



Pages 14-16



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## Opinion

Higher authorities dissatisfied with the Supreme Council's slow response to proposals

# The judiciary is under scrutiny ...

■ **Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

ON March 16, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited the Supreme Judicial Council – a visit that gained “special and exceptional significance,” as evident to anyone with insight and discernment.

While His Highness the Amir affirmed his belief that the judiciary is the cornerstone of achieving justice, and expressed his pride in the impartial Kuwaiti judiciary, distinguished by its professionalism and competence in preserving rights and upholding justice; his speech during the meeting did not lack what he described as “some matters and issues that affect justice and raise doubt and confusion regarding the system of some rulings.”

His Highness clearly referred to “the issuance of conflicting and contradictory rulings. One judge issues a ruling, and another overturns it; even though the cases are all similar in facts and circumstances, without any addition or omission. This raises doubt and suspicion about the rulings.”

He stressed that “the rush to issue judicial rulings to uphold falsehood, settle scores and achieve personal interests at the expense of supporting the oppressed perpetuates tribalism and pre-Islamic fanaticism, and threatens the interests of the country and its people.”

Out of His Highness’ commitment to maintain the integrity of the judiciary, he considered the last resort and refuge for all to protect rights and freedoms. He instructed members of the judiciary to “order, hope and consider.”

He explained that the order is “the rapid Kuwaitization of the judiciary and supporting positions. The hope is to quickly adjudicate and resolve disputes, as well as the avoidance of adjournment of sessions for the most trivial reasons. As for consideration, it is placing the interests of Kuwait, supporting the oppressed, achieving justice, and avoiding conflicting rulings with similar facts and circumstances above all other considerations.”

His Highness clearly ordered the enactment of legislation to develop judicial work and regulations to facilitate its procedures, to expedite



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

the adjudication of cases and prevent their accumulation and delay.

Although nearly a month has passed since the meeting and the royal speech, and even despite the Supreme Judicial Council’s prompt convening of a special session – less than 48 hours after the meeting, after which it announced its commitment to implement all orders and directives contained in the royal speech, “nothing has happened”. Matters remain at a standstill, not beyond the framework of “promises and pledges.”

According to reliable sources, circles within the Ministry of Justice are disturbed by what they described as “the Supreme Judicial Council’s delay in responding to the ministry’s letters regarding amending and updating laws to serve Kuwait globally.”

They said “the Supreme Judicial Council has its status and importance, and it is undoubtedly appreciated and respected by everyone. However, the slow response to proposals is hampering the legal and legislative reform process, up to the point where it is feared that it will cause significant harm to Kuwait. If the delay continues longer, Kuwait will be under the scrutiny of numerous international institutions regarding a number of laws related to combating terrorism and money laundering, human rights, and some civil and criminal procedures; especially since some of these institutions are seeking to settle scores with Kuwait over its Arab and regional stances.”

According to the same sources, judicial reform is being closely monitored and pursued by the highest authorities in the country. The Minister of Justice is exerting tre-

mendous efforts in this regard; as the next phase requires the issuance of a package of laws and similar legislative amendments before June, which will witness reviews in several international forums to close loopholes through which criminals can escape and to address internationally criticized aspects of the implementation of Kuwaiti laws.

These sources also confirmed that the minister’s actions and his legal revolution are the scrutiny of higher authorities who are keen on expediting the requirements of this new era.

They stressed the need for “a real shakeup of legislation, some of which is based on the private interests of influential individuals or members of previous parliaments, or has been mislabeled and has tarnished Kuwait’s image globally.” They emphasized that the higher directive to expedite legislative reform are currently the Minister of Justice’s primary concern.”

Yes, Kuwait has suffered from a morbid condition in recent years, and even decades, which worsened when some constitutional institutions, which are currently inactive, encroached on the government’s powers. In the eyes of the world, this has rendered it incapable of moving toward development. Therefore, higher authorities have ordered rapid reform, regardless of the cost, because time waits for nothing while the country stagnates.

In this context, money laundering laws, human rights laws, and everything that could tarnish the State’s image have been put under intense scrutiny; with the goal of “being consistent with the demands of the times on one hand, and on the other hand, to restore the State’s global image, especially with some money thieves fleeing abroad and the lack of faithful implementation of international agreements.”

Thus, the sources revealed that “strict oversight in this area is necessary and it should not allow any flaws.” On the other hand, they believe that “some consultations were misplaced or incomplete, and although they were not binding, they were implemented; creating new obstacles to updating the laws, especially since some people do not understand the structure of Kuwaiti society and its social culture that played a major role in this.”

In context, sources said “the Kuwaitization of the judiciary was a successful step, because the political

leadership seeks to localize the country’s important facilities, and the judiciary is the backbone, indeed, the brain of any development.”

They added “the failure to localize judicial institutions was a source of great discontent in the decision-making process. The opinions expressed were not in compliance with basic international standards on one hand; and on the other hand, they contained loopholes that could undermine any court rulings, as His Highness the Amir pointed out in his speech before the Supreme Judicial Council, particularly regarding conflicting rulings and similarity of grounds.

They cited the statements of His Highness the Amir during his visits to State institutions and sectors last Ramadan, “so that the workshop could begin with full seriousness, without any justification or hesitation.”

They pointed out that Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait wanted to “break away from the norm, and not keep up with the seven ministers who served in the ministry in recent years and left things as they were. They neither initiated the necessary reforms nor exert any effort either out of fear of parliamentary accountability or out of self-interest, which kept the situation as it was.” They affirmed that the minister is leading a massive legislative reform project, which requires, at the very least, a helping hand to assist him in implementing the royal directives.

Sources said those who deal with the Minister of Justice noticed his despair over the legacy he has before him, and the time remaining until June, especially since many questions have been directed to Kuwait from international circles.

They added “it is true that the legislative amendment project is both large and complex, and some of it requires speed but without haste; this does not prevent the amendment of many criminal laws to combat corruption and plundering of public funds, as well as major crimes, particularly the extradition of criminals.”

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## Army Deputy Chief inspects site ahead of counter-terror exercise

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: Kuwait Army Deputy Chief of Staff Rear Admiral Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has inspected the site for the Jabriya joint exercise scheduled for Thursday at Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base under the patronage of Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah and the supervision of the Army, in cooperation with several government and military agencies.

The General Staff of the Army revealed that the

inspection visit included a thorough assessment of the readiness of the participating agencies in the exercise.

During the visit, Rear Admiral Al-Sabah listened to a detailed explanation of the scenarios that will be addressed, and the mechanisms for coordination and field interaction to implement the joint missions.

He expressed his appreciation and gratitude for the preparations for the exercise, stressing the need to fully benefit from it in order to gain experience and unify concepts among the participants.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Rear Admiral Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inspects the site of a joint military exercise in Al-Jabriya.

# Kuwait defers power cuts as demand falls

KD 25.8 mln green light for grid upgrade

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The weekend drop in temperatures reduced power consumption by 2,200 megawatts on Friday, with the load index recording 10,400 megawatts compared to the peak of 12,640 megawatts last Thursday.

Sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy pointed out that most government buildings are closed during the weekend; indicating these buildings consume large amounts of energy to operate their air conditioners and facilities – both central and on-site. Sources affirmed this, along with the lower temperatures, prompted the ministry to refrain from implementing the programmed power cuts in residential, industrial and agricultural areas; which happened in the previous week.

Sources also pointed out that the inclusion of units under maintenance to the power grid on a regular basis and the import of electricity from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) will mitigate the power crisis brought about by lack of productivity, as well as provide relief to the grid in the coming days.

Earlier, the ministry announced scheduled power outages in some parts of 21 residential areas for one week from Saturday, April 12 to Saturday, April 19. The outages, which will last for four hours, will begin daily at 8:00 am.

According to a statement issued by the ministry, the outages are

necessary to carry out maintenance work on a number of secondary transformer plants.

The affected areas include: Farwaniya Block 3; Yarmouk Block 3; Saad Al-Abdullah blocks 1, 2, 3, and 4; Fintas; Fahaheel; Mangaf; Adailiya Block 1; Salmiya blocks 2, 3, 9, 10, and 12; Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh blocks 1, 2, and 3; Khaitan Block 4; Hawally blocks 3, 7, and 9; Sabah Al-Salem blocks 1 and 9; Funaitees blocks 1, 2, 5, and 8; Al Qairawan blocks 2 and 3; Granada Blocks 2 and 3; Al Omariya Block 1; Bneid Al Qar blocks 1 and 2; Sabah Al Nasser blocks 3, 5, and 6; Andalus Block 13; Al Daiya Block 2; Jaber Al-Ahmad Block 7.

The ministry has urged residents in the affected areas to take the necessary precautions.

Furthermore, sources confirmed that the ministry obtained approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) on Wednesday to directly contract with the GCCIA for the construction of two overhead power lines from the new Wafra station to the Sabah Al-Ahmad 3Z stations at a total cost of KD25.801 million.

Sources explained this contract is made possible through the coordinated efforts of the GCCIA and member states to modernize the electricity grid to ensure it operates efficiently to be fully capable of meeting the power needs of the nation.

Sources disclosed that the new overhead lines planned for construction will enable the transmission of electricity, especially during the summer months and to meet the increased demand for electricity from the new Wafra station.

Continued on Page 5





Over 10,800 judicial notices sent in one week as part of digital transformation initiative

# Justice Ministry sees surge in e-notifications via Sahel app

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The Ministry of Justice announced that, as part of its digital transformation efforts and with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of the judicial notification system, the first week of imple-

menting Ministerial Resolution No. 26/2021, following its amendment, witnessed a significant increase in the use of electronic notification methods, particularly through the "Sahel" application, reports Al-Seyassah

daily. The ministry reported that a total of 10,848 judicial notifications were issued via the "Sahel" application from April 2 to April 9. It explained that this steady

rise in the number of notifications over such a short period is considered a clear indication of the decision's success in meeting its main objectives. These include expediting litigation procedures, reducing the time required

for notifications, improving the reliability of legal notifications through secure and verifiable digital means, and cutting down operational costs associated with traditional paper-based notifications.

The ministry reiterated its commitment to continuously develop its legislative and technical systems in line with best practices for ensuring prompt justice and better service for citizens and residents.

# Kuwait, Slovenia set to boost economic co-op

New investment opportunities explored

LJUBLJANA, April 12, (KUNA): Kuwait's non-resident ambassador to Slovenia, Talal Al-Fassam, affirmed that Kuwaiti-Slovenian relations are gaining momentum toward fruitful cooperation in many key sectors, in line with both countries' sustainable development priorities.

Ambassador Al-Fassam told KUNA after meeting with Mariana Marijec, Executive Director of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce in Ljubljana, that the meeting discussed ways to enhance economic ties and explore investment opportunities that serve mutual interests.

Al-Fassam emphasized Kuwait's strong commitment to building high-quality international partnerships and providing an attractive investment environment, especially for Slovenian businesses.

He highlighted opportunities for Slovenian companies in areas aligned with Kuwait's development



KUNA photo  
Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam exchanges souvenirs with Mariana Marijec.

vision, such as technological innovation, advanced healthcare, and clean energy projects.

The ambassador noted Slovenia's clear interest in cooperating with Kuwait, pointing to Ms. Marijec's welcome of broader economic ties and the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce's readiness to support com-

panies looking to enter the Kuwaiti market.

He concluded by saying the meeting is part of Kuwait's broader effort to strengthen economic ties with European countries and foster dialogue between business sectors to support sustainable development and long-term strategic partnerships.

## Schools, roads and EPA proposals put on hold

# MoJ land request gets green light

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: In its eighth meeting for the third legislative round chaired by Nasser Al-Jadaan on Thursday, the Hawally Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council approved only one out of 10 items on its agenda -- the request of the Ministry of Justice to allocate a site for the construction of the Experts Affairs Department building in the governorate (Block Seven, Mubarak Al-Abdullah) with an area of 6,000 square meters.

Meanwhile, the committee took

the following decisions:

■ Refer the question on private schools in Salwa to the main session;

■ Refer two items to the executive branch -- sites of the National Center for Vessel Traffic Systems (VTC), Search and Rescue (SAR); and Navigational Indications (ATON) project tower on Owha Island -- for further study;

■ Further study of the request to amend the council's decision dated Oct 10, 2022 regarding the multi-storey parking building for Symphony Mall on the Arabian Gulf Street side;

■ Retain three items on the agen-

da -- request of the Environment Public Authority to add a commercial activity (coffee shop) in Salmiya Environmental Pollutants Building-Block One; request of the Interior Ministry to allocate an area for impounded vehicles near the Drug Controls General Department (DCGD) building Salmiya-Block 10 until the representatives of the ministry and DCGD attend the meeting; and the proposal to build a pedestrian bridge along Taawun Street between Salwa and Anjafa beach areas in order to discuss it with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

## MoE revokes supervisor's termination

# MoE revokes supervisor's termination

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: Based on the invalidity of the procedures, the Ministry of Education has cancelled its decision to terminate the service of the technical and administrative follow-up supervisor in the Supplies and Warehouses Department, which was originally set to end on September 1, 2024, due to her retirement.

The decision, issued by the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Saud Al-Dhafiri,

was based on the Civil Service Law and Regulations of 1979, the decisions of the Council of Ministers and the Civil Service Council, as well as the powers granted by Resolution No. 18193/1994.

The new decision annuls the previous one, which had terminated her service due to procedural errors and clarified that she was not entitled to any salary during the period in which she was not employed. The decision also instructed the relevant authorities, including the Civil Service Commission, the Finance Affairs Department, and the End-of-Service Department, to implement the reversal.

# APRIL

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KU photo  
Photographer Aziz Al-Mutawa during a dialogue session.

## Ecocriticism and the Lens

### Photography as a sensory practice

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The Department of Visual and Interior Design at the College of Architecture has organized a dialogue session titled, "Ecocriticism and the Lens: Photography as a Sensory Practice."

Photographer Aziz Al-Mutawa conducted the session, during which he showcased his photographic works and research focusing on the mudflats in Kuwait.

He reflected on how industrial, personal and environmental elements intertwine through his lens.

He also discussed the latest methods for photographing environmental areas that de-emphasize the human element; as well as the most important tips, techniques and inspiration that photographers need in these places in order to capture images from interesting and expressive angles.

He explained the concept of 'embodied ecocriticism' as an introduction to understanding the relationship between the photographer and their photographic environment.

The dialogue session focused on a new horizon for understanding photography, viewing it not only as a process of image-making, but also as a practice that reshapes the way people interact with their surroundings.

## CSC distributes bonuses to employees

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: Excellent bonuses have been disbursed to employees and officials at the Civil Service Commission (CSC), based on certain job performance criteria and in accordance with approved policies and regulations, reports Al-Anba daily.

The bonuses were deposited into the personal accounts of the eligible personnel after confirming that all conditions were met and approved by the concerned authorities, while ensuring transparency and fairness throughout the process.

It was confirmed that the practice of granting excellent bonuses annually to eligible employees and officials will continue in line with established regulations, rules and budgetary provisions. These bonuses serve as an exceptional incentive for those with outstanding performance, following an objective evaluation conducted by the CSC in accordance with relevant regulations.

In a related development, and in accordance with the mandate of the Civil Service Council, the CSC is conducting a comprehensive study to identify new positions that Kuwaitis can fill in the private sector.

Sources told the daily that the study focuses on identifying job titles and new employment sectors for Kuwaitis within the private sector. The study also outlines

targeted national workforce percentages for the private sector like private schools, cooperative societies, and tourism and hotel establishments. This is part of a broader vision to increase the proportion and number of Kuwaitis employed in the private sector in the next decade.

The goal is to encourage citizens to join the private sector by offering financial incentives, such as the National Labor Support Scheme, which provides monthly financial assistance to citizens employed by private companies. Additional benefits are also provided by the State to ensure the stability of workers in this sector and to reduce the disparity in benefits between the public and private sectors.

Furthermore, some private sector employers are offering training and qualification programs designed to enhance the skills of Kuwaitis, aligning them with the needs of the private labor market. These initiatives help facilitate the integration of Kuwaiti workers into the private sector, increasing job opportunities. Private companies are also incentivized to hire citizens through the provision of support to institutions that commit to employing a set percentage of Kuwaitis, which contributes to increased demand for the private sector and promotes labor market balance.

## 7th Ring Road and Fahaheel Expressway to close for ongoing maintenance work

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The General Traffic Department has announced the closure of the road parallel to the Seventh Ring Road, opposite Abdullah Al-Mubarak, along with the closure of the area's exit leading to the Seventh Ring Road. These closures are part of ongoing road development and maintenance work and will remain in effect until April 17, according to Al-Seyassah daily.

Additionally, starting April 13, two lanes on King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Road (Fahaheel Expressway) will be closed for traffic heading from Kuwait City toward Fahaheel, near Sabah Al-Salem. This closure, which is also part of road maintenance efforts, will last until April 23. The exit from Sabah Al-Salem to the Fahaheel Expressway will also be closed during this period.



Picture of Trump after assassination attempt displaces Obama portrait at WH

Trump proclaims self 'in good shape', results of physical aren't immediately released

WASHINGTON, April 12, (AP): Donald Trump is undergoing his annual physical on Friday, potentially giving the public its first details in years about the health of a man who in January became the oldest in U.S. history to be sworn in as president. "I have never felt better, but nevertheless, these things must be done!" Trump, 78, posted on his social media site. Despite long questioning predecessor Joe Biden's physical and mental capacity, Trump has routinely kept basic facts about his own health shrouded in secrecy - shying away from traditional presidential transparency on medical issues. If history is any indication, his latest physical is likely to produce a flattering report that's scarce on details. It will be conducted at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and will be the first public information on Trump's health since an assassination attempt against him in Butler, Pennsylvania, in July. Rather than release medical records at that time, Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson - a staunch supporter who served as his White House physician and once joked in the White House briefing room that Trump could live to be 200 if he had a healthier diet - wrote a memo describing a gunshot wound to Trump's right ear. In a subsequent interview with CBS last August, Trump said he'd "very

gladly" release his medical records but never did. Trump is three years younger than Biden. But on Inauguration Day of his second term in January, Trump was five months older than Biden was during his 2021 inauguration - making Trump the nation's oldest president to be sworn into office. Before Jackson's memo, Americans hadn't seen key details about Trump's health since November 2023, when Dr. Bruce A. Aronwald released a letter to coincide with Biden's 81st birthday, saying Trump was in "excellent" physical and mental health. The letter, posted on Trump's social media platform, contained no details - such as the Republican's weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, or the results of any test. Instead, Aronwald wrote that he'd examined Trump that fall and found his "physical exams were well within the normal range and his cognitive exams were exceptional," while also noting that Trump had "reduced his weight." Trump was treated at Walter Reed for his serious bout with the coronavirus in 2020. During that, Trump's physician offered a rosy prognosis on his condition, though White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said some of Trump's vital signs were "very concerning." After Trump recovered, more details emerged that he had been sicker



US Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is surrounded by US Secret Service agents at a campaign rally, July 13, 2014, in Butler, Pa. (AP)

than he'd let on. But Trump largely refused to say more about his health at the time, instead submitting to a pre-aped, remote medical "evaluation" and interview on Fox News Channel. That was conducted by Dr. Marc Siegel, a Fox News contributor who had questioned Hillary Clinton's physical ability to serve as president in 2016 and later

House released a subsequent statement from the president's then-personal physician, U.S. Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, saying it had been a "planned interim checkup" kept "off the record" due to scheduling uncertainties. Arguably, Trump's most famous past comments about his own health came during a television interview in July 2020, when he listed off "Person. Woman. Man. Camera. TV" while attempting to demonstrate his cognitive abilities.

Also: WASHINGTON: The White House on Friday hung a painting of President Donald Trump depicting a moment after an assassination attempt against him last summer - bumping the official portrait of one of his predecessors, Barack Obama. Hanging a new presidential likeness without advance notice is unusual, and Trump putting himself in that space could be seen as him breaking with norms yet again. By tradition, portraits of the two most recent former presidents go on display in the foyer - and Trump is in the unique position of also being a former president. Obama's portrait went on display in the foyer of the State Floor, near the staircase to the president's residence, after it was unveiled in 2022. The White House said it is still in the foyer,

but has been moved to the opposite wall, where a portrait of former President George W. Bush used to hang. Plans are to move Bush's portrait nearer to his father's, former President George H.W. Bush, which is on the staircase to the residence. The White House announced the unexpected change in a post on its official account on X with a photo of the new painting that said, "Some new artwork at the White House" and a pair of emoji eyes. The painting captures the aftermath of an attempt on Trump's life during a July rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. Trump was wounded in the ear and thrust his fist skyward as he said, "fight, fight, fight!" Those words became a key rallying cry of his successful reelection campaign. The original painting on canvas was done by artist Marc Lipp and was donated to the White House by Andrew Pollock via the Blue Gallery in Delray Beach, Florida, the White House said. Lipp's online biography as part of the Blue Gallery website describes him as "a Modern Pop Art who translates his love for art through paintings and sculptures." Pollock is an author and school safety advocate whose daughter Meadow was among the students killed in the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.



Emergency personnel respond to the area where a small plane crashed on the railroad tracks beneath the overpass near Interstate 95 in Boca Raton, Fla, on April 11. (AP)

South Florida plane crash kills 3

Three people were killed and one was injured when a small plane crashed Friday morning in South Florida near a major interstate highway and pushed a car onto railroad tracks, officials said. Boca Raton Fire Rescue assistant chief Michael LaSalle said the plane crash that killed all three people on board emitted a fireball when it hit the ground, injuring a person in a nearby car. LaSalle said several roads near the Boca Raton Airport will remain closed near Interstate 95. The Federal Aviation Administration identified the plane as a Cessna 310 with three people on board. It went down about 10:20 a.m. after departing from Boca Raton Airport

bound for Tallahassee, the FAA said in an email. Fire officials told the South Florida Sun Sentinel that the aircraft appeared to have pushed a car onto the railroad tracks, leading to the tracks' closure. Josh Orsino, 31, said he was stopped at a red light at a nearby overpass when he heard a loud explosion and saw a huge fireball come toward him. "We're just sitting there, and I see the palm trees start catching on fire," Orsino said. "I thought it was an oil rig or a car crash type thing." Orsino said everyone was honking and trying to get off the overpass, not sure if it was going to collapse. (AP)

US Attorney Habba probes NY gov over immigration enforcement policy

Iowa's Republican Gov Reynolds won't seek reelection in 2026

DES MOINES, Iowa, April 12, (AP): In a surprise announcement Friday, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds said she will not seek a third term in office. Reynolds, a Republican, has held the position since 2017, when former Gov. Terry Branstad was appointed US ambassador to China. She was elected to full terms in 2018 and again in 2022. "This wasn't an easy decision, because I love this state and I love serving you," Reynolds said in a video posted on social media. "But, when my term ends, I will have had the privilege of serving as your governor for almost 10 years." Her decision sets up next year's election for governor in Iowa as the first without an incumbent in nearly two decades. Reynolds said she is leaving office after years of her family supporting her, saying now "it's time for me to be there for them." Her husband, Kevin Reynolds, was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2023. In January, she said his cancer remained in remission. Reynolds, who got her start in politics as treasurer in largely rural Clarke County in southern Iowa, population less than 10,000, was the state's first female governor. She was elected to the Iowa Senate in 2008 before serving as Branstad's running mate, when she was elected lieutenant governor in 2010. Iowa's politics have shifted drastically since Reynolds first got to the state capitol in Des Moines. The state launched former President Barack Obama's presidential bid and supported him in both the 2008 and 2012



Iowa Gov Kim Reynolds speaks during a news conference at the Statehouse in Des Moines, Iowa, Jan 31, 2024. (AP)

general elections then clearly backed President Donald Trump in all three of his presidential runs. Republicans have been steadily increasing their majorities in the Iowa House and Senate under Reynolds' leadership, giving her ample opportunity to advance her priorities. Reynolds also has not shied away from the national attention, delivering a GOP response to President Joe Biden's address to Congress and serving as the chair of Republican Governors Association. She's enjoyed the spotlight that comes with hosting the presidential

caucuses, making a splash in 2023 by breaking a longstanding tradition of Iowa governors staying neutral in the race - and breaking with Trump - by endorsing Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. And as Trump has moved on his second-term agenda at the federal level, Reynolds has regularly highlighted the conservative policies Iowa has already adopted. Reynolds has celebrated her work to get school choice in Iowa across the finish line, signing into law in 2023 the creation of publicly funded educational savings accounts for students' private school tuition or other approved

expenses. In the current school year, more than 27,000 students used the program, which becomes available to any student in the coming year. Reynolds' proposed budget line for the accounts next year reached \$314 million. Also: NEWARK, NJ: The top federal prosecutor in New Jersey says she has launched an investigation into Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy and state Attorney General Matt Platkin over the state's directive to local law enforcement not to cooperate with federal agent conducting immigration enforcement. Alina Habba, appointed last month by President Donald Trump as the interim U.S. attorney for the state, announced the investigation on Thursday evening on Fox News. "I want it to be a warning for everybody that I have instructed my office today to open an investigation into Governor Murphy, to open an investigation into Attorney General Platkin," she said. At an unrelated news conference on Friday, Platkin touted state and federal law enforcement cooperation on criminal investigations and pointed to federal courts upholding the state's directive. "I'm going to keep doing my job. I know the brave men, men and women of law enforcement in our state who do extraordinary work every day, will keep doing their jobs," Platkin said.

European countries vow billions in military support for Ukraine

BRUSSELS, April 12, (AP): Britain on Friday announced a "surge" of military support to Ukraine, as the war-ravaged country's Western backers gathered at NATO headquarters to drum up more weapons and ammunition to help Kyiv fight off Russia's invasion. Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over \$580 million would be spent to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armored vehicles on the battlefield. On the eve of the meeting in Brussels, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defenses. "Ukraine needs a sufficient number of modern systems like Patriot" missile systems, he said in a post on social media. "A political decision is needed to supply these systems to protect our cities, towns, and the lives of our people - especially from the threat of Russian ballistic weapons. Our partners have such available systems," Umerov said. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeals for more Patriot



Britain's Defense Secretary John Healey, (left), Ukraine's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, (second from left), and Germany's Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, (right), arrive for a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group at NATO headquarters in Brussels on April 11. (AP)

systems since 20 people were killed a week ago, including nine children, when a Russian missile tore through apartment buildings and blasted a playground in his home town. "Ukraine needs at the very least 10 systems that are sufficiently effective specifically against Russian ballistic missiles, and this is where Patriots are second to none," he said on his Telegram channel ahead of the meeting. "We are counting on decisions."



People attend an anti-corruption protest in the southwestern town of Novi Pazar, Serbia on April 12. (AP)

Serbian capital braces for mega pro-president rally

Chanting patriotic songs, thousands of supporters of Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic gathered in downtown Belgrade on Friday, a day ahead of what authorities expect to be a huge rally in his support. Belgrade was on edge, with authorities preparing for large crowds and potential counter-demonstrations in different parts of Serbia, in-

cluding an anti-government rally in a southern Muslim-populated part of the country. The rally in the Serbian capital is expected to be a significant moment in Serbia's ongoing political crisis after more than five months of student-led anti-corruption protests triggered by a rail station canopy collapse that killed 16 people in the north of the country on Nov. 1.

In Belgrade on Friday, Vucic unveiled a Serbian red blue and white flag which the state-run media said is the largest in the history of the Balkan state. In the central parts of the capital in front of the parliament building dozens of tents were erected to house Vucic's supporters arriving from different parts of the country, as well as Serbs from neighboring Kosovo and Bosnia. (AP)

Bomb strikes near Athens offices of Greek railway company, no injuries reported

ATHENS, Greece, April 12, (AP): A bomb planted near the offices of Hellenic Train, Greece's main railway company, exploded Friday night in a busy district of central Athens, authorities said. There were no reports of injuries. The explosion comes amid widespread public anger over a 2023 railway disaster, Greece's worst, in which 57 people were killed and dozens more injured when a freight train and a passenger train heading in opposite directions were accidentally put on the same track. Local media said a newspaper and a news website had received an anonymous call shortly before Friday's blast, with the caller warning that a bomb had been planted outside the railway company offices and would explode within about 40 minutes. In a statement, Hellenic Train said the explosion had occurred "very close



Policemen close the road after a suspected bomb explosion outside of the Hellenic Train offices the company that runs Greece's railway, (the second building on the right), in Athens, Greece on April 11. (AP)

to its central offices" and said the blast had caused limited damage and no injuries to any employees or passers-by. It said authorities had acted immediately upon receiving information about the warning call, and that the company was cooperating fully with authorities and ensuring the safety of its staff.

Italy sends rejected migrants to Albania detention centers

SHENGJIN, Albania, April 12, (AP): Italian authorities on Friday transferred 40 migrants with no permission to remain in the country to Italian-run migration detention centers in Albania. It was the first time a European Union country sent rejected migrants to a nation outside the EU that is neither their own nor a country they had transited on their journey, migration experts said. A military ship with the migrants departed the Italian port of Brindisi and arrived hours later in the Albanian port of Shengjin, about 65 kilometers (40 miles) northeast of the capital, Tirana. The migrants were seen being transferred in buses and minivans under heavy security to an Italian-run center in Shengjin, where they will be processed before being transferred to a second center in Gjader, also run by Italian authorities. The Italian government has not released their nationalities or further details. Both facilities in Shengjin and in Gjader were originally built to process asylum requests of people intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea by Italy.



A migrant escorted by police officers disembarks the Italian navy ship Libra as Italian authorities transfer 40 migrants with no permission to remain in the country to Italian-run migration detention centers in Albania, in Shengjin, northwestern Albania on April 11. (AP)







Ranked first in Service Hero's 'Mobile Operators' and 'ISPs' categories for 2024

# Zain clinches top customer satisfaction honors for 13th time



Waleed Al-Khashti receiving Zain's award from Faten Abu-Ghazaleh.



Zain honored with its second award.



The company secured the highest number of consumer votes in both categories.

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: In an achievement that reflects its continued leadership in the technology sector in the Kuwaiti market, Zain has once again claimed the top position at the Service Hero Customer Satisfaction Index Awards for the 13th time. The company was awarded first place in both the Mobile Operators and Internet Service Providers categories for the year 2024.

The announcement was made during the awards ceremony honoring the top-ranked organizations held at the Four Seasons Hotel, attended by

Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, alongside Faten Abu-Ghazaleh, President of Service Hero, and a number of executives and leaders from the winning companies.

For the 13th time in its history, Zain has led the telecom and ICT sector in Kuwait across both categories, having secured the highest number of consumer votes in the Kuwaiti market.

Zain takes pride in consistently topping these two categories year after year, which reflects its leading position in the technology, tel-

ecom, and digital services sectors in Kuwait. It also highlights the company's excellence in exceeding customer expectations, fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations, and its ongoing efforts to enhance its suite of innovative services, solutions, and its competitive offers to serve its customer base—the largest in Kuwait.

Zain secured first place in two distinct telecom categories for its success in achieving the highest customer satisfaction levels for the quality and efficiency of its products and services, outperforming competitors in the

same categories. The company views this recognition as a testament to its unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional service to its customers.

Winning this award, which is based solely on customer and consumer votes, demonstrates Zain's dedication to strengthening its leadership in the Kuwaiti market. The evaluation was conducted based on the quality of services offered, customer service excellence, and the trust of its customers in the company's service quality.

Service Hero celebrated the top-

performing service providers in the country for the year 2024, based on the Customer Satisfaction Index for the 15th consecutive year. The index was based on 28,837 validated consumer ratings, covering participants of both genders and from a wide spectrum of industries, nationalities, and educational backgrounds.

Headquartered in Kuwait, Service Hero is the only consumer-led customer satisfaction index in the Middle East. The company is a member of ESOMAR and adheres to the global organization's principles for self-regulation and ethical market practices.

Service Hero is overseen by an

independent advisory council to ensure neutral and objective results that accurately reflect consumer preferences, making its insights a trusted benchmark that provides transparent and relevant guidance to businesses.

The advisory council consists of academics and business experts representing leading educational and commercial institutions in Kuwait and the UAE, including the American University of Kuwait and the Australian College of Kuwait. Since its establishment in 2010, Service Hero has measured 280,000 validated consumer ratings, covering over 850 private sector companies.

## Model 3, Model Y, and Cybertruck now available

# Tesla officially launches in Saudi Arabia amid complex history with the Kingdom

RIYADH, April 12, (AP): Tesla officially launched in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, marking a new chapter in the company's global expansion after Elon Musk's troubled relationship with the kingdom - but the Middle East country's extreme heat could pose a challenge for its electric vehicle performance and battery efficiency.

Musk and Saudi Arabia have had a complicated history. Back in 2018, the Tesla CEO claimed he had secured funding from the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund to take the company private. That deal never happened, leading to lingering tensions.

With the launch of its first showroom and service center in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, Tesla makes its long-anticipated entry into the Saudi market. The facility will offer models, including Model 3, Model Y and the Cybertruck, and pop-up stores are also opening in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam.

The Riyadh event drew a large and diverse crowd - from content creators and car enthusiasts to visitors excited about Tesla's launch.

"It's a beautiful step we've been waiting for - to finally see Tesla open in Saudi Arabia," said Bader Khalid, a local businessman. "The

country is clearly moving toward electric vehicles."

"Tesla is one of the most important EV companies in the world, so it's a big deal to have them present in our market," he added.

However, the kingdom still faces significant challenges in infrastructure, with a limited number of public EV charging stations available. The government has announced plans to expand charging networks as part of its sustainability goals.

Musk has a large fan base in the kingdom, praised by many for his creativity and innovation, and seen as a visionary of the future.

"He's always looking ahead," said Mohammed Osama, a teenager who describes himself as enthusiastic about everything Tesla. "Maybe a few things don't make sense right now, but in the future, it'll all come together - he's building something bigger."

Many attendees expected Musk to make an appearance, at least via video, but he didn't show.

Though Tesla has faced criticism and even vandalism in parts of the United States and elsewhere, after Musk took a prominent role in President Donald Trump's administration. People have protested Musk's Department of Government Efficiency,

or DOGE, which has been moving to slash the size of the federal government through large-scale layoffs, contract cancellations and other moves.

Still, many in Saudi Arabia believe that won't impact Tesla's performance in the kingdom.

"Political events outside of Saudi Arabia don't concern us," said Khalid. "So I don't think this thing has any effect."

Lucid Motors, another luxury electric vehicle manufacturer, headquartered in California, has had a deepening relationship with Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom's Public Investment Fund is one of Lucid's largest backers, owning a majority stake in the company. In 2022, Lucid announced plans to build its first international manufacturing plant in the city of Jeddah, a major step in the kingdom's push to become a hub for advanced automotive technology.

The growing interest in electric vehicles aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 - an ambitious plan to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on oil. EVs are a key part of the strategy, with the government aiming for 30% of all vehicles in Riyadh to be electric by 2030.

## 46% female & 54% male interns join program

# InvestGB launches the third edition of Internship Program for Kuwaiti youth

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: As part of its continued commitment to Kuwaiti youth and employee empowerment, Gulf Capital Investment Company, "InvestGB", has launched the third edition of its Internship Program. The program provides participants with real-world exposure, hands-on training, and opportunities to build personal and professional skills essential for the evolving workforce.

Since the start of 2025, the program recruited 13 interns, with a demographic breakdown of 46% female and 54% male, between the ages of 17 to 25.

InvestGB's commitment to diversity and local talent development is evident in its workforce composition, with women comprising 46% of employees and Kuwaiti nationals representing 71% of the team, particularly in key investment roles.

The Company has successfully concluded the first and second editions of the program, benefitting 40 ambitious high school and university students, with 10% of participants joining InvestGB after completing the program. The initiative has proven to be a powerful pipeline for talent and further solidifies its position as a private sector leader in supporting youth education and sustainable development in Kuwait.

In parallel, InvestGB continues to build an innovative and inclusive work culture that prioritizes employee development and well-being, recognizing its people as the foundation of long-term success. This dual focus on empowering future talent and supporting current employees reflects InvestGB's broader strategy for sustainable growth.

Ms. Sara AlMuzaini, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at InvestGB said, "Investing in young minds today builds a stronger and more resilient Kuwait tomorrow." We are proud to provide opportunities that empower the next generation and connect them to meaningful career opportunities."

Beyond these youth initiatives, InvestGB's innovative workplace culture has resulted in notable achievements, including increased employment retention rates



Sara AlMuzaini



and improved performance metrics across departments.

AlMuzaini added, "At InvestGB, we are cultivating more than a workplace; we are building a community. Our culture is rooted in well-being, continuous development, and shared purpose, which directly contributes to our organizational excellence."

AlMuzaini further highlighted that InvestGB remains dedicated to supporting and developing the community through various initiatives, including youth empowerment and workplace enhancement. Through training and development programs, the company provides students and graduates with practical opportunities to acquire the skills needed for the job market, and it reinforces its commitment to investing in human capital for sustainable growth.

## Tariffs add complexity, cost, and uncertainty to global trade

# Sweeping US trade tariffs will spark broad negative impact on credit

By Moody's Ratings

On 2 April, US President Donald Trump announced a swath of trade actions, revisiting trade relations with the nation's trading partners. The announcement followed the 2025 "National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers" under the America First Trade Policy. The sweeping new tariffs are the largest increase since the 1930s and will likely upend global trade dynamics: China has already retaliated with new 34% tariffs on all US imports.

The additional protectionist tools increase the complexity and cost of global trade and weaken growth prospects, especially for trade-reliant economies, as well as many industries. Uncertainty is already weighing on business confidence and delaying investment. Financial market volatility is sharply higher, with steep declines in equity markets and a capital flight to treasuries. Tariff hikes will increase prices for US consumers and businesses. Weaker growth dynamics will further moderate inflationary pressures in other regions. Until now, strong growth has given the Federal Reserve the option to keep the federal funds rate on hold. However, a weaker growth outlook will likely bring forward interest rate cuts.

We expect the US tariffs, ranging between 10% and 50% on top of most levies already in place, to prompt negotiations, concessions and revamped trade deals. The tariffs' credit effects will depend upon their scope, duration and retaliatory responses. We also expect more investment restrictions that could affect strategic sectors. Shifting trade policies and trade reconfiguration could also present opportunities, particularly for emerging markets that manage to deftly navigate geopolitical and socioeconomic crosscurrents as trade flows reroute in response to differential treatment. Similar effects have been seen in past instances such as sanctions on direct trade with Russia. As the global economy adjusts, there will also be opportunities from production shifts in the longer term.

The additional tariffs on goods imported into the US are calibrated in a simple way, charging a rate determined by the size of a country's trade surplus with the US in 2024, relative to its total exports to the country. Countries that have the largest surplus proportionate to their exports attract the highest tariff rates. Asia-Pacific (APAC) economies will be among the hardest hit, especially China given additional tariffs of 34% on top of previous 20% tariffs, but also "connector countries" like Cambodia and Vietnam (see exhibit) that have benefited from trade reconfiguration because of existing US-China trade tensions. Even countries with which the US has a trade surplus will suffer because a minimum universal rate of 10% will be applied. Canada and Mexico are unaffected by the latest announcement since

the existing fentanyl and migration orders remain in place. Therefore, United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)-compliant goods will continue to have a 0% tariff, while non-USMCA compliant goods will be subject to a 25% tariff. Non-USMCA-compliant energy and potash face a 10% tariff.

Assuming the tariffs are implemented in the manner that the President presented, there will be a significant negative impact on global growth and a materially higher risk of US recession this year. Our most recent global macro forecast was for G-20 GDP growth to slow to 2.5% in 2025, and highlighted the downside risks of lower growth and higher inflation if widespread tariffs were introduced. The newly announced tariffs go beyond this downside scenario, with the full impact depending on many factors such as the persistence of this new tariff regime across countries, pricing decisions by importing and exporting firms, and—critically—the response from other countries. Reciprocal tariffs are only one aspect of the latter; many countries may also take steps to support specific sectors or stimulate domestic economic growth more broadly.

**Sectoral specialization**

On the sector level, industries with sectoral specialization, complex supply chains and high integration in global value chains such as the technology and auto industries, particularly in Europe, Japan and Korea, are most exposed. The new tariffs' broader scope will also increase the cost of consumer goods and affect US retailers and consumer-facing companies. How negative the credit effect is depends on a company's pricing power and strategy, how long tariffs apply and what retaliatory tariffs are imposed, all of which remain largely in flux. Tariffs are credit positive for US domestic producers in some protected industries such as steel and aluminum producers, but others like automakers and other closely integrated sectors will be pressured by higher input costs and likely retaliatory actions.

The minimum baseline tariff of 10% takes effect 5 April, while the higher tariff rates commence 9 April. There are carveouts for sectors where tariffs already apply, such as auto, steel and aluminum, or sectors currently undergoing trade investigations such as pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber articles, certain critical minerals, copper and energy and energy products, which potentially face additional duties.

APAC economies will be subject to particularly high additional tariff rates, notably Cambodia (49%), Laos (48%), Vietnam (46%), Sri Lanka (44%), Bangladesh (37%), Thailand (36%), China (34%) and Taiwan, China (32%). Moody's-rated APAC sovereigns account for around 40% of US goods imports and form the backbone of glob-

al supply chains. The magnitude of these tariffs is likely to weigh on global trade activity, reduce demand for regional exports, and undermine business confidence, leading to reduced investment in APAC.

Total additional tariffs on Chinese goods are now at 54%, but any supply chain diversification away from China will be inhibited by China's market dominance, limiting the pace at which companies are able to shift. The duty-free de minimis treatment for China and Hong Kong SAR, China will end on 2 May, negatively affecting e-commerce platforms and logistic companies with high exposure to the US market. China has responded to the latest additional US tariffs by imposing 34% levy on all US imports. Most exposed to these retaliatory tariffs are US agriculture, manufacturing and liquefied natural gas sectors.

Effective 3 April, passenger vehicles and light trucks that are not USMCA-compliant became subject to a supplemental 25% tariff, which will also apply to key automobile parts no later than 3 May. Japan and Korea have high exposures to US vehicle tariffs, although their increasing use of US production facilities helps mitigate the impact. However, any further shifts in production to the US will take too long to offset the immediate competitive threat for automakers that make their products elsewhere. The major shift in US trade policy is sharply negative for APAC but could be lessened if governments in the region succeed in negotiating better conditions.

For the EU, the new 20% tariffs, including previously announced tariffs on autos, and steel and aluminum, in total affect around €380 billion of EU goods comprising 2% of GDP. The European countries most affected are Ireland, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Austria. At the EU sector level, machinery, alcoholic beverages, retail and apparel are most exposed. Additionally, the main credit effect for some of these manufacturing sectors will be from increased competition related to diverted exports from countries most affected by the tariffs especially in Asia, including China and Vietnam, although import quotas and anti-dumping and countervailing duties might mitigate some of the impact for certain sectors. This will lower profit margins for companies operating in sectors that compete directly with imported products. European autos are also affected by the passenger vehicles tariffs. Nevertheless, the negative effect of higher tariffs may be lessened by bringing production closer to consumers and a reduction in Chinese input costs for some European companies. The EU's policy response will determine the full effects on economies and sectors. The EU has said it will attempt to negotiate over the coming weeks but will also be prepared to retaliate against US services imports, including digital services.



Medium-sized cognitive bank team at the exhibition.



Great turnout at the bank's pavilion.

**Marafi: We continue to invest in educational and youth initiatives as part of our strategy to develop the future leaders of Kuwait**

# Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait participates in Derasti exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its participation in the Derasti exhibition, a platform that brings together students, experts, and educational service providers, with the aim of enhancing educational and professional opportunities.

Held from 7 to 10 April 2025, the Derasti exhibition brought together a select group of universities, educational institutions, and financial organizations under one roof to guide and support high school students in exploring

their future university paths and financial planning needs. It also helped them make informed decisions regarding their academic and financial futures.

ABK participated in the event by showcasing its banking solutions specifically designed for youth, providing services that meet their needs and support them on various levels.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, stated, "We continue to invest in educational and youth initiatives as part of our comprehensive strategy to



Ms. Johair Marafi – General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK

support the community and contribute to the development of future leaders in Kuwait."

She noted that education and students hold significant importance for ABK, which is keen to offer numerous banking products and services, discounts, and exclusive offers in collaboration with partners across various sectors within Kuwait.

Marafi explained that ABK offers students the A+ Student account, which provides many exclusive benefits, including a 30% discount through the Talabat app

during weekends, a prepaid card free for one year, along with various special offers and discounts in collaboration with numerous stores in Kuwait.

Marafi emphasized at the end of her statement ABK's pride in the great trust it enjoys among students, and the close relationship it has with many universities in Kuwait. She highlighted the importance of joint cooperation among all parties to achieve desired goals, advance the educational sector in Kuwait, and meet stakeholders' needs of all.



Responding to students' inquiries.

# China hits back at US, will raise tariffs on American goods from 84% to 125%

Tit for tat tax hikes see no end

BEIJING, April 12, (AP): China announced Friday that it will raise tariffs on U.S. goods from 84% to 125% - the latest salvo in an escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies that has rattled markets and raised fears of a global slowdown.

While U.S. President Donald Trump paused import taxes this week for other countries, he raised tariffs on China and they now total 145%. China has denounced the policy as "economic bullying" and promised countermeasures. The new tariffs begin Saturday.

Washington's repeated raising of tariffs "will become a joke in the history of the world economy," a Chinese Finance Ministry spokesman said in a statement announcing the new tariffs. "However, if the U.S. insists on continuing to substantially infringe on China's interests, China will resolutely counter and fight to the end." China's Commerce Ministry said it would file another lawsuit with the World Trade Organization against the U.S. tariffs.

"There are no winners in a tariff war," Chinese leader Xi Jinping said during a meeting with the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, according to a readout from state broadcaster CCTV. "For more than 70 years, China has always relied on itself ... and hard work for development, never relying on favors from anyone, and not fearing any unreasonable suppression."

Trump's on-again, off-again measures have caused alarm in stock and



An aerial view of new cars waiting for shipment at a pier for ro-ro ships in Yantai city in eastern China's Shandong province, Sunday, March 30, 2025. (AP)

bond markets and led some to warn that the U.S. could be headed for a recession. There was some relief when Trump paused the tariffs for most countries - but concerns remain since the U.S. and China are the world's No. 1 and No. 2 economies, respectively.

"The risk that this escalating trade war tips the world into a recession is rising as the two largest and most powerful countries in the world continue to punch back with higher and higher tariffs," Jennifer

Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital markets, wrote Friday. "No one truly knows when this will end."

Chinese tariffs will affect goods like soybeans, aircrafts and their parts and drugs - all among the country's major imports from the U.S. Beijing, meanwhile, suspended sorghum, poultry and bonemeal imports from some American companies last week, and put more export controls on rare earth minerals, critical for various technologies.

The United States' top imports from China, meanwhile, include electronics, like computers and cell phones, industrial equipment and toys - and consumers and businesses are likely to see prices rise on those products, with tariffs now at 145%.

Trump announced on Wednesday that China would face 125% tariffs, but he did not include a 20% tariff on China tied to its role in fentanyl production.

## Upending global trade:

By Hassan F. Beidas

Last Wednesday witnessed an exceptional situation with the Trump administration announcing the imposition of tariffs affecting most countries around the world. This announcement calls into question all trade agreements signed since the Second World War.

How did the markets react? U.S. stock futures fell sharply on Thursday following President Donald Trump's announcement of sweeping reciprocal tariffs ranging from 10% to 49%. This sparked fears of a global trade war that could cast a heavy shadow over the U.S. economy.



Hassan F. Beidas

The Dow Jones and S&P 500 dropped by more than 2% and 3%, respectively, while Nasdaq 100 futures plunged by over 4%. Companies with global supply chains and heavy reliance on imports were the hardest hit. Apple alone lost \$250 billion in market value. Yields on 10-year U.S. Treasury bonds fell by 15 basis points to 4.0455%.

According to available data, this marked the largest one-day drop since August 2 and the lowest level since October.

It is worth noting that president Trump announced a base tariff of 10% on all imports, with higher rates on key trading partners - 34% on China and 20% on the European Union.

Several countries are considered losers, while others are winners, in light of Trump's tariff announcement:

- Losers:
- Specific tariffs were imposed on several countries, including:
    - 20% on the European Union
    - 54% total on China
    - 26% on India
    - 32% on Taiwan

- 46% on Vietnam
- 24% on Japan
- 25% on South Korea

Winners:

- The United Kingdom, which only faced a 10% tariff.
- Goods complying with the USMCA agreement from Mexico and Canada remain exempt from the new tariffs
- Products related to fentanyl-based medications are exempt as well.

However, tariffs linked to migration and fentanyl will continue to apply to Mexico and Canada as long as the relevant conditions persist.

The Trump administration also announced a 25% tariff on cars, affecting nearly \$600 billion worth of auto parts. These measures will extend to all computer imports, including laptops and desktops, which were valued at \$138.5 billion in 2024.

Furthermore, the Trump administration will sign an executive order to close the "de minimis" loophole, which exempts low-value shipments from customs duties. Over 90% of incoming parcels to the U.S. enter through this exemption, around 60% of which originate from China.

Key Questions Arising on the major Global trade changes from these increased Tariffs:

1. How will different countries respond? (China has promised retaliation; the EU had leaned toward a response in recent days; some countries like the UK may choose not to respond in order to benefit from relatively preferential treatment.)
2. Could President Trump change his stance or delay implementation? (This already happened in March when the three major U.S. automakers received a one-month exemption for auto parts.)
3. What will be the economic impact on U.S. and global markets if these tariffs are fully implemented as announced?
4. How will affected countries' reactions impact their own economies and the global trade?

# Trump's tariffs have launched global trade wars. Here's a timeline of how we got here

NEW YORK, April 12, (AP): Long-threatened tariffs from U.S. President Donald Trump have plunged the country into trade wars abroad - all while on-again, off-again new levies continue to escalate uncertainty.

Trump is no stranger to tariffs. He launched a trade war during his first term, taking particular aim at China by putting taxes on most of its goods. Beijing responded with its own retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products ranging from fruit to automotive imports. Meanwhile, Trump also used the threat of more tariffs to force Canada and Mexico to renegotiate a North American trade pact, called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, in 2020.

When President Joe Biden took office, he preserved most of the tariffs Trump previously enacted against China, in addition to imposing some new restrictions - but his administration claimed to take a more targeted approach.

Fast-forward to today, and economists stress there

could be greater consequences on businesses and economies worldwide under Trump's more sweeping tariffs this time around - and that higher prices will likely leave consumers footing the bill. There's also been a sense of whiplash from Trump's back-and-forth tariff threats and responding retaliation seen over the last few months.

Here's a timeline of how we got here:

Trump is sworn into office. In his inaugural address, he again promises to "tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens." And he reiterates plans to create an agency called the External Revenue Service, which has yet to be established.

On his first day in office, Trump also says he expects to put 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico starting on Feb. 1, while declining to immediately flesh out plans for taxing Chinese imports.

Trump threatens 25% tariffs on all Colombia imports and other retaliatory measures after President Gustavo Petro's rejects two U.S. military aircraft carrying migrants to the country, accusing Trump of not treating immigrants with dignity during deportation.

In response, Petro also announces a retaliatory 25% increase in Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods. But Colombia later reversed its decision and accepted the flights carrying migrants. The two countries soon signaled a halt in the trade dispute.

Trump signs an executive order to impose tariffs on imports from Mexico, Canada and China - 10% on all imports from China and 25% on imports from Mexico and Canada starting Feb. 4. Trump invoked this power by declaring a national emergency - ostensibly over undocumented immigration and drug trafficking.

The action prompts swift outrage from all three countries, with promises of retaliatory measures.

Trump agrees to a 30-day pause on his tariff threats against Mexico and Canada, as both trading partners take steps to appease Trump's concerns about border security and drug trafficking.

ringing migrants to the country, accusing Trump of not treating immigrants with dignity during deportation.

In response, Petro also announces a retaliatory 25% increase in Colombian tariffs on U.S. goods. But Colombia later reversed its decision and accepted the flights carrying migrants. The two countries soon signaled a halt in the trade dispute.

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# African nations that faced steep Trump tariffs get some relief but mostly more uncertainty

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, April 12, (AP): African nations that faced some of the steepest reciprocal tariffs from the Trump administration were given a moment of relief Thursday by the suspension of the duties, only for new uncertainties to hang over key businesses sending clothing and textiles, vanilla and fruit to the United States.

Lesotho, Madagascar and South Africa were threatened with some of the highest tariff rates under U.S. President Donald Trump's plan.

Lesotho, a tiny mountain kingdom, was stunned by the 50% duties that were due to come into effect Wednesday before Trump announced a 90-day pause on the levies. It was the second highest tariff rate after China.

"This will give us the opportunity to negotiate the reduction of tariffs so that the playing field is levelled," Lesotho Trade and Industry Minister Mokhethi Shelile said in response to the suspension. "It's a serious issue for us, but we are tackling it head-on."

Many like Lesotho had already sent trade delegations to Washington or were willing to negotiate, with some of their

most important industries and tens of thousands of jobs hanging on the outcome.

Nearly half of Lesotho's 30,000 clothing and textile workers depend on jobs making apparel for American brands like Levi's, Nike, Reebok and others, which are exported to the U.S. Clothing and textiles is the biggest private employer in the country of just 2.3 million people.

around the world.

The Commissioner welcomed the 90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs over 10 percent, saying it "opens the door for negotiations." However, he stressed that the 10% tariffs remain in effect and are harmful to the global economy, noting that the U.S. has not suspended its 25 percent tariffs on steel, aluminum, or auto parts.

He noted that the rapid nature of these developments makes it difficult to assess their impact on the EU's economic outlook.

European ministers agreed that "the U.S. itself will be the first and most affected by these tariffs."









## SPORTS



Stars of the Second Forum.

## Special Olympics hosts 2nd Unified Champions Schools Sports Forum

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The Special Olympics recently organized the second Unified Champions Schools Sports Forum, held at the Kazma Sports Club Hall with active participation from players from the National School. The event featured two exciting matches in football and basketball, with students from both the National School and Al-Huda School competing.

The event was attended by key figures, including Hana Al-Zawawi, President of Special

Olympics Kuwait; Mohammed Odeh, Director of the National School; Fahad Al-Sahli, Board Member of Al-Tamoooh Club; and Huda Al-Khalidi, Director of Al-Tamoooh Club. The National School Scout team contributed to the festive atmosphere, adding to the event's lively spirit. Students from Al-Huda School for Special Needs also took part in the forum, showcasing their skills and teamwork.

During her opening speech, Hana Al-Zawawi extended her heartfelt thanks and gratitude

to the National School community, the key strategic partner in bringing the Unified Champions Schools program to life. She highlighted the program's role in promoting educational integration through sports, fostering an inclusive environment for all students. Al-Zawawi emphasized that such initiatives are crucial in building school communities that encourage acceptance and mutual understanding, providing young people with opportunities to grow in an inclusive setting.

## Kuwait eyes hosting Beach Games after successful Muscat 2025 event

MUSCAT, April 12: Mohammed Al-Khalfan, Director General of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, emphasized that sports tournaments and events play a crucial role in supporting Gulf integration, particularly in the realm of sports, offering mutual benefits for all participating nations.

Al-Khalfan made these remarks during his leadership of the Kuwaiti delegation at the 3rd Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Beach Games (Muscat 2025).

He highlighted the significant importance of such sporting events in strengthening social cohesion and promoting unity and brotherhood among the people of the GCC countries. These gatherings, he said, are vital in fostering collaboration and mutual understanding across the region.

Al-Khalfan also underscored the Kuwait Olympic Committee's commitment to participating in this major event, which not only unites the GCC nations through sport but also strengthens the ties of solidarity among the Gulf peoples.

He further noted that the directors of the Gulf delegations attending the Beach Games recently discussed the possibility of Kuwait hosting the next edition, following the success of this year's games. This discussion follows a 10-year gap since the last Beach Games, which were held in Doha in 2015.



Mohammed Al-Khalfan, Director General of the Kuwait Olympic Committee.

## City fights back from 2-goal deficit to beat Crystal Palace



Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta, left, challenges Manchester City's Mateo Kovacic during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Crystal Palace at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

## Leeds and Burnley move into strong position to secure EPL return

LONDON, April 12, (AP): Kevin De Bruyne sparked Manchester City's remarkable fightback from two goals down in a 5-2 win over Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday that re-ignited his team's Champions League qualification hopes.

The 33-year-old De Bruyne curled a free kick in off the post to begin the comeback in the 33rd minute and had a hand in goals by Omar Marmoush and Mateo Kovacic in the first half. James McAtee added a fourth - off a pass from goalkeeper Ederson, who later came off injured - before fellow academy product Nico O'Reilly wrapped up the win.

It was a display showing the enduring quality of De Bruyne, who announced last week he would be leaving City at the end of the season after 10 years at the club.

Injuries have affected the Belgium playmaker's impact in recent seasons but his class can still shine through, with his assist for Kovacic the 119th of his Premier League career.

"I would say basically I have been pain-free for the last six weeks and that's a massive difference," De Bruyne said. "It was hard but now I feel free, and able to do a lot of training sessions. I don't know what's going to happen but I want to play on. We will see where I can end up."

Eberechi Eze and Chris Richards scored in the first 21 minutes for

Palace to shock City into action.

The victory lifted City into fourth place above Chelsea and Newcastle, who have games in hand in the race to secure England's five Champions League spots.



Leeds and Burnley have become big favorites to secure automatic Championship promotion spots in the race to get back in the Premier League.

After Burnley won 2-1 at home to Norwich on Friday, Leeds secured a 2-1 victory over Preston on Saturday.

First-place Leeds stayed ahead of Burnley on goal difference and they are both five points clear of third-place Sheffield United, which conceded two late goals to lose 2-1 at last-place Plymouth on Saturday - four days after losing at home to Millwall.

There are only four rounds of games remaining.

"We've given up another massive opportunity to get in touch and close the gap to Leeds and Burnley," said Sheffield United manager Chris Wilder, who clashed with some celebrating Plymouth players as the teams came off the field after the final whistle. "So we're not in a great position because of a week full of poor results. We have to own that and reset Monday."

Leeds is in its second season back in the second tier after relegation from the Premier League, while Burnley is seeking an immediate return to the top flight.

UDINE, Italy, April 12, (AP): Two goals right before halftime put visiting AC Milan on its way to a comfortable 4-0 win over Udinese in Serie A and extended the home side's losing streak to four matches.

Udinese is on its worst run since the end of the 2022-23 season, when it also lost four in a row. It remains in 11th place.

The win left Milan in ninth, one point behind Fiorentina, but it will worry about an injury to goalkeeper Mike Maignan, who was taken off on a stretcher after colliding with teammate Alex Jiménez.

Rafael Leao's superb strike from 18 meters was quickly followed by Strahinja Pavlovic's glancing

header from a corner on the stroke of halftime.

Udinese was forced to chase the game in the second half and Milan took advantage of gaps that opened up.

Theo Hernández added a third in the 74th minute when he started a sweeping move in his own half and finished it off with an unstoppable shot.

Substitute Tammy Abraham's superb cross led to a fourth from Tijjani Reijnders 10 minutes from time.



A goal in each half from Keito Nakamura gave Reims an historic 2-0 win at Lens in Ligue 1.

It was Reims' first league win against Lens since 1977 and a personal triumph for the Japanese winger.

Nakamura got the first after 33 minutes when he side-footed home from close range.

Nhoa Sangui did the hard work for the clincher, three minutes from time, taking the ball the length of the field before laying it off to Nakamura to curl the ball in from an angle.

Lens was unfortunate to leave empty handed in a match where it had most of the possession and chances and where Reims goalkeeper Yehvann Diouf was elected man of the match.

The result lifted Reims out of the relegation playoff spot and into 14th. Lens was ninth.

## 3 Kuwaitis advance to semis

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The Kuwaiti junior squash team has achieved another milestone, with three players advancing to the semifinals of the 29th Arab Junior and Youth Squash Championship at the Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah Center in South Surra.

Abdullah Mayouf delivered an impressive performance, defeating the fourth-seeded Jordanian, Khalil Al-Tayeh, in the quarterfinals. Saleh Al-Kandari also triumphed, beating Jordan's Bishr Mohammed in straight sets. Meanwhile, second-seeded Issa Al-Najadah secured his place in the semifinals after overcoming his fellow Kuwaiti player, Hamoud Al-Sawagh. Alongside the Kuwaiti trio, Jordan's Hazem Tariq also advanced to the semifinals.

In the under-19 category, Jassim Al-Gharib made his way to the final by defeating his compatriot Abdullah Hani 3-1. On the other side, top-seeded Saudi Mohammed Al-Nusfan also secured a



Abdullah Mayouf and Issa Al-Najadah in action.

3-1 victory, beating Jordanian Osama Al-Batayneh. Al-Gharib will now face Al-Nusfan for the Arab Youth Singles title.

The three-day team championship begins today, Sunday.

## Gulf Tennis Champ'ship begins in Kuwait with full GCC participation

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The Gulf Tennis Championship for Under-12, Under-16, and general age teams which began two days ago at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex, with participation from all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Kuwait Tennis Federation President, Abdulredha Al-Gharib, stated that the tournament, which runs until April 16, will feature three age groups. The competition format follows a single-group league structure for all age groups, with the team accumulating the highest points securing first place.

Al-Gharib also highlighted the strong preparation of the Kuwaiti national team for the tournament, emphasizing collaboration with the Rafa Nadal Academy,



One of the stars of the Kuwaiti team.

which trains all national tennis players across various categories. He further noted that international competition has played a key role in enhancing the players' skills.

## Waratahs win Super Rugby title

SYDNEY, April 12, (AP): The New South Wales Waratahs beat the Queensland Red 43-31 on Saturday to win their sixth Super Rugby Women's title in eight grand final appearances.

The Waratahs have now beaten Queensland in all 13 of their matches, including the championship match Saturday at North Sydney Oval.

Queensland trailed 12-0 early and scored the first try of the second half to pull to within five points of the Waratahs, but it was all New South Wales after that. Flyhalf Arabella McKenzie had 13 points for the winners from a penalty goal and five conversions.

"It feels absolutely unreal," Waratahs winger Desiree Miller said. "This is my second (grand final win) and it almost feels even better than the first."

Queensland fullback Charlotte Caslick, who signed with the Reds after

making the switch from her dominant seven-a-side game to the 15-player format, missed out on adding to her career accomplishments.

Caslick was looking to add a Super Women's premiership to her trophy cabinet, which already includes an Olympic gold medal, Women's World Cup gold and multiple World Series titles.

In the semifinals, the Waratahs beat the Perth-based Western Force 54-17 when Georgina Friedrich scored three tries, and she also had two tries in the final on Saturday. Queensland was an attacking force in its 54-40 semifinal victory against the Fijiana Drua, but the Reds allowed 35 unanswered points in the second half.

The Waratahs will now travel to New Zealand to face the winner of Super Rugby Aupiki in the inaugural Women's Super Rugby Champions final next Thursday.

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Pauline Ferrand-Prévot, of France, lifts the cobbles trophy after winning the Paris-Roubaix cycling race in Roubaix, France. (AP)

# Sports



The victorious Kuwait Club players with officials.

## Kuwait Club defeats Al-Arabi for seventh Volleyball Super Cup

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: Kuwait Club secured its seventh Volleyball Super Cup title by defeating Al-Arabi 3-0 in the final, with set scores of 25-18, 25-21, and 25-18 at the Volleyball Association Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. The team was crowned by Federation President Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, Assistant Secretary General Nayef Al-Khamili, Chairman of the

Competitions Committee Dr. Jaber Al-Sharif, Kuwait Club President Khaled Al-Ghanim, and club board member Balsam Al-Ayoub.

Al-Qadisiya Club has won the Super Cup once, while Kazma Club has claimed it twice.

In related news, the Volleyball Association's Competitions Committee has revised the schedules for the Premier League, Golden Square, and First Division League. This adjustment was made following a request from the national team coach, Argentinian Julian Alvarez, who sought sufficient time for the Blues to prepare for the upcoming

West Asian Championship in Bahrain, set to begin on July 1.

The Premier League, which was initially divided into two divisions before the Golden Square, will now be a single division. It starts today with matches between Kuwait and Burqan, and Al-Shabab and Al-Qadisiyah, and will conclude on May 29. The Golden Square will begin with the Premier League final on May 2 and conclude on May 13.

Meanwhile, the First Division League will begin tomorrow, Monday, and will be split into two divisions, with the season concluding on May 10.

### Qualifying rounds for the men's and women's skeet events begin

## Egypt, Oman delegations hail Kuwait's world-class organization of Amir Championship

KUWAIT CITY, April 12: The annual Grand Prix of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Shooting Championship officially begins today, Sunday, with the qualifying rounds for the men's and women's skeet (75-shooter) events.

The official training sessions for both the men's and women's skeet competitions took place yesterday, followed by the opening ceremony at 6:30 pm.

The technical committee for the championship convened at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Ranges. Chaired by Engineer Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi, President of the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, member of the International Shooting Federation, and Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee of the Championship, the meeting covered the regulations for the competition and addressed queries from the participating teams.



Officials of the Amir International Shooting Championship.

Major General Hazem Hosni, President of the Egyptian and

African Shooting Federations, expressed the Arab Republic of

Egypt's strong commitment to participating in the His Highness the

Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Grand Championship. He highlighted the championship's esteemed position both within Arab and foreign nations and the invaluable support and patronage it receives from His Highness the Amir.

Hosni remarked, "Kuwait offers crucial success factors for such events, including the presence of top shooters, which ensures fierce competition. The Kuwait Shooting Club is equipped with Olympic-standard ranges, providing an ideal environment for both training and competition."

He added that Egypt's shooting team is participating in the championship not only for the experience but also to pursue additional medals.

Hosni also commended the efforts of the Kuwait Shooting Federation, led by Engineer Duajj Al-Otaibi, and its board members, for their dedication to ensuring the championship's success. He acknowledged the on-

going support from Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah, President of the Asian Shooting Federation, for all Asian shooting federations.

The head of the Omani delegation also expressed his congratulations to Engineer Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi on the launch of the championship, which carries a name held dear by everyone. He emphasized that the organization of the event was exceptional, a hallmark of Kuwait's long-standing excellence in hosting world-class championships.

Subhi praised the Kuwait Shooting Federation for setting exemplary standards in organizing major events and creating an environment that supports competitive fairness. He added, "The Oman Shooting Federation always looks forward to participating in tournaments in Kuwait, with the His Highness the Amir's Championship being among the most significant. We aim to achieve honorable results in this highly competitive and fair competition."

## Kuwait youth women's team secures fourth place in Jordan



Kuwaiti players leave the pitch after their match.

AMMAN, April 12: The Kuwaiti youth women's national team secured fourth place in the fifth West Asia Championship, held in Aqaba, Jordan, after suffering a 7-1 defeat to Syria in the third-place play-off.

Maysa Behbehani scored the sole goal for Kuwait in the match.

Earlier in the tournament, Kuwait faced tough competition, losing their first-round matches to Jordan 1-0, Syria 6-0, and Palestine 9-0.

## Leverkusen drops more points

BERLIN, April 12, (AP): Bayer Leverkusen star Florian Wirtz returned after five weeks out but could not inspire his team to pick up anything more than a 0-0 draw against Union Berlin in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Wirtz couldn't return soon enough for Leverkusen, which was knocked out of the Champions League - by Bayern - and the German Cup - by third-division Arminia Bielefeld - while the 21-year-old player

recovered from an ankle injury.

Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso sent him on in the 57th minute and he made an immediate impact, setting up a chance for Exequiel Palacios.

Union forward David Preu was booked on his Bundesliga debut for a bad challenge on Wirtz's ankle in the 83rd. Wirtz carried on and remained central to all of the home team's attacking play.

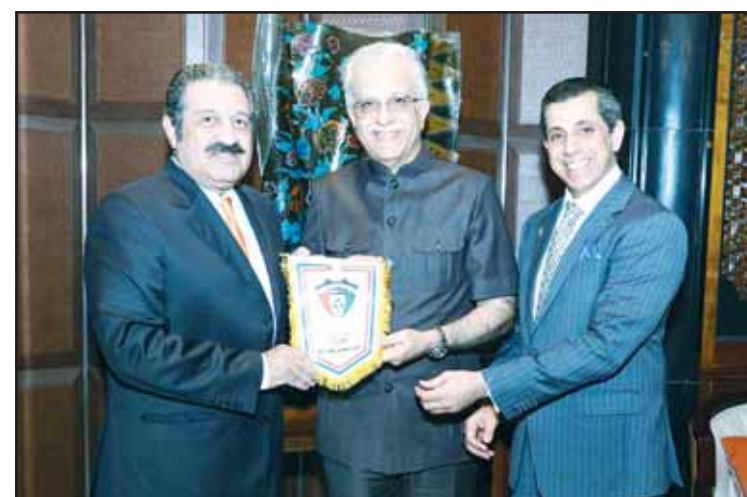
## Kuwait bid to host Asian Cup gains momentum with AFC President visit

Sheikh Salman Al-Khalifa praises Kuwait for joining six other countries

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12, (KUNA): Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Football Association, has extended an invitation to Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), to visit Kuwait in connection with ongoing discussions about Kuwait's bid to host the AFC Asian Cup 2031.

In a statement released by the Kuwait Football Association following a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Sheikh Ahmad revealed that Sheikh Salman has accepted the invitation and is expected to visit Kuwait soon, coinciding with the arrival of AFC representatives to assess the country's readiness for hosting.

Sheikh Ahmad expressed his pleasure at Sheikh Salman's acknowledgment of Kuwait's strong commitment to the bid, highlighting that the meeting was productive and conducted in a positive atmosphere.



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yusuf with Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim during the Asian General Assembly meeting.

The meeting was attended by several key figures, including Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia, Rashid Mohammed Al-Saleh, Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association for Technical Affairs, Osama Hussein, and board member Dr. Ahmad Ajab. Also present was Engineer Sarah Al-Fulaith, Acting Deputy Director of the Public Authority for Sport for Facilities

and Maintenance, who provided a detailed presentation on Kuwait's sports infrastructure and future development plans.

The AFC previously announced that it had received seven official bids to host the AFC Asian Cup 2031, including Kuwait's bid. This demonstrates the tournament's growing stature and the confidence of national associations in their abil-

ity to host the event to international standards.

Sheikh Salman Al-Khalifa, President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), praised Kuwait for joining six other countries in competing to host the AFC Asian Cup 2031, highlighting the growing significance of the continental championship.

During his remarks at the AFC Executive Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, held ahead of the AFC Congress, Sheikh Salman acknowledged the "letters of interest" received by the AFC secretariat by the March 31, 2025 deadline. These letters were submitted by Kuwait, Australia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, the UAE, and a joint bid from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Sheikh Salman noted that this record number of bids underscores the increasing importance of the AFC Asian Cup, drawing a comparison to the Qatar-hosted tournament, which attracted record-breaking fan attendance.

He also confirmed that Saudi Arabia will host the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, with the host country for the 2031 edition to be announced at the AFC Congress in 2026, following a thorough assessment of all bids.