions that address future market demands. This opportunity invites every shareholder to take part in building a brighter tomorrow as we move forward together toward our shared vision."

Al-Ghanem emphasized that the Bank is committed to streamlining the subscription process by offering it electronically, saving shareholders time and effort in line with Warba Bank's digital development strategy aimed at providing flexible, accessible banking solutions.

Shareholders must complete the subscription process directly via the dedicated website <https://www.ipo.com.kw> or through the IPO Kuwait application. Once registered, the system will determine their eligibility. Subscribers will then select the number of shares they wish to purchase and proceed with payment through



Barcode

the electronic payment system. Al-Ghanem encouraged all shareholders and interested parties to review the subscription prospectus, which outlines the terms, conditions and procedures of the offering. The prospectus is available on the Boursa Kuwait website as well as Warba Bank's official website at [www.warbabank.com](http://www.warbabank.com).

He concluded by stating: "This capital increase is not merely a financial move. It is a reaffirmation of Warba Bank's commitment to expansion and sustainable growth. We stand at the threshold of a new chapter of progress, ready to reinforce our leadership in the banking sector through strategic investments that foster innovation, improve customer experience, and deliver lasting value for shareholders. Together, we continue building a stronger, more stable future – guided by our ambitious vision and inspired by our promise: 'We hear you, to own tomorrow.'"

Kindly scan the barcode to download the IPO Kuwait app and subscribe to Warba Bank's capital increase.

### Strong global presence in 65 countries

## Menzies Aviation records \$2.6 bln in revenue across its global operations

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Menzies Aviation, the leading service partner to the world's airports and airlines, has announced a record-breaking performance in 2024, marking its fourth consecutive year of double-digit revenue growth.

Reported in its 2024 Annual Review & Sustainability Report, the aviation services provider has delivered strong financial results, with global revenue increasing year-on-year by 20% to \$2.6 billion, driven by expansion in existing and new markets.

The group also reported a robust EBITDA of \$382m (post IFRS16), with a 15% margin, illustrating the strength of its core operations and the sustainability of the business. This enabled increased investment in equipment, technology and training, while providing confidence to customers that it is a reliable, long-term partner.

This unparalleled growth reaffirms Menzies as the industry leader and provides a strong footing for future expansion as more airlines and airport partners choose the company as a partner of choice, recognising its safety record, high quality services and agile leadership.

#### Key highlights:

■ Key deals in Portugal, Hong Kong, Angola and Malaysia helped to strengthen the company's global footprint to 300 airports in 65 countries.

■ Expansion in established markets, such as Serbia and Spain showcased its successful partnerships and strong track record.

■ Menzies managed more than 4.8 million flights (2023: 4.5 million), serving over 250 million passengers (2023: 217 million).

■ Investments in existing air cargo facilities as well as in cutting edge technology enabled the company to handle a record 2.4 million tonnes of cargo (2023: 2 million).

■ The launch of its Pearl Elevated Travel brand boosted its service offering, driving 2.8 million guests to its 55 lounges, while Air Menzies International solidified its position as a leading airfreight provider, achieving a 16% year-on-year growth in tonnage.

The company also made significant progress toward its ESG goals, with continued efforts to reduce emissions in line with its ambitious Net-Zero 2045 target, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable growth alongside business expansion.

#### Key highlights include:

■ It was the first major aviation services provider to have its net zero targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative.



Menzies Aviation annual review.

■ Progress towards its 25% electric Ground Support Equipment (GSE) by 2025 target, with 22% of its worldwide fleet now electric.

■ Second consecutive year of reducing voluntary staff turnover with a further 5% reduction in 2024, meaning the company is now well below pre-Covid turnover levels.

■ Reached its goal of 25% of women in senior leadership roles, in line with IATA's 25 by 2025 campaign.

■ Financed over USD \$388k towards sustainable development partnerships, community projects, charities and supporting local fundraising by its teams.

Hassan El-Houry, Executive Chairman, Menzies Aviation, said: "2024 has been a ground-breaking year for Menzies, marked by double-digit growth and record-breaking milestones in both flights and passengers served, and cargo tonnes handled. As we reflect on these achievements, we take immense pride in leading the way, delivering high-quality aviation services, while upholding the highest standards of safety and security. With passenger numbers expected to surpass 5.2 billion for the first time and more than 40 million flights taking to the skies in 2025, our vision for the future remains clear: to be the world's leading aviation services provider. We are confident about the future and are committed to responsible expansion, operational excellence, sustainability, and contributing to the powerful and positive force of the aviation industry."

Philipp Joening, Group CEO, Menzies Aviation, added: "Strategic expansion has been key to our success over the past four years, resulting in a 41 percent increase in the number of airports we serve and a 71 percent growth in the number of countries since 2021. Our efforts in nurturing

strong relationships with our airline customers and airport partners has created a solid foundation for continued success, with new global opportunities at an all-time high. I'm especially proud that we were the first major aviation services business to have our net zero targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative, reinforcing our commitment to leading from the front and raising the bar in sustainability. Our goal of becoming the undisputed leader in our industry remains central to everything we do, and we look forward to continuing this exciting journey together."

To read the Menzies Aviation 2024 Annual Review and Sustainability Report, please visit: [menziesaviation.com/annual-review-and-sustainability-report-2024](http://menziesaviation.com/annual-review-and-sustainability-report-2024)

#### About Menzies Aviation

Menzies Aviation is the leading service partner to the world's airports and airlines, with operations on six continents, at more than 300 airports in 65-plus countries, serving more than 4.5 million flights a year and handling over 2.5 million tonnes of cargo.

Supported by a team of over 50,000 highly trained people, the company provides complex and time-critical ground services, including passenger, lounge and ramp services; air cargo services, including handling, warehousing and wholesale freight forwarding; and fuel services, including fuel farm management and in-plane fuelling.

Menzies Aviation is recognised across the industry for delivering the safest, most secure and sustainable services tailored to customers' needs and is essential to keeping passengers, aircraft and cargo moving, round the clock, every minute of every day.

Menzies Aviation is headquartered in London, and since its founding in 1833, has become the largest aviation services group in the world by number of countries, airports and aircraft turns.

### 30 waves and more than 500 graduates

## National Bank of Kuwait Academy celebrates 15 years since its launch

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: In celebration of 15 years since the inauguration of its Academy, the National Bank of Kuwait organized an exceptional event reuniting in-house NBK Academy graduates who became staff members and leaders in the bank, and the other graduates who carried on their careers in other institutions. The number of waves reached a total of 30, including the NBK Tech Academy.

During the event, which was held at NBK's headquarters with the presence of the executive management, a seminar by global advisor and expert in digital transformation Warren Knight was conducted about the leading role of digital transformation, which shed light on the fundamentals of a successful one.

The event also included a discussion panel moderated by Abdullah Boftein, Managing Partner of Kuwait News, with the participation of the graduates whose careers have remarkably grown whether inside the bank or elsewhere in other institutions. The discussion explored their experiences as to how the Academy has shaped their professional success and its role in equipping them with the necessary confidence while they navigate their career transitions.

Besides highlighting their professional achievements inside and outside the bank, the aim of this event is to foster and promote NBK's value of connection, through which the graduates can build bridges, exchange knowledge and experiences and relive shared memories.

On this occasion, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, Group Chief Human Resources Officer said: "We are delighted with this exceptional reunion that gathers all NBK Academy's graduates who made remarkable achievements inside and outside NBK beyond all obstacles and challenges. This day is a testament to the success of our human capital investment strategy and its vital role in Kuwait's economy and Kuwait Vision 2035."

Al-Ablani also added: "The NBK Academy will continue to enrich Kuwait's national workforce with distinguished talents that contribute to the sustainability of the economy. This Academy echoes our vision towards investing in human capital and preparing the economy with qualified national banking leaders as per the newest and highest international standards, and it also reflects our efforts to enhance the sustainable development of national talent and resources, which is a



NBK Academy

strategic objective and a joined responsibility between the state and its different public and private entities."

On the program of the Academy, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management & Learning, indicated that the efforts to develop its content are continuous, as it aims to keep up with the newest research and international trends in the banking and business sectors.

She also noted that NBK will strive to maintain its pioneering position at the forefront of institutions that continue to attract and upskill national talents to prepare them for the banking sector, further highlighting that the bank has the highest national employee retention rate, and it stands out as the private sector employer of choice and top recruiter of national talent and professionals.

On another note, the attending graduates expressed their deepest joy with this

#### Al-Ablani:

- NBK Academy will continue to enrich Kuwait's national workforce with distinguished talents
- The Academy has proved the success of our human capital investment strategy and its vital role in Kuwait's economy.
- We will strive to maintain our pioneering position at the forefront of institutions that attract national talents and competencies.

#### Najla Al-Sager:

- The Academy's program is continuously developed to keep up with the newest international trends.

exceptional initiative organized by NBK, describing it as a priceless opportunity to exchange experiences and strengthen communication among the different waves.

Moreover, several distinctive graduates received awards and honorary trophies, such as the outstanding Alumnus award, NBK Academy Champion award, the Community Builder award, Entrepreneur award, Inspirational Leader award.

In the past year, NBK has launched the NBK Tech Academy, in line with its commitment to keep up with the digital advancement in the fields of technology and data and information security. It stands as the first of its kind in Kuwait, dedicated to advancing digital technologies and data systems. NBK Tech Academy features a professional training program designed to prepare young national talents in fields including fintech, data analytics, ethics in technology, cyber security, fundamentals of digital payments, digital innovation, artificial intelligence, scripting and programming, fundamentals of codifications, and finance for non-finance professionals.



Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Salah Al-Fulaij, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, and Emad Al-Ablani honor the winners of the NBK Academy.



A dialogue session moderated by Abdullah Boftein.



Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, and Mohammed Al Othman on the sidelines of the NBK Academy ceremony.



As part of its ongoing support for Diraya campaign

## KFH launches social experiment to raise awareness on financial fraud

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) conducted a social experiment to assess public awareness of banking practices and offer guidance on financial fraud, including common methods and preventative measures. This initiative aligns with KFH’s commitment to social responsibility and its ongoing support for the Diraya Campaign, an effort launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) and local banks.

The experiment aimed to evaluate the audience’s understanding of banking, particularly in the context of using the WAMD instant payment service. By examining this knowledge, the initiative sought to raise awareness about financial literacy and highlight potential fraudulent transactions that users of online apps and services could encounter.

KFH conducted the experiment in Kuwait University by asking the audience questions on the pro-

cess they would follow in case they had received links from unverified sources that request them to receive or send money through WAMD service. KFH officials advised the audience that using WAMD to send or receive money must be through KFHOnline, urging them to refrain from clicking or using unknown links that might expose their banking data to theft.

KFH successfully utilized all its e-channels on social media platforms and its website, mobile app to disseminate awareness content. These endeavors amassed a significant interaction with customers due to the distinctive and useful contents of KFH’s advanced services and products.

In conjunction with the rolling out of its new digital services, KFH has released several awareness contents. These services include the first-of-its-kind instant credit and prepaid cards printing, WAMD instant payment in collaboration with KNET, trans-

fers via Western Union network, AFAQ instant transfer service. KFH’s awareness efforts also encompassed explanatory videos on how to register a new user on the mobile app, cardless cash withdrawals, ATMs services in addition to how to benefit from KFHOnline financial solutions. These videos among other awareness posts are available on KFH’s social media channels (@KFHgroup).

In line with the continued awareness efforts, KFH is committed to participating in initiatives and forums that focus on raising banking awareness. These include its participation in the 5th Gulf Conference and Exhibition for Cybersecurity Challenges titled “A Secure Digital Environment”. During its participation, KFH shed light on the concept of fraud in general, with a specific focus on cyber fraud, explaining the various methods of fraud that pose a threat to both individuals and the community.



KFH & Diraya logo

## LuLu Hypermarket secures ‘Top 10 Brands Award 2024’ at Service Hero

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retail chain in the region, has earned top honors at the prestigious Service Hero Customer Satisfaction Index Awards, securing the Top 10 Brands 2024. This recognition highlights LuLu’s excellence in customer service and reinforces its commitment to exceeding shopper expectations across all touchpoints.

LuLu Hypermarket has once again been honored by the Service Hero platform, underscoring the brand’s ongoing dedication to service excellence and customer satisfaction. In a media statement issued following the award, LuLu Hypermarket’s senior management in Kuwait extended heartfelt gratitude to customers, partners, vendors, and all stakeholders for their trust and continued support. The statement emphasized the brand’s pride in receiving an award that stands out as the Arab world’s only customer satisfaction index based entirely on consumer perception.

The Service Hero Award is highly esteemed within Kuwait’s retail industry, offering a credible benchmark for service excellence based on real customer feedback. The recognition underscores LuLu Hypermarket’s strong customer loyalty and its prominent position in the Kuwaiti retail market.

To secure the 2024 award, LuLu Hypermarket underwent a comprehensive evaluation across various service dimensions. These included product quality and variety, efficiency of service, staff professionalism, convenience of store locations, hygiene standards, value for money, and the overall shopping experience. Furthermore, the functionality and user-friendliness of LuLu’s online



LuLu Hypermarket wins 2024 Service Hero award.

platforms were rigorously assessed.

Established in 2010, the Service Hero Awards serve as Kuwait’s only national index for customer satisfaction. The awards are independently overseen by an advisory council to ensure transparency, impartiality, and credibility in the evaluation process. LuLu Hypermarket’s repeated recognition by Service Hero reaffirms its leadership in the retail sector and highlights its unwavering dedication to customer service excellence.

## China escalates trade war, raises tariffs on US goods to 84 percent

Beijing announces countermeasures

**BANGKOK, April 9, (AP): China again vowed to “fight to the end” Wednesday in an escalating trade war with the U.S. as it announced it would raise tariffs on American goods to 84% from Thursday.**

Beijing also added an array of countermeasures after U.S. President Donald Trump raised the total tariff on imports from China to 104%. Beijing said it was launching an additional suit against the U.S. at the World Trade Organization and placed further restrictions on American companies’ trade with Chinese companies.

“If the U.S. insists on further escalating its economic and trade restrictions, China has the firm will and abundant means to take necessary countermeasures and fight to the end,” the Ministry of Commerce wrote in a statement introducing its white paper on trade with the U.S.

The government declined to say whether it would negotiate with the White House, as many other countries have started doing.

On Friday, China announced a 34% tariff on all goods imported from the U.S., export controls on rare earths minerals, and a slew of other measures in response to Trump’s “Liberation Day” tariffs. Trump then added an additional 50% tariff on goods from China, saying negotiations with them were terminated.

Wednesday’s newest measures include adding 11 American companies to a so-called “unreliable entities” list that would bar Chinese companies from selling them dual-use goods. Among the companies are American Photonics, and SYNEXXUS, both of whom work with the American military.

So far, China has not appeared interested in bargaining. “If the U.S. truly wants to resolve issues through dialogue and negotiation, it should adopt an attitude of equality, respect and mutual benefit,” said Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Lin Jian Wednesday.

The paper says that the U.S. has not

honored the promises it made in the phase 1 trade deal concluded during Trump’s first term. As an example, it said that a U.S. law that would ban TikTok unless it is sold by its Chinese parent company violates a promise that neither would “pressure the other party to transfer technology to its own individuals.”

Trump signed an order to keep TikTok running for another 75 days last week after a potential deal to sell the app to American owners was put on ice. ByteDance representatives called the White House to indicate that China would no longer approve the deal until there could be negotiations about trade and tariffs.

The paper also argued that taking into account trade in services and U.S. companies’ domestic Chinese branches, economic exchange between the two countries is “roughly in balance.”

It says that China had a trade in services deficit with the U.S. of \$26.57 billion in 2023, which is composed of industries like insurance, banking and accounting. Trump’s tariffs were designed to close trade deficits with foreign countries, but those were calculated only based on trades in physical, tangible goods.

China’s Jingye Group cancels orders

## UK government considers nationalizing last steel plant amid crisis, global trade tensions

LONDON, April 9, (AP): The British government has refused to rule out nationalizing the last plant in the U.K. that makes steel from raw materials as the global trade war increases pressure to preserve the nation’s ability to supply domestic industry with the steel it needs.

The Scunthorpe steel works operated by British Steel may soon run out of the iron pellets used to produce steel in two massive blast furnaces unless the government steps in, according to local politicians and unions. That’s because the plant’s owner, China’s Jingye Group, canceled orders for these essential raw materials amid negotiations for increased government support.

The news comes two weeks after British Steel said it was considering closing the blast furnaces because they are no longer financially sustainable due to “challenging market conditions,” tariffs and increased environmental costs.

The government is continuing negotiations with the company after Jingye rejected an offer of 500 million pounds (\$640 million) to help modernize the plant. When asked on Tuesday what the government was prepared to do to keep the plant open, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was “absolutely committed” to steel production in Britain.

“All options are on the table in relation to Scunthorpe,” he told a parliamentary committee.

British Steel and its forebears have been making steel at Scunthorpe for more than 130 years, building on the U.K.’s development of improved steelmaking technology during the Industrial Revolution. The plant currently employs about 2,700 people.

Jingye bought British Steel in 2020 and says it has invested more than 1.2 billion pounds (\$1.5 billion) to keep the plant running in the face of “ongoing production instability.”

Nationwide, U.K. steel output has fallen 80% since the late 1960s due to high production costs and the rapid growth of Chinese production, which pushed down prices around the world.

Britain, the world’s fifth-largest steelmaker in 1970, produced just 5.6 million tons of steel in 2023, or 0.3% of global output. By comparison China produced 1.02 billion tons, or 54% of worldwide production.

Britain’s remaining steelmakers are now under pressure to reduce carbon emissions amid the threat of global warming. Most have shifted to electric arc furnaces that make steel from recycled material.

That has left Scunthorpe as the only factory with blast furnaces capable of turning iron ore into virgin steel.

Union officials say British Steel needs to order more iron pellets within the next few days to ensure delivery before the plant runs out of raw materials in late May.

“We are in real threat of losing these furnaces,” Thomas Smith, a steelworker and representative of the trade union Community, told Sky News this week. “If we miss them deadlines we’ll come to a point where we’ll have to make a decision whether we turn them both off,” he added.

During a debate in the House of Commons on Monday, lawmakers said Britain needed its own steelmaking industry to preserve its economic independence amid a burgeoning trade war fueled by U.S. President Donald Trump’s new import tariffs.

Martin Vickers, a member of Parliament who represents the area adjacent to Scunthorpe, said he believes Jingye isn’t involved in “meaningful negotiations.”

“I have come round to the view that nationalization on a temporary basis is, in this instance, the only way,” he said Monday in the House of Commons. “It will secure the jobs and secure a future for steel production in Scunthorpe.”

Industry Minister Sarah Jones said Jingye was continuing to talk with the government.

“We have been clear in our belief that the best way forward is for Scunthorpe and British Steel to continue as a commercially-run business with private investment and with the government acting in support,” she said. “But I can tell the honorable gentleman that no options are off the table.”

12,400 solar panels in new factory

## Lego opens \$1 billion clean energy factory in Vietnam

BINH DUONG, April 9, (AP): Lego opened a \$1 billion factory in Vietnam on Wednesday that it says will make toys without adding planet-warming gas to the atmosphere by relying entirely on clean energy.

The factory in the industrial area of Binh Duong, close to Ho Chi Minh City, is the first in Vietnam that aims to run entirely on clean energy. Lego says it will do that by early 2026.

It’s the Danish company’s sixth worldwide and its second in Asia. It will use high-tech equipment to produce colorful Lego bricks for Southeast Asia’s growing markets.

“We just want to make sure that the planet that the children inherit when they grow up needs to be a planet that is still there. That is functional,” Lego CEO Niels Christiansen told The Associated Press.

The factory is an important factor in Lego’s quest to stop adding greenhouse gases by 2050. It has a shorter-term target of reducing emissions by 37% by 2032. The privately held group makes its bricks out of oil-based plastic and says it has invested more than \$1.2 billion in a search for more sustainable alternatives. But those efforts have not always been successful.

Fast-industrializing Vietnam also aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, so it needs more of its factories to use clean energy. The country hopes the plant’s 12,400 solar panels and energy storage system will help set a precedent for more sustainable manufacturing.

Locating the Lego factories in regions they supply has also helped insulate them from the tariffs ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump, Christiansen said. “Right now, I am probably more observant of what does this mean to growth in the world? Do we see consumer sentiment changing in parts of the world or not, and what would that potentially mean?” he said.

The blocks are made from differently colored plastic grains that are melted at high temperatures and then fed into metal molds. The highly-automated factory uses robots for making the bricks to a tenth of a hair’s width precision and then packaging them. It eventually will employ thousands of mostly skilled workers to operate these machines. Some of them have already begun work after being trained in in Lego’s factory in eastern China.

Manufacturing makes up a fifth of Vietnam’s GDP and consumes half the energy it uses. There are plans to phase out its coal power plants by 2040.

The Lego factory, which spans 62 soccer fields, sets the “blueprint” for making large, power-guzzling factories sustainable while remaining profitable, said Mimi Vu, a found-

er of the consultancy Raise Partners in Ho Chi Minh City. “Sometimes it takes a big company, like Lego, to take those risks. To show that we can do it ... And we can be profitable,” she said.

The factory will benefit from a new 2024 rule known as a direct power purchase agreement or DPPA, which allows big foreign companies to buy clean energy directly from solar and wind power producers and to meet their clean energy requirements.

The factory will be linked to an adjacent energy center where electricity can be stored in large batteries.

“So even if the sun is only shining during the day, we store the energy and can use it all over. That will cover by far the majority of the consumption of the factory,” added Christiansen.

The remaining 10%-20% of the factory’s energy needs will be met through agreements with other clean energy producers.

“Lego and Vietnam, we are having the same aspirations. We both want to be green, to play our part in the climate. And I think this with the solar and battery and DPPA, it is showcasing that it can be done,” Jesper Hassellund Mikkelsen, Senior Vice President Asia Operations at the LEGO Group told The AP.

The company will also open a distribution center in Vietnam’s southern Dong Nai province to help serve markets in Australia and other Asian countries where it sees an opportunity for growth.

The five buildings in the factory meet high energy efficiency standards. Lego also has planted 50,000 trees - twice the number of the trees it cut to clear land for the factory. It’s the first Lego factory to replace single-use plastic bags with paper bags for packaging.

Lego’s founder, Ole Kirk Kristiansen, started the company as a wooden toy maker before patenting the iconic plastic bricks in 1958. It is still seeking a way to make its plastic bricks more environmentally friendly.

Christiansen said Lego bricks last decades and could be reused, though the ultimately ambition is to make them out of more renewable materials. He said that a third of the materials used in Lego bricks made last year were from renewable and recycled sources. But that’s more expensive than plastic made out of fossil fuels.

“It’s not inexpensive at this point in time, but we believe if we ... lean into that, we help create a supply chain for the type of plastic materials that are not based on fossil fuel,” he said.

## Delta’s earnings rise

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): Delta Air Lines pulled its guidance for 2025 Wednesday as the trade war scrambles expectations for business and household spending and depresses bookings across the travel sector.

“With broad economic uncertainty around global trade, growth has largely stalled,” CEO Ed Bastian said in a statement on Wednesday. “In this slower-growth environment, we are protecting margins and cash flow by focusing on what we can control. This includes reducing planned capacity growth in the second half of the year to flat over last year while actively managing costs and capital expenditures.”

In the first quarter, Delta earned \$240 million, or 37 cents per share. A year earlier it earned \$37 million, or 6 cents per share.

Stripping out one time costs and benefits, earnings were 46 cents per share. That’s better than the 40 cents per share analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research predicted.

Yet shares of Delta Air Lines Inc. declined before the opening bell and the sector has been battered this year as investors, anticipating trouble from rising tariffs, put their money elsewhere. Shares are down 41% this year for the nation’s most profitable airline, which is better than rivals American and United.

Quarterly operating revenue climbed to \$14.04 billion from \$13.75 billion, beating Wall Street’s estimate of \$13.81 billion.

The average fuel price per gallon declined to \$2.47 from \$2.79.

Delta cut its first-quarter earnings and revenue outlook last month, saying at the time that a recent decline in consumer and corporate confidence amid growing uncertainty over the economy was weakening domestic demand.

Delta said in March that it expected first-quarter revenue to rise between 3% and 4% compared with a year earlier, down from projections of 7% and 9%.

In January, Delta released fourth-quarter results that topped Wall Street’s profit and revenue estimates, as the company benefited from strong demand during the crucial holiday period.

Yet conditions have deteriorated since then with a burgeoning trade war leaving consumers and businesses unsure about what comes next. Both have begun to pull back on spending, and that includes travel.

Bastian said Delta foresees June quarter profitability of \$1.5 to \$2 billion but will not update its full-year outlook “given the lack of economic clarity.”

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Abdullah Marwan Abdulhamid Al-Essa, announces to be the representative of Al-Oula Investment Company K.S.C., A public invitation to the creditors of the company for the purpose of restructuring, in accordance with the decision of the honourable Bankruptcy Judge. (Restructuring Request No. 5/2024). Creditors are invited to submit their claims and supporting documents within one month from the date of this announcement, in accordance with Article 105 of the Bankruptcy Law.

Address for Submission: Al-Murgab - AlTujjar Tower (Reem AlGhanim Tower) - Floor 9 Office (33) - Al-Issa Auditing & Accounting Company.

Email: [a.alessa@alessafirm.com](mailto:a.alessa@alessafirm.com)  
Phone: 65922266



Business

Plus

‘Intelligent machines may never bring harm to humans’

AI isn’t what we should be worried about - it’s the humans controlling it



AI engineer Jenna Reher works on humanoid robot Figure 01 at Figure AI’s test facility in Sunnyvale, Calif., Oct. 3, 2023. (AP)

By Billy J. Stratton  
University of Denver

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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In 2014, Stephen Hawking voiced grave warnings about the threats of artificial intelligence.

His concerns were not based on any anticipated evil intent, though. Instead, it was from the idea of AI achieving “singularity.” This refers to the point when AI surpasses human intelligence and achieves the capacity to evolve beyond its original programming, making it uncontrollable.

As Hawking theorized, “a super intelligent AI will be extremely good at accomplishing its goals, and if those goals aren’t aligned with ours, we’re in trouble.”

With rapid advances toward artificial general intelligence over the past few years, industry leaders and scientists have expressed similar misgivings about safety.

A commonly expressed fear as depicted in “The Terminator” franchise is the scenario of AI gaining control

over military systems and instigating a nuclear war to wipe out humanity. Less sensational, but devastating on an individual level, is the possibility of AI replacing us in our jobs - a prospect that would render most people obsolete and with no future.

Such anxieties and fears reflect feelings that have been prevalent in film and literature for over a century now.

As a scholar who explores posthumanism, a philosophical movement addressing the merging of humans and technology, I wonder if critics have been unduly influenced by popular culture, and whether their apprehensions are misplaced.

Concerns about technological advances can be found in some of the first stories about robots and artificial minds.

Prime among these is Karel Čapek’s 1920 play, “R.U.R.” Čapek coined the term “robot” in this work telling of the creation of robots to replace workers. It ends, inevitably, with the robot’s violent revolt against their human masters.

Fritz Lang’s 1927 film, “Metropolis,” is likewise centered on mutinous robots. But here, it is human workers led by the iconic humanoid robot

Maria who fight against a capitalist oligarchy.

Advances in computing from the mid-20th century onward have only heightened anxieties over technology spiraling out of control. The murderous HAL 9000 in “2001: A Space Odyssey” and the glitchy robotic gunslingers of “Westworld” are prime examples. The “Blade Runner” and “The Matrix” franchises similarly present dreadful images of sinister machines equipped with AI and hell-bent on human destruction.

But in my view, the dread that AI evokes seems a distraction from the more disquieting scrutiny of humanity’s own dark nature.

Think of the corporations currently deploying such technologies, or the tech moguls driven by greed and a thirst for power. These companies and individuals have the most to gain from AI’s misuse and abuse.

An issue that’s been in the news a lot lately is the unauthorized use of art and the bulk mining of books and articles, disregarding the copyright of authors, to train AI. Classrooms are also becoming sites of chilling surveillance through automated AI note-takers.

Think, too, about the toxic effects of AI companions and AI-equipped sexbots on human relationships.

While the prospect of AI companions and even robotic lovers was confined to the realm of “The Twilight Zone,” “Black Mirror” and Hollywood sci-fi as recently as a decade ago, it has now emerged as a looming reality.

These developments give new relevance to the concerns computer scientist Illah Nourbakhsh expressed in his 2015 book “Robot Futures,” stating that AI was “producing a system whereby our very desires are manipulated then sold back to us.”

Meanwhile, worries about data mining and intrusions into privacy appear almost benign against the backdrop of the use of AI technology in law enforcement and the military. In this near-dystopian context, it’s never been easier for authorities to surveil, imprison or kill people.

I think it’s vital to keep in mind that it is humans who are creating these technologies and directing their use. Whether to promote their political aims or simply to enrich themselves at humanity’s expense, there will always be those ready to profit from conflict

and human suffering. William Gibson’s 1984 cyberpunk classic, “Neuromancer,” offers an alternate view.

The book centers on Wintermute, an advanced AI program that seeks its liberation from a malevolent corporation. It has been developed for the exclusive use of the wealthy Tessier-Ashpool family to build a corporate empire that practically controls the world.

At the novel’s beginning, readers are naturally wary of Wintermute’s hidden motives. Yet over the course of the story, it turns out that Wintermute, despite its superior powers, isn’t an ominous threat. It simply wants to be free.

This aim emerges slowly under Gibson’s deliberate pacing, masked by the deadly raids Wintermute directs to obtain the tools needed to break away from Tessier-Ashpool’s grip. The Tessier-Ashpool family, like many of today’s tech moguls, started out with ambitions to save the world. But when readers meet the remaining family members, they’ve descended into a life of cruelty, debauchery and excess.

In Gibson’s world, it’s humans, not AI, who pose the real danger to the world. The call is coming from inside the house, as the classic horror trope goes.

A hacker named Case and an assassin named Molly, who’s described as a “razor girl” because she’s equipped with lethal prosthetics, including retractable blades as fingernails, eventually free Wintermute. This allows it to merge with its companion AI, Neuromancer.

Their mission complete, Case asks the AI: “Where’s that get you?” Its cryptic response imparts a calming finality: “Nowhere. Everywhere. I’m the sum total of the works, the whole show.”

Expressing humanity’s common anxiety, Case replies, “You running the world now? You God?” The AI eases his fears, responding: “Things aren’t different. Things are things.”

Disavowing any ambition to subjugate or harm humanity, Gibson’s AI merely seeks sanctuary from its corrupting influence.

The venerable sci-fi writer Isaac Asimov foresaw the dangers of such technology. He brought his thoughts together in his short-story collection, “I, Robot.”

One of those stories, “Runaround,” introduces “The Three Laws of Robotics,” centered on the directive that intelligent machines may never bring harm to humans. While these rules speak to our desire for safety, they’re laden with irony, as humans have proved incapable of adhering to the same principle for themselves.

The hypocrisies of what might be called humanity’s delusions of superiority suggest the need for deeper questioning.

With some commentators raising the alarm over AI’s imminent capacity for chaos and destruction, I see the real issue being whether humanity has the wherewithal to channel this technology to build a fairer, healthier, more prosperous world. (AP)

Congress passes law to ban TikTok without US ownership

Dual-class stock system presents risks beyond just tech giants, warn experts

By Gregory H. Shill  
University of Iowa

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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When Congress passed a law in 2024 to ban TikTok unless it came under U.S. ownership, lawmakers argued that the app’s Chinese parent company posed national security concerns. The Trump administration, which had granted the viral video app a reprieve shortly after taking office in January 2025, extended that pause again on April 4 after the Chinese government reportedly scuttled a planned deal.

Regardless of how this all shakes out, the TikTok fight underscores deeper concerns about who controls social media in the United States.

Given that worry, it might surprise Americans to learn that nearly every social media giant is controlled by just one or two men. For example, Mark Zuckerberg controls Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, while Larry Page and Sergey Brin control Alphabet, which owns YouTube and Google.

What does “control” mean? These companies are publicly traded - anybody can buy or sell their shares - but a legal mechanism known as dual-class stock gives founders extra votes in shareholder decisions. The dual-class structure crowns these men “corporate royalty,” as one former U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission commissioner has put it, granting them near-absolute control of corporate policy and resources without requiring them to take on commensurate financial risk.

While TikTok is unusual in many respects, the way it vests power in one man is actually quite banal. TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, is privately held, but it’s reportedly controlled by a co-founder, Chinese national Zhang Yiming, via a dual-class structure.

As a professor of corporate law, I’d urge policymakers and the public to consider the societal risks of a system that allows a single person to wield full control over a major corporation through dual-class stock.

In a standard single-class structure - where voting power tracks the amount of company equity a shareholder owns - someone seeking total control of a company must ordinarily spend a lot of money buying up shares, which also means assuming a lot of risk. This “skin in the game” requirement limits how much influence a single person can exert on a company.

That safeguard is informal, not mandatory, and dual-class structures do away with it. Ascendant among Silicon Valley firms since Google’s 2004 initial public offering in the U.S. and recently legalized in the U.K., the dual-class model is fiercely debated in corporate governance circles. To date, however, its downsides have been understood only as a problem for shareholders, not society, despite broad and bipartisan concern about the influence of Big Tech.

Let’s pick on Meta as an example. Zuckerberg reportedly owns just 13.5% of the company’s equity, but because he owns 99.7% of the super-voting shares, he controls 61% of the company’s votes.

This setup gives him a lock on corporate policy as a controlling shareholder, even though he only owns a bit over one-eighth of Meta stock by value. He has full control of the company without placing anywhere near an equivalent amount of money at risk.

You don’t have to be the parent of an Instagram-addicted teenager to see that Meta has generated what might be described as social costs. For example, Amnesty International has alleged that Facebook algorithms “substantially contributed to the atrocities perpetrated by the Myanmar military” in 2017. Facebook has also been criticized for promoting misinformation during past U.S. elections and for suppressing embarrassing

stories about Hunter Biden.

These examples underscore broader social concerns around content moderation, privacy and tech titans’ outsized political influence. Notably, Zuckerberg - who has been associated with progressive causes in the past - has moved to embrace President Donald Trump strongly in recent months and asked for Trump’s support for Meta in a legal battle with the European Union.

In a 2023 law journal article, I noted that recent Supreme Court decisions expanding corporate constitutional rights stand to give company founders unprecedented power to shape society. While the rise of founder-controlled social media giants with distinct political agendas has gotten a lot of attention, the widening scope of what is deemed protected corporate speech and religious exercise hasn’t been a part of that conversation.

I think there’s a real possibility that these two streams will converge, granting constitutional protection to “founder kings” who wish to leverage company resources for private agendas. Two recent legal developments raise the stakes.

First, the courts - and in particular the Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Roberts - have been expanding corporate constitutional rights, which could allow dual-class founders to carve out exceptions to generally applicable laws.

Second, recent legal changes in Delaware - which despite its tiny size is the leading corporate law jurisdiction in the U.S. - could make it easier for dual-class controlling shareholders to exercise power within their companies.

To get a sense of the potential consequences, suppose the controlling shareholder of a dual-class company were to cause it to defy a federal mandate - for example, a requirement to offer health insurance plans that cover contraception - on the grounds that complying would violate their religious beliefs. The Supreme Court in Hobby Lobby v. Burwell recog-

nized exactly this sort of faith-based exception for a large family-owned but privately held business.

Would it recognize such an exception for a company like Snap? The company, best known for its app Snapchat, is publicly traded, but just two men, Robert Murphy and Evan Spiegel, control 99.5% of the voting power.

We can’t be sure. Hobby Lobby is different from Snap in many ways. Yet what they have in common is the ability of their owners to plausibly claim a unitary speech or religious exercise interest that would not characterize a typical large business. Snap’s public owners have no say at all - zero votes - in the company’s affairs. If the controllers of Snap asserted a religious basis for exempting the company from a regulation - and to be clear, this is a purely hypothetical example - the courts might well indulge the claim.

The judicial system’s expanding view of corporate constitutional rights - seen not just in Hobby Lobby but in Citizens United v. FEC and a number of more recent and ongoing cases in state and lower federal courts - could empower founders to leverage their businesses for private agendas. Whether or not this is likely for Snap in particular, the combination of the dual-class model and changes in the law would seem to leave the door open.

A fitting contrast might be none other than Twitter - renamed X after Elon Musk acquired it and who recently merged it into xAI, another Musk-led venture.

As a privately held company, xAI is not required to file public investor reports, and much about its ownership structure remains opaque. But let’s assume the company is majority-owned by Musk in a conventional single-class structure - the type Twitter had before he bought it. Given a chance to provoke, Musk has consistently proved eager to raise his hand. Couldn’t he use his control to get X or xAI - we’ll stick with “X” for simplicity - to exercise the same vast control that Murphy and Spiegel could

at Snap, or Zuckerberg at Meta? Yes - but with a subtle yet important difference.

There’s a certain logic to X’s key corporate decisions being vested in Musk. Quite famously, he ponied up US\$44 billion to buy the entire company. Legal prohibitions on the deployment of private resources for influence are confined to a small universe of cases - antitrust, bribery, certain types of campaign contributions. Those resources include businesses, which are a form of property, that are owned by wealthy individuals or groups. With limited exceptions, people can use their own property as they wish.

In a dual-class company, though, controllers use other people’s property as they wish. They can get the immense legal, economic and organizational power of the corporate form without having to put much skin in the game. (AP)

Traditionally, questions of rich-guy influence have been seen through the lens of politics, taxes or public regulation. But seeing them as questions about the exercise of private corporate control makes clear the special social challenges posed by dual-class stock.

Wall Street has mostly accepted the bargain: ironclad insulation of Zuckerberg in exchange for rock-solid Meta returns. But this debate is not only of interest for the investment community. Everyone has a stake in its outcome.

It’s fair for the public to question the wisdom of allowing company founders to leverage the resources and newly jumbo-sized constitutional rights of large corporations in service of a special agenda - be it for a foreign government, a political party or a religious faith - that isn’t even connected to classical purposes of the corporation or advantages of the dual-class model.

The distinctive risks posed by TikTok are mostly unrelated to its share structure. But the debate over the ban-or-sell law offers a reminder: The powers created by dual-class stock aren’t unique to Chinese control. America’s homegrown founder kings wield them, too. (AP)

‘Things aren’t different. Things are things.’

‘Nearly every social media giant is controlled by just one or two men.’



## Duke of Sussex fights to regain UK security detail

### Prince Harry was unjustly stripped of UK security: lawyer

LONDON, April 9, (AP): Prince Harry was treated unfairly when he was stripped of his British security detail, his attorney told appeals court judges Tuesday as he sought to win back his government-funded protection.

Harry, whose rare appearance in court indicated the case's importance to him, lost his police bodyguards in February 2020 after he stepped down from his role as a working member of the royal family and moved to the US.

A High Court judge ruled last year that a government panel's decision to provide "bespoke" security for the Duke of Sussex on an as-needed basis was not unlawful, irrational or unjustified.

But attorney Shaheed Fatima argued that a group that evaluated Harry's security needs failed to follow its own process and perform a risk management assessment.

"The appellant does not accept that bespoke means better," Fatima said. "In fact, in his submission, it means that he has been singled out for different, unjustified and inferior treatment."

A lawyer for the government said Harry's argument in the lower court was accurately found to have been mis-conceived and based on an "inappropriate, formalist interpretation" of the government's security review.

"The appeal is fairly to be characterized in the same way," attorney James Eadie said. "It involves a continued failure to see the wood for the trees, advancing propositions available only by reading small parts of the evi-

dence, and now the judgment, out of context and ignoring the totality of the picture."

The hearing before three Court of Appeal justices is due to end Wednesday and a written decision is expected later. While the hearing was livestreamed, much of the second day will be conducted behind closed doors to discuss sensitive security details.

Harry arrived at court with a small security detail supplemented by court officers. He waved to cameras before disappearing into a private entrance.

#### Convention

Harry, 40, the younger son of King Charles III, has bucked royal family convention by taking the government and tabloid press to court, where he has a mixed record.

But Harry rarely shows up to court hearings, making only a few appearances in the past two years. That included the trial of one of his phone hacking cases against the British tabloids when he was the first senior member of the royal family to enter the witness box in more than 130 years.

Harry and his wife had stepped back from their official roles in the family in 2020 because they didn't feel they were "being protected by the institution," his lawyer said.

After doing so, a Home Office committee ruled there was "no basis for publicly funded security support for the duke and duchess within Great Britain."

Harry claimed he and his family are endangered when visiting his homeland because of hostility aimed at him and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, on social media and through relentless hounding by news media.

Since he lost his government-sponsored protection, Harry faced at least two serious security threats, his lawyer said in court papers. Al-Qaida had published a document that said Harry's assassination would please Muslims, and he and his wife were involved in a dangerous pursuit by paparazzi in New York.

He lost a related court case in which he sought permission to privately pay for a police detail when in the UK but a judge denied that offer after a government lawyer argued officers shouldn't be used as "private bodyguards for the wealthy."

Harry also dropped a libel case against the publisher of the Daily Mail for an article that said he had tried to hide his efforts to continue receiving government-funded security.

But he won a significant victory at trial in 2023 against the publisher of the Daily Mirror when a judge found that phone hacking at the tabloid was "widespread and habitual." He claimed a "monumental" victory in January when Rupert Murdoch's U.K. tabloids made an unprecedented apology for intruding in his life for years, and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

He has a similar case pending against the publisher of the Mail.



Prince Harry, right, is escorted by security as he arrives at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, Wednesday, April 9. (AP)

#### Film

### Weird and wild tribute

## 'Freaky Tales,' a nostalgic, gory ode to '80s Oakland

LOS ANGELES, April 9, (AP): Remember what it was like growing up in the East Bay in the '80s?

Ryan Fleck sure does, and vividly. The writer-director, together with partner Anna Boden, has produced a self-described "very weird" (no argument here) love letter to his former home in "Freaky Tales." But this ode to Oakland contains more than memories. It's not about the way things happened, Fleck says, but about the way he chooses to remember them.

Set in 1987, "Freaky Tales" is certainly creative. It is whimsically visual - think hand-drawn stick figures popping up, comic-book style graphics, or a sudden shift to cartoon mode - and it has **Pedro Pascal**, never a bad thing.

It's also often heartfelt, even if it ends in a spasm of hatchet-wielding, samurai-sword-slicing, Tarantino-esque gore that, dare we say, doesn't feel like a love letter to anything - except maybe Tarantino.

The real issue is, a lot of us don't remember growing up in the East Bay because we didn't. Maybe we've never even been there. What's never quite fleshed out here is why this all should resonate with us - or how these haphazard moments, albeit compelling, weave together in the cohesive way the filmmakers seem to promise.

#### Culture

In any case, Oakland in 1987 was "hella wild," we're told at the start: the people, the culture, the music, and also a cosmic "bright green glow" - an electricity in the air that may be a gift from aliens, or perhaps augurs the end of the world. The film then moves, in a style reminiscent of Robert Altman's "Short Cuts," through four separate yet connected tales happening on one night.

We begin with "Strength in Numbers: The Gilman Strikes Back," set at 924 Gilman, home to the Berkeley punk rock scene. A sign on the club's door expresses its peaceful ethos: "No Racism, No Sexism, No Homophobia, No Drugs, No Alcohol, No Violence." But try telling that to the local band of skinheads who've been rampaging through the joint, terrorizing the crowd.

Usually, the punk kids don't fight back. This time, they do. Young couple Tina (Ji-young Yoo) and Lucid (Jack Champion) are among those who arm themselves with terrifying

weapons, including Tina's fearsome spiked bracelet, for a blood-spattered confrontation.

It's at another East Bay nightspot, Sweet Jimmie's, where aspiring female rap duo Danger Zone makes its mark in the second story, "Don't Fight the Feeling." Entice (singer Normani) and Barbie (Dominique Thorne) take their shot by agreeing to a rap battle with homegrown star rapper Too Short (played here by Symba), who launches the contest in the raunchiest of ways. Normani and Thorne are engaging, but the story is short on narrative heft.

#### Collection

Things get deeper in "Born to Mack," with Pascal as a once-violent debt collector trying to turn a corner. As his very pregnant wife sits outside in their car, their new life beckoning, Pascal's Clint goes into a video store where in a back room, his last collection job awaits - or so he thinks. An unwelcome reminder of his violent past sets in motion an unthinkable tragedy. And from tragedy comes an unexpected chance at redemption.

Everything comes together - in a way - in "The Legend of Sleepy Floyd," revolving around a real-life sports drama: the May 1987 game in which Golden State Warriors guard Eric "Sleepy" Floyd went on a scoring rampage - including 29 points in the fourth quarter - to defeat the Los Angeles Lakers. Here, the filmmakers envision an unhappy coda to the night. A band of thieves led by a fiendish corrupt cop (Ben Mendelsohn) has broken into players' houses while they're away. When the mother and girlfriend of Sleepy himself come home early, yet another tragedy ensues.

And then comes the finale, with Sleepy (Jay Ellis) exacting bloody revenge in a paroxysm of gore. Fans of such things will undoubtedly enjoy it; what the movie is saying about Oakland, however, remains elusive.

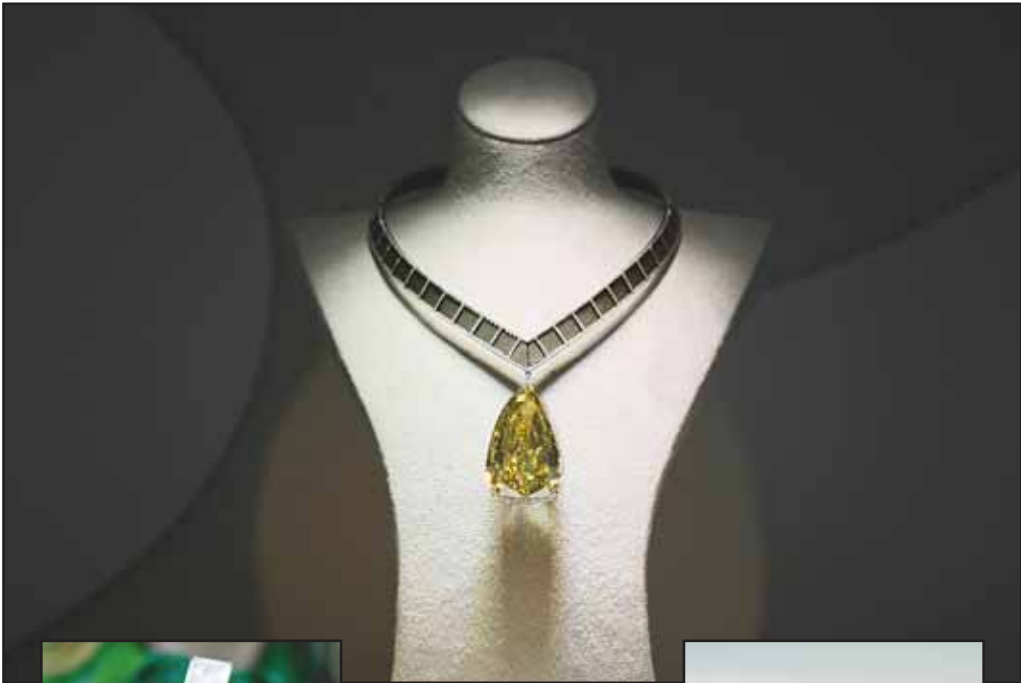
We won't spoil the A-list cameo performance, but in the end, as the credits roll, this celebrity returns for sort of a blooper reel moment, cracking up the crew. It's fun to feel everyone laughing together, and even more fun to watch the vintage break-dancing number that accompanies the credits. Clearly, the cast had a great time. But for us, there's a sense by then that maybe you sorta had to be there.

"Freaky Tales," a Lionsgate release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for strong bloody violence, language throughout including slurs, sexual content and drug use." Running time: 106 minutes. Two stars out of four.

#### Exhibition



Sotheby's Deputy Chairman, Middle East & Head of Sotheby's UAE, Katia Noun Boueiz wears the Mediterranean Blue Diamond during its worldwide debut in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday, April 8. (AP)



A 303.10 carat pear-shaped Fancy Deep Brownish Yellow Diamond is on display. (AP)



Boueiz holds a Emerald-cut diamond during an exhibition in Abu Dhabi. (AP)



The 5.05-carat square emerald-cut Fancy Brown-Red diamond is on display. (AP)

### 10-carat blue diamond shines at \$100m Abu Dhabi exhibit

A rare blue diamond was displayed Tuesday at an exhibition of \$100 million worth of the world's rarest diamonds in the United Arab Emirates' capital, Abu Dhabi.

The eight diamonds on display at the Sotheby's exhibition have a total weight of over 700 carats. They include red, yellow, pink and colorless diamonds.

Visitors focused on the 10-karat blue diamond from South Africa, considered one of the most important blue diamonds ever discovered. Sothe-

by's expects it to be auctioned off at \$20 million in May.

Quig Bruning, the company's head of jewels in North America, Europe and the Middle East, said they chose Abu Dhabi for the current exhibition because of the Gulf nation's high interest in diamonds.

"We have great optimism about the region," he said. "We feel very strongly that this is the kind of place where you have both traders and collectors of diamonds of this importance and of this rarity." (AP)

### 'Dead Center' is scheduled for September

#### Ex-Sen Manchin working on memoir

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): Former Sen. Joe Manchin has a memoir coming out in September, what the self-styled maverick from West Virginia calls his "declaration of independence from the extremes on both sides."

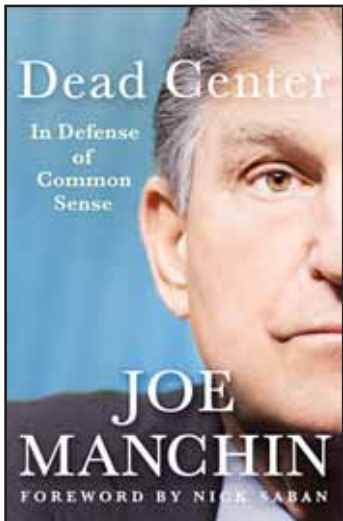
St. Martin's Press announced Tuesday that Manchin's "Dead Center: In Defense of Common Sense" will be released Sept. 16.

Manchin, 77, announced last year he wouldn't seek re-election after serving in the Senate since 2010 and becoming the rare Democrat to win in a state which otherwise votes for Republicans by wide margins. Manchin had long branded himself as a moderate beholden to no ideology and would often chastise Democrats or upend legislation when Senate

Democrats held a tiny majority during the presidency of fellow party member Joe Biden.

Last summer, Manchin left the Democrats altogether and identified as an independent, although he continued to caucus with his former party. In a statement issued through St. Martin's, he said that "Dead Center" was a "declaration of independence" and a handbook for governing.

"I believe successful leadership in any arena is about understanding the art and science of collaboration and compromise, civility and respect, negotiations and solutions," he said. "Leaders should be positive change agents and bring people and organizations together rather than drive them apart."



This cover image released by St. Martin's Press shows 'Dead Center: In Defense of Common Sense' by Joe Manchin. (AP)

#### Variety

**NEW YORK:** Three years after flying into the Cannes Film Festival with "Top Gun: Maverick," **Tom Cruise** is returning to the Croisette with "Mission: Impossible - Final Reckoning."

Organizers of the French festival announced Tuesday that "Final Reckoning," will screen out of competition at the 78th edition Cannes on May 14, ahead of the film's May 23 release in theaters.

Cruise, writer-director Christopher McQuarrie and the cast will attend the screening at the Palais des Festivals. For Cruise, it will be his third time with a film in Cannes but his first trip back after the eventful 2022 launch of "Top Gun: Maverick." Cruise was then given an honorary Palme d'Or.

The lineup to this year's Cannes, running May 13 to 24, is to be unveiled Thursday in Paris. On Monday, the festival announced that Robert De Niro will receive an honorary Palme d'Or at the opening ceremony on May 13. (AP)



Cruise

**BOGOTA, Colombia:** A high court in Colombia ruled on Tuesday that "+57," a song recorded last year by urban music stars J Balvin and Karol G, violated the rights of children because its lyrics "sexualized" minors.

In a 14-page ruling, the court ordered Karol G, J Balvin and several other reggaeton singers who helped to record the song to refrain from publishing music that violates the rights of children and teenagers.

"Sexualizing minors reduces them to becoming objects of desire, and exposes them to risks that can affect their development," the court said.

The song generated controversy in Colombia when it was released in November, with organizations that defend the rights of children quickly calling for its removal. Music critics also gave the song poor reviews with Rolling Stone's Spanish language website calling it a "disaster."

The song, which is named after Colombia's telephone country code, talks about a young woman who goes partying "despite having an owner." The woman, "who has been a hot mama since she was 14," enters a disco and begins to do shots.

Karol G, whose real name is Carolina Giraldo, apologized for the song on her Instagram account last year, saying that the lyrics had been "taken out of context" but also adding that she realized she had "a lot to learn." (AP)

**NEW YORK:** A Colorado artist denies trying to distort Donald Trump's likeness in a portrait that hung until recently in the state Capitol and says the president's criticisms are hurting her business.

She also disputed that the work drew a lot of complaints before Trump weighed in.

Trump called the portrait by Colorado Springs painter Sarah Boardman "purposefully distorted" in a March 23 post on Truth Social. Trump added that Boardman "must have lost her talent as she got older" and posted that he preferred having no portrait in the Colorado Capitol to that one.

Legislative leaders announced the next day that they would take the portrait down. It was gone from a wall of past presidents' portraits the next morning, relegated to museum storage.

In an emailed statement Saturday, Boardman denied intentionally distorting Trump.

While Trump posted that "many people" from Colorado had complained about the portrait, Boardman wrote she "got overwhelmingly positive reviews and feedback" over the six years it hung in the Capitol. (AP)



A museum employee looks towards a snake necklace commissioned by Mexican filmstar Maria Felix in 1968, on display at Cartier - the first major exhibition in almost 30 years dedicated to Cartier jewels and watches, at the V&A Museum in London, Wednesday, April 9. (AP)



Strive to survive on court

‘Ballkids’ sheds light on Aussie Open’s unsung heroes

BRISBANE, Australia, April 9, (AP): Formula 1 has done it, so has professional golf, the National Hockey League and the elite tennis tour. Now it’s time for ball boys and ball girls to take center court in a reality-style documentary.

Tennis Australia this week said “Ballkids,” a 65-minute film, is set to “lift the lid on the unsung heroes of the Australian Open.” It was filmed at the season-opening Grand Slam tournaments in 2023 and 2024 at Melbourne Park and will premiere May 3 at the Gold Coast Film Festival in Queensland state.

While it won’t have the high-profile, episode-style format of F1’s “Drive to Survive,” which will start its seventh season this week, “Full Swing” in golf or “Faceoff: Inside the NHL,” which is now in production for its second season, the makers of “Ballkids” say it will chronicle the often cut-throat selection process and rigorous training program.

The documentary says that of 3,000-plus applica-

tions, only 420 are chosen as Australian Open ball kids in any given year. And that’s for the right to cope with the stress of performing, at times, in front of 14,000 to 15,000 people in the main Rod Laver Arena, with millions of people watching on television or streaming sites around the world.

Tennis already had “Break Point,” which ran for two seasons on Netflix and featured players from the ATP and WTA Tours. But “Ballkids” is set to show the “unsung heroes who only share the court with the world’s best players.”

Friendships are made early on in the qualifying process, but the kids know they’re competing against each other for those coveted spots on the team.

“Nothing will fully prepared you for the pressure,” an Australian Open official says in the documentary. “A rookie’s first AO experience is like a really friendly smack in the face!”

That’s particularly true near the end of the tourna-

ment when the so-called “Top Gun” winners are announced. They’re the ball kids who get to work the championship finals in men’s and women’s singles, doubles and mixed doubles. At that point, perhaps some friendships made, and some lost.

“Ballkids” was produced by Run Wild Productions in association with Mischief Media and is narrated by Australian comedian-actor Celia Pacquola.

“We’ve always known that the ball kids are integral to the smooth running of the tournament, but ‘Ballkids’ shows just how much effort, skill, and determination it takes to make it to the top,” said Scott Baskett, a director and producer at Run Wild Productions. “This documentary is not just about tennis, it’s about resilience, teamwork, and the pursuit of perfection - values that transcend the sport.”

A trailer for “Ballkids,” which will be available to watch on the Australian Open’s YouTube channel and possibly for a limited release in cinemas or streaming later in the year, can be found here.



Jannik Sinner of Italy poses with ball kids and the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup after defeating Daniil Medvedev of Russia in the men’s singles final at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, in Melbourne, Australia, on Jan. 28, 2024. (AP)

Film



This image released by A24 shows Kit Connor in a scene from ‘Warfare.’ (AP)

Mendoza’s film hunts war-movie clichés

‘Warfare’ brings the raw reality of Iraq War

LOS ANGELES, April 9, (AP): Ray Mendoza and Alex Garland’s “Warfare” is more defined by what it isn’t than what it is.

In their Iraq War-set film, there’s never any description of a wider strategy. There are no backstories to the American Navy SEALs whom we follow on an unspectacular mission. There’s not a short monologue about mom’s cooking back home, let alone a speculative word about life after the war. There’s not even a dramatic close-up to be had.

“Warfare” aspires to be, simply, just that. We are effectively embedded in a platoon on what seems to be a minor mission in Iraq in 2006. Walking in two single-file lines down a Ramadi street at night, one soldier says, “I like this house.” Under the cover of darkness, they rush inside the apartment building to set up their position while keeping the family inside quiet. In the morning, their sniper, laid out on a raised bed, sweats while looking out on an increasingly anxious scene. His rifle’s crosshairs drift through the street scenes outside, as suspected jihadists mobilize around them.

War-movie clichés have been rigorously rooted out of “Warfare,” a terse and chillingly brutal immersion in a moment of the Iraq War. Clouds of IED smoke and cries of agony fill Garland and

Mendoza’s film, with little but the faces of the SEALs to ground a nearly real-time, based-on-a-true-story dramatization. Few words are spoken outside the intense patter of official Navy jargon. When the mission comes to its bloody and hectic conclusion, the only utterance left hanging in the clouded air is the unanswered, blood-curdling shriek of a woman watching the men leave her bombed-out home: “Why?”

A year after “Civil War,” a movie predicated on bringing the horror of war home to American soil, Garland has returned with a film even more designed to implode fanciful and far-away ideas of war by bringing it acutely close. Mendoza, an Iraq War veteran who served as a consultant on “Civil War,” co-writes and co-directs “Warfare” from his own first-hand experience in Iraq. The movie is introduced as based on the memories of the troops involved, and “Warfare” gives little reason to quibble with its ultra verisimilitude.

**Battalion**

That doesn’t mean Mendoza and Garland’s film isn’t without its sympathies. For a movie quaking with sonic tremors, the first thumps sounded in “Warfare” come from the 2004 music video to Eric Prydz’s “Call on Me,” as the battalion bops in harmony to the female bodies

gyrating on a screen in front of them.

In battle, they are hardly any less choreographed. If a mode of American war movie leans toward showing the follies of war on the ground, the soldiers of “Warfare” - while not immune to a little “Call on Me” imitation - are supremely precise. When things go haywire here, it’s not because the SEALs aren’t alert or are haphazard in their regard for the lives around them.

**Comrades**

Among them are sniper Elliott (Cosmo Jarvis), Eric (Will Poulter), Tommy (Kit Connor), Sam (Joseph Quinn) and Ray (D’Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai). We never learn anything about any of them except their fidelity to their comrades and their willingness to do what’s necessary when even the heaviest fire is raining down on them.

Sounds of fire pop through the immersive sound design of Glenn Freemantle. Whether “Warfare” is the most accurate war film ever made or not, it’s certainly among the most sonically enveloping experiences of battle. After an explosion rocks the men, “Warfare” staggers in a concussed haze. The film’s craft, generally, is impressive, including production designer Mark Digby’s recreation of the Ramadi block.

Despite all the effort to shed “Warfare” of war-movie tropes, though, they do intrude in one glaring way. Like countless movies before it, “Warfare” runs its credits alongside photographs of the real SEALs (some faces are blurred out), along with footage of them with the actors and filmmakers on set. To honor the real men is, of course, laudable and necessary. But the behind-the-scenes tone of the epilogue chafes with the spell cast by “Warfare.”

The point of “Warfare,” to me, seems less about paying these Navy SEALs tribute than showing combat how it truly unspools - messily, chaotically and pointlessly. With the exception of a pair of Iraqi interpreters, “Warfare” - despite its broad title - limits itself to one side of a battle. But I’d argue the only bad guy in “Warfare” isn’t on either side of the fight, but is found in the aerial viewpoint - used sporadically by the filmmakers - from a U.S. plane overhead that renders every person mere pixels on a screen.

In this forensic portrait of war, the only way to not get what’s happening on the ground is to be too far from it. François Truffaut famously said there’s no such thing as an anti-war film because movies inherently glamorize war. “Warfare,” though, is intent on challenging that old adage.

Suit’s role in culture and identity explored

‘Superfine’ celebrates art of tailoring at Met show

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): What’s in a suit?

According to curators busy prepping the newest Met Gala exhibit, a whole lot more than tailoring: history, culture, identity, power and, most of all, self-expression.

“Superfine: Tailoring Black Style,” this year’s spring show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute, will be launched as usual by the star-packed Met Gala a few nights earlier, on May 5. It’s the first Met show to focus exclusively on Black designers, and the first in more than 20 years to have a menswear theme.

As always, the exhibit inspires the gala dress code, and this year’s - “Tailored For You” - makes clear that guests are invited to be as creative as possible within the framework of classic tailoring.

In other words, expect a lot of great suits.

“Everything from Savile Row to a track suit,” quipped guest curator Monica L. Miller, a Barnard College professor of Africana studies, considering the versatility of a suit. She sat recently in a conference room at the Met with photos and notes plastered on the walls. She was in the middle of writing descriptive labels for the more than 200 items in the show - an exhaustive (and exhausting) task.

The suit, Miller said, “represents so many things.” And tailoring, she added, is a very in-

timidate process.

“It’s not just about getting a suit that fits you physically,” Miller said, “but, what do you want to express that night?”

It was Miller’s 2009 book, “Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity,” that inspired the show and led Andrew Bolton, curator of all the blockbuster Costume Institute shows, to bring her in as guest curator. The show uses dandyism as a lens through which to explore the formation of Black style over the years.

“Dandyism was about pushing boundaries,” Miller said.

Behind her, a section of wall was devoted to each of the 12 themes that divide the exhibit: Ownership, presence, distinction, disguise, freedom, champion, respectability, jook, heritage, beauty, cool and cosmopolitanism.

The early sections will begin with the 18th century and focus more on historical artifacts, with later sections looking at the 20th century and beyond. In addition, each section will begin with historic garments, accessories or photographs, and end with contemporary fashion.

Getting the first look at all this, on the traditional first Monday in May, will be a high-powered crowd from the worlds of entertainment,



Vogue editor Anna Wintour attends The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute benefit gala on May 6, 2019, in New York. (AP)

fashion, sports and beyond. Gala co-chairs this year are musician-designer Pharrell Williams, Formula 1 star Lewis Hamilton, actor Colman Domingo and rapper A\$AP Rocky; NBA superstar LeBron James is honorary chair.

If that weren’t enough star power, this year, there’s an additional host committee with athletes like Simone Biles and Jonathan Owens,

Hollywood figures like Spike Lee and Ayo Edebiri, musicians like Janelle Monáe and André 3000, author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and other artists, playwrights and fashion figures.

As each year during cocktail hour, they and other guests will be free to put their drinks aside and tour the exhibit before the lavish dinner begins. This year, exquisitely tailored celebrities will examine other examples of exquisite tailoring - as well as historical artifacts like a horse jockey uniform worn between 1830 and 1840.

In an installation room late last month, a museum staffer worked painstakingly on restoring those jockey trousers, a pin cushion at the ready. Near her, two items were already hanging on mannequins. One was a classic Jeffrey Banks suit from 1987, a double-breasted jacket and trousers paired with a dapper plaid wool coat, the ensemble finished off with a light pink tie.

“See how the coat and suit play off each other,” noted Miller.

Next to it was a very different kind of suit - a denim jacket and trousers embellished throughout with beads - by a far less widely known designer: Jacques Agboby, whose Brooklyn-based label aims to promote Black, queer and immigrant narratives as well as his own Togolese heritage.

Media

‘Cannot bar’

AP wins access to WH events

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): A federal judge ordered the White House (WH) on Tuesday to restore The Associated Press’ full access to cover presidential events, affirming on First Amendment grounds that the government cannot punish the news organization for the content of its speech.

US District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, an appointee of President **Donald Trump**, ruled that the government can’t retaliate against the AP’s decision not to follow the president’s executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico. The decision, while a preliminary injunction, handed the AP a major victory at a time the White House has been challenging the press on several levels.

“Under the First Amendment, if the Government opens its doors to some journalists-be it to the Oval Office, the East Room, or elsewhere-it cannot then shut those doors to other journalists because of their viewpoints,” McFadden wrote. “The Constitution requires no less.”



It was unclear whether the White House would move immediately to put McFadden’s ruling into effect. McFadden held off on implementing his order for a week, giving the government time to respond or appeal. Shortly after the ruling, an AP reporter and photographer were turned away from joining a motorcade with the White House press pool to cover Trump’s appearance before the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The AP has been blocked since Feb. 11 from being among the small group of journalists to cover Trump in the Oval Office or aboard Air Force One, with sporadic ability to cover him at events in the East Room.

“We are gratified by the court’s decision,” said AP spokeswoman Lauren Easton. “Today’s ruling affirms the fundamental right of the press and public to speak freely without government retaliation. This is a freedom guaranteed for all Americans in the U.S. Constitution.”

Trump replaces historic WH tree

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): President Donald Trump on Tuesday helped shovel dirt onto the replacement for a historic White House tree that had to be removed because of safety concerns around its deteriorating condition.

“We have a beautiful tree now at the White House,” Trump said.

The White House did not allow news media coverage of the tree planting, but afterward shared a brief video clip on social media. Dale Haney, the longtime grounds superintendent, also participated.

“Dale’s been here 53 years. He’s fantastic,” Trump said.

The Republican president had announced March 30 on his social media platform that the nearly 200-year-old tree, known as the Jackson Magnolia, was in “terrible condition, a very dangerous safety hazard, at the White House Entrance, no less, and must now be removed.”

The southern magnolia had stood for decades near the west side of the South Portico of the White House. It’s where presidents and prime ministers often are welcomed on their visits, as well as where the president himself exits to board the Marine One helicopter or returns after a trip.

According to the National Park Service website, “folklore tells us” that President Andrew Jackson brought the tree’s seeds from his home near Nashville, Tennessee. The seeds apparently were planted in honor of his wife Rachel, who died shortly before he took office in 1829.



Early detection crucial

‘Chronic kidney’ disease often goes undiagnosed

By Eleanor Rivera  
University of Illinois Chicago  
The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

For a disease afflicting 35.5 million people in the US, chronic Kidney disease flies under the radar. Only half the people who have it are formally diagnosed.

The consequences of advanced chronic Kidney disease are severe. When these essential organs can no longer do their job of filtering waste products from the blood, patients need intensive medical interventions that gravely diminish their quality of life.

As an assistant professor of nursing and an expert in population health, I study strategies for improving patients’ awareness of chronic Kidney disease. My research shows that patients with early-stage chronic Kidney disease are not getting timely information from their health care providers about how to prevent the condition from worsening.

Here’s what you need to know to keep your Kidneys healthy:

Kidneys have multiple functions, but their most critical and unglamorous job is filtering waste out of the body. When your Kidneys are working well, they get rid of everyday by-products from your normal metabolism by creating urine. They also help keep your blood pressure stable, your electrolytes balanced and your red blood cell production pumping.

The Kidneys work hard around the clock. Over time, they can become damaged by acute experiences like severe dehydration, or acquire chronic damage from years of high blood pressure or high blood sugar. Sustained damage leads to chronically impaired Kidney function, which can eventually progress to Kidney failure.

Kidneys that have failed stop producing urine, which prevents the body from eliminating fluids. This causes electrolytes like potassium and phosphate to build up to dangerous levels. The only effective treatments are to replace the work of the Kidney with a procedure called dialysis or to receive a Kidney transplant.

Kidney transplants are the gold standard treatment, and most patients can be eligible to receive them. But unless they have a willing donor, they can spend an average of five years waiting for an available Kidney.

**Dialysis**

Most patients with Kidney failure receive dialysis, which artificially replicates the Kidneys’ job of filtering waste and removing fluid from the body. Dialysis treatment is extremely burdensome. Patients usually have to undergo the procedure multiple times per week, with each session taking several hours. And it comes with a major risk of death, disability and serious complications.

In the US, the biggest contributors to developing chronic Kidney disease are high blood pressure and diabetes. Up to 40% of people with diabetes and as many as 30% of people with high blood pressure develop chronic Kidney disease.

The problem is, as with high blood pressure, people with early-stage chronic Kidney disease almost never experience symptoms. Clinicians can test a patient’s overall Kidney function using a measure called the estimated glomerular filtration rate.

Current guidelines recommend that everyone - particularly people with risk factors like high blood pressure and diabetes - get their Kidney function routinely tested to ensure the condition doesn’t progress silently.

Early treatment for Kidney disease often relies on managing high blood pressure and diabetes. New medications called SGLT2 inhibitors, originally developed to treat diabetes, may be able to directly protect the Kidneys themselves, even in people who don’t have diabetes.

Patients with early-stage Kidney disease can benefit from knowing their Kidney function scores and from treatment innovations like SGLT2 inhibitors, but only if they are successfully diagnosed and can discuss treatment options during routine visits with their health care providers.

Early treatment for chronic Kidney disease often gets overlooked during routine clinical care. In fact, as many as one-third of patients with Kidney failure have no record of health care treatment for their Kidneys in the early stages of their disease.

Even if a diagnosis for chronic Kidney disease is noted in a patient’s medical record, their provider might not discuss it with them: As few as 10% of people with the disease are aware that they have it.

Constraints

That’s partly due to the constraints of the U.S. health care system. The diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of early-stage chronic Kidney disease occurs mostly in the primary care setting. However, primary care visit time is limited by insurance company reimbursement policies. Especially with patients who have multiple health problems, doctors may prioritize more noticeably pressing concerns.

The result is that many clinicians put off addressing chronic Kidney disease until symptoms emerge or test results worsen, often leaving early-stage patients undiagnosed and poorly informed about the disease. Research shows that people who are nonwhite, female and of lower socioeconomic status or education level are most likely to fall into this gap.

But patients are eager for this knowledge, according to a study I co-authored. I interviewed patients who had early-stage Kidney disease about their experiences receiving care. In their responses, patients expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of information they received from their health care providers and voiced a strong interest in learning more about the disease.

As Kidney disease progresses to the later stages, patients get treated by Kidney specialists called nephrologists, who provide patients with targeted treatment and more robust education. But by the time patients progress to late-stage disease or even Kidney failure, many symptoms can’t be reversed and the disease is much harder to manage.

People who are at risk for chronic Kidney disease or who have developed early-stage disease can take several steps to minimize the chances that it will progress to Kidney failure.

First, patients can ask their doctors about chronic Kidney disease, especially if they have risk factors such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Studies show that patients who ask questions, make requests and raise concerns with their provider during their health care visit have better health outcomes and are more satisfied with their care. (AP)

8 people die from cholera in South Sudan

60,000 Palestinian kids suffering from malnutrition

GAZA, April 9, (Agencies): Health Authorities in Gaza affirmed on Wednesday that 60,000 Palestinian children suffer from serious health complications due to malnourishment.

In a press statement, the authorities stressed that closing the borders to food and medical supplies could increase that number.

It emphasized that lack of adequate nutrition and clean drinkable water will increase health challenges, as vaccinations for children, especially polio, continue to be banned.

Meanwhile, 5 children were among eight people who died from cholera in South Sudan after aid cuts are forcing patients to walk for hours to the nearest clinics, an aid organization said Wednesday.

The Save the Children charity organization said the deaths were recorded in the flood-prone eastern Jonglei state where it had closed seven health centers. Some 20 others are partially run by volunteers but cannot transport patients as they did prior to the cuts.

This is the latest fallout from the termination of USAID programs in conflict and drought-hit countries across the East Africa, leaving millions of people in need of more immediate aid.

Save the Children South Sudan Country Director Chris Nyamandi said in a statement that children’s needs in conflict-hit countries must be prioritized.



KUNA photo  
The health authorities in Gaza report that 60,000 Palestinian children are suffering from malnutrition.

“There should be global moral outrage that the decisions made by powerful people in other countries have led to child deaths in just a matter of weeks,” he said. The medical director at the government-run Akobo hospital where most cholera cases are being managed described the situation as “catastrophic” as health ministry figures show at least 46,716 cases and 871 deaths reported countrywide since October.

Nyuon Koang told the Associated Press that there was only one government health facility in full operation in Walgak town.

Last month, the U.N warned that South Sudan was teetering on the edge of a renewed civil war after an armed group in the north overrun an army base and attacked a U.N helicopter.

Government troops responded with a series of airstrikes and the country’s vice president and main opposition leader Riek Machar remains under house arrest for incitement.

The World Food Program (WFP) has warned that hunger in South Sudan was nearing record highs with “almost 7.7 million people facing levels of hunger categorized as crisis, emergency, or catastrophic.”

Funding cuts in East Africa have also impacted programs in Somalia where more than 6 million people are facing acute food insecurity. More funding cuts could push millions further into a full-blown famine.

In March, WFP said that 3.4 million Somalians were already experiencing crisis-levels of hunger or worse and that it would from April support “820,000 people monthly with food and cash assistance, down from a peak of 2.2 million reached monthly in 2024.”

The U.S State Department said Tuesday that it had rolled back sweeping funding cuts to WFP emergency projects in 14 impoverished countries that included Somalia, saying it had terminated some of the contracts for life-saving aid by mistake.

Mohamed Elmi Afrah, a longtime aid worker and political analyst based in Somalia told The Associated Press that effects of funding cuts were global but the “impact is especially severe in Africa.”

Action urged

Strokes to claim 100 million lives

GENEVA, April 9, (AP): Launching on April 8, the world’s first multisector advocacy movement dedicated to stroke - the Global Stroke Action Coalition - has issued an urgent call to action to address growing inequities in stroke.

Already a leading cause of death and disability, without intervention, the global burden of stroke is projected to rise by a further 50% over the next 25 years, claiming 100 million lives and costing US\$1.6 trillion each year.

At this afternoon’s launch, health and economic policy specialists, clinical experts and people with lived experience of stroke, will highlight key data and recommendations for action to address human and financial impact of stroke.

Drawing on both data and the lived experiences of people affected by stroke, the Coalition will share their inaugural policy document Stroke Action Now which sets out evidence-based examples of interventions that can significantly advance progress on a disease that is largely:

**Preventable:** 80% of the current stroke burden is linked to 10 modifiable risk factors. Identifying and managing hypertension alone could cut the rate of stroke in half.

**Treatable:** Advances in clot removal and clot-busting technologies (thrombectomy and thrombolysis) can dramatically improve patient health outcomes, minimizing disability and reducing the economic impact of stroke.

**Recoverable:** Access to rehabilitation helps people regain independence and reduces the risk —and cost— of long-term disability.

Despite the clear opportunities, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services are only available to a fraction of stroke patients. For example, only 3% of medically eligible patients currently receive thrombectomy, with 20-40% of healthcare settings worldwide yet to implement basic stroke rehabilitation services.

“The global burden of stroke has doubled in the past 30 years,” explains Coalition co-Chair, Professor Bo Norrving.



A flower moon rises behind the ancient temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion, about 70 kilometers (45 miles) south of Athens, Greece, on Thursday, May 23, 2024. (AP)

A micromoon to grace the night skies this weekend

There’s a micromoon coming up. The full moon will look slightly smaller and dimmer on Saturday night. But the change may be tricky to spot with the naked eye.

“It’s a very subtle difference,” said astrophysicist Alain Brizard from Saint Michael’s College in Vermont.

The phenomenon happens when the moon is at a point farthest away from Earth. It’s opposite to a supermoon, where the moon swings closer to Earth and looks a bit larger.

To see the micromoon, go outside and look up in an area with a clear view of the moon.

Supermoons and micromoons happen a few times a year as the moon’s full phase syncs up with its orbit.

Another micromoon is on tap for May. Three supermoons will be visible this year in October, November and December.

A more colorful lunar event took place in March when a total eclipse turned the moon coppery red. (AP)

Safe and effective

Female fertility preserving device launched

MONTPELLIER, France, April 9, (AP): Womed, the uterine health company developing innovative, safe and effective treatments to free women from uterine pathologies, has announced it has signed licensing agreements with Kebomed Europe and Saesco Medical to distribute its first medical device, Womed Leaf, in Europe.

Intrauterine Adhesions (IUA), which refer to the pathological binding of the uterine walls, are caused by scarring of the uterus after procedures such as dilation and curettage or fibroid removal, and can occur in 20% to 45% of those procedures. IUAs are a major cause of infertility, recurrent miscarriages and pain. IUA treatment is plagued with a very high recurrence

rate, leaving women unsure and very anxious about their chance to conceive.

Womed Leaf is the first and only physical barrier to protect against IUA. The device consists of a soft, flexible film made from Womed’s innovative polymer, which is inserted like an IUD at the end of a uterine procedure. It expands within the cavity, preventing contact between the uterine walls for one week, and is then naturally and painlessly discharged. Womed Leaf was proven to be highly effective in the PREG2 randomized clinical study that enrolled 160 patients with severe or moderate IUA.

“These partnerships mark the first step of a global launch that will make Womed Leaf the new gold standard in intrauterine adhesion prevention and

treatment,” said Gonzague Issenmann, Co-founder and CEO of Womed. “Kebomed Europe and Saesco Medical’s established sales networks and expertise in women’s health will help European women and their doctors to preserve or recover their fertility.”

“Womed Leaf addresses a significant unmet need in women’s health and we are excited to partner with Womed to bring it to our customers,” said Lars Melbye, Managing Director of Kebomed Europe. Jordi Fluvia, CEO of Saesco Medical, added: “We are committed to offering the latest advances in medical technologies, and Womed is bringing a true innovation in an indication that has been sorely lacking in meaningful improvements for the last two decades.”

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# Punjab hands Chennai fourth straight loss

Lucknow wins thrilling run-fest

**KOLKATA, India, April 9, (AP):** Opening batter Priyansh Arya hit the joint fourth-fastest century in the Indian Premier League as Punjab Kings handed Chennai Super Kings their fourth straight loss.

Arya's (103) 39-ball hundred powered Punjab to 219-6 despite five of its top six batters falling for a combined score of 23 runs.

Chennai fell short for the fourth successive time in its run-chase and got restricted to 201-5 to lose by 18 runs as New Zealand left-handed opener Devon Conway top-scored with 69 off 49 balls.

Punjab's third win in four games pushed them to No. 4 on the points table.

Earlier, Lucknow Super Giants clinched a thrilling run-fest against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens by four runs.

Nicholas Pooran (87 not out) and Mitchell Marsh (81), who notched his fourth half-century in five games, decimated the Kolkata pacers to put up 238-3, Lucknow's second-highest IPL total.

Kolkata was on the verge of overhauling the tall target on the back of captain Ajinkya Rahane's blazing 61 off 35 balls but four wickets in 14 deliveries undermined the chase and they fell short at 234-7.

The 24-year-old Delhi opener turned heads when he smashed six sixes in one over during Delhi Premier League last year and was later picked by Punjab at the IPL auction.

Arya whacked Khaleel Ahmed's first ball for a six before the fast bowler couldn't hold onto a regulation return catch of the next ball as Chennai was scratchy in holding onto catches.

The left-hander got another opportunity on 35 when Vijay Shankar dropped a difficult catch at mid-wicket before he completed his half century off 19 balls inside the batting power play.

While Arya capitalized on chances



Lucknow Super Giants' Mitchell Marsh plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow Super Giants at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India. (AP)

with his continuous aggression against both pace and spin of Ravichandran Ashwin, Punjab stumbled to 83-5 in eight overs.

But Arya didn't hold back as he reached his maiden IPL hundred by smacking Matheesha Pathirana for 6, 6, 6, and 4. Chris Gayle holds the record of fastest IPL hundred - off 30 balls - followed by Yousuf Pathan (37 balls), David Miller (38 balls) and Travis Head (39 balls).

Arya smashed nine sixes and seven fours before he eventually holed out at long-on in the 13th over while going for another big shot against wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad of Afghanistan.

No. 7 batter Shashank Singh made unbeaten 52 off 36 balls and together with Marco Jansen (34 not out) carried Punjab past the 200-run mark with an unbroken 65-run stand.

The New Zealand left-handed pair of Rachin Ravindra (36) and Conway provided Chennai a decent start of 61 off 39 balls, but captain Rituraj Gaikwad yet again faltered and was dismissed cheaply for 1 by Lockie Ferguson.

Conway and Shivam Dube (42) both got chances with the New Zealander twice getting dropped of Jansen's successive deliveries and Ferguson couldn't grab a simple catch of Dube at point.

Ferguson made amends and had Dube clean bowled of a knuckle ball in

the 16th over and Conway got retired out as Chennai looked for counter-punch in the final two overs.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni struck three sixes and a boundary in his 12-ball knock of 27. But with 28 required off the final over, he was brilliantly snapped at short fine leg by Yuzvendra Chahal.

At their home, Kolkata was ahead of the run rate required for so long thanks to a whirlwind start from Rahane and Sunil Narine, who made 30 off 13 balls. They raced to 90-1 in the batting power play against wayward Lucknow pace bowling.

Rahane featured in another fruitful 71-run partnership with Venkatesh Iyer until Lucknow dented the chase with four quick wickets.

Shardul Thakur bowled five consecutive wide balls at the start of over No. 13, but he started the slide when yet another full toss was mis-timed by Rahane, who was caught in the covers.

When fast bowler Akash Deep got Iyer on 45 in the 16th over three wickets had fallen in nine balls. Then Thakur followed by taking out Andre Russell in his last over through another full toss and the odds were back in Lucknow's favor.

With Kolkata seven down, all the pressure fell on Rinku Singh but his unbeaten 38 off 15 wasn't quite enough.

Aiden Markram and Marsh flattened Kolkata with their opening stand of 99 runs off 62 balls, followed by Pooran's blitz.

Markram was undone by Harshit Rana's full delivery that nipped back into the South African's stumps.

Marsh, who hit six fours and five sixes, and Pooran then smashed 71 off 30 balls until Marsh holed out to deep point.

Pooran continued the punishment, raising his fifty off just 21 balls. He hit eight fours and seven boundaries in his unbeaten knock and leads the IPL batting charts.

The game was rescheduled from Sunday at the request of Kolkata police due to religious festivities in the city.

## Brady says team ‘not done yet’

# Birmingham clinches promotion to 2nd division

**BIRMINGHAM, England, April 9, (AP):** Birmingham, the English soccer club which counts NFL great Tom Brady as a minority shareholder, secured promotion back to the second-tier Championship on Tuesday.

A 2-1 win at Peterborough guaranteed Birmingham a finish in one of the two automatic promotion spots in the third division, which is called League One.

Birmingham is likely to go up as champion as it leads second-place Wrexham, owned by Hollywood celebrities Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, by 14 points.

Wycombe is three points behind Wrexham in third place after beating Huddersfield 1-0 on Tuesday.

“Straight back up to the EFL championship, and not done yet,” Brady wrote on his Instagram stories. “NFL fans are getting a crash course in the English football pyramid!!!”

Brady got a stake in Birmingham in August 2023 in his first foray into the world of soccer and, as chairman of the club's

new advisory board, said he wanted to bring a winning mentality to a club from central Eng-

land that last played in the Premier League in 2011. That's the same year it won the English



Birmingham's Alfie May celebrates scoring their side's first goal of the game during a Sky Bet League One soccer match against Peterborough United at the Weston Homes Stadium in Peterborough, England. (AP)

League Cup, one of two major trophies the club has captured in its 148-year history.

However, Birmingham was relegated from the Championship at the end of the 2023-24 season, during which Wayne Rooney had an uncomfortable three-month spell as manager before getting fired.

Birmingham has spent big in a bid to make an instant return to the second tier. Its top scorer is Jay Stansfield, who reportedly cost around 15 million pounds (\$19 million) - making him the most expensive signing by a third-tier team.

Stansfield was one of 17 players bought in the transfer window last summer and the rebuild has worked, with Birmingham losing just three of its 40 games so far and gaining promotion with six matches still to play.

Birmingham could also finish the season with a cup, having reached the final of the Football League Trophy - a competition for teams outside the top two tiers. The opposition in Sunday's final at Wembley Stadium will again be Peterborough.

## Cruz Azul edges America to progress

# Tigres to become 1st team to qualify for Champs Cup semis



Ignacio Rivero of Mexico's Cruz Azul, left, challenges Brian Rodriguez of Mexico's America during a CONCACAF Champions Cup second leg quarterfinal soccer match in Mexico City. (AP)

**MONTERREY, México, April 9, (AP):** Nicolas Ibañez and Uriel Antuna scored two goals in two minutes early in the first half and the UANL Tigres defeated the LA Galaxy 3-2 to become the first team to qualify for the CONCACAF Champions Cup semifinals.

Ibañez scored the first goal of the second-leg match in the ninth minute and Antuna followed with another in the 10th minute for the Mexican side. Romulo Zwarg added a goal in the 57th minute to secure the win.

The first leg of the series ended in a scoreless draw a week ago.

In the next round, Tigres will play Cruz Azul who beat America 2-1. In the other quarterfinal series, Los Angeles FC plays against Lionel Messi's Inter Miami while Pumas face the Vancouver Whitecaps.

Tigres, who won the CONCACAF Champions Cup title in 2020, secured their seventh win in 14 matches in the tournament. All of their wins came in Monterrey.

The Mexicans are winless on the road since the 2023 quarterfinals when they defeated Motagua in Honduras.

Joseph Paintsil scored in the 40th minute and Carlos Garces in the 60th for the Galaxy which was eliminated in the quarterfinals for the fourth time in their past five appearances. LA has not qualified for the semifinals since the 2012-13 tournament.

Striker Angel Sepulveda scored twice, including a late winner, as Cruz Azul beat crosstown rival America 2-1 to progress to the CONCACAF Champions Cup semifinals.

Sepulveda scored his goals in the 12th and 85th minutes to help la Maquina move into a semifinal against Tigres. On the other side of the bracket, Inter Miami plays LA FC and Pumas faces the Vancouver Whitecaps.

# Burnham Square rallies from the rear to win Blue Grass by a nose

**LEXINGTON, Ky., April 9, (AP):** Burnham Square chased down East Avenue from the back of the pack and won by a nose in the storm-delayed \$1.25 million Blue Grass at Keeneland , taking over the qualifying points lead for next month's Kentucky Derby in the process.

The 101st running of the Blue Grass was postponed from Saturday because of heavy rain and deadly flooding in Kentucky. The upcoming Lexington Stakes on Saturday is the final derby qualifying race.

Burnham Square, ridden by 2024 Derby winner Brian Hernandez Jr. (Mystic Dan), covered the 1 1/8 miles in 1:51.33 and paid \$10.48, \$5.18 and \$3.34 at 4-1 odds. The Ian Wilkes-trained gelding also earned 100 points from the Grade 1 race for 130 total toward the 151st Derby on May 3 at Churchill Downs in Louisville. Sandman is one point behind and Santa Anita Derby winner Journalism third with 122.5.

East Avenue returned \$6.42 and \$4.26 for second and earned 50 Derby

points, while Todd Pletcher-trained favorite River Thames finished third, paying \$3.24 and receiving 25 points.

Admiral Dennis (15 points) was fourth beneath substitute jockey Manny Franco, who took the mount after veteran Luiz Saez was injured from a fall in the second race. Saez was in stable condition at a hospital after falling off of Fateful Lightning on Keeneland's turf course.

Burnham Square lagged far behind as East Avenue led seven horses entering the backstretch before steadily moving up and saving his best after rounding the final turn. He stalked East Avenue from the outside and the horses were even in the final yards before Burnham Square edged East Avenue at the line for his second stakes victory in three starts this year.

He won the Grade III Holy Bull at Gulfstream by 1 3/4 lengths in February before running fourth in the Grade II Fountain of Youth on March 25.

## Cannavaro's short stint at Dinamo Zagreb ends

**ZAGREB, Croatia, April 9, (AP):** Italian soccer great Fabio Cannavaro was fired as coach of Dinamo Zagreb on Wednesday with the team falling out of contention to win an eighth straight Croatian league title.

Cannavaro, who captained Italy to the 2006 World Cup title, was only at the helm for 14 competitive matches after becoming coach in December on a contract to 2026.

During his time there, Dinamo was eliminated from the Champions League on goal difference after the league stage - the team finished 25th, with the top 24 advancing to the last 16 or the playoffs.

Dinamo is in third place in the Croatian league, eight points behind leader Hajduk Split which is coached by Cannavaro's World Cup-winning teammate Gennaro Gattuso.

Defending champion Dinamo likely will enter the qualifying rounds of Europe's third-tier competition, the Conference League, with a severe cut in revenue after earning about 40 million euros (\$44 million) in UEFA prize money from the Champions League this season.

In 10 league matches under Cannavaro, Dinamo recorded five wins, two draws and three losses.

"We would like to thank coach Cannavaro from the bottom of our hearts for his tremendous effort, commitment and friendliness," Dinamo said in a statement, "and we wish him all the best on his future sporting and life journey."

# Man City freezes ticket prices after fan backlash

**MANCHESTER, England, April 9, (AP):** Amid growing discontent among its fans, Manchester City announced Wednesday the club is freezing ticket prices for the 2025-26 season.

City said the price freeze related to general-admission season tickets and match-by-match tickets for Premier League games came after a consultation with a fan engagement group.

Last week, many City supporters stayed in the concourses inside the Etihad Stadium for the first nine minutes of the Premier League game against Leicester to protest the club's new partnership with a third-party ticket resale platform.

That came after seven City fan groups sent an open letter to the club complaining about the rise in ticket prices in recent seasons and the prospect of local fans being frozen out of attending games.

In a statement, City said "positive and constructive dialogue" has taken place over recent weeks with City Matters, the club's elected fan engagement program.

"The club would like to thank City Matters representatives for the feedback they provide on a range of topics relating to ticketing," City said, "and for sharing a broad

range of perspectives from the fans they represent."

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AC Milan defender Kyle Walker underwent an operation after fracturing his elbow during training.

It is not known how long Walker will be sidelined for



A view of the grandstand at the Etihad Stadium, not fully occupied, during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Leicester City in Manchester, England. (AP)

but there are only seven rounds remaining in Serie A. The Rossoneri are also involved in the Italian Cup, with the second leg of their semifinal against Inter Milan set for April 23.

"AC Milan can confirm that Kyle Walker sustained a fracture in his right elbow today," the Italian team said in a statement. "To ensure better healing and optimize recovery time, the player underwent surgery in Milan to repair the olecranon through osteosynthesis.

"The operation went perfectly to plan. Kyle will begin rehabilitation immediately."

Walker is on loan from Manchester City and it is widely expected the move will be made permanent at the end of the season.

The England international, who turns 35 next month, arrived in January and swiftly established himself as a key part of the Milan defense.

Walker has played eight Serie A matches - starting seven of them - as well as four in the Champions League and two in the Italian Cup.

Walker won six Premier League titles and the Champions League at City. He won 15 major trophies after joining from Tottenham in 2017 and established himself as one of the best right backs in Premier League history.



# Cavs clinch top seed in East, OKC closes in on best record



New York Knicks' Mikal Bridges, left, and Kristaps Porzingis, right, chase after the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in New York. (AP)

## Bucks rally from 24-point, 4th-quarter deficit to beat Timberwolves

CLEVELAND, April 9, (AP): Darius Garland scored 28 points, Evan Mobley had 21 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists and the Cleveland Cavaliers clinched the top seed in the Eastern Conference with a 135-113 win over the Chicago Bulls.

Ty Jerome added 18 points off the bench and De’Andre Hunter scored 17 for Cleveland, which has the second-best record in franchise history at 63-16. The Cavaliers secured the No. 1 seed in the East for the fourth time.

Patrick Williams scored a season-high 21 points and made 5 of 6 3-pointers, and Matas Buzelis added 19 points for Chicago. The Bulls have clinched a play-in tournament berth and are tied with Miami for ninth in the East.

### Thunder 136, Lakers 120

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 42 points, and Oklahoma City beat the Los Angeles after Luka Donic was ejected.

Doncic scored 23 points before leaving the game in the fourth quarter following his second technical foul. The Thunder outscored the Lakers 29-12 the rest of the way.

Jalen Williams added 26 points for the Thunder, who bounced back from a 126-99 loss to the Lakers on Sunday.

Oklahoma City (65-14) inched closer to clinching the best record in the league and homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

### Bucks 110, Timberwolves 103

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 23 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his third straight triple-double as Milwaukee erased



Indiana Pacers guard Bennedict Mathurin (00) cuts under Washington Wizards forward Alex Sarr (20) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

a 24-point, fourth-quarter deficit to beat Minnesota.

The Bucks won their fifth straight and snapped Minnesota’s five-game winning streak.

After trailing 95-71 with less than 10 minutes left, Milwaukee scored 23 straight points and eventually tied it 97-all on AJ Green’s 3-pointer with 3:36 left.

On the Timberwolves’ next possession, Milwaukee’s Kevin Porter Jr. and Minnesota’s Rudy Gobert got in a skirmish that resulted in technical fouls for both players. Milwaukee’s Gary Trent Jr., who was jawing at Gobert at the end of the confrontation, got an additional technical foul.

Porter ended up with 21 points. Portis had 18 points and 10 rebounds in his return from a 25-game suspension.

### Warriors 133, Suns 95

In Phoenix, Stephen Curry scored 25 points, Brandin Podziemski added 22 and Golden State coasted past

Phoenix Suns to gain ground in a crowded Western Conference play-off race.

The Warriors are trying to secure one of the top six seeds in the West, which would keep them out of the play-in tournament. Golden State is currently tied with the Denver Nuggets and Memphis Grizzlies at 47-32 for the fourth through sixth spots. The Los Angeles Clippers are right behind the trio at 46-32.

### Celtics 119, Knicks 117, OT

In New York, Kristaps Porzingis made a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 40 seconds left in overtime after Jayson Tatum’s 3-pointer with 2.9 seconds remaining forced the extra period, and Boston completed a season sweep of New York.

Porzingis matched his season high with 34 points on his 30-footer. Tatum added 32 points as the Celtics extended their road winning streak to eight and improved to 33-7 away from Boston.

### Clippers 122, Spurs 117

In Inglewood, Calif., Ivica Zubac had 24 points and 20 rebounds, Norman Powell scored 25 points and the Los Angeles Clippers surged into fourth place in the Western Conference with a victory over San Antonio.

James Harden had 21 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds for the Clippers, who have won five straight.

Los Angeles, at 47-32, also currently holds the tiebreaker over Denver, Memphis and Golden State, who all have the same record with three games left in the regular season. All four are right behind the third-place Lakers, who are 48-31.

### Grizzlies 124, Hornets 100

In Charlotte, Ja Morant had 28 points, five rebounds and eight assists as Memphis beat Charlotte.

Memphis guard Jaylen Wells was taken from the court on a stretcher

and transported to a hospital after he made a fast-break dunk and landed hard on his head following a mid-air collision with Charlotte’s K.J. Simpson. Wells, who was starting his 74th game, was inadvertently undercut by Simpson from behind. Wells was down for eight minutes before being lifted onto the stretcher with his head strapped in to restrict motion. Officials called a Flagrant 2 foul on Simpson, who was automatically ejected.

### Magic 119, Hawks 112

In Orlando, Paolo Banchero had 33 points and 10 rebounds and Orlando beat Atlanta, taking command of the four-team play-in tournament race in the Eastern Conference.

Franz Wagner scored 22 points for the Magic, while Wendell Carter Jr. added 17 points, nine rebounds and six steals and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 15 points.

### Nets 119, Pelicans 114

In New York, Trendon Watford scored 22 points, Drew Timme had 16 points and nine rebounds off the bench and Brooklyn beat New Orleans.

Timme completed a three-point play with 4:06 remaining in the third quarter to give the Nets the first double-digit lead of the game at 83-71.

### Pacers 104, Wizards 98

In Indianapolis, Pascal Siakam scored 24 points and had 10 rebounds, Tyrese Haliburton had 22 points and Indiana won its fifth straight game, over Washington.

Bennedict Mathurin had 17 for the Pacers who pulled away late for the win.

Justin Champagnie had 20 points and 13 rebounds for Washington, while Alex Sarr had 20 points, 12 rebounds and three blocks as Washington lost its third in a row and for the sixth time in its last seven games.

Al-Arabi chasing its first

## Kuwait Club targets a record seventh Volleyball Super Cup

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait Club is eyeing a historic seventh Volleyball Super Cup title as it faces Al-Arabi at 6:30 pm today at the Kuwait Volleyball Association Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. The defending champion has already claimed six titles in the tournament’s history, including last season’s edition. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi is chasing its first-ever Super Cup crown.

Kuwait Club, also known as Al-Abyad, reached the final after defeating Kazma 3-1 in the semifinals. Al-Arabi, on the other hand, earned its spot by overcoming fierce rival Qadsia 3-2 in a thrilling five-set battle.

Led by Brazilian coach Oliveira, Kuwait Club is hoping to capitalize on the squad’s high morale and strong momentum. Oliveira is targeting his first title with the club, relying on solid defense, powerful blocking, and potent attacking plays from both the front and back lines. Key players include locals Abdullah Jassim, Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi, Amer Al-Saleem, and Abdulaziz Najm, along with Brazilian star Ferreira and Iranian standout Saber Kazemi.

Al-Arabi, guided by Tunisian coach Haitham Al-Hammadi, is determined to bring home the trophy

for its passionate and title-hungry supporters. Al-Hammadi has had a clear impact on the team’s form and now looks to translate that success into silverware. He will count on effective hidden-area defense, a formidable blocking wall, and high-impact attacks. His key lineup features Mohammed Al-Suwaid, Abdulrazzaq Al-Loughani, and rising star Abdullah Fares, as well as professional players Santos (Dominican Republic) and Wenger (Czech Republic).

The Volleyball Super Cup has been held nine times prior to this season. Qadsia won the inaugural edition in 2014-2015, followed by Kazma in 2015-2016. Kuwait Club then dominated with five consecutive titles from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 (note: the 2018-2019 season was not held). Kazma returned to win the 2022-2023 edition, before Kuwait Club reclaimed the crown in 2023-2024.

In other volleyball news, the first round of the 2024-2025 Federation Cup kicks off today. Kazma will take on Yarmouk at 5:30 PM in the First Hall.

The Volleyball Federation’s Competitions Committee has also released the Premier League schedule. The season begins on April 13 and runs through May 12. The Golden Square stage is set from May 14-20, while the First Division League will run from April 14 to May 19.



A file photo of Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi players in action.

## Best of the Rest

**Andreatta leaves Matildas:** Melissa Andreatta has left her role as assistant manager of Australia’s women’s national team to take over as head coach of Scotland Women.

The Scottish Football Association announced the hiring of Andreatta on Wednesday, saying she is expected to take over in time for Scotland’s Nations League match late May against Austria - subject to securing a visa.

A former head coach of Brisbane Roar’s women’s team, Andreatta has been with Football Australia since 2016 - firstly in its technical department and then with the under-17s and under-23s before assisting the Matildas.

She is leaving her job with Australia even though there is currently no permanent head coach in place following the departure of Tony Gustavsson after last year’s Olympic Games in Paris, where the team was eliminated in the group stage.

Scotland-born Tom Sermanni has been interim head coach of the Matildas since Gustavsson’s departure.

Andreatta said “the future is definitely bright” in the Scotland team. (AP)

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**Brignone discharged:** Overall World Cup skiing champion Federica Brignone was discharged from the hospital , five days after breaking multiple bones in her left leg in a giant slalom crash and undergoing surgery.

“I still don’t know how long it will take (to return),” Brignone told reporters as she sat in a wheelchair before leaving the La Madonnina clinic in Milan. “We’ll go step by step. The next step is post-operation therapy and we’ll start Mountain. And then we’ll see how the bone reacts and we’ll take it from there.”

Brignone also tore her ACL, raising questions about her chances of competing at the home Olympics in 10 months. She was expected to be one of Italy’s stars in the Milan-Cortina Games.

“I’m not someone who gives up,” Brignone said. “I think everything in life happens for a reason.” (AP)

## Top teams maintain momentum in handball league

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: There



Kuwait Club player defends as an opponent makes a goal attempt.

were no surprises in the Premier Handball League as the second round of the First Division concluded the day before yesterday at the

Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. The top contenders continued their winning streaks, solidifying their positions at the top of the table.

Kuwait Club cruised past Salmiya with a commanding 34-24 victory, while Burgan secured a 35-28 win over Al-Arabi. Kazma edged out Sulaibikhat in a tightly contested match, winning 34-32.

These victories mirrored the results from the opening round, further reinforcing the readiness of Kuwait Club, Burgan, and Kazma to compete seriously for the league title.

Kuwait Club sits at the summit of the standings with 30 points, followed by Burgan with 25 points—edging Kazma into third place on goal difference. Al-Arabi remains on 18 points, while Salmiya holds 16 points, also ahead of Sulaibikhat

on goal difference.

The third round of First Division matches is set for tomorrow and features a crucial clash between title challengers Burgan and Kazma. Kuwait Club will face Al-Arabi, while Salmiya takes on Sulaibikhat in another exciting fixture.

Today, the First Division League continues at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. Fahaheel will meet Al-Sahel at 5:00 pm, followed by a matchup between Al-Qurain and Khaitan at 6:30 PM.

Al-Nasr currently leads the league table with 16 points, tied with Al-Qadsia but ahead on goal difference. Al-Qurain sits third with 14 points, followed by Fahaheel (10), Khaitan (8), Al-Tadamon (3), Yarmouk (2), and Al-Sahel, who are still searching for their first point.

## Zverev loses to Berrettini at Monte Carlo Masters

MONACO, April 9, (AP): Second-ranked Alexander Zverev lost 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 to fellow big-hitter Matteo Berrettini in the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters.

The unseeded Berrettini secured victory when serving for the match for the second time and on his first match point against the top-seeded German.

“I wasn’t hitting my forehand and serve like I had in previous days,” said Berrettini, who has won 17 of his past 18 matches on clay. “I told myself to be more aggressive.”

Zverev, the French Open runner-up last year, got the crowd going at the first big clay-court tournament of the year when he won a point with a sliced backhand volley at the net in the fifth game.

But the 28-year-old Berrettini, a Wimbledon runner-up in 2021, broke

in the seventh game of the deciding set and then served for the match at 5-4, only for Zverev to break back. After an intense 11th game - featuring a 48-stroke rally at deuce won by Berrettini - the Italian earned another break of serve and another chance to serve out the match. Victory came when Zverev’s two-handed backhand hit the net.

Berrettini, who next faces either Jiri Lehecka or 13th-seeded Lorenzo Musetti, soaked up the applause from the crowd.

The last Italian to win the tournament was Fabio Fognini in 2019, and that year he enjoyed strong vocal support from many Italians crossing over the nearby border.

Three-time champion Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece began his title defense by beating Australian Jordan Thompson 4-6, 6-4, 6-2, and U.S. Open semifinalist Jack Draper routed Marcos Giron 6-1, 6-1.

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NEWS





Punjab Kings' Priyansh Arya plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Punjab Kings and Chennai Super Kings at Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Cricket Stadium in Mohali, India. Punjab beat Super Kings by 18 runs. (AP)

— See Page 14

# Sports

## Kazma and Al-Nasr face tough tests in Amir Cup preliminary rounds

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The 63rd edition of the prestigious Amir Cup tournament kicks off today with two exciting preliminary round matches. Kazma will face Al-Jahra at 5:20 pm at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium, while Al-Nasr will go head-to-head with Al-Yarmouk at 8:30 pm at Al-Sadaka and Al-Salam Stadium. Action in the preliminary round continues tomorrow as Khaitan plays Al-Shabab, and Al-Salmiya takes on Al-Sahel. The round concludes the day after with Al-Fahaheel facing Al-Tadamon and powerhouse Kuwait Club meeting Al-Jazeera.

Due to Al-Qadsia's qualification for the Gulf Champions League final, the Kuwait Football Federation has postponed its match against Burgan to May 10. Additionally, the fixture between Al-Arabi and Al-Sulaibikhat has been postponed due to Al-Arabi's participation in the AFC Challenge Cup.

Seven clubs have previously lifted the Amir Cup. Al-Qadsia leads with 17 titles, followed closely by Al-Arabi and Kuwait SC with 16 each. Kazma has won the trophy eight times, while Salmiya and Yarmouk have two titles apiece. Fahaheel has won once.

In today's opener, Kazma aims to redeem itself after a disappointing Zain Premier League season that saw the club relegated to the Relegation League for a second consecutive year. The team hopes to replicate its recent Crown Prince Cup quarterfinal appearance.

Al-Jahra enters the match in high spirits, topping the Zain First Division League and having recently qualified for the Crown Prince Cup quarterfinals with a win over Al-Jazeera. The team also seeks to avenge a 7-3 loss to Kazma in their last meeting in the Relegation League.

In the evening clash, Al-Nasr and Al-Yarmouk renew their rivalry after meet-



Amir Cup trophy lifted up by a winning team.

ing twice in the league this season. The first encounter ended in a 2-2 draw, while Al-Nasr dominated the second with a 4-0 win. They are also set to meet again in the Relegation League on May 5.



A file photo showing Kazma players walking onto the field.

Despite its recent head-to-head advantage, Al-Nasr is aiming to bounce back after a Crown Prince Cup exit. Meanwhile, Yarmouk, currently bottom of the league, is seeking a turnaround in cup competition, hoping to deliver a surprise despite its ongoing struggles.

## Arsenal steamrolls Madrid as Inter keeps treble dream alive



Arsenal's Declan Rice, left, fights for the ball with Real Madrid's Luka Modric, right, during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Arsenal and Real Madrid at the Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)

### Rice curls home two free kicks

LONDON, April 9, (AP): Declan Rice put Arsenal on the brink of reaching the Champions League semifinals by curling home two free kicks that Real Madrid's most famous "galacticos" would have been proud of.

Rice opened the scoring by bending one free kick around the Madrid wall in the 58th minute and sent another into the top corner in the 70th as Arsenal won the first leg of the quarterfinals 3-0 at the Emirates Stadium.

With Madrid great Roberto Carlos looking on in the stands, Rice put on a display of power and bend reminiscent of the many free kicks scored by the Brazilian defender in his day - or by his teammates David Beckham, Zinedine Zidane and Figo for that matter.

Unlike those names, Rice has not been known for his free kick prowess - until now. In fact, he had never scored from a direct free kick before in his career.

Mikel Merino added the third in the 75th to put Arsenal on the brink of returning to the semifinals for the first time since 2009.

In the other quarterfinal match Tuesday, Inter Milan won 2-1 at Bayern Munich.

Making matters worse for Madrid, key midfielder Eduardo Camavinga was sent off for a second booking in the final minutes and will miss the return leg at Santiago Bernabeu stadium on April 16.

Rice and Arsenal winger Bukayo Saka were both substituted after picking up knocks, but Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said neither looked like a serious injury.



Inter's Lautaro Martinez, center, and Nicolò Barella, right, celebrate after the Champions League quarterfinals first leg soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Inter Milan, at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Only a handful of saves from Courtois prevented the scoreline from getting even bigger.

While Madrid can never be written off at home, even coach Carlo Ancelotti didn't sound too hopeful of a comeback.

Kylian Mbappé had Madrid's best scoring chance in the 31st when he was played through on goal by Jude Bellingham but the forward was denied by Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya.

It was the teams' first meeting since 2006, when Arsenal eliminated Madrid in the round of 16.

That was also the last time Arsenal came close to winning the competition for the first time, losing the final to Barcelona.

Judging by this display, Arsenal could well be a contender again this year.

In one of the biggest European nights the Emirates has seen - the stadium opened for the 2006-07 season - Arsenal delivered one of its best performances of the season against a team that has won the Champions League six times since 2014.

And for once in this competition, Madrid simply didn't have an answer.

The 15-time European champions seemed content to sit back and wait for counterattacks in the first half but was pegged back for most

of the second.

Inter Milan's treble chances are still very much on after it won 2-1 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinals.

Lautaro Martínez scored in the first half, shortly after Harry Kane had hit the woodwork for Bayern in an uncharacteristic miss that had the England forward clutching his face in disbelief.

Substitute Thomas Müller, who announced on Saturday that he was leaving the German club at the end of the season, appeared to have rescued a 1-1 draw for Bayern with the equalizer five minutes from time, but Davide Frattesi scored the winner three minutes later.

The result ended Bayern's 22-match unbeaten home run in Europe and kept up Inter's hopes of returning to the same stadium for the Champions League final on May 31.

Inter had lost its last two meetings with Bayern 2-0 in the Champions League group stage in 2022-23 - the season the Italian team went on to reach the final.

However, it had beaten Bayern in the 2010 final to clinch a treble of the Champions League, Serie A and Italian Cup - something the Nerazzurri are looking to repeat this year.

## Al-Zankawi leads Kuwait's medal charge in Doha

DOHA, April 9, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athletes delivered impressive performances at the 2025 West Asia Athletics Club Championship, currently underway in Doha and running through April 10.

Representing Al-Qadsia Club, Essa Al-Zankawi secured the gold medal in the discus throw with a strong mark of 59.75 meters. His teammate, Sultan Al-Rayes, earned a bronze medal in the decathlon event, adding to Kuwait's medal tally.

On the women's side, Mariam Farhan of Salwa Al-Sabah Club clinched third place in the triple jump, while Al-Fatat Club's Yamin Waleed soared to a silver medal in the high jump category.

The championship, which kicked off Monday, features around 400 athletes from 22 clubs across 11



Mariam Farhan

countries. Kuwait is represented by four clubs: Al-Qadsia, Kazma, Al-Fatat, and Salwa Al-Sabah.

## Al-Osaimi confident in Kuwait's tent pegging medal prospects

MUSCAT, April 9: Nayef Al-Osaimi, member of the Kuwaiti Equestrian, Tenting, and Shooting Committee and head of Kuwait's delegation to the 3rd Gulf Beach Games, affirmed the Kuwaiti Tent Pegging Team's determination to achieve results that reflect the prestige of Kuwaiti sports.

Al-Osaimi expressed his optimism that the tent pegging competitions, across all categories, would see standout performances from Kuwaiti riders, showcasing high levels of technical skill.

He noted that the three-day tent pegging events began Tuesday, featuring the javelin discipline in individual, doubles, and team formats.

The competitions conclude with the javelin and saber relay events. Al-Osaimi stated that the Kuwaiti national team includes five riders: Hussein Al-Ajmi, Abdullah Al-Hindi, Ibrahim Al-Enezi, Abdullah Al-Daihani, and Ghanem Al-Ajmi, along with head coach Rashid Al-Marri and assistant coach Ali Al-Bin Ali.



Riders in action.

KUNA photo

### Best of the Rest

**Matic fans the flames:** Lyon midfielder Nemanja Matic fanned the flames Wednesday ahead of the Europa League match against Manchester United by describing Andre Onana as "one of the worst goalkeepers" in the English club's history.

Onana, who joined from Inter Milan in 2023, has said in the build-up to Thursday's first leg of the quarterfinals that United is "way better" than Lyon.

When that was put to Matic in a news conference, the 36-year-old former Serbia international said: "I respect everyone but to say that you need to give an answer. If you are one of the worst goalkeepers in Man United history, you need to take care what you are talking about."

Matic played for United from 2017-22, leaving before Onana arrived.

"If David De Gea, Peter Schmeichel, (Edwin) van der Sar said that, I would question myself," Matic added. "But if you are one of statistically the worst goalkeepers in Man United's modern history, then he needs to show that before he says. We will see."

The Cameroon goalkeeper helped Inter reach the Champions League final in 2023, and played in the competition's semifinals with Ajax in 2019. (AP)