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## Amir receives Crown Prince, Acting PM

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Also on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Iran in Muscat to avoid 'drinking from the bitter cup'

FOR the past 46 years, a great country like Iran has been trapped in the bottle of "exporting the revolution."

Iran has remained bound to this rigid vision since the Middle Ages, despite several popular uprisings that have been brutally suppressed by the Revolutionary Guard, an institution widely seen by Iranians as a "state within a state."

For more than four decades, the Iranian people have been asking these questions:

- What have we gained from severed ties with our neighbors?
- Why is our national wealth wasted on regional sectarian militias?
- Has this approach brought us prosperity, improved our economy, or uplifted the lives of our citizens? Or has it only deepened our poverty?

Today, nearly 80 percent of Iranians live below the poverty line, while the mullahs and the influential continue to thrive on the wealth plundered from the poor.

While these questions continue to be repeated throughout Iran, it has become increasingly evident that Iran's grip over four Arab capitals is merely an illusion.

The Syrian uprising against the former regime was the first nail in the coffin of Iranian hegemony. This was followed by Hezbollah's defeat in Lebanon. Meanwhile, Iraq continues to move forward with its reconstruction process and control of sectarian militias.

As for Yemen, it is increasingly clear that approximately four percent of the population cannot maintain control over 39 million people. Signs of a potential uprising against the Houthis are beginning to emerge throughout the country.

The Iranian regime has yet to learn from the harsh lessons of history, which have repeatedly proven that no sect can dominate a nation indefinitely. Sooner or later, the people will rise against the oppressors.

India, with its population of 1.4 billion people, embraces a remarkable diversity. It is home to 180 religions

and speakers of 350 languages, yet it upholds the principle of equality for all. Despite Hinduism being the dominant faith, it has neither imposed its control over the entire population nor pursued a policy of exporting its religious ideology to the world.

Today, Iran finds itself trapped in a prison cell due to regional and international developments. The country has two options: pursue a diplomatic solution through direct negotiations with the United States, which is the world's leading power, or head down a path that leads to hell.

Empty rhetoric of strength and arrogance no longer carries weight. The global community remains firm in confronting Iranian-backed terrorism, leading to a growing blockade and increasing restrictions on Iranian citizens, including entry bans to many countries.

As a result, the Iranian economy has suffered massive losses, and the hardship faced by ordinary citizens has worsened. Hence, the regime was forced to yield, and went to the Omani capital, Muscat, in a bid to avoid drinking from the "bitter cup."

Although this isn't the first time, today's circumstances are markedly different.

If former U.S. President Barack Obama paved the way for expanding Iran's regional influence, the current President Donald Trump has taken a starkly different approach, making it clear that he will not tolerate any Iranian threat to Middle Eastern countries. His administration's priority is to establish strong economic and political partnerships with the countries of the region.

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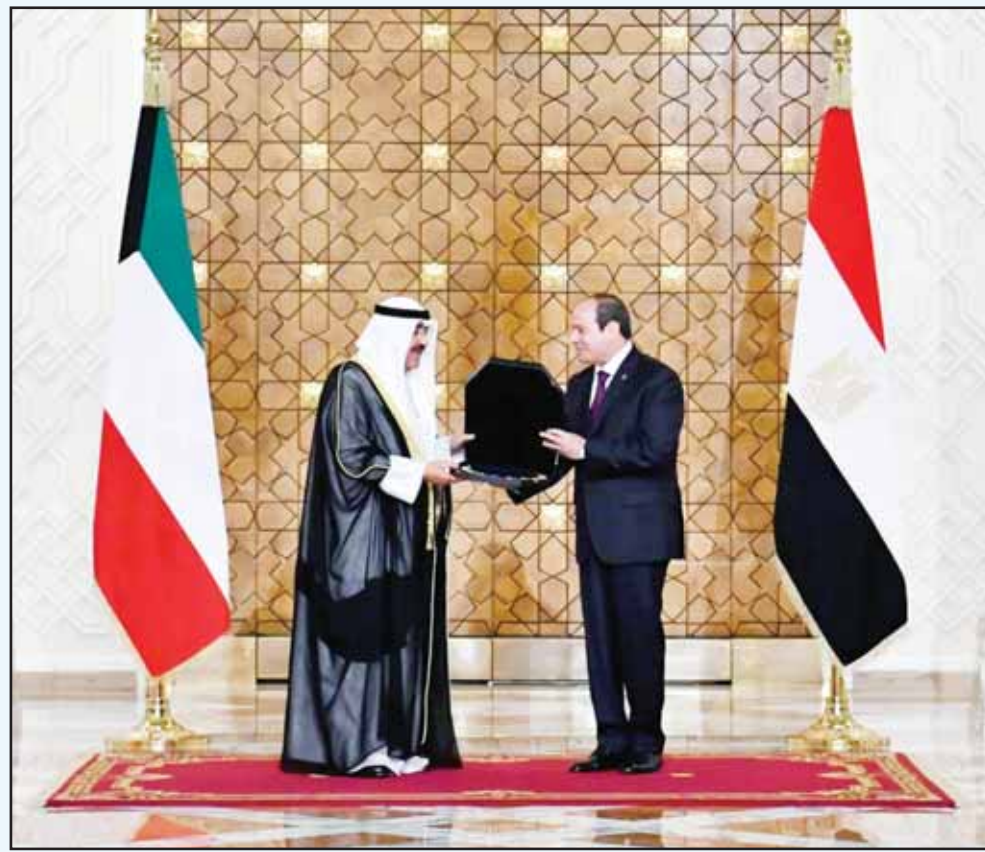
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## Egypt's president in Kuwait Monday

Kuwaiti Diwanias Association welcomes El-Sisi's visit



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during his visit to Egypt in April 2024, at the kind invitation of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

By Bassam Al-Qassab  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi departed on Sunday to Qatar, launching a Gulf tour that would also include Kuwait.

Presidential Spokesman Ambassador Mohammad Al-Shennawi stated in a statement that El-Sisi is scheduled to meet Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to discuss ways to bolster bilateral cooperation across various fields as well as discussing regional developments, particularly efforts to secure a ceasefire in Gaza.

He will also meet with Qatari business representatives to explore opportunities for economic collaboration, it added.

President El-Sisi will then head to Kuwait on Monday, reaffirming the deep strategic ties between the two countries and their shared commitment to expanding economic and investment cooperation.

During his visit to Kuwait, El-Sisi is set to meet with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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# Expat driving license printing set at KD10

Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf stresses strict traffic law to protect lives

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: A Ministerial Decision No. 560/2025 has been issued by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to amend some provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 81/1976.

The amendments include the addition of a new clause No. 59 to Article 204-bis concerning the executive regulations of the Traffic Law and its amendments. The newly added clause stipulates, "A fee of KD10 shall be charged for printing driving licenses for expatriates."

The decision, which has been published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youn", stipulates that the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior shall implement the decision, and it will come into effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

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Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt. Gen. Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with officials during the opening of the 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

### Six-month event kicks off

## Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka blends tradition and tech

TOKYO, April 13, (KUNA): The 2025 World Exposition in Osaka officially opened to the public on Sunday, kicking off a six-month event through October 13 with a record 158 countries and regions, including Kuwait, participating.

Under the theme of "Designing Future Society for our Lives," the participants showcase their cultures and technologies in the Expo on the artificial island of Yumeshima in Osaka Bay, western Japan. According to the Japan Association, about 28.2 million people are expected to visit the event.

The pavilions of participating countries are located inside the Grand Ring, the world's largest wooden structure with a circumference of 2 km that demonstrates the expo's concept of "Unity in Diversity."

The exhibits at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, include the iPS heart beating, flying cars, and a rock that originated on Mars.

In his speech at an opening ceremony on Saturday, Emperor Naruhito said, "It is my sincere hope that Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan will serve as an opportunity for people around the world to respect not only their own lives, but also the lives of those around them and the various forms of life that exist in nature, and to be inspired to work together to create a sustainable future."

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Kuwait's 'Visionary Lighthouse' pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka.

KUNA photo

## Gold jumps to KD 32.1 per gram in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Gold prices reached historic highs in trading last week, driven by global factors such as escalation of the trade war between the United States of America and China, the continuation of global geopolitical crises, and the decline of the US dollar to its lowest levels in nearly two years. However, the impact was felt particularly in Kuwait, where gold prices saw significant increases.

According to a special report issued by the Kuwaiti company Dar Al-Sabik on Sunday, the price of spot gold surged to \$3,245.45 per ounce, marking a 6.9 percent weekly gain. This rise was attributed to the weakening US dollar and an increased demand for safe-haven assets, driven by fears of a global economic

slowdown. Also, the price of gold futures for June delivery closed at \$3,244.60 per ounce, up by \$67.10 (2.1 percent) in a single session.

Locally, the price of 24-carat gold in Kuwait was reported at KD 32.1 per gram (approximately \$98), while 22-carat gold stood at about KD 29.42 (approximately \$90) per gram. Silver prices remained stable at KD 370 per kilogram (about \$1,209).

On the global front, the increase in gold prices was influenced by the escalation of the trade war between the United States and China to unprecedented levels, ongoing geopolitical crises, and a significant drop in the US dollar. The dollar index hit a two-year low of 99.01 points, which is the lowest since May 2022, following the release of weak US economic

data, including a 0.4 percent month-on-month drop in the producer price index for March, marking its first contraction in 17 months.

In addition, the annual inflation rate based on the producer price index fell from 3.2 percent in February to 2.7 percent, while core inflation, excluding food and energy, remained above 3 percent, reaching 3.3 percent. These inflationary pressures pose ongoing challenges for US monetary policymakers.

The University of Michigan survey revealed a sharp decline in US consumer confidence, with the index dropping from 57 points in March to 50.8 points in the preliminary April reading.

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## Heatwave, zero visibility to hit Kuwait on Monday

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): The Kuwait Meteorological Department was expecting Kuwait to experience a hot air mass on Monday, which will cause a rise in temperatures and active southerly winds that will reduce horizontal visibility due to dust, particularly in open areas.

The acting director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told KUNA on Sunday that a cold air front is expected to pass over Kuwait Monday afternoon, the winds will turn northwesterly and become stronger, and visibility will continue to decline to below 1,000 meters due to dust, with some areas possibly experiencing zero visibility.

Al-Ali also predicted sea waves to rise to six feet, with dust gradually settling. The weather is expected to improve from Tuesday morning, accompanied by a drop in temperatures.

He affirmed the importance of following weather updates through the Meteorological Department's official website, app, and social media channels.

## Kuwait to host key forum on combating human trafficking

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Minister of Justice, Nasser Al-Sumait announced on Sunday that Kuwait is preparing to host the 6th session of the Government Forum on Combating Human Trafficking.

In a press statement, Al-Sumait who also chairs the Permanent National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Person and Smuggling of Migrant, affirmed that Kuwait's hosting of the forum reflects its unwavering commitment to protecting human rights and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Al-Sumait

He noted that the forum, themed "Protecting Rights and Promoting Justice in Combating Human Trafficking" was aligned with Kuwait's ongoing efforts on both legislative and executive tracks.

Kuwait has made significant strides to strengthen its legal framework to combat human trafficking through implementing relevant laws in line with its international obligations and firm respect of global human rights standards.

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## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:03 Asr ..... 15:23  
 Sunrise... 05:25 Maghrib .. 18:13  
 Zohr ..... 11:49 Isha ..... 19:33

## Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** A significant Increase in temperature, partly cloudy and with light to moderate freshening southerly wind to southwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h causing rising dust with a chance

## Weather

for scattered light rain.

**By Night:** Dusty with moderate to fresh strong at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 30-60 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	32	21
Abdaly	32	18
Jahra	33	21
Salmiyah	28	21
Jal Aliyah	32	18
Nuwaisib	32	22

## Al-Tabtabaei to attend ministerial roundtable and UNESCO meeting

## Kuwait joins Human Capability Initiative Conference

By Khaled Al-Shammari

RIYADH, April 13, (KUNA): The second edition of the Human Capability Initiative (HCI) Conference kicked off on Sunday, in Riyadh, under the theme "Beyond Readiness," with the participation of Kuwaiti Minister of Education, Engineer Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, along with more than 300 participants.

In a press statement, Minister of Education and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Human Capability Development Program, Yousef Al-Benyani, said that the second edition of the conference, which is witnessing international participation from 38 countries, is a continuation of the previous successes of the first edition.

He added that this conference affirms the kingdom's leading role and its keenness to participate in the global dialogue on the future of human capability development.

The Kuwaiti Minister of Education is scheduled to participate today in a ministerial roundtable meeting with the participation of 20 ministers from various countries, as well as a meeting of the Board of Directors of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The conference features more than 100 dialogue sessions spread across four main platforms, aiming to exchange expertise and discuss prominent practices that contribute to enhancing human capability readiness in response to the world's rapid



Kuwaiti Minister of Education, Engineer Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, along with more than 300 participants. KUNA photo

changes, in addition to exploring key future trends.

The sessions focus on innovative

models to empower individuals and communities, as well as on strengthening collaboration between the

public, private, and non-profit sectors to develop sustainable and impactful solutions for the future.

## Municipal Committee set to deliberate metro, agricultural land amendments

## 22nd Council meeting to address transport routes and zoning issues

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, headed by Munira Al-Amir, will hold its 22nd meeting for the third legislative round on Tuesday,**

The committee will deliberate on two items on its agenda as follows:

■ Updated response of the executive body to the query of the deputy chairman of the council regarding the Kuwait Metro project;

■ Proposed amendment to the schedule of requirements and specifications for agriculture and livestock areas as per the request of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari in his letter dated March 12, 2025.

The updated response of the Kuwait Municipality about Kuwait Metro states that the metro route and right-of-way have been included in the survey plans as per the letter of the Structural Planning Department dated Sept 11, 2011. This included the decision

that the council issued on July 11, 2011; stating the preliminary approval for the study of the structural plan for public transport in the country.

According to the seventh alternative regarding the allocation of the proposal routes for various modes of transportation (heavy rail, metro, light rail, tram, tram feeder buses, metro and light transport); these routes will be handed over after their allocation and upon approval of the Transportation Ministry. This will be in coordination with the concerned ministries and entities, taking into account the recommendations presented in the study in order to guarantee the success of the project.

The project was transferred from Ministry of Transportation to the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) when the latter was established in 2014.

Asked about the entity tasked to study the initially approved route for the metro; address the existing problems, difficulties and obstacles in private or public properties; find plausible solutions and present proposals, the Municipality disclosed the current study is conducted by the Public-Private Partnership Pro-

jects Authority. It clarified that a detailed study will be completed once the Transportation Sector in PART is activated to carry out the final studies for the metro's routes and stations.

The Municipality disclosed that it received a letter from PART dated Sept 6, 2018; indicating that it is focusing on the implementation of the project, given its significant contribution to the development of the internal passenger transport sector. "This sector is considered the main element in development, and it contributes to alleviating traffic congestion, which causes numerous economic and social problems. PART explained that it is currently conducting a study on the project, detailing its findings and how to implement them. A report will then be presented to the Council of Ministers for action," the Municipality added.

The Municipality explained that it abandoned the metro project for years without taking any action; stressing it is not the entity responsible for the project, which falls under the jurisdiction of PART.

The most important proposed amendments to Table No. Six (re-

quirements and specifications for agricultural and livestock areas) are as follows:

■ Amend building ratios in the agricultural areas (Wafra, Abdally and Sulabiya) to allow only 10 percent of the plot area to be built, with a maximum of 10,000 square meters to include residential buildings and a family rest house for the plot owner with a total building area not exceeding 1,000 square meters, including the ground and first floors, workers' residence and a guard's room with an area not exceeding 2,000 square meters.

■ Allow building reserves at a rate not exceeding 80 percent of the plot area that must be covered with light materials.

■ The maximum height for the residence of the plot owner and family rest house is nine meters, 10 meters for all types of workshops and warehouses, five meters for the room of the guard.

■ The setback must not be less than five meters from all sides of the plot's borders, except the place designated for collecting garbage containers and the guard's room and its facilities, which may be attached to one of the facades.

## Kuwait welcomes Oman role in high-level Iran-US nuclear talks

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Saturday that Kuwait welcomes Oman's hosting of the high-level talks between the United States and Iran on the latter's nuclear program.

It expressed, in a statement, hope

that the talks will contribute to strengthening peace, security and stability in the region.

The ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's support to dialogue and diplomatic solutions as a means of settling disputes, praising the effort made by Oman in this regard.

## Other Voices

## The intelligence of Israel and the stupidity of the Zionists

By Ahmad alsarraf

The events of October 7, 2023 were not entirely unexpected, and will ultimately serve the Palestinian cause, regardless of Hamas' intentions behind the attacks or the catastrophic consequences.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel 76 years ago, many of its leaders have understood that security and stability cannot be guaranteed for their continued existence in the surrounding environment without the complete elimination of Palestinian demands. This can only be achieved by eliminating the Palestinians themselves.

Efforts to normalize relations with Arab states, and to weaken and disperse their efforts are merely a means to achieve this goal.

This explains the unprecedented brutality in the treatment of the people of Gaza and the Israelis' categorical rejection of the "two-state solution."

Some opponents of the Palestinian resistance repeatedly assert that Israel created Hamas. They argue that the October 7 attack could not have taken place without Israel's knowledge, thus providing justification for destroying Gaza, killing as many of its residents as possible, and forcing the rest to leave their land.

If this is the case, why hold Hamas responsible and accuse it of treason? Why lament the massive destruction in Gaza? Why do they describe Hamas as "criminal," even though they themselves have previously condemned Hamas for being a tool of Israel?

If I were Palestinian, especially from Gaza, and believed that Israel's survival depended on my destruction, with no state willing to offer me protection or security after being abandoned by most, and knowing I had no homeland, no future, no dignity, and no freedom, would I hesitate to carry out, or at least support, any form of resistance, even if it meant sacrificing myself?

Several Israeli leaders and officials, including Ehud Barak and others, have acknowledged the Palestinians' right to resist, a right that some Arabs continue to deny.

Many Palestinians have already been martyred, and many more will face the same fate in the future.



alsarraf

This is the painful reality of history and the inevitable fate of any oppressed people fighting for justice, dignity, and freedom.

Numerous Palestinian cities have been destroyed, and their people displaced, with more cities and more lives at risk in the future.

This, too, is the harsh reality of history. There is no struggle without sacrifice. Those who endlessly call for a shift toward peace and the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the issue have repeatedly failed to present a viable vision for achieving peace, given Israel's continued intransigence and its insistence on annihilating the people of Gaza, by any means and at any cost. What they are advocating for is, in fact, the same as what the Zionists demand: complete surrender to their fate and acceptance of whatever terms they choose to impose.

The attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023 led to a series of dangerous and unprecedented consequences, many of which inadvertently advanced the Palestinian cause.

An increasing number of countries, particularly major Western powers, have acknowledged the Palestinians' right to an independent state. There has also been growing discussion in various Western circles about the exaggerated numbers of Holocaust victims. More people are now recognizing the parallels between the treatment of Palestinians by the Zionists and the atrocities committed by the Nazis against Jews in Germany and Europe. Furthermore, the extent of the alliance between the Zionist lobby and the US administration has been laid bare, highlighting its significant influence, even within the American legislature.

The cause has also garnered the sympathy and deep understanding of many of the world's leading thinkers, opinion leaders, and commentators, including Jewish scholars. This marks a revolution that few could have anticipated just a few years ago.

Establishing the truth requires patience and struggle. As Palestinian poet Abdel Rahim Mahmoud said:

"I will carry my soul in my palm and throw it into the abyss of destruction.

Unless I lead a dignified life, I would rather die."

Those who fail to understand this are often unaware of the true value of dignity.

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## Kuwait army deputy chief of staff to attend 8th Dragon Group meeting

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad left Kuwait this morning with an official delegation to participate in the eighth meeting of the Dragon Group in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Dragon Group comprises the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, as well as the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

During the meeting, a number of issues of mutual interest will be discussed, and ongoing efforts will be



KUNA photo  
 Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army.

reviewed, and views on regional challenges will be exchanged.

## Kuwait deplores Israel's closure of UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli occupation forces' closure of six schools affiliated to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in East Jerusalem.

In a statement, the ministry said the step is a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law that seeks systematically to prevent Palestinian children from their right to education.

This measure constitutes dangerous escalation as part of the con-

tinued chains of Israeli occupation violations against the brotherly Palestinian people, the statement noted.

It reiterated Kuwait's categorical rejection of all attempts aiming to undermine the UNRWA's role.

The ministry renewed Kuwait's call for the international community, mainly the Security Council, to assume its responsibility to stop these dangerous violations and hold the Israeli occupation authorities accountable.

It further called for serious work to ensure the continuation of UNRWA services and the protection of its educational institutions, according to the statement.

## CMA-certified training boosts graduate employability

## UIC partners with KU for lecture on CISI qualification

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Union of Investment Companies collaborated with the Community Service and Continuing Education Center at Kuwait University for a lecture titled "The CISI qualification journey to work in the financial and investment sector" that was held on April 9.

According to a press release issued by UIC, the lecture highlighted the importance of professional training and international accreditation, particularly in financial and investment services, with a focus on qualifications accredited by the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI).

This lecture was part of ongoing joint efforts to prepare graduates for the job market and raise awareness about the importance of enrolling in both mandatory and optional training programs accredited by the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) of Kuwait, as well as those approved by the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI). These programs are designed to enhance employment opportunities in the financial and investment sectors.

The initiative is in line with Kuwait's strategic direction and the goals of the "New Kuwait 2035" vision, particularly in the area of human capital development, which is a fundamental pillar for transitioning to a competitive, knowledge-based economy.

This vision aims to cultivate a skilled national workforce capable of leading development by equipping them with modern knowledge and skills, especially in the investment and financial sectors, which form the backbone of the national economy.



Representatives from the UIC.

The initiative also seeks to bridge the gap between academic education and the labor market by offering practical training tailored to the needs of the local economy. This approach enhances job prospects for graduates in investment institutions, banks, and financial companies.

This approach reflects the shared belief of all participating parties about the importance of partnerships between the public and private sectors and academic institutions. Such collaboration is seen as the most effective way to develop a knowledgeable and skilled professional generation equipped with the tools needed to achieve excellence and strengthen Kuwait's position as a leading regional and global financial hub.

The main topics covered in the lecture were:

■ Overview of mandatory and optional programs approved by CMA, including:

1. CMA laws and regulations  
 2. Introduction to securities and investment (international curriculum)

3. Islamic Finance Qualification, specifically for employees of licensed entities operating in accordance with Islamic Sharia

■ Review of the most important CISI certifications and standards recognized locally and internationally.

■ Discussion on the importance of professional qualifications for graduates seeking careers in the investment, banking, real estate, and financial industries.

■ Sharing real-world experiences and success stories from Kuwait's investment sector.

■ Interactive Q&A session to answer inquiries about registration procedures, professional accreditation, and career advancement opportunities.

CMA places great emphasis on ensuring the professional competence and technical proficiency of individuals nominated for "registerable" positions in the investment and finance sectors. This is in line with Article 3-3-2 of Book Five of the Executive Regulations of Law No. 7/2010 on establishment of CMA and its securities activities.

The training programs also aim to enhance participants' understanding of both theoretical and practical concepts related to financial markets. They equip trainees with comprehensive knowledge of the regulatory and operational requirements of investment institutions.

During the event, an electronic questionnaire was distributed to students to assess their interest in the

various training courses and identify their training priorities.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, UIC will organize a series of training programs in cooperation with the Community Service and Continuing Education Center at Kuwait University. These programs will be delivered under the supervision of certified trainers and specialists from the investment sector.

Secretary-General of UIC Fadwa Darwish affirmed that this initiative reflects UIC's commitment to its national role in empowering young Kuwaiti talent.

She noted that the initiative aims to open new horizons for youth by offering practical and professional training that is in line with the demands of both the local and international markets, thereby enhancing employment opportunities in investment and financial institutions.

Darwish also praised the pivotal role played by Kuwait University through its Community Service and Continuing Education Center in supporting national initiatives of this kind.

She stressed that collaboration between academic institutions and regulatory and professional bodies is an important factor for the success of any sustainable development strategy.

Darwish also commended Kuwait University for its commitment to link higher education outcomes with labor market needs, and to provide a flexible and integrated learning environment that enables students and graduates to pursue continuous development and earn valuable professional qualifications.



## Three blows in a month ... it hurts: Is Kuwait chasing investors away?

"IS Kuwait really on its way to becoming an international commercial and financial hub? This question is being asked forcefully in light of the ministerial decisions and new laws," Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Without a doubt, everybody is demanding for regulating markets. However, certain measures require a long-term vision related to domestic and foreign investments, including flexibility in this regard.

"If the Ministry of Commerce issues a decision that reflects lack of commercial confidence in institutions or companies, those who fail to comply face fines ranging from KD1,000 to KD10,000. Therefore, everyone must quickly disclose and identify the actual beneficiary to avoid such penalties. This increases the complexity of business operations at a time that flexibility is required.

"It must be taken into account that abuses are not met with widespread punishment. If a group of merchants failed to realize this; we should not hold everyone accountable, especially since Kuwait needs to attract more investments, similar to other countries keen on diversifying their sources of income.

"On the other hand, a decision regarding land was issued with a vague title, similar to a ban on land monopoly. This is an error that must be clarified. The Kuwaiti economy is constitutionally free; meaning, there are no restrictions except in cases of fraud, deception and anything that violates the Constitution and the law.

"Thus, there must also be a vision to ensure matters do not deviate from their intended purpose. Even if intentions are good, miscalculations or unclear language can lead to misdirection. This is counterproductive to the transformation of Kuwait into a financial and commercial center, as investors will not invest in the country if they perceive significant risks.

"This brings us to another aspect of the recently issued laws, which some citizens consider a form of arbitrariness, that is, the Traffic Law. While it is true that road accidents must be reduced, the reality contradicts the legislator's position. Statistics indicate an exaggeration in the severity of the situation.

"While the idea is good, the approach is really unjustified. With the massive number of road surveillance cameras, the issue becomes more like a restriction that confuses drivers.

"In past decades, especially when some public employees entered the commercial sector; we witnessed them issuing executive decisions that served their own interests, particularly the taxi operators who were strict in the pursuit of their own interests. So, what was the result? Everyone knows the answer. Three thorny issues emerged in a span of one month, which indicate a certain degree of haste. I consider them a heavy dose, because people have begun to feel as if they are in school.

"The Kuwaiti people deserve trust, because violations are minor. If the goal is reform, then that is welcomed. However, the self-evident legal principle must be taken into account: the law regulates the life of society in accordance with its culture. It becomes a general social behavior. In other words, it is unfair to use the rule applied worldwide in judging the anomaly based on rare and individual behaviors."

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"Food security consists of several components, each playing a critical role in creating a system that enables a society to achieve self-sufficiency in essential goods and nutritional values. Naturally, this self-sufficiency must aim to meet the goals of maintaining a balance in the availability of high-nutritional goods over extended periods, including crops and basic supplies. Adding the element of medicine to this equation further enhances its importance," columnist **Dr. Sultan**

**Majed Al-Salem** wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"In Kuwait, for many years, various committees, government agencies, projects, and even personal initiatives have worked towards enhancing food security in different ways. Over time, we have written extensively about this issue and raised awareness about its various aspects. However, one critical component remains overlooked despite the wealth of local expertise: shrimp farming. Specifically, farming shrimp on land in specialized ponds with a clear, focused purpose, much like inland aquaculture, has yet to be addressed by any specialized initiative.

"Of course, I am not referring to the success or funding of isolated projects or businesses, but rather to the establishment of specialized complexes with a clear and defined goal, akin to initiatives undertaken by governments in the Arab, Western, and Asian regions. This is where the role of various government bodies and institutions becomes crucial, as they must work together towards this objective, which has been discussed for quite some time, yet we have not seen any real governmental initiative to adopt a comprehensive project for this purpose.

"At this juncture, it is important to address a key question: Why focus on shrimp farming instead of fish farming as a priority? The answer, naturally, is multifaceted, and includes market value, demand, and quality. However, the importance of fish farming should not be overlooked, as it too can help reduce prices and increase supply.

"In 2023, Kuwait consumed fish worth KD 6.7 million, weighing approximately 2.8 tons, and the shrimp sales estimated at one million kilograms. These are significant figures, and aquaculture can help ensure a steady supply of these products in local markets, reducing costs, and also factoring in specialized studies on the environmental and economic impacts, without neglecting the social aspect.

"Globally, fish farming expanded significantly between 1990 and 2020, growing from 21.8 million tons to 87.5 million tons, with over 7,000 tons specifically attributed to shrimp. These figures, especially those related to aquaculture, shed light on global consumption trends, market value, and the benefits it brings to all stakeholders.

"A reference study from the University of Glasgow in Scotland highlights that, in addition to meeting one of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals related to ending hunger, a balance must be struck between the social impacts of fish farming and other environmental and technical considerations.

"This brings us to the question: How will consumers respond to these products? Generally, the response tends to be positive when the products are financially supported and competitively priced. Therefore, it is necessary to take a serious approach locally in the coming days, with a significant influx of aquaculture products into the market. Of course, this will only happen if we take proactive steps!

"On a side note: I was taken aback by a comment on a post on X platform, claiming that during the recent holiday, expatriates were the primary users of public facilities, and that citizens were left behind. This is an unacceptable statement. I am not sure where to begin in analyzing and deconstructing this flawed thinking, but to summarize, and without diving into the depths of the racism some harbor, all communities residing on this land have the same rights, freedoms, and responsibilities as citizens. They are partners in the nation's progress and have the right to enjoy their holidays as they wish, provided their stay is regulated by law. Let's elevate our thinking a bit. Perhaps God will help us with our own selves."

— **Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty**



Adel Al-Kharafi



Dr. Al-Salem



Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef supervises the security campaign.



Part of the security campaign.

Mol photos

## Campaign results in arrests, citations and vehicle seizures

# Acting Prime Minister oversees comprehensive security and traffic operation in Maidan Hawally

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Ministry of Interior conducted a comprehensive security and traffic campaign in Maidan Hawally under the direct leadership and supervision of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign witnessed active participation of various field departments of the Traffic Operations Affairs Sector, including the General Traffic Department, the General Department of Rescue Police, the Central General Department

of Operations, and the Private Security Sector. Female police officers also participated in the campaign to enhance its effectiveness and achieve its security objectives.

As a result, the campaign led to the issuance of 921 traffic citations, the arrest of five individuals who were in violation of the residency and labor laws, the detention of five individuals who were reported as absconding, the arrest of three individuals with outstanding warrants, and the referral of three individuals to the

Drug Control General Department. In addition, eight vehicles and motorcycles, wanted by the judiciary, were seized, and ten vehicles and motorcycles in violation of traffic laws were impounded.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed that these campaigns are part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing security and public order, with ongoing efforts to apprehend violators and wanted individuals, and ensure a safe and stable environment throughout Kuwait.

# Court of Cassation wraps up deliberations in ex-MPs' case

CA upholds Kuwaiti woman's right to home title

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Court of Cassation will conclude deliberations on the State security cases of former MPs Hussein Al-Qallaf, Anwar Al-Fikr and Hamad Al-Alyan on Sunday.

It will also rule on the vote-buying case of former MP Saadoun Hammad and others; case of former MP Abdullah Fahad accused of insulting the judiciary after the Court of Appeals suspended the six-month prison sentence imposed on him, and the case of Musaed Al-Qurayfah who is accused of insulting HH the Amir.

Earlier, the Court of Appeals suspended the two-year prison sentence imposed Al-Qurayfah, sentenced Al-Qallaf to two years in prison with hard labor, acquitted

Saadoun Hammad of vote-buying, and refrained from imposing punishment on Al-Alyan.

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeals upheld the right of a female citizen to obtain a title deed for the marital home without requiring the signature of her ex-husband.

Attorney Ali Al-Wawan, lawyer of the citizen, appealed to the judiciary; as his client challenged her ex-husband and the concerned government agencies. She explained that she built the marital home in 2012, but her ex-husband divorced her in 2016 and refused to grant her the rights to her home.

Al-Wawan then presented to the court the receipts of electricity bills that his client paid, in addition to documents proving she spent money on the construction of the house and this was corroborated by an expert's report. He then called for amending the Housing Law to ensure justice for female citizens and shorten the process of going to court for them. He said the State provides housing care for families, primarily the custodial mother after divorce.

# Court of First Instance sessions relocated to the new Justice Palace effective Sunday

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: President of the Court of First Instance Counselor Abdullah Thanyan Al-Thunayan issued Decision No. 17/2025 on the relocation of all Court of First Instance sessions from their current locations at the old Justice Palace and the Capital Family Court to the new Justice Palace building effective Sunday, reports Al-Anba daily.

The decision states: "In light of Minister of Justice Decision No. 119/2025 regarding the relocation of Court of First Instance sessions to the new Justice

Palace building, and based on the authorization granted by the General Assembly of the court, and in order to facilitate judicial work; all Court of First Instance sessions shall be moved from their existing headquarters at the old Justice Palace and the Capital Family Court to the new Justice Palace building, effective April 13, 2025."

According to the decision, all sessions will be held in the designated halls at 9:00 am., with evening sessions scheduled for 2:00 pm.

# KFF implements energy conservation measures

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Chief Major General Talal Mohammed Al-Roumi has instructed all sectors to rationalize consumption of electricity and water both during and after working hours, in line with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These directives aim to conserve essential resources and reduce loads during the summer months.

KFF has assigned the Construction and Maintenance Department in the Engineering Affairs and Information Systems Sector to oversee the implementation of these directives.

## News in Brief

### 2 young men arrested for possession of drugs

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Capital Security Directorate patrols arrested two young men in Sulaibikhat after they were found in possession of narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the patrols were conducting their rounds in the area when they noticed a suspicious vehicle parked in a school parking lot.

Upon approaching the car, officers discovered the two individuals inside using drugs. A thorough search revealed a bag containing Shabu, as well as various drug paraphernalia. The suspects were immediately referred to the concerned authority, along with the prohibited items in their possession.

□ □ □

**Kuwaiti scammed:** A Kuwaiti citizen, in his 50s, filed a formal complaint at the Farwaniya Police Station, alleging that he was the victim of a financial scam involving an expatriate restaurant owner, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the complainant, the suspect approached him in Farwaniya, proposing a business partnership and requested a financial contribution in exchange for shared ownership in a restaurant. The complainant agreed and transferred the requested amount. However, shortly after receiving the funds, the expatriate purportedly closed the restaurant and became unreachable, as his mobile phone has been switched off.

The case was referred to the Criminal Investigations Department in the Interior Ministry for further investigation into the suspect's whereabouts and the circumstances surrounding the alleged scam.

## Campsites cleared, deposits refunded

### Farwaniya inspection sees multiple violations

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (Agencies): The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has announced the launching of inspection campaigns in a bid to uncover building violations in investment, commercial, industrial and private residential buildings, reports Al-Anba daily.

The inspection tours include taking regulatory measures against those proven to have committed violations, while ensuring compliance with the rules and regulations. The department disclosed that the first inspection tour in Farwaniya Governorate covered several areas, resulting in the issuance of 13 violation citations and 40 warnings for building violations in Farwaniya.

The department affirmed that the inspection tours are conducted in all governorates as per the schedule it has prepared in coordination with other concerned de-

partments.

Meanwhile, Head of the Kuwait Municipality's Camps Committee Faisal Al-Otaibi revealed that 95 percent of camping sites have been evacuated, and insurance deposits are being refunded to permit holders who have restored their sites to their original condition without any violations, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Otaibi stressed that municipality teams are continuing to inspect the remaining campsites and remove the few tents that are still in place.

He clarified that grazing tents fall outside the jurisdiction of the Camps Committee.

Al-Otaibi revealed that teams from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) are participating in the municipality's inspections to ensure cleanliness standards are met before insurance deposit refunds are processed.



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Representatives from Housing and Electricity sectors during the session.

PAHW photo

# PAHW steps up coordination to fast-track housing projects

Report to reach Cabinet soon

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) held the second meeting of the Government Coordination Committee, in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

During the meeting, both parties discussed implementation plans to deal with challenges facing infrastructure service projects in the new housing cities, with the aim of developing effective solutions.

A detailed report on the outcomes of the efforts by

the relevant government entities will be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

PAHW Director General and Team Leader Rashid Al-Enezi stated that the second meeting builds on existing efforts to accelerate the implementation of housing projects and complete the necessary infrastructure to ensure their readiness in parallel with citizens' relocation to the new cities.

He said further meetings will be held with all concerned government bodies, in line with the Cabinet's decision and the directives of the Minister of State for Housing Affairs.

Al-Enezi added that the Council of Ministers closely monitors the performance of the government agencies that are responsible for executing housing projects.

## Comprehensive bylaw aims for transparency and oversight

# Municipal Council member seeks overhaul of land allocation rules

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** In a legislative precedent within the Municipal Council, member **Munira Al-Amir** has submitted a comprehensive proposal to create a unified bylaw for the allocation of government land to regulate past and current decisions according to a modern legal and regulatory framework.

The proposal includes a detailed vision encompassing the mechanisms for submitting applications, studying allocations, handing over sites, controls for cancellation and extension, and an integrated electronic system for tracking applications and projects.

The proposed bylaw revolves around six key points, most notably; documenting previous allocation decisions, linking allocations to the State's master plan, setting binding timeframes for implementation, and automatic cancellation in the event of a breach of conditions.

Al-Amir pointed out that the allocation authority is one of the most important tools, which the council possesses to contribute to the realization of the development vision of the State. She asserted that the time has come to compile all previous allocation decisions into a single, comprehensive and updateable bylaw that stipulates precise requirements and steps to facilitate implementation.

She believes the issuance of regulations for the allocation process will address the disparities in the implementation of previous decisions and enhance the efficiency of municipal performance, especially in light of the increasing reliance of government

projects on site allocations.

She added that having a clear regulatory framework will guarantee the government agencies' adherence to timeliness and technical procedures, while improving the ability of the council to perform its oversight and regulatory roles to the fullest.

Meanwhile, the council -- chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri -- will hold its 16th regular session for the third legislative term on Sunday to discuss several items on its agenda; the most important of which is a letter from the minister of state for Municipal Affairs dated March 27 regarding the ratification of the minutes of the council meeting held on Feb 23.

The agenda also includes the implementation of Cabinet decisions related to transferring the allocation of labor residential cities to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and the Ministry of Finance.

Last week, the Technical Committee, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, approved the request to reallocate the sites of labor residential cities allocated earlier pursuant to previous council resolutions in implementation of two Cabinet decisions.

**These are the recommendations:**

- First: Allocate the following to PAHW
  - First labor residential city in Subiya measuring 2,465,000 square meters
  - Third labor residential city in South Jahra measuring 1,015,000 square meters
- Second: Allocate the following to the Ministry of Finance:
  - Second labor residential city in North Mutlaa measuring 2,465,000 square meters
  - Fifth labor residential city in South Sabah Al-Ahmad measuring 2,465,000 square meters
  - Sixth labor residential city in South Khiran Residential City measuring 2,465,000 square meters.



Al-Amir

## MPW denies Wafra street responsibility

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** The Ministry of Public Works has clarified that the street in Wafra, which was recently damaged by accumulated water, is not within its jurisdiction, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In response to reports circulating on social media, the ministry explained that it has not been able to carry out any maintenance

on the street over the past two years. The main challenge is the difficulty of making thorough repairs due to the ongoing water accumulation in the area.

# APRIL

## Room Promotion



The Arab Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Championship kicks off in Tunisia with Kuwaiti participation.

KUNA photo

## Kuwait backs youth at Arab Robotics meet

Kuwait has been eager to back scientific activities in a manner that shows its attention to science and technology, Kuwait's Ambassador to Tunisia Mansour Al-Omar affirmed on Friday.

Al-Omar made the statement while receiving the Kuwaiti delegation's members partaking in the 16th Arab Robotics and AI Championship to kick off in Tunis on Saturday, with a wide participation of Arab institutions.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Al-Omar said such activities boost modern technological and scientific collaboration, expressing delight for Kuwait's partaking in this event, which seeks to enhance innovation in this field.

Meanwhile, deputy head of the Ku-

wait Information Technology Society Dr. Abeer Al-Omairi said the institution continues its role in developing technological education of young generations and encourage their innovation, in line with Kuwait's future vision towards technological and knowledge economy. She voiced pride for Kuwait's honorable representation in this key championship.

Al-Omairi, also head of the society, said Kuwait's competitors are 12 high and intermediate schools students who have been trained well on these skills.

The event is a real opportunity for Kuwait's students to share, and enhance, expertise with all participants from Arab countries in a competitive environment, she affirmed. (KUNA)

## KUNA launches new training program

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** KUNA Center for Development of Media Skills launched its training program on Sunday until April 17, under the title of "Skills of Handling and Managing News Bulletins," with KUNA staff in participation.

Presented by KUNA's Managing Editor Mahmoud Boushehri, the program covers the basics of a desk editor's work, as well as the technical and administrative role of the bulletin director on the news desk.

It also covers the challenges of the bulletin director's work, the skills required in management and communication, and how to manage the daily bulletin.

It also addresses the foundations of news production, news value standards, evaluating and re-editing journalistic material, as well as the bulletin during emergencies and how to handle breaking news.



KUNA's Managing Editor Mahmoud Boushehri

KUNA photo

Established in December 1995, the KUNA Center for Development of Media Skills is considered one of the most important media training centers, it aims to develop personal media capabilities and advance professional media work.

## Al-Zour refinery gets KD 130mn upgrade

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** According to official sources from the oil sector, the Al-Zour refinery is preparing for a major periodic maintenance project, with an estimated budget of KD 130 million, reports Al-Anba daily.

The sources revealed that the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has divided the massive contract into two parts: Block 1, valued at KWD 57.45 million, and Block 2, valued at KWD 71.79 million.

They explained that the Al-Zour Refinery project is considered one of the most

important strategic projects in Kuwait's oil sector, and plays a vital role in the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's 2040 vision.

The refinery has a refining capacity of approximately 615,000 barrels per day, accounting for 43.5 percent of Kuwait's total refining capacity.

It is made up of three mini-refineries, each equipped with atmospheric distillation, desulfurization, and hydrotreating units, which enhance operational flexibility and ensure continuous operations.

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## LOCAL

## Kuwait wins seat on AL human rights committee



Al-Mutairi

CAIRO, April 13, (KUNA): Kuwait has been voted in as a member of the Arab charter on human rights committee for a four-year term, its permanent delegate to the Arab League said on Sunday.

The Kuwaiti nominee, who garnered the second largest number of votes, is joined by his counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman to complete the committee's membership, Talal Al-Mutairi told KUNA.

On Kuwait's membership in the committee, he said it was a testament to the trust bestowed upon the nation, in addition to its impressive human rights record, which includes its prompt delivery of a routine report on the matter, added the diplomat.

### 'Campaign revives hope'

## Namaa Charity provides water to thousands of Gazan families

RAMALLAH, April 13, (KUNA): Namaa Charity, part of Kuwait Social Reform Society, carried out an emergency campaign on Sunday to distribute water to disaster-stricken Gazan families.

Through 48 tankers, more than 12,000 Palestinian families were given one-to-two gallons of water to meet the minimum daily needs in light of the scarcity of resources and services, said Charity vice CEO Abdulaziz Al-Kandari.

The campaign, co-organized by Wa-

faa Palestine, praised Namaa's role in reviving hope. Wafaa Director, Marwan Muhaisen, said that despite all the difficulties, Kuwaiti aid arrived to revive hope.

The initiative comes as part of a series by Namaa with the support of the people of Kuwait to help deal with crises in Palestine, especially besieged Gaza. Namaa assured that support will continue to include food, healthcare, and other aid to the most affected families.



Distribution of water to disaster-stricken Gazan families. KUNA photos



Group photo during the AAOIFI 9th Sharia Audit Conference.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

# Ministry strengthens oversight of Sharia-compliant companies

Shura-AAOIFI conference highlights Sharia audit importance

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marwa Al-Jaidan said the ministry is focusing on the improvement of the regulatory and oversight environment for companies operating in accordance with the Islamic Sharia Law.**

In her speech at the opening of the Ninth Shura-AAOIFI Sharia Audit Conference, Al-Jaidan pointed out this has been the case since the opening of the first Islamic bank in the country in 1977 and it continued in the 1990s, during which a number of Islamic companies were established, and these companies were required to ensure their articles of association and bylaws comply with Sharia principles.

She affirmed that the ministry has always been keen on keeping pace with the development of this vital sector by activating legal frameworks, most notably the Companies Law, which requires Islamic companies to appoint an independent Sharia audit committee, approve its reports and disclose them with complete transparency. "This is a fundamental element in the credibility of their operations and to ensure the confidence of customers and investors," she added.

She pointed out that Sharia auditing is no longer just a technical or procedural activity, as it is rather

an integrated regulatory system which contributes to building financial institutions that guarantee balance between compliance with Sharia provisions and efficient institutional performance. "Therefore, the ministry remains committed to work closely with other regulatory authorities in the country and financial institutions, which balance compliance with Sharia provisions and efficient institutional performance," she revealed.

She stated that the ministry is keen to work closely with other regulatory authorities like the Central Bank of Kuwait, Capital Markets Authority and the Insurance Regulatory Unit, to unify standards and enhance governance and Sharia audit practices.

### Islamic economy

She affirmed the ministry's support for licensing and monitoring activities in this sector, such as Sharia consulting firms and external Sharia audit offices. "This reflects the country's commitment to create a flexible and reliable legislative and regulatory environment that supports the Islamic economy," she asserted.

She explained that these efforts have shaped Kuwait into one of the most dynamic countries in the growth of the Islamic finance sector. "Sharia-compliant assets now represent approximately 49 percent of the total assets of the Kuwaiti banking sector, according to a Fitch Ratings report for the first half of 2024. This indicator not only reflects the expansion of Islamic finance, but also demonstrates the growing confidence in this sector both locally and internationally. This growth is expected to continue in the coming years, driven by the growing demand for Islamic financial services and supported by the State's wise policies to transform Kuwait into a regional center

for Islamic finance," she disclosed.

She indicated that holding this conference in Kuwait -- with the broad participation of regulatory authorities, experts and practitioners in the Islamic finance sector -- is considered an important opportunity to exchange views and enhance integration between theoretical and practical experience. "Most importantly, it explores the prospects for developing Sharia auditing in light of rapid global transformations," she stressed.

She is hoping that the Shura-AAOIFI Conference will result in the formulation of practical recommendations and initiatives to consolidate the principles of governance and transparency in Islamic institutions and support the sustainability of this vital sector.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Kuwait Banking Association Yaqoub Al-Rifai stated that external Sharia auditing plays an important role in ensuring that Islamic financial institutions comply with Sharia principles. "It works hard to improve governance in Islamic banks, achieve greater transparency and credibility in banking operations, and ensure compliance with local and international laws and regulations related to Islamic finance. This increases the efficiency of the Islamic financial system in Kuwait and boosts customer and investor confidence. Exchanging ideas and experience on Sharia auditing will improve our understanding and lead us toward the advancement of Islamic financial systems," he elaborated.

He expressed his confidence that the discussions at the conference and the accompanying workshops will significantly contribute to the development of this vital field, in order to achieve shared goals and strengthen trust and transparency in financial institutions.

## Continued from Page 1

### Iran in

It is true that the Gulf states, and the Arab world as a whole, have been cautious when dealing with Iran. However, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has extended its hand to Iran more than once, expressing a desire to restore ties to the level seen during the era of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. That period was marked by economic and industrial cooperation, as well as strong relations at the popular level.

However, Tehran rejected all these efforts and chose to pursue a difficult path, which only led to greater tension. The countries of the region are now dealing with the recent developments with a sense of realism, grounded in the understanding that the Arabian Gulf basin is the backbone of global economic stability. Such stability, however, can only be achieved if the mullah's regime abandons its unrealistic projects.

Therefore, regardless of whether the negotiations in Muscat are direct or indirect, the path to a solution begins with the capitals close to Tehran.

If Iran truly seeks progress and stability, it must abandon its project of "exporting the sectarian revolution" and instead work on reaching an agreement with its neighbors.

### Expat driving

In other news, Ministry of Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf confirmed the humanitarian approach of the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the strict implementation of the new traffic law.

He disclosed there is a reconciliation order for traffic violations, which are viewed from a humanitarian perspective. "Grave traffic violations that cause fatal accidents will be subject to the maximum penalties, depending on the crime committed by the violator," he clarified.

He made this statement to reporters on the sidelines of the opening of the 38th Unified Gulf Traffic Week, with the theme, "Driving without a Phone," at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in the Avenues Mall.

Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Yousef Al-Khudah and senior security officials from GTD attended the event, which included the opening of an awareness exhibition at the Avenues Mall.

"The goal of the new traffic law is to protect the lives of road users and reduce traffic accidents," Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf revealed; while urg-

ing drivers to comply with the law to guarantee their safety while driving.

He pointed out that this year's Unified Gulf Traffic Week aims to spread traffic awareness, promote the culture of adhering to traffic rules, protect lives and properties, and instill safe traffic behavior in Gulf societies.

He stated "I am pleased to convey the greetings of acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and his wishes for the success of the event and to achieve the desired goals."

He added the Unified Gulf Traffic Week is an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation between security agencies and community engagement, contributing to the reduction of traffic accidents and to ensure a safer and more disciplined traffic environment.

"We would like to remind you that the new traffic law will take effect on April 22. It includes amendments aimed at raising road safety and enhancing compliance with traffic regulations. We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all those participating and supporting these events, asking Allah Almighty to crown our efforts with success, for the good of our beloved country and the safety of its citizens," he concluded.

Director General of GTD Brigadier Jamal Al-Foudari said "community participation has become an absolute necessity to overcome traffic challenges and find optimal solutions to reduce the loss of lives on the roads due to traffic accidents, which are often the direct result of committing violations. This can only be achieved through the cooperation of public and private institutions. They must shoulder their responsibilities and actively contribute to spreading traffic awareness, starting within institutions and extending to society as a whole."

He added that the slogan of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week embodies 38 years of joint cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the field of traffic awareness and emphasizes the importance of several concepts, all of which serve a single goal -- preserving lives. "This slogan is translated into practical action by the organizing committee of the event. The committee appreciates your presence and support, and considers them a major motivation to continue its efforts to intensify traffic awareness. Today, we are on the cusp of a new phase -- the implementation of the

amended Traffic Law. Through this, we aspire to raise awareness among road users and reduce the rates of accidents, injuries and deaths by utilizing all available technological means and leveraging digital development in all services and fields."

He thanked all employees at GTD, the organizing committee of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week, and the contributing companies and media outlets for their continuous support for this event throughout the year.

### Egypt's president

Meanwhile, Head of the Kuwaiti Diwanias Association Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Muajel welcomed the visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to the State of Kuwait, insisting that the visit highlights the deep-rooted historical ties between the two countries and reflects their shared commitment to strengthening cooperation in various sectors.

In a special statement, Al-Muajel expressed appreciation for President El-Sisi's visit, affirming that it comes at a critical time in the region and underscores Egypt's special place in the hearts of Kuwait's leadership and people.

He highlighted that the relationship between Egypt and Kuwait serves as a model of Arab brotherhood and cooperation based on a long history of mutual support and aligned positions.

Al-Muajel stated that the Kuwaiti Diwanias Association takes pride in this significant visit and look forward to its positive outcomes, which will further enhance cooperation between Kuwait and Egypt, and benefit both nations as well as promote greater Arab unity.

Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations are distinguished by their special nature and strong ties, spanning decades through fruitful joint cooperation, coordination on regional and international issues, and full solidarity across various milestones.

These historical relations have set an exemplary model for inter-Arab relations as Egypt was among the first countries to recognize Kuwait's independence in 1961, continuing its supportive stance toward Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.

Kuwait was also one of the first countries to support Egypt during difficult times, particularly during the Suez Crisis in 1956, the 1967 and October 1973 wars, continuing its support for Egypt until today.

Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations has witnessed a new and historic phase with the state visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Egypt in April 2024, at the

kind invitation of the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, marking His Highness the Amir's first official visit to Egypt after assuming power.

During the visit, the Egyptian President awarded His Highness the Amir the Order of the Nile, the most prestigious Egyptian medal given to presidents, kings and Amirs in recognition of their roles.

The medal was in recognition of the strong relations between the two countries, and in recognition of His Highness the Amir's prestigious position and high status.

During The 13th session of the Kuwaiti-Egyptian Joint Committee, held in Cairo on September 12 last year, ten memoranda of understanding and executive programs were signed, outlining future vision for joint cooperation.

These memoranda covered competition protection, industrial export development, environmental protection, tourism, youth and children, housing and construction, media and sports, and scientific and technical cooperation in planning.

In a statement to KUNA, Egyptian journalist and Arab affairs expert Osama Ajaj said that the relationship between Kuwait and Egypt is distinguished and of extreme importance.

He pointed to the support of the late Egyptian President Jamal Abdulnasser during Kuwait's declaration of its independence, saying that the late president declared his country's recognition of Kuwait and facilitated Kuwait's membership into the Arab League and the United Nations.

In 1967, Kuwait rushed to provide support to Egypt after the Israeli occupation aggression and formed Al-Yarmouk Brigade, fighting alongside Egyptian forces in the Suez Canal battle against Israeli occupation, resulting in approximately 40 martyrs, including officers and soldiers.

In August 1990, Egypt was among the countries that quickly rejected the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and participated in the international coalition "Operation Desert Storm," where its forces played a significant role in expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait and declaring the end of operations in February 1991.

Regarding economic and trade cooperation, Ajaj said that Kuwait ranks third in the Arab world in terms of economic cooperation, with Kuwaiti investments reaching USD 20 billion.

He added that more than a quarter of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's projects are located in Egypt, in addition to Kuwait's contributions to infrastructure projects such as power plants and land reclamation.

For his part, political analyst Ashraf Abdulaziz said that Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations extended back to before Ku-

wait's independence through joint cooperation, particularly in cultural fields.

This cooperation was marked through Zaki Talimat's visit to Kuwait, as well as the launch of Al-Arabi magazine, which was launched in Kuwait and became a beacon for Arab cultural and media work.

He noted that Kuwait was one of the countries keen to support Egypt during the 1976 and 1973 wars, as well as during the June 30 Revolution, where it was present and supportive of the demands of the Egyptian people.

### Gold jumps

This decline reflects growing pessimism among US households regarding economic conditions, as well as a rise in inflation expectations from 5 percent to 6.7 percent in the short term and from 4.1 percent to 4.4 percent in the long term.

The trade war between the United States and China has reached unprecedented levels, following Washington's decision to raise tariffs on Chinese products to 145 percent. In response, Beijing imposed a 125 percent tariff on American goods, impacting more than \$700 billion in bilateral trade between the two countries.

This escalation significantly boosted global demand for gold as a safe-haven asset, driving its price above \$3,200 an ounce, where it remained stable, despite a rise in real yields on ten-year US Treasury bonds to 2.307 percent, a development that typically exerts downward pressure on gold prices.

The Dar Al-Sabik report stated that gold's ability to maintain its gains despite rising returns reflects the growing influence of geopolitical tensions and global uncertainty, which are currently outweighing the impact of traditional monetary policy.

It predicted that markets will be influenced this week by several important factors, including the acceleration of quarterly earnings announcements from Wall Street-listed companies, as well as the release of important economic data such as U.S. retail sales and industrial production, China's economic growth figures, and inflation and labor market data from the United Kingdom.

In addition, decisions from major central banks including the European Central Bank, the Bank of Canada, and the Bank of Korea, are expected to impact market sentiment.

### Kuwait's pavilion

Kuwait's pavilion is a narrative of two parts with the base level telling

a story of heritage and tradition while the higher level is a display of future aspirations.

The pavilion allows visitors to embark on an immersive journey through Kuwait's past, present, and future in four exhibition rooms that combine tradition and cutting-edge technology.

The area where the two layers meet is known as the pearl to commemorate role of pearl diving industry in Kuwaiti economy, and its deeply rooted seafaring history. Each space in the pavilion, which takes the name Visionary Light-house, tells a different story using interactive technologies and Artificial Intelligence techniques.

Kuwait was also one of only four Arab countries that participated in the Expo 1970 in Osaka, the first of its kind in the country, which drew more than 64 million visitors.

- See Also Page 13

### Kuwait to

Al-Sumait underscored that the event served as a high-level regional platform for exchanging expertise among governments and regional international organizations and its objective was to boost cooperation and coordinating efforts to combat human trafficking.

The forum would discuss topics on enhancing regional and national responses regarding human trafficking by prioritizing victim protection, providing full support, and reviewing early intervention strategies to address this serious crime.

The agenda would also cover developing regional and international partnerships to exchange expertise, build capacities, support victims, and ensure access to justice and comprehensive protection, as well as tackling emerging challenges with early solutions.

Al-Sumait reaffirmed that Kuwait's hosting such event shows its vision to promote justice and uphold human dignity, expressing hope that the forum would yield outcomes and recommendations that support joint regional action and advance global efforts to combat this crime.

The organization of this forum by Ministry of Justice is part of a broader national initiative led by the Permanent National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, established in 2018 under directives of Cabinet.

The committee includes representatives from several national entities, including the Public Prosecution, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Information, Health, as well as Public Authority for Manpower.



## America

**Disabled teen shot by police dies:** An autistic, nonverbal teenage boy who was shot repeatedly by Idaho police from the other side of a chain-link fence while he was holding a knife died Saturday after being removed from life support, his family said.

**Victor Perez, 17,** who also had cerebral palsy, had been in a coma since the April 5 shooting, and tests Friday showed that he had no brain activity, his aunt, Ana Vazquez, told The Associated Press. He had undergone several surgeries, with doctors removing nine bullets and amputating his leg.

Police in the southeast Idaho city of Pocatello responded to a 911 call reporting that an apparently intoxicated man with a knife was chasing someone in a yard. It turned out to be Perez, who was not intoxicated but walked with a staggered gait due to his disabilities, Vazquez said. His family members had been trying to get the large kitchen knife away from him.

Video taken by a neighbor showed that Perez was lying in the yard after falling over when four officers arrived and rushed to the fence at the edge of the yard. They immediately ordered Perez to drop the knife, but instead he stood and began stumbling toward them.

Officers opened fire within about 12 seconds of getting out of their patrol cars and made no apparent effort to de-escalate the situation.

"Everybody was trying to tell the police, no, no," Vazquez said. "Those four officers didn't care. They didn't ask what was happening, what was the situation."

"How's he going to jump the fence when he can barely walk?" she said. (AP)

**Plane with 6 people crashes in NY:** A twin-engine plane with six people on board crashed Saturday in a muddy field in upstate New York, authorities said.



Perez

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office responded to a 911 report around noon, according to Undersheriff Jacqueline Salvatore, who said the crash was fatal but declined to reveal how many people died.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the Mitsubishi MU-2B with six people on the flight was headed to Columbia County Airport near Hudson, but crashed about 30 miles (48 kilometers) away near Copake.

"It's in the middle of a field and it's pretty muddy, so accessibility is difficult," Salvatore said during a news conference near the scene about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Albany.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it had deployed an investigation team, which was expected to arrive Saturday night. (AP)

**Fishing boat capsizes, 3 rescued:** A commercial fishing boat hit ground and capsized, leading to the rescue of three people and a fuel spill in Boston Harbor.

The 86-foot scallop fishing boat became stuck in shallow water and tilted over near Green Island with three people on board, Coast Guard officials said. The Coast Guard said it received a distress call about the accident at about 7:45 a.m.

The crew on board the boat, Eileen Rita, put on immersion suits when the vessel ran aground, the Coast Guard said. None of them were injured, and Boston Police safely removed them and transferred them to land, the Coast Guard said.

The cause of the accident was still under investigation, the Coast Guard said, adding that one factor was that the boat was traveling in shallow water at low tide.

The Coast Guard said it was still monitoring potential pollution from the accident on Friday, and a sheen of fuel was reported on the water. Photos released by the Coast Guard on Friday showed the fishing boat tilted on its side near Green Island with a trail of fuel nearby on the surface of the water.

The boat reported discharge of as much as 4,000 gallons of diesel and 50 gallons of lube oil, the Coast Guard said.

Green Island, near the location of the accident, is a small rocky island that is part of Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. (AP)

## Washington, DC faces budget crisis after House leaves \$1.1 bln hole in city coffers

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): When the House of Representatives adjourned for a two-week recess, it left Washington, D.C., elected officials scrambling to fill a \$1.1 billion hole in the capital city's budget, despite personal public directives from President Donald Trump for Republicans to address the issue.

The House's failure to act now makes for a worst-case scenario for Mayor Muriel Bowser and the D.C. Council, who have warned of looming layoffs and service cuts for the city of 700,000 people.

Earlier this week, Bowser sounded the alarm several times, warning that failure to pass the budget-saving measure would have immediate effects and insisting "we need that to happen this week." But on Friday, she declined to comment on the state of affairs or what would be next for the city.

On Thursday, as the Congressional recess loomed, Bowser also issued an 11th-hour plea on the X social media platform, tagging both Trump and Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana, and warning the necessary cuts would "impact DC police overtime, firefighters, and programs for our kids ... The House should not recess until this bill is passed."

Bowser also reposted Trump's own social media posting from late March, where he called on House leadership to pass the budget measure and "get it done IMMEDIATELY."



District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser speaks at a news conference to address the impact of the proposed continuing resolution, on Capitol Hill in Washington on March 10. (AP)

The crisis dates back to March, when the House passed a federal government funding bill that would force the district's government to revert to its 2024 budget parameters, effectively cutting \$1.1 billion from its previously balanced budget midway through the financial year.

Bowser spearheaded an intense congressional lobbying campaign to prevent the change, saying it would result in immediate across-the-board cuts to staffing and programs, includ-

ing teachers and police officers being laid off.

The Senate approved the funding bill with the cut but immediately followed up with a separate bill that would make the district's budget whole again. That fix then reverted back to the House for approval. But despite three weeks in session following Trump's appeal, and endorsements from both the police and firefighters unions, the House of Representatives failed to even bring the proposal to the floor for discussion.

'Technology exists to allow voting from afar'

## As Congress tables proxy voting, lawmakers seek solutions for parents who serve in office

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): As a bipartisan measure to allow new parents in Congress to vote by proxy has failed, some lawmakers hope their states can find solutions to bring and keep younger women in state capitols.

Republican Florida Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, who had been leading the congressional push, said she reached an compromise with US House Speaker Mike Johnson last week that does not include proxy voting.

Without a precedent in Congress, lawmakers remain hopeful that statehouses can change instead. Parents say proxy voting would allow women valuable and sometimes medically necessary time to recover and care for their infants at a moment when childcare, families and affordability are front and center for American politics.

"This should be about supporting families and supporting lawmakers who prioritize the issues of families," said Mallory McMorrow, who was the second sitting Michigan state senator to give birth. "It should not be a partisan issue."

Voting by proxy means a lawmaker casts a vote on behalf of another who is absent. Another option that has been used at the state level is remote voting, in which a member calls in to cast their vote.

Like in Congress, state legislative sessions can run late into the night, commutes home can be long and members stay away from home for several days a week.

There was no proxy or maternity leave policy for lawmakers when McMorrow had her daughter in 2021, but she took 12 weeks anyway. McMorrow, who is running for US Senate, said technology exists to allow voting from afar. It would be useful as well for active duty military members and in medical emergencies.

Nebraska State Sen Machaela Cavanaugh said the way legislatures operate shows state government was not built with women in mind. It was novel when she brought her baby to the floor in 2019 and had to push for a designated nursing room, both of which are now normalized.

Advocates for women's representation say lawmaking is so hard on mothers with young families many choose not to pursue public office. While the numbers vary by state, only a third of all state lawmakers are women.

"We want people in office who understand what most American families are dealing with," said Liuba Grechen Shirley, CEO and founder of Vote Mama, a group that supports mothers running for office.



Virginia Delegate Destiny LeVere Bolling stands on the floor of the Virginia House of Delegates in Richmond, Va., during the 2025 legislative session on Jan 13. (AP)

Many states allowed remote participation during the COVID-19 pandemic and have since rolled back those practices. Others have kept the provisions.

The Minnesota and Colorado House chambers allow remote participation in limited circumstances, including

ling, who is currently on maternity leave, called the flexibility "invaluable" and was disheartened by the outcome in Congress.

"I am glad that Democrats in the Commonwealth of Virginia choose to stand with families, as we always have, to set a better example for our friends in D.C.," she said in a statement.

Opponents of the practice such as Johnson, the Republican House speaker, say lawmaking requires participation in person. Some fear the option would result in too many lawmakers missing session.

Johnson agreed to formalize a "pairing system" long used in Congress in which one member who is physically present in the House cancels out the vote of someone who is absent. Arkansas' Legislature has a similar system.

Rules made at the federal level have some precedent on practice in statehouses. Since the Federal Election Commission allowed congressional candidates to spend their campaign dollars on child care in 2018, 39 states have followed suit, according to Vote Mama.

"At the root of this, there just aren't enough moms in office to push for these changes," Grechen Shirley said.

Hawaii House minority Leader Lauren Matsumoto said she was de-

nied the chance to vote remotely when she gave birth to her daughter in late 2019. Shortly thereafter, the pandemic caused the Legislature to temporarily move to a remote system anyway.

Reinstating that practice would be useful for the many young parents joining the Legislature, but Matsumoto would want a system that safeguards against abuse.

"In Hawaii, we're separated by water," said Matsumoto, a Republican. "There's different reps that have to fly in. So what works for Hawaii might not be the same for Oklahoma."

Many proponents also want male lawmakers to be with their families during the birth of a child.

Former Missouri state Rep. Peter Merideth had to speed home occasionally during his tenure after his young daughter developed epilepsy. While video calling into committees or voting remotely would not have solved all his family needs, it would have helped.

"I would not want my representative to start doing that on a regular basis. I do think you miss a lot by not being there," Merideth said. "But I wouldn't want them to have to choose between a crisis situation at home and being able to be there for those of us that voted for them."



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, firefighters put out the fire following Russia's missile attack that killed at least 32 civilians in Sumy, Ukraine, on April 13. (AP)

## More than 30 killed, 99 hurt in Russian missile attack on Ukrainian city of Sumy

KYIV, Ukraine, April 13, (AP): At least 32 people have been killed in a Russian missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy on Sunday, officials said.

Two ballistic missiles struck the heart of the city at around 10:15 a.m. as people gathered to celebrate Palm Sunday, according to officials. Images posted from the scene on official channels showed lines of black body bags lying on the side of the road, while more bodies were seen wrapped in foil blankets among the debris. Video footage also showed fire crews as they fought to extinguish the shells of burnt-out cars among the rubble from damaged buildings.

"On this bright Palm Sunday, our community has suffered a terrible tragedy," acting Mayor Artem Kobzar said in a statement on social media. "Unfortunately, we already know of more than 20 deaths."

At least 32 people were killed as a result of the attack, including two children, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine said in a statement. A further 99 people were injured, including 11 children, it said.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed that rescue efforts were ongoing and said "dozens" had been killed in the double missile attack.

"According to preliminary information, dozens of civilians were killed and wounded. Only filthy scum can act like this - taking the lives of ordinary people," he said.

The attack on Sumy is the second large-scale attack to claim civilian lives in just over a week, following a deadly missile strike on Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih on April 4 that killed some 20 people, including nine children.

Zelenskyy also called for a global response to the attack. "Talks have never stopped ballistic missiles and aerial bombs. What's needed is an attitude toward Russia that a terrorist deserves," he said.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, the mayor of the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, Ihor Terekhov, said Sunday that a Russian strike had hit one of the city's kindergartens, shattering windows and damaging the building's facade. No casualties were reported.

Russia and Ukraine's top diplomats on Saturday used a high-level conference in Turkey to once again trade accusations of violating a tentative US-brokered deal to pause strikes on energy infrastructure, underscoring the challenges of negotiating an end to the 3-year-old war.

The two foreign ministers spoke at separate events at the annual Antalya Diplomacy Forum, a day after US envoy Steve Witkoff met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss peace prospects. Ukraine's European allies on Friday promised billions of dollars to help Kyiv keep fighting Russia's invasion.

While Moscow and Kyiv both agreed in principle last month to implement a limited, 30-day ceasefire, they issued conflicting statements soon after their separate talks with US officials in Saudi Arabia. They differed on the start time of halting strikes, and alleged near-immediate breaches by the other side.

"The Ukrainians have been attacking us from the very beginning, every passing day, maybe with two or three exceptions," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, adding that Moscow would provide the US, Turkey and international bodies with a list of Kyiv's attacks during the past three weeks.

## Polish conservatives use celebration to rally behind presidential candidate

WARSAW, Poland, April 13, (AP): Poles traveled from across the country to the nation's capital for a patriotic demonstration Saturday celebrating 1,000 years since the coronation of the first Polish king. They danced the Polonaise in historic costumes, sang the national anthem and chanted slogans in support of a conservative candidate running in next month's presidential election.

The march of thousands was supported by Law and Justice party, the conservative populists who governed Poland for eight years until 2023, when a centrist, pro-European Prime Minister Donald Tusk took over. Law and Justice is hoping to regain power in the next general election. In the meantime it is fighting to elect an ally as president who is commander-in-chief and has influence over foreign policy and veto power over laws.

Law and Justice leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski called on "all patriots" to join the march, which culminated in a gathering in front of the Royal Castle where the party's candidate, 42-year-old Karol Nawrocki, spoke to a supportive crowd. The castle, rebuilt after it was destroyed by Germans during World War II, is a symbol of the nation's history and resilience.

A historian, Nawrocki said Poland today must safeguard "this heritage, this beauty, this crown that was given to us." "We want a Poland with aspirations, with dreams, because we are committed to those who came before us and to those who will come after us," Nawrocki said. "We want a great Poland!"

There were a few US flags amid a sea of Polish flags, and



Poles take party in a patriotic demonstration celebrating 1,000 years since the coronation of the first Polish king on April 12, in Warsaw, Poland. (AP)

supporters also expressed support for U.S. President Donald Trump. One of them, Stanislaw Bieniek, 81, said he fled communist Poland for the U.S., where he gained citizenship. "My whole family voted for Trump, and now I live here and I will vote for Nawrocki," he said.

The parade came as the party seeks to generate momentum around Nawrocki, who has been struggling in the polls against the front-runner, the liberal Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski.

## Serbia president demands order after months of anti-corruption protests shaking rule

BELGRADE, Serbia, April 13, (AP): Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic on Saturday demanded that authorities restore "order and peace" in the Balkan country following months of anti-corruption protests that have shaken his firm grip on power.

Vucic was addressing a large crowd of his supporters during a rally in downtown Belgrade with many of them bused into the Serbian capital from all over the country, as well as neighboring Kosovo and Bosnia.

The Serbian president has been struggling to quell the nationwide movement led by university students demanding justice for the victims of a train station canopy collapse that killed 16 people in November and which many blamed on alleged widespread graft.

The increasingly authoritarian Serbian government has stepped up a crackdown against critics and independent media, with police questioning students and activists and threatening legal action to curb university strikes. Vucic's speech before thousands of his supporters at a rally in Belgrade suggested state pressure on the protesters and media could grow further.

The gathering in Belgrade was designed to counter the massive anti-corruption protests that have drawn hundreds of thousands of people in an unprecedented challenge to Vucic. In a highly divisive speech, the Serbian president accused the student-led protesters of "inflicting huge evil on Serbia in the past five months," and reiterated claims of a foreign-led plot to oust him from power.



Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic greets his supporters gathered during a huge rally in his support, apparently designed to counter student-led gatherings in Belgrade, Serbia on April 12. (AP)

"The attack came from abroad," Vucic said without naming the alleged foreign organizers and offering no evidence for his claims. "We will not allow those from outside and inside Serbia to destroy our state." Vucic received backing from his right-wing ally, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who addressed the rally in a video message. Another speaker was Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik whose arrest is sought by Bosnia's authorities over his separatist policies.



British parliamentarian refused entry to Hong Kong

## HK's biggest pro-democracy party gets mandate to move closer to disbandment

HONG KONG, April 13, (AP) — Hong Kong's biggest pro-democracy party on Sunday received its members' mandate to proceed with steps toward a potential disbandment, part of the erosion of political freedoms as China cracks down on dissent in the southern city.

Democratic Party Chairman Lo Kin-hei said over 90% of the members who took part in the vote supported the motion to let the central committee take up the procedure toward disbandment. He said he hopes there will be a final vote in the coming months.

"Unless there is a big change, I believe this inclination will be maintained in the next general meeting," he said, adding that the party would continue with its work until then. The process might not finish this year, said vice chair Mok Kin-shing.

The party's decision reflects the dwindling semi-autonomy and freedoms promised to the former British colony when it returned to China's rule in 1997. The moderate political party has effectively become a pressure group, members say.

Lo earlier said the decision was made based on the current political situation and social climate. Party veterans told The Associated Press that some members were warned of consequences if the party didn't shut down.

Massive anti-government protests in 2019 led China to impose a sweeping national security law that was used to prosecute many leading activists. Some of the party's former lawmakers are now in prison, and the party has been absent from elections after authorities overhauled the electoral system to ensure only "patriots" can run.

The Democratic Party, founded in 1994, is one of the few remaining pro-democracy groups that still speak out from time to time following the closure of dozens of civil society groups under the shadow of the security law. They include the city's once second-largest pro-democracy party and a decades-old group that organized the annual vigil to commemorate Beijing's Tiananmen crackdown in 1989.

The party had long positioned itself as a moderate pro-democracy force. Some of its former members joined the government as senior officials. Its willingness to negotiate with Beijing led to its proposal being included in a 2010 political reform package - a move that drew harsh criticism from some members and other democracy advocates who wanted more sweeping changes.

Prominent party members include Martin Lee, nicknamed the city's "father of



Lo Kin-hei, (left), chairman of Hong Kong's Democratic Party and Mok Kin-shing, vice chairman, pose for photographs at a press conference at the office of Hong Kong's Democratic Party in Hong Kong on April 13. (AP)

democracy," Albert Ho, former leader of the group that organized Tiananmen vigils, and journalist-turned-activist Emily Lau.

Lau and former lawmaker Fred Li were among the members who attended Sunday's meeting. Lo said about 110 members voted in person or through proxies.

Former chairman Yeung Sum said it was a pity that the party was preparing to disband. He said he believed the "one country, two systems" is the most viable system for the city under Beijing's rule. Hong Kong's open society and pluralistic culture under the relative democratic political system is beneficial to the future of the local community and China's economic development, he said.

He believes Hong Kongers who tasted an open political system and the rule of law would not give it up.

"The political culture and the fight for democracy will carry on in Hong Kong in a peaceful and relational manner," he said.

### Also:

**HONG KONG:** A British member of parliament was refused entry to Hong Kong last week, the first to have received such treatment since the former British colony's return to Chinese rule in 1997. **Wera Hobhouse**, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party representing Bath, wrote on social media platform Bluesky: "Authorities gave me no explanation for this cruel and upsetting blow. I hope the Foreign Secretary will recognise that this is an insult to all parliamentarians and seek answers from the Chinese Ambassador."

Hobhouse said she flew to Hong Kong from the United Kingdom with her husband to visit their newly-born grandchild, whom she was unable to see or hold.

The British Consulate in Hong Kong replied to an Associated Press inquiry, saying it is aware that a U.K. member of parliament was denied entry into Hong Kong on Thursday and it was "raising this urgently" with the city's authorities.

There was no immediate response from authorities in Hong Kong. However, in similar previous cases, they have said they give no explanations for refusing to allow entry.

Hobhouse is one of more than 40 parliamentarians on the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China that scrutinizes Beijing's human rights record. Beijing objects viscerally to all such criticism and has rendered the Sino-British Agreement under which Hong Kong was turned over to Chinese rule null and void. It has also slapped travel and financial sanctions on various Hong Kong officials who took part in the 2019 protests. Since its return to China after 155 years, Hong Kong has seen diminishing Western-style civil liberties and has lost a high degree of autonomy despite promises by the ruling Communist Party in Beijing to keep the status quo for at least 50 years.

Pro-democracy protests that paralyzed Hong Kong in 2019 led to a crackdown that has all but silenced dissent through restricted elections, media censorship and a China-imposed national security law that saw a slew of opposition politicians jailed. Dozens of civil society groups have closed down.

## New quakes shake central Myanmar, one of biggest aftershocks since March 28 temblor

BANGKOK, April 13, (AP) — A magnitude 5.5 earthquake struck on Sunday morning near Meiktila, a small city in central Myanmar, according to the US Geological Survey.

The quake came as Myanmar is engaged in relief efforts following a massive 7.7 magnitude temblor that also hit the country's central region on March 28. The epicenter of the latest quake was roughly halfway between Mandalay, Myanmar's second-biggest city, which suffered enormous damage and casualties in last month's earthquake, and Naypyitaw, the capital, where several government offices were then damaged.

There were no immediate reports of major damage or casualties caused by the new quake, one of the strongest of hundreds of aftershocks from the March 28 temblor. As of Friday, the death toll from that quake was 3,649, with 5,018 injured, according to Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, a spokesperson for Myanmar's military government.

Myanmar's Meteorological Department said Sunday's quake occurred in the area of Wundwin township, 97 kilometers (60 miles) south of Mandalay, at a depth of 20 kilometers (12 miles). The US Geological Survey estimated the depth at 7.7 km (4.8 miles).

Two Wundwin residents told The Associated Press by phone the quake was so strong that people rushed out of buildings and that ceilings in some dwellings were damaged. A resident of Naypyitaw also reached by phone said he did not feel the latest quake. Those contacted asked not to be named for fear of angering the military government, which prefers to closely control information.

The United Nations last week warned that damage caused by the March 28 quake will worsen the existing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, where a civil war had

already displaced more than 3 million people.

It said the quake severely disrupted agricultural production and that a health emergency loomed because many medical facilities in the quake zone were damaged or destroyed.

Sunday's quake occurred on the morning of the first day of the country's three-day Thingyan holiday, which celebrates the traditional New Year. Public festivities for the holiday had already been canceled.

Human rights experts for the United Nations are expressing urgent concern about ongoing military operations in Myanmar's civil war, despite ceasefires called by major parties to facilitate relief efforts after the country's devastating March 28 earthquake. At the same time, a new UN report said that because of the earthquake, the Southeast Asian country is facing increased humanitarian needs while a food shortage and a health crisis appear to be looming.

"At a moment when the sole focus should be on ensuring humanitarian aid gets to disaster zones, the military is instead launching attacks," Ravina Shamdasani, a spokesperson for the U.N. Human Rights Office in Geneva said Friday. "Since the earthquake, military forces have reportedly carried out over 120 attacks - more than half of them after their declared ceasefire was due to have gone into effect on 2 April."

The U.N. agency said: "We call on the military authorities to remove any and all obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to cease military operations."

The death toll from the 7.7 magnitude quake and aftershocks reached 3,689, with 5,020 injured, Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, a spokesperson for the military government, said Friday.



People clean debris from damaged buildings in the aftermath of an earthquake on March 28, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on April 7. (AP)

## Australian political leaders launch election campaigns focused on 1st-time homeowners

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 13, (AP) — Australia's rival political leaders offered Sunday competing policies to help Australians buy a home ahead of the nation's first federal election in which younger voters will outnumber the long-dominant baby boomer generation.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton officially launched their parties' campaigns ahead of the May 3 elections. Helping aspiring homeowners buy into a national real estate market in which prices are high and supply is constrained due to inflation, builders going broke, shortages of materials and a growing population was central to both campaigns.

"Buying a first home has never been easy, but for this generation, it's never felt further out of reach," Albanese told his supporters in the west coast city of Perth.

"In Australia, home ownership should not be a privilege you inherit if you're lucky. It should be an aspiration that Australians everywhere can achieve," he added.

The governing center-left Labor Party promised Sunday 10 billion Australian dollars (\$6.3 billion) in grants and loans to build 100,000 new homes over eight years exclu-



Australian Liberal Party and opposition leader Peter Dutton, (left), meets former prime ministers Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison, (right), at his party's coalition campaign launch ahead of the May 3 federal election in western Sydney, Australia on April 13. (AP)

sively for first-homebuyers, who would only have to pay a 5% deposit instead of the current minimum 20%, with the government paying the remainder.

Dutton's conservative Liberal Party promised to ease demand for housing by banning foreign investors and temporary residents from buying existing homes for two years while reducing immigration and

foreign student numbers.

First-time homebuyers would also be able to claim a tax deduction on mortgage interest payments for new homes, Dutton said.

"Today, I bring a message of hope to all Australians seeking to own a home of their own. I will be a prime minister who restores the dream of homeownership," Dutton told an audience in Sydney, on the east coast.

## Govt, Rwanda-backed rebels trade blame

### Dozens reported killed in E.Congo: authorities

GOMA, Congo, April 13, (AP) — At least 50 people were killed in weekend attacks in Congo's conflict-battered east, authorities said Saturday. The government traded blame with Rwanda-backed rebels over who was responsible for the violence that quickly escalated the conflict in the region.

The renewed violence that residents reported in and around the region's largest city of Goma - which the M23 rebels control - was the biggest threat yet to ongoing peace efforts by both the Gulf Arab state of Qatar and African nations in the conflict that has raised fears of regional warfare.

Goma resident Amboma Safari recounted how his family of four spent the night under their bed as they heard gunfire and bomb blasts through Friday night. "We saw corpses of soldiers, but we don't know which group they are from," Safari said.

The decades-long conflict between Congo and the M23 rebels escalated in January, when the rebels made an unprecedented advance and seized the strategic eastern Congolese city of Goma, followed by the town of Bukavu in February. The latest fighting has killed some 3,000 people and worsened what was already one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with around 7 million people dis-



M23 rebels patrol the streets of Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo on Jan 29. (AP)

placed.

At least 52 people were killed between Friday and Saturday, including a person shot dead at Goma's Kyeshero Hospital, Congo's Ministry of Interior said in a statement that blamed the attack on M23.

M23 spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka issued a statement blaming Congolese forces and their allies for the attacks. Kanyuka said Congo's joint operations with local militias

and southern African troops "directly threaten the stability and security of civilians" in the region.

The group said it has been compelled to "reconsider its position to prioritize the security" of the people in the area, suggesting the crisis could worsen.

Christian Kalamo, a civil society leader in the North Kivu province that includes Goma, said at least one body was seen on the streets on Saturday.

## Saudi condemns attacks on famine-hit camps in Sudan's Darfur that killed 100

RIYADH, April 13, (Agencies) — The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Sunday strongly condemned the recent attacks targeting displacement camps near el-Fasher city in Sudan, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of numerous civilians. In a statement, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom's rejection of such acts, describing them as blatant violations of international and humanitarian law.

The statement stressed the urgent need to ensure the protection of humanitarian and relief personnel, to cease hostilities, avoid targeting civilians, and to fully implement the commitments outlined in the Jeddah Declaration on the Protection of Civilians in Sudan, signed on May 11, 2023.

The Ministry extended its deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to the families of the victims, and wished a swift and full recovery to those injured. Sudan's notorious paramilitary group launched a two-day attack on famine-hit camps for displaced people that left more than 100 dead, includ-



A burned military vehicle sits at Khartoum international airport a day after it was recaptured from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in Khartoum, Sudan on March 27. (AP)

ing 20 children and nine aid workers, in the Darfur region, a UN official said Saturday.

The Rapid Support Forces and allied militias launched an offensive on the Zamzam and Abu Shorouk camps and the nearby city of el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province, on Friday, said U.N. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan Clementine Nkweta-Salami.

El-Fasher is under the control of the military, which has fought the RSF since Sudan descended into civil war two years ago, killing more than 24,000 people, according to the United Nations, though activists say the number is likely far higher.

The camps were attacked again on Saturday, Nkweta-Salami said in a statement. She said that nine aid workers were killed "while operating one of the very few remaining health posts still operational" in Zamzam camp.

"This represents yet another deadly and unacceptable escalation in a series of brutal attacks on displaced people and aid workers in Sudan since the onset of this conflict nearly two years ago," she said.

## Ecuador incumbent president, leftist lawyer again vie for top job in runoff election

QUITO, Ecuador, April 13, (AP) — Ecuadorians were voting Sunday in the country's presidential election runoff, facing the choice between incumbent President Daniel Noboa and leftist lawyer Luisa González.

It's the second presidential runoff election in less than two years in the South American country, where voting is mandatory. Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. local time, with more than 13 million people eligible to vote.

Both Noboa and his challenger, González, have promised voters solutions to the extortions, killings, kidnappings and other crimes that became part of everyday life as the country emerged from the pandemic. Analysts expect the result in Sunday's vote to have a very tight margin.

Voters chose Noboa over González in the runoff of a snap election in October 2023. The candidates advanced to Sunday's contest after being the top vote-getters in February's first-round election. Voters are primarily worried about the violence that transformed the country, starting in 2021 - a spike in



Army soldiers unload electoral kits at a polling station in preparation for Sunday's presidential runoff election in Quito, Ecuador on April 12. (AP)

crime tied to the trafficking of cocaine produced in neighboring Colombia and Peru.

Both candidates have promised

tough-on-crime policies, better enforcement for law enforcement and international help to fight drug cartels and local criminal groups.



# Business



Areej Al Ghanim, General Director of American Baccalaureate School, and Fahad Al-Sharrah, Communications Manager of Weway Bank



American Baccalaureate School's annual charity carnival.

## Bank introduces 'Jeel' card for children

### Weway Bank sponsors ABS's 18th Charity Carnival

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Weway Bank, Kuwait's pioneering digital bank, sponsors the American Baccalaureate School's 18th Annual Charity Carnival. The event, held on Saturday, April 12th, brought together a significant number of students, parents, and participating organizations in a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere.

#### Driving Next Generation Through Digital Initiatives

Weway Bank's sponsorship aligns with its ongoing commitment to empowering the next generation and fostering their growth and future development since the Bank equips young individuals with the essential tools and knowledge to understand financial literacy concepts from an early age through its innovative digital banking solutions. The Bank's participation in this annual charity carnival goes beyond mere sponsorship; it's a valuable opportunity for the Bank to directly engage with students, understand their needs, and empower them by introducing its innovative digital solutions. The Weway Bank firmly believes that investing in children and youth is an investment in the future of Kuwait.

#### Strategic Partnership for Community Engagement and Humanitarian Support

The American Baccalaureate School's annual charity carnival has a long-standing tradition of

supporting noble humanitarian causes. Weway Bank's sponsorship underscores its commitment to supporting this year's beneficiary, the Kuwait Autism Center. The Bank recognizes the vital role the center plays in serving children with autism spectrum disorder and their families in Kuwait and is dedicated to contributing to the carnival's fund-raising goals.

#### Empowering Future with "Jeel"

Attendees had the opportunity to visit the Weway Bank's engaging booth, which featured a variety of surprises and interactive activities for all ages. The Weway team provided information about the Bank's diverse card offerings, with a special focus on the "Jeel" card, the first of its kind in Kuwait designed for children aged 8 to 14. This innovative product allows the younger generation to enjoy a seamless digital banking experience via the Weway app, designed with a user interface specifically for their age group and incorporating parental control features through the parents' Weway app.

Weway Bank continues to enhance the banking experience for various segments of society in Kuwait by offering solutions that empower individuals of all ages to achieve financial independence. Through modern technology and a dedication to user-centric app design, Weway Bank is leading the future of banking in Kuwait and the region.

### Kuwait achieves 92% digital payment usage

## 'Visa' official acknowledges Kuwait's progress in digital payment security

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): A top official at the credit card service corporation Visa commended on Sunday Kuwait's progress within creating a safe digital environment, affirming that it was steadily developing and moving forward within this field.

Speaking to KUNA in an interview, Charles Lobo -- Senior Vice President, and Regional Risk Officer for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMEA) at Visa -- indicated that the State of Kuwait had bolstered its digital payment system security via implementing the tight supervisory guidelines set by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

This created a solid digital infrastructure, which boosted trust in electronic transactions that rivals global practices in this domain, he asserted, pointing out that the CBK's digital transformation strategy was a cornerstone in sustainable development especially within digital economy.

He indicated that Visa had carried out the "Stay Secure" study, showing that eight out of 10 consumers in Kuwait trusted digital payments with said consumers showing willingness to further use the tool in the foreseeable future.

Lobo noted that Kuwait was one of the pioneers in digital payment with a 92 percent usage rate, the highest in the GCC region, while contactless payment was at 99 percent, signaling a huge trust by consumers, an increase in retail purchase, and the country's commitment to building a safe, progressive, and comprehensive digital economy.

Lobo commended the cooperation between the public and private sectors within digital payment, stressing that such collaboration would ensure Kuwait maintaining a leading position in digital payment and financial technology.

Meanwhile, Lobo noted that the "Stay Secure" study

showed that 94 percent of consumers in Kuwait had taken precautions to secure payments, while 53 percent refused to transfer money on behalf of other individuals via e-mail.

Some 53 percent avoided sharing card or account details with 40 percent of clients activating text messages notifications in case of any suspicious activity, he added.

Despite digital security awareness increasing, there are still challenges, Lobo said, revealing that the Stay Secure study had shown that 44 percent of consumers fell victim to fraud and 14 percent suffered repeatedly from such crime.

He mentioned that 91 percent of clients in Kuwait felt safe if the transaction required confirmation codes with 55 percent preferring security visible security icons.

He asserted that Visa continued to work with the Kuwaiti government, banks, and technological and digital payment companies, adding that there was closer cooperation with the CBK to boost security protocols to prevent fraud as well as increase awareness campaigns for consumers.

He revealed that there was increased cooperation with banks in AI technology to provide safer payment options for transactions, especially within retail, affirming that Visa encouraged touchless payment and digital wallets.

He revealed that Visa had invested some USD 10 billion in the last five years globally in cybersecurity.

Lobo noted that Visa used the 1994-founded CyberSource platform, which it acquired in 2010 for USD 2 billion, to provide functionality for payment processing for authorization, capture, and settlement of card transactions, worldwide.

The technology had saved USD 40 billion in electronic commercial income and prevented fraudulent operations worth USD 650 million, he said.

## General index slips 0.15%

### Boursa Kuwait ends Sunday mixed

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday's trading session on a mixed note, as the General Market Index slipped 11.65 points, or 0.15 percent, to settle at 7,808.26 points. A total of 206.8 million shares were traded in 13,175 transactions, with a market value of KD 54.2 million (approximately USD 166.3 million).

The Main Market Index edged higher, gaining 9.09 points or 0.13 percent to close at 7,138.92 points. Trading volume reached 99.5 million shares through 6,038 transactions, valued at KD 13.9 million (around

USD 42.6 million). Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index dropped 17.40 points, or 0.21 percent, ending the day at 8,360.99 points. The index saw 107.2 million shares change hands in 7,137 transactions, worth KD 40.3 million (approximately USD 123.7 million).

In contrast, the Major 50 Index recorded a notable gain of 59.18 points, or 0.87 percent, to close at 6,899.86 points. Trading activity amounted to 84 million shares through 5,047 transactions, with a total value of KD 12.3 million (around USD 37.7 million).

## Global markets shake as trade tensions escalate: NBK report

### Dollar declines and gold rises

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Financial markets faced significant turbulence this past week as U.S.-China trade tensions intensified, triggering sharp moves across currencies, equities, and commodities. The U.S. dollar dropped steeply, with the Dollar Index falling below 100 for the first time since July 2023.

Meanwhile, investors sought safety in traditional haven currencies such as the Swiss franc and Japanese yen, which saw notable gains. U.S. stock markets were highly volatile -- initial optimism fueled by President Trump's 90-day tariff pause sparked historic rallies in the S&P 500 and Nasdaq, but these gains quickly reversed the following day as trade uncertainty resurfaced. Gold prices soared past \$3,200 per ounce, setting new records as the weakening dollar and rising recession concerns drove demand for safe-haven assets.

#### United States

##### FOMC Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the Federal Reserve's March FOMC meeting revealed that members expect U.S. tariff policies to drive inflation higher this year. They expressed concern that persistent inflation, combined with a weakening outlook for growth and employment, could complicate future policy decisions. Given the current economic uncertainty, members agreed that keeping interest rates unchanged was appropriate. The Fed also opted to significantly slow its pace of quantitative tightening, though some members questioned the effectiveness of this move. Markets are currently pricing in three rate cuts -- totaling 81 basis points -- by the end of the year.

##### U.S. Inflation Eased in March

Inflation in the United States eased notably in March, with the annual CPI dropping to 2.4% from 2.8% in February, and monthly prices falling for the first time since May 2020. Core inflation also slowed to 2.8%, the lowest in nearly four years. While this offers some relief to the Federal Reserve, economists caution that Trump's sweeping tariffs could reverse the trend by pushing prices higher.

Food prices rose 0.5%, with egg prices jumping 5.9% month-over-month and 60.4% annually due to ongoing avian flu impacts. Shelter costs, a major inflation driver, eased slightly, while energy prices declined.

Airline fares fell 5.3%, and recreation costs dipped, signaling weaker discretionary spending.

Meanwhile, U.S. wholesale prices also fell more than expected in March, suggesting inflationary pressures were easing before reaching consumers.

The Producer Price Index (PPI) dropped 0.4% month-over-month and slowed to an annual rate of 2.7%, down from 3.2%. A major driver of the decline was a 4% drop in energy

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0942	1.0880	1.1473	1.1360	1.1250	1.1550	1.1421
GBP	1.2843	1.2705	1.3145	1.3080	1.3000	1.3210	1.3081
JPY	147.04	142.05	148.27	143.51	141.50	144.40	142.03
CHF	0.8577	0.8096	0.8672	0.8151	0.7950	0.8250	0.8061

prices, influenced by weak demand, rising supply, and recession fears.

Food prices also fell, down 2.1%. Core PPI, which excludes food and energy, dipped 0.1% and rose just 3.3% annually -- the slowest pace since September -- offering further signs of cooling inflation. The report comes ahead of the full impact of President Trump's new trade policies.

#### Consumer Sentiment Sours in April

U.S. consumer confidence declined further in April, with the University of Michigan's Consumer Sentiment Index falling to 50.8 from 57 in March -- well below expectations of 54.5. The drop reflected weaker assessments of both current conditions, which fell to 56.5 from 63.8, and future expectations, which declined to 47.2 from 52.6.

Inflation concerns also intensified, with the one-year outlook surging to 6.7% from 5% and the five-year outlook rising to 4.4% from 4.1%. Finally, the survey showed the highest share of consumers expecting higher unemployment in the next year since 2009.

#### U.S. China Trade Retaliations Shake Markets

Earlier on Wednesday, President Trump softened his stance on trade tariffs and announced a 90-day suspension on most new duties -- excluding those targeting China.

U.S. equity markets posted record-breaking gains following the news, as the Nasdaq surged 12%, its best performance in 24 years, while the S&P 500 jumped 9.5%, the most since 2008. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 7.9%, its largest increase since 2020, with a historic 2,963-point gain. However, China escalated its trade dispute with the U.S. on Friday by raising tariffs on American goods from 84% to 125%, in response to President Trump's reciprocal tariff hikes. The Chinese finance ministry criticized further U.S. tariff increases as economically meaningless, warning they would eliminate demand for U.S. imports in China.

Despite the rising tension -- with the U.S. tariff rate now effectively at 145% -- China stated it would ignore any further hikes but remains open to negotiations if the terms are fair.

The ongoing tit-for-tat has added to global market volatility with U.S. equity markets closing deep in red just 24 hours after a record-breaking trading session.

Furthermore, the U.S. dollar index fell to the lowest level in nearly 3 years below the 100 mark, as majors continue to gain on the back of global trade uncertainty and a flock to other safe haven currencies and commodities including the Swiss franc and gold. The Greenback was last seen trading

at 99.78.

#### United Kingdom

##### GDP Expands Beyond Expectations

The U.K. economy grew by 0.5% in February -- well above expectations -- driven by a strong rebound in the services sector and gains in production and construction. Services output rose 0.3%, while production jumped 1.5% and construction increased 0.4%.

This marks a turnaround from January's flat growth. The British pound climbed following the data, strengthening 0.6% against the dollar. Despite this positive surprise, the broader economy has struggled for momentum, and new U.S. tariffs -- set to impose an additional 10% on U.K. exports -- pose fresh risks, particularly as the U.S. remains Britain's top trading partner.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3080.

#### Asia-Pacific

##### China in Deflationary Struggle Amid Trade Tensions

China's inflation data for March came in weaker than expected, highlighting growing economic pressure from the escalating trade conflict with the U.S. Consumer prices fell 0.1% year-over-year and 0.4% month-over-month, both worse than forecasts. The decline reflects reduced domestic spending amid rising U.S. tariffs, which were increased by President Trump in early March.

Producer prices also dropped for the 30th straight month, falling 2.5% annually -- deeper than the expected 2.3% decline -- as weak demand and trade tensions continued to weigh on China's export-driven sectors.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 7.2916.

##### RBNZ Delivers Rate Cut

New Zealand's central bank lowered its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to 3.50% on Wednesday, marking its fifth consecutive cut. As expected, the move reflects growing concern over weak domestic demand and global economic uncertainty.

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand signaled it is prepared to ease further, citing rising global trade barriers as a threat to both international and local economic growth. "These developments pose downside risks to New Zealand's economic activity and inflation outlook," the RBNZ stated.

The NZD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.5824.

#### Kuwait

**Kuwaiti Dinar**  
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30765

### 'Sustainability deeply rooted in KFH's Islamic values'

## KFH sponsors International Conference on Sustainable Development at 'GUST'

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: As part of its leadership in social responsibility and sustainability, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has concluded its sponsorship of the International Conference on Sustainable Development, Social Responsibility, and Business Ethics organized by the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST).

Commenting on this occasion, KFH Executive Manager Governance and Sustainability, Mohammad Alarbeed said that KFH places significant importance on sustainability, as well as social and environmental responsibility. These efforts are guided by the Board of Directors, ensuring that the KFH's endeavors are aligned with Kuwait's Vision 2035 of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

During the seminar hosted by GUST, Alarbeed highlighted that KFH adopts a comprehensive approach to sustainability, integrating its principles across initiatives that serve individuals, society, and the broader global community. "KFH is considered a pioneer in the field. It has embraced sustainability since its establishment due to its strong alignment with Islamic Sharia principles," added Alarbeed. "Last month, KFH bagged four prestigious awards from EMEA Finance Magazine for the year 2024, including the Sustainability Award -- Middle East Level."

He explained the concept of sustainability to students, offering examples of KFH major projects, initiatives and activities concerning environment preservation. The most important of these efforts is the Keep it Green initiative which promotes environmental protection to maintain sustainability. "In terms of green services, KFH offers green Sukuk,



Mohammad Alarbeed reviews the importance of sustainability for GUST students.

and bank cards made from recycled materials," he remarked. Additionally, Alarbeed highlighted KFH's key roles in

the field of sustainability, such as signing a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Pro-

gramme (UNDP) to support women's empowerment principles. He also mentioned that KFH received the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS -- Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto building. The certificate rendered KFH as the first bank in Kuwait to receive this honor reflecting the building's design in accordance with sustainability principles and environmental standards.

He also shed light on KFH's social contribution in the reconstruction of the damaged area in Al Mubarakiya. The Bank's initiative involves reconstructing approximately 17 buildings in the damaged area, along with the development of some neighboring structures. The project aligns with the sustainability principles and environmental preservation by greening the rooftops of the new buildings and the overall area.

It is worth noting that KFH released its Sustainability Report last year, a pioneering document in the Kuwaiti banking sector. This comprehensive report integrates the bank's financial and non-financial performance, aligning with Integrated Reporting principles. By enhancing transparency and accountability, KFH demonstrates its commitment to embedding a sustainability strategy in line with global best practices. The report provides a comprehensive and integrated overview of KFH's business, encompassing the bank's performance, challenges, opportunities, and key activities related to sustainability, social responsibility, and environmental impact. KFH has also released the Carbon Footprint Report, first-of-its-kind in Kuwait's banking sector.



## Report outlined company's sustainability strategy, its non-financial performance and initiatives for 2024

# Boursa Kuwait publishes fourth sustainability report, reaffirming commitment to governance, transparency and sustainable growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Boursa Kuwait published its fourth Corporate Sustainability Report, which shed light on the company's initiatives from January 1 to December 31, 2024. The report outlined the company's sustainability strategy and assessed its governance, social responsibility and environmental stewardship performance.

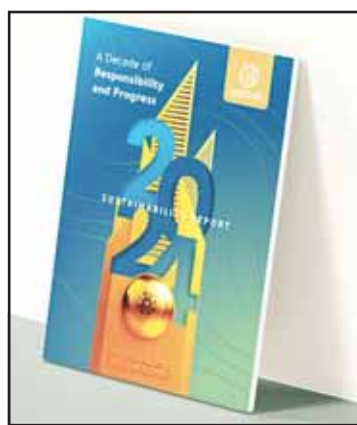
The report marks a significant milestone in Boursa Kuwait's journey, reinforcing its commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices since its inception and reflecting its dedication to adopting internationally recognized best practices to develop an efficient, transparent, and inclusive financial market.

It was prepared in alignment with the core concepts of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) guidelines for the securities and commodities exchanges sector and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report also adheres to the principles of Boursa Kuwait's ESG Reporting Guide, which incorporates the requirements of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) to meet the evolving and dynamic expectations of all stakeholders.

"This year marked a pivotal milestone for Boursa Kuwait as we celebrated our tenth anniversary – a decade defined by excellence, innovation, and meaningful progress. Over the years, we have played a key role in advancing Kuwait's capital market while embedding sustainability at the heart of our operations and reinforcing our belief that Boursa Kuwait's role extends well beyond facilitating trading and investment. The company is deeply committed to driving economic growth and enhancing financial inclusion across the State of Kuwait," said Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi.



Mohammad Al-Osaimi



2024 sustainability report

Al-Osaimi added that the report signifies a pivotal step in Boursa Kuwait's efforts to align its objectives with Kuwait's vision for national development and its international climate commitments. He noted that, as a key enabler of sustainable finance and a model issuer in the Kuwaiti capital market, the company plays a prominent role in empowering listed companies to incorporate sustainability into their operations and financial strategies to attract long-term investments.

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"In 2024, Boursa Kuwait made significant strides in advancing ESG principles, guided by its comprehensive governance framework, which ensures the highest standards of transparency and underscores the company's commitment to ethical business practices in line with global benchmarks. The company remains committed to ethical business practices in line with the standards adopted worldwide, keeping pace with the evolving dynamics of the international financial landscape and adopting the latest best practices to contribute effectively to a more sustainable future for the Kuwaiti financial sector," Al-Osaimi said.

Throughout 2024, Boursa Kuwait continued to advance its commitment to financial literacy – a core pillar of its mission since inception and a key driver in reinforcing the company's position both regionally and globally. Anchored in the belief that well-informed stakeholders are vital to the growth, integrity, and long-term resilience of capital markets, the company remained steadfast in its efforts to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to actively engage in – and benefit from – Kuwait's capital market and the broader financial ecosystem. These efforts contribute to fostering a more inclusive, empowered,

and resilient financial environment.

As part of these ongoing efforts, Boursa Kuwait launched the inaugural edition of the "Bell" initiative, aimed at positioning financial literacy as a foundational tool for financial stability, economic development, and social prosperity. The initiative was implemented in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies, Kuwait University, the CFA Society Kuwait, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz," and the Credit Information Network Company (Ci-Net).

Boursa Kuwait also added several prestigious accolades to its growing list of achievements, a testament to its continued excellence in corporate sustainability, governance and ESG practices. The company received seven awards from renowned international institutions, underscoring its leadership and impact in these critical areas, including "Best in Sustainability Transparency" award from Global Finance magazine, "Best Sustainable Corporate Governance – Kuwait" and "Best ESG Strategy – 2024" from The European magazine and "Outstanding Contribution to Women's Empowerment in MENA – 2023", "Best ESG Strategy in GCC Capital Markets – 2023" and "Outstanding Contribution to Financial Inclusion in GCC Capital

Markets – 2023" from Capital Finance International (CFI). Its 2023 Sustainability Report was also recognized as the Best Sustainability and ESG Report by the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA).

The bourse was able to make strides in its ESG efforts internally as well, achieving an employee retention rate of 98% in 2024 to under score its success in cultivating a dynamic and empowering work environment that fosters both professional growth and personal development. Boursa Kuwait also continued to actively support a range of social and environmental initiatives, working closely with local and international organizations to sponsor 38 programs designed to create meaningful, long-term impact within the community it serves throughout the year.

These accomplishments underscore Boursa Kuwait's unwavering commitment to promoting transparency, embedding sound governance and advancing sustainability across the market as well as highlighting the company's pivotal role as a leading enabler of sustainable finance in Kuwait, dedicated to building a resilient, inclusive financial ecosystem that drives economic growth and supports the transition to a more sustainable future.

As part of its ongoing support of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

## KIB promotes financial literacy at FunFest, showcases products and services

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently set up a special booth at Souq Sharq's waterfront during the FunFest event, with the aim of promoting banking awareness and financial literacy among festivalgoers. The initiative is part of KIB's ongoing support for the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in collaboration with local banks. It also underscores the Bank's commitment to guiding customers in making informed financial decisions and protecting the security of their banking data.

Commenting on the initiative, Sultan Alhajri, Area Manager of Retail Banking at KIB, said: "Our participation in the FunFest event reflects our

deep commitment to social responsibility and to building strong relationships with our customers and the community. KIB aims to always be a trusted partner in helping community members achieve their financial goals and enjoy a secure, stable financial life."

Alhajri added: "By participating in events like FunFest, we aim to provide valuable insights into essential financial concepts and raise public awareness about best banking practices. This includes guiding attendees on managing their finances, protecting their banking information, safely using bank cards, and securing their accounts. We also highlight the steps needed to avoid fraud and phishing scams, while encouraging a culture

of saving and investing. Our representatives also used the opportunity to shed light on the role of financial institutions—particularly in Islamic financing—and to introduce visitors to our wide range of innovative products and services designed to enhance their experience and meet their diverse needs."

It is worth noting that KIB continues to strengthen its role as a trusted financial partner, committed to raising public awareness on key banking topics in line with its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. The Bank constantly seeks to launch initiatives that promote financial literacy and support the objectives of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, embodying its corporate slogan 'Bank for Life'.



Sultan Alhajri



KIB representatives at FunFest.

## Some electronics to get tariff relief

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 13, (AP): The Trump administration late Friday said it would exclude electronics like smartphones and laptops from reciprocal tariffs, a move that could help keep the prices down for popular consumer electronics that aren't usually made in the U.S.

It would also benefit big tech companies like Apple and Samsung and chip makers like Nvidia, setting the stage for a likely tech stock rally on Monday.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said items like smartphones, laptops, hard drives, flat-panel monitors and some chips would qualify for the exemption. Machines used to make semiconductors are excluded too. That means they won't be subject to the current 145% tariffs levied on China or the 10% baseline tariffs elsewhere.

It's the latest tariff change by the Trump administration, which has made several U-turns in their massive plan to put tariffs in place on goods from most countries.

The exemption seemed to reflect the president's realization that his China tariffs are unlikely to shift more manufacturing of smartphones, computers and other gadgets to the U.S. any time soon, if ever, despite the administration's predictions that the trade war would prod Apple to make iPhones in the U.S. for the first time.

But that was an unlikely scenario after Apple spent decades building up a finely calibrated supply chain in China. What's more, it would take several years and cost billions of dollars to build new plants in the U.S., and then confront Apple with economic forces that could triple the price of an iPhone, threatening to torpedo sales of its marquee product.

Trump's decision to exempt the iPhone and other popular electronics made in China mirrors the similar relief that he gave those products during the trade war of his first term in the White House. But Trump began his second term seemingly determined to impose the tariffs more broadly this time, triggering a meltdown in the market values of Apple and other technology powerhouses.

# Freak sell-off of 'safe haven' US bonds raises fear that confidence in America is fading

Trump tariff pause not yielding desired results

**NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): The upheaval in stocks has been grabbing all the headlines, but there is a bigger problem looming in another corner of the financial markets that rarely gets headlines: Investors are dumping U.S. government bonds.**

Normally, investors rush into Treasury bills at a whiff of economic chaos but now they are selling them as not even the lure of higher interest payments on the bonds is getting them to buy. The freak development has experts worried that big banks, funds and traders are losing faith in America as a stable, predictable, good place to store their money.

"The fear is the U.S. is losing its standing as the safe haven," said George Cipolloni, a fund manager at Penn Mutual Asset Management. "Our bond market is the biggest and most stable in the world, but when you add instability, bad things can happen."

That could be bad news for taxpayers paying interest on the ballooning U.S. debt, consumers

taking out mortgages or car loans – and for President Donald Trump, who had hoped his tariff pause earlier this week would restore confidence in the markets.

A week ago, the yield on the 10-year Treasury was 4.01%. On Friday, the yield shot as high as 4.58% before sliding back to around 4.50%. That's a major swing for the bond market, which measures moves by the hundredths of a percentage point.

Among the possible knock-on effects is a big hit to ordinary Americans in the form of higher interest rates on mortgages and car financing and other loans.

"As yields move higher, you'll see your borrowing rates move higher, too," said Brian Rehling, head of fixed income strategy at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "And every corporation uses these funding markets. If they get more expensive, they're going to have to pass along those costs customers or cut costs by cutting jobs."

Treasury bonds are essentially IOUs from the U.S. government, and they're how Washington pays its bills despite collecting less in revenue than it spends.

To be sure, no one can say exactly what mix of factors is behind the developing bond bust or

how long it will last, but it's rattling Wall Street nonetheless.

Bonds are supposed to move in the opposite direction as stocks, rising when stocks are falling. In this way, they act like shock absorbers to 401(k)s and other portfolios in stock market meltdowns, compensating somewhat for the losses.

"This is Econ 101," said Jack McIntyre, portfolio manager for Brandywine Global, adding about the bond sell-off now, "It's left people scratching their heads."

The latest trigger for bond yields to go up was Friday's worse-than-expected reading on sentiment among U.S. consumers, including expectations for much higher inflation ahead. But the unusual bond yield spike this week also reflects deeper worries as Trump's tariffs threats and erratic policy moves have made America seem hostile and unstable – fears that are not likely to go away even after the tariff turmoil ends.

"When the issue is a broader loss of confidence in the United States, even a much fuller retreat on trade might not work" to bring yields down, wrote Sarah Bianchi and other analysts at investment bank Evercore ISI. "We're not sure any of the tools remaining in Trump's toolkit will be sufficient to fully staunch the bleeding."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said the yield spike is not unusual or worrisome, pinning the blame on professional investors who had borrowed too much and needed to sell.

"I think that it is an uncomfortable but normal deleveraging that's going on," he told Fox News Thursday, adding that it "happens every couple of years."

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One Friday night, Trump said "The bond market's going good. It had a little moment, but I solved that problem very quickly. I'm very good at this."

Trump acknowledged that the bond market played a role in his decision Wednesday to put a 90-day pause on many tariffs, saying investors "were getting a little queasy."

If indeed it was the bond market, and not stocks, that made him change course, it wouldn't come as a surprise.

The bond market's reaction to her tax and budget policy was behind the ouster of United Kingdom's Liz Truss in 2022, whose 49 days made her Britain's shortest-serving prime minister. James Carville, adviser to former U.S. President Bill Clinton, also famously said he'd like to be reincarnated as the bond market because of how much power it wields.

## As tariffs put Sino-US trade in peril, Chinese businesses ponder the future

BEIJING, April 13, (AP): When the first two rounds of 10% tariffs hit, Zou Guoqing, a Chinese exporter, groaned but didn't find the barriers insurmountable. He gave up some of his profits and offered his client, a snow-bike factory in Nebraska, price cuts ranging from 5% to 10%. It seemed to work: The factory agreed to a new order of molds and parts.

But when President Donald Trump announced an additional 34% universal tariff on Chinese goods on April 2, Zou, who's been exporting to the U.S. for more than a decade, was incredulous.

"There's not a thread of feasibility," said Zou, who does business in the eastern Chinese city of Ningbo. "It looks like I would have no choice but give up trading with the U.S."

Then came 50% more from Trump, followed by another hike – pushing the universal tariff on Chinese goods to the sky-high 145%, and Zou said he now could only hope that the two leaders can communicate. "We are pausing the shipments," he said, "until the leaders talk."

The 145% tariff from the United States and the retaliatory 125% tariff from China are putting businesses doing trade between the U.S. and China on edge. They're fretting not only about

their next orders, but also the viability of their business if there's no quick relief. Experts are worried the decades-long trade ties that have underpinned the relationship between the world's two largest economies could be unraveling.

If the high tariff is sustained for the next six months or longer, "that would actually lead to a real effective decoupling between the American and Chinese economies," said Chen Zhiwu, professor of finance at Hong Kong University Business School.

Josh Lipsky, senior director of the Atlantic Council's GeoEconomics Center, said the sky-high tariff, if

kept in place, amounts to "almost a trade embargo," making it impossible for China to export low-value items such as apparel to the U.S. It also would force U.S. businesses to source elsewhere, away from China, if there should be alternatives, he said.

In a turn, the Trump administration late Friday said it would exclude electronics like smartphones and laptops from reciprocal tariffs, which means they won't be subject to the 145% tariffs levied on China. The exemption seemed to reflect Trump's realization that his China tariffs are unlikely to shift more manufacturing of smart-

phones, computers and other gadgets to the U.S. any time soon.

In China, the central tariff office flat-out declared there was "no possibility for market acceptance" of U.S. goods exported to China" at the current tariff level.

"Everyone's pretty worried," said Hu Jianlong, founder of Brands Factory, a consultancy that works with Chinese companies trying to break into overseas markets. "At this point in time, there's no good way forward. This situation has not resolved... there's no final number. And so everyone's still waiting to see how this will develop."

Apple didn't respond to a request for comment Wednesday. The Cupertino, California, company has yet to publicly discuss its response to Trump's tariffs on China, but the topic may come up on May 1 when Apple CEO Tim Cook is scheduled to field questions from analysts during a quarterly conference call to discuss the company's financial results and strategy.

## UK economy enjoyed unexpected growth spurt in Feb before Trump tariff turmoil

LONDON, April 13, (AP): Official figures Friday showed that the British economy, the world's sixth-largest, enjoyed a growth spurt in February, the month before U.S. President Donald Trump started to roll out tariffs on imported goods.

The Office for National Statistics found that the British economy grew by 0.5% in February, ahead of market expectations for a more modest increase of 0.2%. It also revised up January's figure to no change from the previous estimate of a 0.1% decline.

Were these more normal times, hopes for the year ahead would be high. But the recent market turmoil prompted by Trump's tariff policies – and subsequent abrupt changes – is expected to lead to a downturn around the world, as busi-

nesses and consumers retrain in the face of the heightened economic uncertainty.

China's decision to raise tariffs on U.S. goods from 84% to 125% from Saturday has only added to fears that the world's two biggest economies are heading for a drawn-out and damaging trade war.

While welcoming Friday's growth figures, British Treasury chief Rachel Reeves acknowledged the uncertain outlook.

"The world has changed and we have witnessed that change in recent weeks," she said. "I know this is an anxious time for families who are worried about the cost of living and British businesses who are worried about what this change means for them."

## Apple has few incentives to start making iPhones in US

SAN FRANCISCO, April 13, (AP): President Donald Trump's administration has been predicting its barrage of tariffs targeting China will push Apple into manufacturing the iPhone in the United States for the first time.

But that's an unlikely scenario even with U.S. tariffs now standing at 145% on products made in China – the country where Apple has manufactured most of its iPhones since the first model hit the market 18 years ago.

The disincentives for Apple shifting its production domestically include a complex supply chain that it began building in China during the 1990s. It would take several years and cost billions of dollars to build new plants in

the U.S., and then confront Apple with economic forces that could triple the price of an iPhone, threatening to torpedo sales of its marquee product.

They might get a reprieve. The Trump administration said late Friday it was excluding electronics, including smartphones, from the current reciprocal tariffs. But it still could levy new or different tariffs on electronics at a later date.

"The concept of making iPhones in the U.S. is a non-starter," asserted Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives, reflecting a widely held view in the investment community that tracks Apple's every move. He estimated that the current \$1,000 price tag for

an iPhone made in China, or India, would soar to more than \$3,000 if production shifted to the U.S. And he believes that moving production domestically likely couldn't be done until, at the earliest, 2028. "Price points would move so dramatically, it's hard to comprehend."

Apple didn't respond to a request for comment Wednesday. The Cupertino, California, company has yet to publicly discuss its response to Trump's tariffs on China, but the topic may come up on May 1 when Apple CEO Tim Cook is scheduled to field questions from analysts during a quarterly conference call to discuss the company's financial results and strategy.



# Business Plus



## Trump raises tariffs on China to 125%, deepening trade standoff

### China holds stronger cards than Trump in trade war, could have the upper hand



The U.S. and China national flags wave as a person passes by in the Chinatown area in New York, Tuesday, April 8, 2025. (AP)

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

By **Linggong Kong**  
Auburn University

When Donald Trump pulled back on his plan to impose eye-watering tariffs on trading partners across the world, there was one key exception: China.

While the rest of the world would be given a 90-day reprieve on additional duties beyond the new 10% tariffs on all U.S. trade partners, China would feel the squeeze even more. On April 9, 2025, Trump raised the tariff on Chinese goods to 125%.

The move, in Trump's telling, was prompted by Beijing's "lack of respect for global markets." But the U.S. president may well have been smarting from Beijing's apparent willingness to confront U.S. tariffs head on.

While many countries opted not to retaliate against Trump's now-delayed reciprocal tariff hikes, instead favoring negotiation and dialogue, Beijing took a different tack. It responded with swift and firm countermeasures. On April 11, China dismissed Trump's moves as a "joke" and raised its own tariff against the U.S. to 125%.

The two economies are now locked in an all-out, high-intensity trade standoff. And China is showing no signs of backing down.

And as an expert on U.S.-China

relations, I wouldn't expect China to. Unlike the first U.S.-China trade war during Trump's initial term, when Beijing eagerly sought to negotiate with the U.S., China now holds far more leverage.

Indeed, Beijing believes it can inflict at least as much damage on the U.S. as vice versa, while at the same time expanding its global position.

There's no doubt that the consequences of tariffs are severe for China's export-oriented manufacturers - especially those in the coastal regions producing furniture, clothing, toys and home appliances for American consumers.

But since Trump first launched a tariff increase on China in 2018, a number of underlying economic factors have significantly shifted Beijing's calculus.

Crucially, the importance of the U.S. market to China's export-driven economy has declined significantly. In 2018, at the start of the first trade war, U.S.-bound exports accounted for 19.8% of China's total exports. In 2023, that figure had fallen to 12.8%. The tariffs may further prompt China to accelerate its "domestic demand expansion" strategy, unleashing the spending power of its consumers and strengthening its domestic economy.

And while China entered the 2018 trade war in a phase of strong economic growth, the current situation is quite different. Sluggish real estate markets, capital flight and Western "decoupling" have pushed the Chinese economy into a period of persistent slowdown.

Perhaps counterintuitively, this prolonged downturn may have made the Chinese economy more resilient to shocks. It has pushed businesses and policymakers to come to factor in the existing harsh economic realities, even before the impact of Trump's tariffs.

Trump's tariff policy against China may also allow Beijing a useful external scapegoat, allowing it to rally public sentiment and shift blame for the economic slowdown onto U.S. aggression. China also understands that the U.S. cannot easily replace its dependency on Chinese goods, particularly through its supply chains. While direct U.S. imports from China have decreased, many goods now imported from third countries still rely on Chinese-made components or raw materials.

By 2022, the U.S. relied on China for 532 key product categories - nearly four times the level in 2000 - while China's reliance on U.S. products was cut by half in the same period.

There's a related public opinion calculation: Rising tariffs are expected to drive up prices, something that could stir discontent among American consumers, particularly blue-collar voters. Indeed, Beijing believes Trump's tariffs risk pushing the previously strong U.S. economy toward a recession.

Alongside the changed economic environments, China also holds a number of strategic tools for retaliation against the U.S.

It dominates the global rare earth supply chain - critical to military and high-tech industries - supplying roughly

72% of U.S. rare earth imports, by some estimates. On March 4, China placed 15 American entities on its export control list, followed by another 12 on April 9. Many were U.S. defense contractors or high-tech firms reliant on rare earth elements for their products.

China also retains the ability to target key U.S. agricultural export sectors such as poultry and soybeans - industries heavily dependent on Chinese demand and concentrated in Republican-leaning states. China accounts for about half of U.S. soybean exports and nearly 10% of American poultry exports. On March 4, Beijing revoked import approvals for three major U.S. soybean exporters.

And on the tech side, many U.S. companies - such as Apple and Tesla - remain deeply tied to Chinese manufacturing. Tariffs threaten to shrink their profit margins significantly, something Beijing believes can be used as a source of leverage against the Trump administration. Already, Beijing is reportedly planning to strike back through regulatory pressure on U.S. companies operating in China.

Meanwhile, the fact that Elon Musk, a senior Trump insider who has clashed with U.S. trade adviser Peter Navarro against tariffs, has major business interests in China is a particularly strong wedge that Beijing could yet exploit in an attempt to divide the Trump administration.

While Beijing thinks it can weather Trump's sweeping tariffs on a bilateral basis, it also believes the U.S. broadly

against its own trading partners has created a generational strategic opportunity to displace American hegemony.

Close to home, this shift could significantly reshape the geopolitical landscape of East Asia. Already on March 30 - after Trump had first raised tariffs on Beijing - China, Japan and South Korea hosted their first economic dialogue in five years and pledged to advance a trilateral free trade agreement. The move was particularly remarkable given how carefully the U.S. had worked to cultivate its Japanese and South Korean allies during the Biden administration as part of its strategy to counter Chinese regional influence. From Beijing's perspective, Trump's actions offer an opportunity to directly erode U.S. sway in the Indo-Pacific. (AP)

Similarly, Trump's steep tariffs on Southeast Asian countries, which were also a major strategic regional priority during the Biden administration, may push those nations closer to China. Chinese state media announced on April 11 that President Xi Jinping will pay state visits to Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia from April 14-18, aiming to deepen "all-round cooperation" with neighboring countries. Notably, all three Southeast Asian nations were targeted with now-paused reciprocal tariffs by the Trump administration - 49% on Cambodian goods, 46% on Vietnamese exports and 24% on products from Malaysia.

Further away from China lies an even more promising strategic opportunity. Trump's tariff strategy has already prompted China and officials from the European Union to contemplate strengthening their own previously strained trade ties, something that could weaken the transatlantic alliance that had sought to decouple from China.

On April 8, the president of the European Commission held a call with China's premier, during which both sides jointly condemned U.S. trade protectionism and advocated for free and open trade. Coincidentally, on April 9, the day China raised tariffs on U.S. goods to 84%, the EU also announced its first wave of retaliatory measures - imposing a 25% tariff on selected U.S. imports worth over €20 billion - but delayed implementation following Trump's 90-day pause.

Now, EU and Chinese officials are holding talks over existing trade barriers and considering a full-fledged summit in China in July.

Finally, China sees in Trump's tariff policy a potential weakening of the international standing of the U.S. dollar. Widespread tariffs imposed on multiple countries have shaken investor confidence in the U.S. economy, contributing to a decline in the dollar's value.

Traditionally, the dollar and U.S. Treasury bonds have been viewed as haven assets, but recent market turmoil has cast doubt on that status. At the same time, steep tariffs have raised concerns about the health of the U.S. economy and the sustainability of its debt, undermining trust in both the dollar and U.S. Treasury.

While Trump's tariffs will inevitably hurt parts of the Chinese economy, Beijing appears to have far more cards to play this time around. It has the tools to inflict meaningful damage on U.S. interests - and perhaps more importantly, Trump's all-out tariff war is providing China with a rare and unprecedented strategic opportunity. (AP)

## Meta, Google drive expansion of renewable energy initiatives

### Companies under pressure to address climate change despite US policy rollbacks

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

By **Ethan I. Thorpe**  
Vanderbilt University

As the federal government moves to eliminate U.S. climate rules, companies still face pressure to be better stewards of the planet from their customers, investors, employees, local communities, lenders, insurers, global trading partners and many states.

Each of those groups knows it will face increasing costs from rising temperatures and extreme weather if corporations don't rein in their greenhouse gas emissions.

Many companies will find that returning to past polluting ways isn't in their best interest. Over 60% of chief financial officers surveyed by global management firm Kearney in December 2024 signaled that they intended to invest at least 2% of their revenue in sustainability in 2025.

These companies may maintain a low profile about climate change while the Trump administration is in power, but they have strong financial incentives to continue to reduce their emissions and their own climate risks.

We study private environmental governance - the ways companies and organizations work outside government to improve the nation's sustainability and reduce environmental damage. Our work finds that, in this polarized era, addressing climate and sustainability challenges is not just a matter of government action.

That's because a lot of climate and sustainability progress is underway in the private sector.

Businesses have used climate and sustainability initiatives for years to make their operations and supply chains more efficient and to reduce their long-term costs.

When McDonald's faced public pressure to reduce waste in the late 1980s, the company teamed up with the Environmental Defense Fund to analyze the problem. It was able to reduce its waste by 30% over the following decade, saving the company US\$6 million a year. This early risk-taking by McDonald's opened the door for other environmental groups to help businesses understand how to reduce their environmental impact, including emissions, while boosting the companies' profitability.

Maersk, the logistics giant responsible for nearly a quarter of global shipping, has responded to pressure from its corporate customers with a plan to reduce carbon emissions by one-third from 2022 to 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2045. It expects the combination of low-emissions vessels and a more efficient delivery network with hubs and shuttles to help meet its climate goals while increasing productivity.

Companies have also helped drive the expansion of renewable energy, motivated by the competitive economics of renewables and business opportunities.

Facebook's parent company Meta and Google invested nearly \$2 billion in projects to provide renewable energy in the Tennessee Valley Authority service area, even though no

government required them to do so. And major companies continued signing renewable energy power purchase agreements in 2025.

Microsoft and Amazon are responding to massive new power demand by trying to locate data centers near existing nuclear power plants for cleaner energy supplies.

Another sign of companies' continuing commitment to sustainability is how many of them measure and report their greenhouse gas emissions even when governments do not require them to do so.

Nearly 25,000 companies representing two-thirds of total global market capitalization and 85% of the S&P 500 report their emissions to the nonprofit CDP. Disclosing emissions is like keeping a fitness journal with a personal trainer. It helps a company track its progress and plan for future financial and environmental risks. More than 12,500 small- and medium-size companies also disclosed emissions to CDP in 2024.

Many of these companies were initially motivated by pressure from environmental groups or corporate customers. Today, they have more reason to continue paying attention to emissions.

California has its own formal reporting requirements designed to encourage companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. And other states are considering setting climate disclosure rules. The Trump administration has promised to challenge them, and announced that it also plans to cut federal greenhouse gas reporting standards, but companies will likely still face reporting rules in the future. The European Union also

has reporting requirements. It delayed their start date in April 2025 to give companies more time to comply.

Managing supply chains with climate and environmental risks in mind can also help businesses increase their efficiency and reduce the risk that climate change will disrupt their operations.

The supply chain is the largest source of the average company's emissions and may be particularly vulnerable to climate shocks. A storm can easily disrupt vital production or shipping, and droughts or heat waves can damage crops, stop work and increase costs. Companies estimate climate-related supply chain risks at \$162 billion, nearly three times the cost of mitigating those risks. Many companies therefore have incentives to reduce emissions and their exposure to related hazards.

Nearly 80% of the largest companies across seven global economic sectors had set environmental requirements for suppliers within their value chains as of 2023. These requirements include reporting carbon emissions, reducing emissions and using sustainable forestry practices.

Walmart eliminated 1 billion tons of carbon emissions from its supply chain in less than seven years by sharing its expertise with suppliers and working with them to reduce their emissions. Walmart's global director of sustainable retail noted in 2024 that the effort made its suppliers more efficient, too.

Companies also face pressure from average people - both employees and customers.

More than two-thirds of Americans support action to address climate

change. Even companies that are not consumer-facing need retail customer and employee support. Pro-climate actions have been found to improve employee and customer loyalty.

The outdoor clothing company Patagonia ranked third out of over 300 brands in a 2024 customer experience survey, in part because of its reputation for sustainable practices. Many of the over 10,000 respondents cited the company's sustainable practices as the leading reason for their support.

Many companies also face pressure from lenders and insurers who want to reduce climate risks to their own bottom lines. Dozens of insurers have committed to ending or restricting underwriting for new fossil fuel projects. Others use incentives, such as lower premiums for companies that reduce emissions or invest in climate adaptation.

Climate change may accelerate the current 5% to 7% annual increase in insured losses, according to estimates from insurer Swiss Re. That has led some insurance leaders to recommend insurance companies take bigger steps to reduce emissions through their investments and policy underwriting.

Media attention and interest group advocacy is often focused on government actions, but decisions made in boardrooms and through initiatives with nonprofits have created an important kind of private climate governance.

As companies respond to their own economic risks and incentives, they help buy time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change until the political system recognizes the financial risks posed to the entire country. (AP)

The dollar's status as a safe haven is under threat.

Returning to past polluting ways isn't in their best interest.



## Al Hurra accuses US of silencing independent Arabic news

### US-backed Mideast TV cuts staff over funding freeze

CAIRO, April 13, (AP): The head of a US-funded Arabic-language television and online news outlet that claims a 30 million-strong audience in the Middle East and North Africa terminated most staff and curtailed TV programming Saturday, accusing the Trump administration and Elon Musk of having "irresponsibly and unlawfully" cut off funding.

In notices to Al Hurra news staffers about their dismissals, chief Jeffrey Gedmin said he had given up on the US administration's freeze lifting anytime soon for the congressionally approved money for Al Hurra and its US-funded Arabic language sister organizations.

Gedmin accused Kari Lake, President Donald Trump's appointee to the American government agency overseeing Al Hurra, Voice of America and other US-funded news programming abroad, of dodging his efforts to speak with her about the funding cutoff.

"I'm left to conclude that she is deliberately starving us of the money we need to pay you, our dedicated and hard-working staff," Gedmin said in severance letters obtained by The Associated Press and excerpt-

ed on the website of Al Hurra's parent company, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday.

Mohamed al-Sabagh, an Egyptian journalist working at the Al Hurra news website in Dubai, told the AP that all the staff in the website and the television channel received emails terminating their contracts.

#### Administration

Al-Hurra is the latest US government-funded news outlet - after Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and others - to cut staff and services amid what the outlets say is the move by the Trump administration and Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to withhold their congressional appropriations.

Lake, appointed to oversee the US Agency for Global Media, describes her agency as being consumed by a "giant rot" that requires the agency's destruction and rebuilding.

The US-backed news organizations were set up starting in the Cold War between the West and Soviet Union. Their designated goal was to provide objective news about the United States and other subjects overseas, often to people under authoritarian governments without access to a free press.

The George W. Bush administration created Al Hurra in 2003, the same year his administration's invasion of Iraq overthrew that country's leader. Al Hurra's journalists covered the US occupation and sectarian and extremist violence that followed, with some them dying on the job during the 2011 Arab Spring, and other political changes across the Middle East.

While Al Hurra over the years faced charges of bias from both conservatives and liberals in the United States, it was one of the few outlets in its region providing space for freedom of the press and speech.

In his note to staffers, Gedmin said his organization would retain a couple of dozen staffers and a "presence" online as court battles over the cuts play out in US courts.



Kari Lake speaks to supporters at a campaign event, Sept. 4, 2024, in Mesa, Ariz. (AP)

## Pop and politics collide

### Weezer, T-Pain, Sanders make waves at Coachella

INDIO, Calif., April 13, (AP): Coachella's second day featured high-profile guests from Hollywood and Washington, D.C., an emotional performance from Weezer and a peaceful transfer of power between electropop stars.

Then there was Flava Flav joining the Yo Gabba Gabba characters on-stage to rap "I love bugs!"

The cultural breadth of the influential Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival was on full display Saturday at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California.

Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Rep. Maxwell Frost of Florida traveled from a Los Angeles rally to the desert to introduce Clairo, praising the 26-year-old singer-songwriter's political activism.

Less than an hour earlier, Charli XCX commandeered a minimalist stage where she was joined by Troye Sivan and Billie Eilish, with an audience that included Oscar nominee Timothée Chalamet in the front row wearing a big smile and a backpack.

As for that power transfer: After last year's "brat summer," the English pop star concluded her "Girl, so confusing" performance with New Zealand electropop star Lorde by declaring "Lorde summer 2025."

Sanders' appearance wasn't the day's only dose of politics. Billie Joe Armstrong adjusted the lyrics of Green Day's set-opening "American Idiot" to declare he's "not a part of the MAGA agenda" and changed lyrics in "... of

Suburbia" to "running away from pain like the kids from Palestine."

T-Pain brought mash-ups and covers to the main stage, singing Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" and Chris Stapleton's "Tennessee Whiskey."

Earlier, Weezer delivered a dozen songs in a well-received performance featuring "Undone (The Sweater Song)," "Buddy Holly" and a cover of Metallica's "Enter Sandman."

The band played four days after bassist Scott Shriner's wife Jillian Lauren was shot and injured by Los Angeles police. Lauren, an author of two memoirs, was arrested and later posted bail after police said she pointed a gun at them.

Band members didn't specifically address the incident, but frontman Rivers Cuomo told the crowd, "It feels so good to get out here with you guys and let out these emotions."

Coachella kicked off Friday with Lady Gaga headlining with a crowd-pleasing, extravagantly theatrical, five-act performance. K-pop star Lisa drew a massive crowd to the Sahara tent and Benson Boone announced his second album and sang "Bohemian Rhapsody" with Queen's Brian May on guitar.

The festival runs through Sunday, with another round of performances April 18 to 20. Travis Scott headlined Saturday night on the main stage with Post Malone set to perform in the final slot Sunday night.

## Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Meghann Fahy in a scene from 'Drop.' (AP)

## A silly but suspenseful sleek thriller

### 'Drop' doesn't phone it in

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP): It's oddly comforting that a movie can still dial M when it wants to.

Smart phones have largely been a bit of a buzzkill for horror films, leading filmmakers to find all kinds of reasons - dead batteries, no service - to strand potential prey. But at least since 1949's "Sorry, Wrong Number," phones have also been a reliable conduit for terror capable of reaching into the home, or your pocket. "Drop," a silly but suspenseful new thriller, carries on the tradition of "When a Stranger Calls" and "Phone Booth" by situating its tension around mysterious, threatening phone messages.

Violet (Meghann Fahy), a widow with a young child, is on her first date in years. After three months of texting, she has hesitantly agreed to finally meet Henry (Brandon Sklenar) for dinner. When they sit down in a fancy restaurant high up a sleek Chicago high-rise, he's charming and relaxed. But Violet, like countless dates before her, can't stay off her phone.

In Violet's case, though, the distraction is legitimate. She keeps getting messages dropped to her phone threatening her son, who's at home with Violet's sister (Violett Beane), unless she does what he says, including killing her date. In her home security cameras she can see a man with his face covered brandishing a gun.

"Drop," directed by Christopher Landon ("Happy Death Day"), doesn't differ greatly from the large swath of high-concept, low-budget thrillers that regularly flood theaters. But it's a taut little movie, almost totally set in the restaurant, with a just-keen enough sense of plausible and preposterous. It knows to keep the pressure-cooker plot moving while not overstaying its welcome. At a nifty 95 minutes, "Drop" knows when to hang up.

As if adding a digital twist to the old line "The call is coming from inside the house," Violet is getting message from an app called DigiDrop that can only be sent from a person within 50 feet. That means eve-

ryone in the restaurant - the bro who bumps into her, the cheesy waiter, the kind bartender - is a suspect. With her terrorizer watching her every move and prohibiting her from breathing a word to anyone, Violet is stuck rooted to her table when every fiber of her being wants to rescue her son.

A considerable help to the film are the grounded screen presences of Fahy ("The White Lotus") and Sklenar ("1923"), both small-screen breakouts who here show movie-star poise. As the plot unspools, there are, naturally, quibbles one could make. Would a mother, with a masked gunman outside her toddler's door be able to feign interest in a duck salad? Does the highly orchestrated trap laid for her match the motives of the criminal mastermind? And while we're asking questions, could we not someday get a phone-themed thriller titled "Butt Dial"?

But if "Drop" is invariably quite a bit less than realistic, it has a whiff of metaphor. Violet isn't just stepping back into the dating pool as a single mom, she's trying to shake the past trauma of spousal abuse. Going on a date with Henry, whom she met on an app, is a kind of crap shoot. Will going out with a stranger met online end in love or violence?

You could also read "Drop" as an extreme version of a more ubiquitous scourge. This is a movie where the bad guy, for nearly the duration of the movie, is nothing but text messages. (They are typically flashed large across the screen.) As Violet grows increasingly preoccupied and frantic, she could be just about anyone - a workaholic after hours, a teenager, a desperate Knicks fan watching the score - whose attention is held prisoner by her phone. How much of the terror of "Drop" would have existed at all, if she had just put it on silent?

"Drop," a Universal Pictures release is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for strong violent content, suicide, some strong language and sexual references. Running time: 95 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

## Legal clash

### Combs' legal team seeks juror vetting

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): Lawyers for Sean "Diddy" Combs are urging a judge to let prospective jurors at the hip-hop mogul's upcoming sex trafficking trial be questioned about their views regarding sex, drugs and violence.

The lawyers raised the subject as they submitted a proposed questionnaire to be filled out by individuals summoned for his May 5 trial in Manhattan federal court.

In a letter to a judge late Friday, the lawyers said they want to know the willingness of would-be jurors to watch videos that are sexually explicit or show physical assault. They also say they want to know their views toward people with multiple sexual partners.

Prosecutors in a letter of their own criticized the defense's proposed questionnaire as too long and touching on subjects that would be better asked in person by the judge, if at all.

They said some of the defense's proposed 72 questions, some containing subparts, were "utterly irrelevant to the ability to serve on a jury."

Prosecutors also cited the sex trafficking trial of Ghislaine Maxwell as an example of how a lengthy questionnaire can be damaging.

After Maxwell was convicted of sex trafficking in December 2021, a juror admitted that he had failed to disclose that he was a sex abuse victim, blaming his oversight in part on being "distracted as he filled out the questionnaire" and having "skimmed way too fast," causing him to misunderstand questions.

#### Questionnaires

Judge Arun Subramanian has told lawyers that questionnaires will be distributed to hundreds of prospective jurors at the end of April so that questioning of prospective jurors can begin on May 5, with opening statements likely on May 12.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to allegations that he subjected individuals to sexual abuse over a two-decade period. The Bad Boy Records founder has remained incarcerated without bail since his September arrest.

An indictment accuses Combs of using the "power and prestige" he wielded as a music mogul to intimidate, threaten and lure women into his orbit, often under the pretense of a romantic relationship.

The indictment said he then used force, threats and coercion to cause victims, including three women specified in the court papers, to engage in commercial sex acts.

It said he subjected his victims to violence, threats of violence, threats of financial and reputational harm and verbal abuse.

Prosecutors have said that a key piece of the evidence at trial will be a video showing Combs punching his former protegee and girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, and throwing her on the floor in a hotel hallway.

Defense lawyers have argued that prosecutors built their case on charges that try to demonize sex acts between consenting adults.

They told the judge they were unable to reach a consensus with prosecutors for what prospective jurors should be asked on questionnaires.

"The defense believes it is important that we allow potential jurors to write candidly about the unprecedented and negative media attention that they may have been exposed to, related to Mr. Combs," the lawyers wrote.

Defense lawyers also asked that jurors be asked to tell if they've watched shows on television titled: "The Fall of Diddy," "Diddy Do It?" "The Downfall of Diddy," and "Diddy: The Making of a Bad Boy."



Rivers Cuomo, (left), and Scott Shriner of Weezer perform during the first weekend of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club on Saturday, April 12 in Indio, Calif. (AP)



Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day performs. (AP)



T-Pain performs during the first weekend of the Coachella festival. (AP)





Puppeteers move cardboard animals through DRC's capital Kinshasa's botanical gardens Thursday, April 10, the first steps of 'The Herds', a moving theatre performance that will travel from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Arctic Circle in a bid to bring attention to the climate crisis. (AP)

### 'The Herds' begins its journey from central Africa to the Arctic Circle

In the Kinshasa Botanical Garden, a troupe of cardboard animals - monkeys, a gorilla, leopards, a giraffe - stand at attention in a clearing. Their handlers, puppeteers dressed in black, begin to move slowly through the woods, eventually picking up speed and breaking out into a run.

These were the first steps of "The Herds," a moving theater performance made up of cardboard puppet animals that flee from the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Arctic Circle in a bid to bring attention to the climate crisis.

This week, the puppet animals started their journey

in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC in central Africa. The story goes that the animals will be forced out of their natural habitats due to global warming and displaced north, stopping in cities along the way and being joined by more animals.

Just meters (yards) away a real-life example of climate change: Part of the botanical garden lay under floodwaters left over from massive flooding earlier this week that left half the city inaccessible and killed dozens. The sight brought "The Herds" story to life in a bleak way. The main event planned in the center of Kinshasa on Friday was canceled because of the heavy

rain.

"The Herds" comes from the team that was behind "The Walk" in 2021, in which a 12-foot tall puppet of a refugee girl called Little Amal drew attention to the refugee crisis by traveling to 15 countries - from Turkey to the UK, Ukraine, Mexico and the US.

Tshoper Kabambi, a Congolese filmmaker and producer, is working on "The Herds" as its DRC producer. He said "The Herds" main goal is to raise awareness.

"Nature is very important to us. But humans have a tendency to neglect nature," he said. "We want to raise awareness among people about everything that is hap-

pening. You have seen the floods all over the world, global warming, deforestation."

"The Herds" will stay in Kinshasa until Saturday before moving onto Lagos, Nigeria, and Dakar, Senegal.

"The Herds" organizers say the significance of starting in Congo lies in the fact that the country is home to the second biggest rainforest in the world. The Congo Basin serves as one of the planet's "lungs," the other being the Amazon Rainforest.

They say much less attention has been focused on Congo's rainforest, but it is still in dire need of protection. (AP)

### Variety

**ABUJA, Nigeria:** Authorities in Nigeria have barred radio stations from playing a song critical of President **Bola Tinubu** and his administration's policies, according to a memo seen Friday by The Associated Press.

The country's media regulator described the content of "Tell Your Papa" in the memo to radio stations as "inappropriate for broadcast."

The song is a response by musician and outspoken government critic Eedris Abdulkareem to recent remarks by Seyi Tinubu, the president's son, who called his father the greatest leader in the country's history.

In the afrobeats track, Abdulkareem asks the younger Tinubu to tell his father that his policies have brought widespread hardship to Africa's most populous country, while highlighting what he calls a string of unfulfilled "empty promises."

Since taking office in 2023, Tinubu's policies such as the removal of subsidies on gasoline have hit hard as Nigeria grapples with fluctuating prices.

Last year, at least 20 people were shot dead and hundreds more were arrested at protests demanding better opportunities and jobs for young people.

In Wednesday's memo, the National Broadcasting Commission said the song violated section 3.1.8 of the country's broadcasting code that prohibits content that is in "breach of public decency." Still, the song has gone viral on social media. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Ten emerging writers, from an author of speculative fiction to a poet rooted in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, have received \$50,000 grants from the Whiting Foundation.

Since 1985, the foundation has had a mission to nurture "new creations" by supporting poets, playwrights and authors of fiction and nonfiction. Past winners have included Tony Kushner, André Aciman and Tracy K. Smith.

This week, the foundation announced its class of 2025. Elwin Cofman writes speculative fiction that Whiting judges say offers "illuminating sites of bawdy humor and horror," while Karisma Price crafts post-Katrina poems that are "songs, howls, portraits, critiques." Judges praised the essays of Aisha Sabatini Sloan for their "startling connections between the personal and the collective."

The other winners were dramatist Liza Birkenmeier, fiction writers Samuel Kolawolé, Shubha Sunder and Claire Luchette, graphic fiction writer Emil Ferris, poet Annie Wenstrup and nonfiction writer Sofi Thanhauser. (AP)

**SANTO DOMINGO:** Fans and countrymen on Thursday shared their remembrances of Dominican Republic music icon Rubby Pérez, who was among the scores of people killed this week after the roof at the Jet Set club in Santo Domingo collapsed. He was 69.

Know for songs such as "Volveré," "El Africano" and "Tu Vas a Volar," Pérez devoted his long career to merengue, the signature musical style of the Dominican Republic. It earned him the title, "the highest voice in merengue," despite it being his second career choice.

Born on March 8, 1956, in Haina, Pérez aspired to be a baseball player, but those dreams came to an halt when his right leg was injured in a car accident.

Pérez eventually found solace in the guitar and started his musical career in the 1970s. He made his debut as part of Los Pitagoras del Ritmo.

In 1989, Pérez joined Wilfrido Vargas' orchestra, which gave him the opportunity to launch his solo career in 1987. In 2022, Pérez released his latest album, "Hecho Esta."

His albums have gone gold and platinum in Venezuela and earned him the Orchestra and Merengue of the Year honors at the Sobrano Awards, the Dominican music awards. (AP)

### Music



Mariah Carey performs at Barclays Center in the Brooklyn borough of New York on Dec. 17, 2024. (AP)

### Singer reveals new gems from 'Emancipation'

## Carey reflects on 20 years of 'Mimi'

**NEW YORK, April 13, (AP):** It may be hard to conceive of now, but there was once a lull in Mariah Carey's superstar career. In 2001, her film "Glitter" was a commercial flop; the album that followed, 2002's introspective "Charmbracelet," was met with a muted response. She was at a crossroads.

And then everything changed. Carey released "The Emancipation of Mimi" in 2005. It joined her athletic R&B-pop with synth-y hip-hop and fun, flirty, enduring hits — she was now only belting when she wanted to, thank you very much. She sounded free, as the title suggested, and the world embraced her for it once again.

On Saturday, the album turned 20. To celebrate, Carey is gearing up to release deluxe, expanded editions of the album on May 30, featuring bonus tracks, new remixes and much more — including the official release of "When I Feel It," a song fans have been waiting for since 2005. It was originally planned for "The Emancipation of Mimi" but was ultimately shelved because of clearance issues with its sample of The Dynamic Superiors' "Here Comes That Feeling."

"These are new gems, as far as I'm concerned," Carey says. "It's exciting to me."

Carey discussed "The Emancipation of Mimi," her recent nomination to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Rihanna and plans for new music with The Associated Press. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** Has your relationship to "The Emancipation of Mimi" changed over the years?

**Carey:** It's still one of my favorite albums that I've done. And, you know, back then when it first came out, everybody was calling it a comeback album. ... I didn't really agree, because you never think you've gone anywhere. You know what I mean?

I just always really loved the songs and the performances. People seem to really be into it. And new fans came from that album.

**AP:** I hear a lot of creative freedom on that album. Do you think it revitalized your career?

**Carey:** I do think it's got a fun feeling to it and it definitely feels free. I guess it sort of revitalized my career. I spent a while making that album ... working with some great people, some great collaborators. ... It was an experience that I'll never forget, creating that album.

**AP:** In June, you'll celebrate another anniversary. Your self-titled debut turns 35. When you think back on

that time, did you envision this career?

**Carey:** I don't know. I really was just so involved and entrenched in making the music and this new career that I was embarking on. And it was amazing. I mean, it's what I had wanted to do for my whole life. And then I was doing it.

**AP:** You're also a 2025 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame nominee.

**Carey:** That's a huge honor. I don't know if I'm going to win it, so I don't want to get too excited about it. So, I just want to say that, again, it's a huge honor and I guess I didn't expect it. I wasn't really thinking about it. And here we are.

**AP:** It seems like the Rock Hall has become more fluid in their definitions of genre over the years. Missy Elliott was inducted in 2023, for example.

**Carey:** I don't really know if genre matters. I feel like people are more open to all different genres, much more than they were, you know? But I feel like a rock star sometimes.

**AP:** You know, after Dolly Parton was inducted, she released a rock album. If and when you are inducted, will you finally release your '90s grunge album? Fans have been waiting.

**Carey:** I mean, I really want to, but I want to do videos, and I have just so many ideas for that.

I don't think I'll be able to pull it together by the summer (before the Rock Hall ceremony) but maybe, maybe I'll release a few songs from it.

**AP:** During your Christmas Time tour last holiday season, your children Monroe and Moroccan joined you onstage. They played guitar and drums; they were really rocking. Would you ever consider a family rock 'n' roll album?

**Carey:** I would love to. They just have a lot of their own things that they're doing, and I don't want to force them to do anything.

**AP:** And at your final date in Brooklyn, Rihanna was in the front row of the audience. Would you ever work with her?

**Carey:** I would love to. Did you see what happened? She wanted me to sign her breasts. I was trying to do it neatly, and it didn't come out right. So, I tried.

**AP:** Your last album of original music, "Caution," came out in 2018. It's been a minute! Are you working on a new album?

**Carey:** I'm not supposed to talk about it. ... But I'm working on something. We won't say what it is, but something new.

### From stand-up to solutions

## Comedians use humor to fight climate change

**BURBANK, Calif., April 13, (AP):** Esteban Gast remembered a feeling of shame he had in high school while calculating how much carbon dioxide, the main driver of climate change, his daily activities created, known as a carbon footprint.

"Have you ever driven a car or flown in an airplane?" were among the long list of questions posed by the calculator.

Unspooling his story in the middle of his set at Flappers Comedy Club in Burbank, Calif., Gast pivoted quickly to describe for the crowd how oil and gas giant BP popularized the idea of tracking individual emissions. That, he said, was aimed at shifting responsibility for climate change from the companies that produce oil, gas and coal, which when burned heat the planet, to people.

"That's like your friend who is addicted to cocaine telling you not to have a latte," he said. The audience roared with laughter.

Gast continued: "BP, famous for spilling oil into the Gulf of Mexico, was like, 'Hey, Esteban, do you ever drive?' And I'm like, 'I don't know, sometimes.' And they're just like pouring oil into a turtle's mouth."

### Awareness

Gast is among a growing group of comedians using humor to raise awareness of climate change. On the stage, online and in classrooms, they tell jokes to tackle topics such as a major US climate law passed in 2022, called the Inflation Reduction Act, fossil fuel industries and convey information about the benefits of plant-based diets that emit less planet-warming emissions. They hope to educate people about the climate crisis, relieve anxiety with laughter and provide hope. And although the impacts of climate change are deadly and devastating, experts say using humor to talk climate is an important part of the larger ecosystem of how it's communicated.

Comedian Brad Einstein thinks of it this way: "How do we look that horror in the eyes and let it look back at us and then give it a little wink?"

In Rasheda Crockett's YouTube comedy series "Might Could," the actor-comedian blends humor with information about climate change. In one video, she quips about the environmental benefits of plant-based diets while begging food scientists to make vegan cheese that actually melts.

"I'm now requesting all vegans who care about the planet to make melting vegan cheese their number one priority,"

she quipped. "Because that's what's going to make veganism more viable. It's the change we have to cheese."

Her interest in writing climate humor is also deeply personal. As a Black woman, she knows that global warming disproportionately hurts Black and other non-white communities.

"This is just another instance where people of color are going to be adversely impacted first by a disaster," said Crockett, a 2023 fellow in the Climate Comedy Cohort, a program Gast co-founded that brings together climate experts and comedians. "The Earth is warming up like the inside of a Hot Pocket ... and I just want people to care."

### Surveys

Surveys show that many people do. A 2023 poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 64% of US adults said they'd recently experienced extreme weather and believed it was caused at least partially by climate change. And about 65% said that climate change will have or already has had a big impact in their lifetime.

Humor can bridge the gap between the technical world of climate science and policy and the average person, Gast said. And he thinks comedians are among the "unlikely" messengers who can do that.

"We need someone talking about science, and then we need someone who doesn't even mention science and just mentions a dope sunset for surfers," he said.

At the University of Colorado in Boulder, climate comedy is a longtime tradition.

For the past 13 years, professors Beth Osnes-Stoedefalke and Maxwell Boykoff have taught a creative climate communication course on how information about climate issues and solutions can be conveyed creatively. Sometimes they work on their own sketch comedy or standup they later perform at the annual "Stand Up for Climate Comedy." It's the kind of event the professors help encourage elsewhere, including the show Gast performed at.

Several years ago, the professors decided to use their students and event attendees as case studies to learn about the effects of merging climate information with comedy. Among their findings were that climate comedy increased people's awareness of and engagement with the issue and reduced their climate anxiety.



Kaycee Conlee performs during Stand Up For Climate, a comedy show at Flappers Comedy on Thursday, March 20, 2025, in Burbank, Calif. (AP)



Corinna Yee performs during Stand Up For Climate. (AP)



## HEALTH/SCIENCE

'Anemia on the rise in teens'

## Premarital testing cuts blood diseases by 90 pct in Kuwait

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Pediatric consultant and head of Kuwait Thalassaemia Association Dr. Maha Bouresli confirmed that premarital screening has contributed to the 90 percent reduction in hereditary blood diseases (sickle cell anemia and thalassemia) in the country, stressing the importance of this screening in preventing various genetic diseases and building a healthy family.

In a statement to the newspaper, Bouresli disclosed that "the National Bank of Kuwait Children's Hospital previously received 10 to 12 new cases of hereditary anemia in children annually. After the mandatory premarital screening, the annual rate has decreased to only one to two cases. Also, referrals to adult clinics no longer exceed one to two cases per year

-- a manifestation of the success of the Health Ministry in preventing these diseases."

She disclosed there are two types of anemia in children: hereditary and acquired. She explained that hemoglobin diseases, thalassemia and sickle cell anemia are among the most common hereditary anemia; in addition to other temporary hereditary types that appear due to the shape of red blood cells and enzyme deficiency. She affirmed that most of such cases are mild. She added acquired anemia affects children from after weaning until the age of 12.

She warned about the dangers of malnutrition among children and adolescents -- between the ages of 10 and 13. She said the fear of bullying and the excessive use of social media have pushed adolescents to follow strict and unhealthy diets to lose weight, leading to higher rate of severe anemia in this group.

## Animals culled

## Foot-and-mouth disease hits Europe, shuts borders

LEVÉL, Hungary, April 13, (AP): Authorities in several countries in Central Europe are working to contain an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among cattle populations that has caused widespread border closures and required the killing of thousands of animals.

The outbreak was first detected on a cattle farm in northwestern Hungary in early March, and animals on three farms in neighboring Slovakia tested positive for the highly transmissible virus two weeks later.

Since then, animals from an additional three farms in Hungary and another three in Slovakia have tested positive for the virus, the first outbreak of the disease in either country in more than half a century.

"Everything is completely upside down" in the area as farmers fear for their own herds and transportation is disrupted by border closures, said Sándor Szoboszlai, a local entrepreneur and hunter in the Hungarian town of Levél where nearly 3,000 cattle had to be culled after the disease was discovered on a farm.

"We didn't even think such a thing could happen. Who could count on that? Nobody," he said. "There are big farms in the area, but I don't think it was the fault of the animal owners, that's for sure. The wind blew it here."

Foot-and-mouth disease primarily affects cloven-hooved animals like cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and deer, and results in fevers and blisters in the mouth and hooves. The virus spreads through contact between animals, or on surfaces like clothing, skin and vehicles, or on the wind. It poses little

danger to humans.

On Friday, authorities in Hungary continued to conduct operations aimed at stopping the spread of the disease and disinfecting affected farms and vehicles in the area. Mats doused in a powerful disinfectant were placed at the entrances and exits of towns and villages across the region to eliminate virus molecules that may cling to tires - though many of those mats quickly went dry and were swept partially off the road by passing vehicles.

This week, the Slovakian government, citing insufficient containment measures by Hungary, closed 16 of their common borders and one with Austria, all of them lesser-trafficked crossings so authorities can focus on conducting border checks at the major ones. Last week, Austria - where there have been no reported cases - closed 23 of its border crossings with Hungary and Slovakia.

Authorities in the Czech Republic, relatively distant from the Hungarian and Slovakian farms where the disease has been detected, have introduced disinfection measures at all the five border crossings used by freight trucks entering the country.

Jiri Cerny, associate professor at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, said the most significant risk of transmission is "through contaminated human objects" such as "tires and cars, on the soles of shoes, and through contaminated food." The Czech Agriculture Minister, Marek Vyborný, has said the restrictions could be lifted 30 days after the last farm animal infected with foot-and-mouth disease has been culled in Slovakia.



Cement blocks and signs on a road show the closer of a border crossing between Hungary and Austria to prevent spreading of foot-and-mouth disease, Rajka, Hungary, Saturday, April 5. (AP)



The Grand Ring is seen on Friday, April 11, 2025 prior to the opening day of Osaka Expo 2025 in Osaka, western Japan. (AP)



India's pavilion is seen incomplete to open for the opening day of the Expo 2025 in Osaka, central Japan, Sunday, April 13. (AP)



A kangaroo sculpture is seen at Australia's pavilion the day before the opening of the Expo 2025 in Osaka. (AP)

## Expo 2025 opens in Japan

## Osaka Expo offers a vision of future

OSAKA, Japan, April 13, (AP): The Expo 2025 opened in Osaka on Sunday with more than 10,000 people singing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to celebrate the start of the six-month event that Japan hopes will unite the world divided by tensions and wars.

Here is what to know about the Expo 2025 Osaka:

The Osaka Expo is held at Yumeshima, which means "dream island," a reclaimed industrial waste burial site in the Osaka Bay, where participants from more than 160 countries, regions and organizations showcase their futuristic exhibits inside about 80 pavilions of unique architecture.

"Creating a future society for our lives" is the main theme. It is Osaka's second Expo after the hugely successful 1970 event that attracted 64 million visitors, a record until Shanghai in 2010.

Organizers expect 28 million visitors through mid-October, though ticket sales have been slow, with about 9 million sold in advance, short of an initial target of 14 million.

"It's been 55 years since the last Expo in Osaka. I've been looking forward to it," said Daiki Chiba, who traveled from Sendai, about 900 kilometers (560 miles) northeast of Osaka.

Many visitors carried Myaku-Myaku mascots or wore clothes matching its colors - red, blue and white - to get in the mood.

The Expo comes only four years after Japan struggled to host the no-audience Tokyo Olympics during the coronavirus pandemic.

It opens in the wake of trade wars and fears of a global economic downturn sparked by US President Donald Trump's tariffs, the three-year Rus-

sian invasion of Ukraine and Middle East conflicts.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba compared the global tensions to a "national crisis" and said that Trump's tariffs, especially the 25% duty on automobiles, would be a blow to all industries and Japan's economy.

Still, Japan wants to turn the pinch into a chance.

"I think the timing is actually quite fitting," said Sachiko Yoshimura, head of Expo 2025 global communications. "Holding the Expo now could eventually help to address the divisions in the world. ... I believe this Expo in Japan might actually lead to stronger international relationships and improvements."

## Iconic

The iconic ring, designed by architect Sou Fujimoto, is a lattice-like structure encircling the venue and recognized by the Guinness World Records as the largest wooden architecture. It is 20 meters (65 feet) high and has a 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) circumference.

The costly ring takes up more than 14% of the Expo's total spending of 235 billion yen (\$1.64 billion) and has triggered public criticism.

The total cost nearly doubled from the initial estimate largely due to the weaker yen, causing construction delays. Several pavilions, including those of Nepal, India, Vietnam and Chile, were not ready for the opening.

The ring is supposed to be partially reusable, reflecting the theme of creating a sustainable future.

Exhibits of cutting-edge technology, such as robots and flying cars, as well as pop culture like Hello Kitty and Gundam, are among the highlights.

"Pavilions all look amazing," said Laurel Sylvester from New Zealand,

visiting with her husband and two children. Her family is interested in ocean sustainability and planned to visit the Blue Ocean Dome. She said the boys are "super excited to have their photo with the (big Gundam) robot and some of the interesting tech things that are going on."

A small artificial heart made from induced pluripotent stem cells, or iPS, demonstrated a heartbeat at a Japanese health care pavilion. At the Future of Life pavilion, visitors can interact with robots. A human washing machine that was a sensation at the 1970 expo returned with a high-tech makeover.

The US pavilion focuses on space travel. Its lunar stone from the Apollo 12 mission, a sensation at the 1970 expo, was back on display.

China, also highlighting space technology, exhibits soil samples from its lunar missions.

Carrying a "Not for sale" sign and decorated with its blue-and-yellow national flags, Ukraine attracted many visitors with a globe and other items carrying barcodes. By scanning them, visitors can see videos showing people's lives at war and their reconstruction effort.

Dymtro Liuyi, Ukrainian creative director, said his country's participation was undecided until December due to the war. The preparation was finished Sunday morning, he said, showing blue paint on his fingers.

With its blue face encircled by red balls, some of them eyeballs, the mysterious, smiley creature Myaku-Myaku welcomes visitors.

The imaginary creature was born from the fusion of cells and water in a small spring in the Kansai region, organizers say. The friendly but clumsy character can transform into various shapes and is good at finding a rainbow after the rain.

## 2022 study

## AMR infections kill over 3m kids

VIENNA, April 13, (AP): A landmark study presented today at ESCMID Global 2025 has revealed that over 3 million children worldwide lost their lives in 2022 due to antimicrobial resistance (AMR)-related infections.

The study underscores the urgent need for both regional and global strategies to control paediatric AMR, particularly in high-burden areas such as South-East Asia and Africa. AMR poses a critical threat to children, who are highly vulnerable to infections. Access to new antibiotic formulations is often much more limited for children because of product development delays.

The study data found that in 2022 alone, more than 752,000 children in Southeast Asia and 659,000 children in Africa died of AMR-associated complications. Many of these deaths were linked to the use of Watch antibiotics (drugs with a high risk of resistance) and Reserve antibiotics (last-resort treatments for severe, multidrug-resistant infections).

Watch and Reserve antibiotics are not intended for first-line treatment and their use should be limited only for those who need them to preserve their effectiveness and reduce the development of resistance.

Between 2019 and 2021, the use of Watch antibiotics increased by 160% in Southeast Asia and 126% in Africa. During the same period, the use of Reserve antibiotics rose by 45% in Southeast Asia and 125% in Africa.

Globally, of the more than 3 million children's deaths, 2 million were associated with the use of Watch and Reserve antibiotics.

"While the rise in use of Watch and Reserve antibiotics may be necessary in response to the concurrent rise in drug-resistant infections, the sharp rise in use of these drugs presents several serious long-term risks", commented Professor Joseph Harwell, study co-author. "Their increased use, especially without careful oversight, elevates the risk of resistance and limits future treatment options. If bacteria develop resistance to these antibiotics, there will be few, if any, alternatives for treating multidrug-resistance infections."

Several factors contribute to the severity of AMR in low- and middle-income countries, including overcrowded hospitals, poor sanitation, and weak infection prevention measures that facilitate the spread of resistant pathogens within healthcare settings and communities.

Professor Harwell furthered, "Mortality rates, which are already alarmingly high, will continue to rise significantly, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where access to alternative treatments and advanced medical interventions may be limited. Addressing this issue requires urgent and coordinated action at both the regional and global levels."

**Autism:** The nation's top health agency will undertake a "massive testing and research effort" to determine the cause of autism, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced.

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine critic who has pushed a discredited theory that routine childhood shots cause the developmental disability, said Thursday that the effort will be completed by September and involve hundreds of scientists. He shared the plans with President Donald Trump during a televised Cabinet meeting.

Trump suggested that vaccines could be to blame for autism rates, although decades of research have concluded there is no link between the two.

"There's got to be something artificial out there that's doing this," Trump told Kennedy. "If you can come up with that answer, where you stop taking something, eating something, or maybe it's a shot. But something's causing it."

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## Chevalier outstanding as Lille edges Toulouse

## Monaco moves closer to Champs League spot after beating Marseille

PARIS, April 13, (AP): Monaco moved closer to a Champions League spot for next season after downing struggling Ligue 1 rival Marseille 3-0 at home.

Japan forward Takumi Minamino, Switzerland striker Breel Embolo and captain Denis Zakaria scored at Stade Louis II as Monaco leapfrogged Marseille and moved into second place.

Paris Saint-Germain clinched a record-extending 13th title last weekend with six games to spare, but the race for the three remaining Champions League places is very much on with six teams in contention.

The top three get an automatic spot in the Champions League with the team in fourth spot entering qualifying. There are five rounds left following this weekend's games.

Monaco took the lead in the 34th minute after Mar-

seille lost the ball in midfield.

Embolo released striker Mika Biereth breaking down the right. After his effort was blocked, the ball rolled out to Lamine Camara and he poked it to Minamino, who finished from close range.

Poor marking allowed Vanderson to slip a pass to the unmarked Embolo in the 58th minute and he clipped the ball into the bottom corner, and then gave Biereth a piggyback as they celebrated.

Marseille's defending has been poor all season and got even worse for the third goal.

The defenders failed to deal with a routine high ball and goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli ended up dragging down Embolo. Zakaria guided his penalty into the top right corner.

It was Marseille's fourth loss in five league games and

coach Roberto De Zerbi's side is now under pressure to hold third place.

Fourth-placed Lille and fifth-placed Strasbourg - which are separated by goal difference - are only two points behind Marseille.

Strasbourg could have moved level with Marseille but conceded a goal four minutes into stoppage time in a 2-2 home draw with sixth-placed Nice.

Lille won 2-1 at Toulouse largely thanks to goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier, who is an outstanding shot-stopper and widely regarded as a future France No. 1.

The 23-year-old caught the eye again, making four consecutive saves midway through the second half to deny Toulouse an equalizer.

Lille's goals came from Belgian winger Matias Fernandez-Pardo and Dutch right back Mitchel Bakker, while

English center half Charlie Creswell scored for Toulouse.

In the other game, defender Melvin Bard put Nice ahead late in the first half and Dutch striker Emanuel Emegha equalized early into the second for his 13th league goal.

Strasbourg moved ahead in the 54th minute through 18-year-old striker Samuel Amo-Ameyaw's composed finish.

English coach Liam Rosenior's Strasbourg side - which travels to play Monaco next weekend - looked set for a sixth straight league win until Burundi midfielder Youssouf Ndayishimiye headed in a late corner from Jonathan Claus.

PSG is exempt from playing this weekend to better prepare for its Champions League quarterfinal return leg against Aston Villa on Tuesday.

## Valenzuela &amp; Celentano lead red-hot Cincinnati to victory



CF Montréal defender Luca Petrasso (13) gets away from Charlotte FC's Nathan Byrne (14) during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Montreal. (AP)

## NYCFC pips Union

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): Gerardo Valenzuela scored in the first half of his first start of the season and Roman Celentano made it stand up for FC Cincinnati in a 1-0 victory over D.C. United on Saturday night.

It was the third straight victory for Cincinnati (5-2-1) and the fourth loss in a row for DC United (1-4-3).

Cincinnati scored the lone goal in the 29th minute when Valenzuela scored unassisted in his first start this season. It was the second career goal for the 20-year-old midfielder after making 11 starts in 30 appearances as a rookie last season. It was the earliest goal scored by Cincinnati this season and the first time it led at halftime.

Celantano totaled two saves - both in the first half - for Cincinnati in posting his fourth clean sheet of the season.

Luis Barraza saved four shots - all in the first half - in his first start for DC United after making 40 career starts for New York City FC from 2021-24.

Alonso Martínez scored early in the second half for New York City FC and Matt Freese made it stand up for a 1-0 victory over Philadelphia at Citi Field in the Union's first match without Daniel Gazdag.

Martínez used an assist from 20-year-old defender Mitja Ilenic in the 55th minute to score for the fifth time this season. Martínez scored 16 goals in 26 appearances last year in his first full season in the league. Ilenic notched his first helper of the campaign and the third of his career in his third season with NYCFC (3-3-2).

Philadelphia (4-3-1) couldn't get an-

thing going after sending Gazdag - the Union's all-time goal scorer - to the Columbus Crew in a \$4-million cash-for-player deal on Friday with performance-based incentives that could add another \$500,000. Gazdag scored a club-record 59 goals in 125 appearances since 2021. He set the Union's single-season record with 22 goals in 2022, finishing one behind Nashville SC's Hany Mukhtar for the Golden Boot Award.

Danny Musovski scored his first goal of the season and the Seattle Sounders beat FC Dallas 1-0 to end a four-game winless streak.

Stefan Frei had a save and recorded his second shutout of the season for Seattle (2-3-3). The Sounders won for the first time since they beat Los Angeles FC 5-2 on March 8.

Pedro de la Vega bounced a shot from nearly 30 yards out off the back post but the rebound went directly to



San Diego FC defender Jasper Löfvensund, left, tries to block a shot by Colorado Rapids midfielder Cole Bassett, right, in the second half of an MLS soccer match in Commerce City, Colo. (AP)

Musovski for the one-touch finish into a wide-open net.

Maarten Paes had three saves for Dallas (3-3-2), which had its three-game unbeaten streak snapped.

The Sounders had just 46% possession but outshot Dallas 15-10, 4-1 on goal.

Sam Surridge scored on a penalty kick in the first minute of second-half stoppage time to rally Nashville SC to a 2-1 victory over Real Salt Lake.

Surridge scored for the second time this season after Nashville (4-3-1) was awarded a PK when Hany Mukhtar drew a foul on Real Salt Lake midfielder Nelson Palacios. Surridge has scored 16 career goals in 45 career appearances with the club.

Real Salt Lake (3-5-0) jumped in front early when Dominik Marczuk took a pass from Diogo Gonçalves in the 12th minute and scored for the first

time this season. Marczuk, 21, had one goal in eight appearances last season - his first in the league. It was the first career assist for Gonçalves in 17 appearances over two seasons.

Pep Biel scored a goal, Kristijan Kahlina had two saves and Charlotte FC beat CF Montreal 1-0.

Kahlina has three shutouts this season for Charlotte (5-2-1).

Biel had a shot from the right corner of the 6-yard box blocked by defender George Campbell, but the rebound bounced back to Biel for a one-touch finish inside the back post.

Montreal (0-6-2), playing at home after seven consecutive road games to open the season, had 65% possession and outshot Charlotte 19-8. Montreal lost its home opener for the first time since moving to Stade Saputo in 2019 and fell to 3-1-0 against Charlotte at home.

Jonathan Sirois had three saves for Montreal.

Charlotte has won back-to-back games and four of its last five.

Darren Yapi and Rafael Navarro scored seven minutes apart in the second half to rally the Colorado Rapids to a 3-2 victory over expansion side San Diego FC.

The Rapids (4-2-2) took a 1-0 lead into halftime on a penalty-kick goal by Djordje Mihailovic in the 37th minute. It was the third goal this season for Mihailovic after scoring a career-high 11 times last year in his first season with the club. The PK was awarded after Yapi was fouled by San Diego goalkeeper CJ dos Santos.

San Diego (4-2-2) pulled even early in the second half when Luca de la Torre used an assist from Chucky Lozano in the 50th minute to score for the second time in his first season. Lozano has three assists in his first five appearances.

## Sunrisers chase down Punjab

## Pooran dazzles as Lucknow ends Gujarat winning streak

HYDERABAD, India, April 13, (AP): Abhishek Sharma scored 141 off 55 balls to lead a stunning chase for Sunrisers Hyderabad against Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League.

Chasing Punjab's mammoth 245-6, Sharma hit 10 sixes and 14 fours in his whirlwind first IPL century as Hyderabad accomplished the second-highest chase in tournament history by reaching 247-2 in 18.3 overs.

It was the third highest individual score in IPL history after Chris Gayle's 175 not out for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in 2013 and Brendon McCullum's 158 not out for Kolkata Knight Riders in 2008.

Sharma notched up a couple of other tournament records as well - his 141 is the highest individual score by an Indian batter in IPL history, and also the highest by a Hyderabad batter.

His knock ended Hyderabad's four-match losing streak as the team earned its second win in six games to climb to eighth in the table. Punjab is sixth after a second loss in five games.

Earlier, some fireworks from Nicholas Pooran also helped the Lucknow SuperGiants halt the Gujarat Titans' four-match winning streak.

Pooran smashed 61 off 34 balls as Lucknow beat previous table-topppers Titans by six wickets. Aiden Markram also hit 58 off 31 balls as Lucknow finished on 186-4 in 19.3 overs.

Pooran, the leading run-scorer, struck seven sixes in his fourth half-century of this year's IPL as Lucknow notched up a third straight win.

Opting to bat, Punjab's in-form top-order set the tone for the match. Priyansh Arya hit 36 off 13 balls, while Prabhsimran Singh scored 42 off 23 balls.

Skipper Shreyas Iyer led the way with 82 off 36 balls, hitting six sixes in this third half-century of the season.

Cameos from Nehal Wadhwa (27) and Marcus Stoinis (34 not out off 11 balls) helped Punjab set an improbable target on the board.

That was until Sharma came to the crease. He put on 171 runs off only 75 balls with Travis Head for the first wicket.



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhishek Sharma bats during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

## Best of the Rest

**Martens sets new record:** Olympic champion Lukas Martens of Germany has broken the men's 400-meter freestyle record at the Swim Open Stockholm.

Martens became the first swimmer to break the 3 minute, 40 seconds barrier, finishing Saturday's race with a time of 3:39.96.

That was 0.11 seconds better than the previous record set by fellow German Paul Biedermann in 2009, according to Olympics.com.

Biedermann's mark had been set wearing the drag-reducing "super suits" that were eventually banned in 2010.

The 23-year-old Martens won the 400-meter freestyle gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics with a time of 3:41.78. (AP)

**Biwott wins Paris Marathon:** Kenyan Benard Biwott and Ethiopian Bedatu Hirpa won the men's and women's Paris Marathon on Sunday. Biwott won the race on his debut and clocked 2 hours, 5 minutes and 25 seconds, eight seconds faster than last year's winner Mulugeta Uma.

He dropped his rivals with about 10 kilometers (6 miles) to go and placed 48 seconds clear of Ibrahim Hassan of Djibouti and 56 seconds clear of countryman Sila Kiptoo.

Hirpa's race was far closer as she overtook countrywoman Dera Dida in the final meters on Avenue Foch, and beat her by just four seconds.

Hirpa finished with a winning time of 2:20.45, while Kenyan Angela Tanui finished third in 2:21:07.

Both winners clinched their second marathon victory, with Biwott winning in Frankfurt last year and Hirpa winning in Dubai earlier this year. (AP)

## Alcaraz beats injured Musetti to win in Monte Carlo for 6th Masters 1000 title

MONACO, April 13, (AP): Carlos Alcaraz defeated an injury-stricken Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 to win the Monte Carlo final on Sunday and secure his sixth Masters 1000 career title.

Alcaraz cruised to his first Monte Carlo trophy and his 18th tour-level victory. The 21-year-old Spaniard will reach No. 2 in the world rankings following the triumph in Monaco.

Musetti started showing signs of a right-leg injury in the third set and received treatment at 0-3. Playing in his first Masters 1000 final, the 23-year-old Italian had trouble moving and keeping up with Alcaraz toward the end of the match.

"This is not the way I want to win a match, I

really feel sorry for him," Alcaraz said. "Just really happy to have won the Monte Carlo for the first time. It's been a really difficult week, with a lot of difficult situations, I'm really proud of myself how I dealt with everything."

Alcaraz has struggled at times this year and was coming off an opening-round loss to David Goffin in Miami.

It was Alcaraz's third consecutive clay-court final after winning the French Open and finishing with a silver medal at the Paris Olympics last year.

Alcaraz was playing in his 23rd tour-level final. He had needed six match points to put away Spanish compatriot Alejandro Davi-

dovich Fokina 7-6 (2), 6-4 in the semifinal on Saturday.

Musetti, whose only two tour-level titles came in 2022, broke Alcaraz's serve twice to win the first set, but Alcaraz came back strong with two breaks of his own in the second to even the match. Musetti was never much in contention in the decider.

Musetti, ranked 13th and a bronze-medalist in Paris last year, defeated Alex de Minaur 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (4) in their semifinal. The Italian had ousted defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarterfinals.

The final was moved forward by three hours because heavy rain was forecast for the evening.



Trump receives a standing ovation as he enters UFC event

## Volkanovski claims featherweight belt with unanimous decision

MIAMI, April 13, (AP) — Alexander Volkanovski reclaimed the featherweight championship early Sunday morning, defeating Diego Lopes by unanimous decision at UFC 314.

Two judges scored the fight 49-46 and the other had it 48-47.

Volkanovski (27-4) had successfully defended his belt four times before losing to Israel Makhachev on Feb. 11, 2023.

Now he has it back.

President Donald Trump entered to a standing ovation and cheers from a crowd of thousands attending a UFC event, shaking hands with supporters against a backdrop of fans waving his trademark MAGA hats.

Just as Trump entered, he greeted podcast host Joe Rogan, who sat to the right of the president. On the other side of Trump sat Elon Musk, billionaire and chief of the Department of Government Efficiency. Trump, who accented his dark suit with a bright yellow tie, pumped his fist in the air, prompting cheers to strains of "Taking Care of Business."

He brought along several members of his administration and White House team, including Health and

Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., FBI Director Kash Patel, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and White House communications aides Steven Cheung and Taylor Budowich. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, also joined Trump for UFC 314.

Trump entered the arena with UFC President Dana White, with whom he has been close for decades. He was also accompanied by his granddaughter, Kai Trump, the daughter of Donald Trump Jr.

In the co-main event, No. 12 lightweight contender Paddy Pimblett continued his rise with a technical knockout of No. 7 Michael Chandler at 3:07 of the third round. Pimblett, a 30-year-old from Liverpool, England, has won all seven of his bouts since moving to the organization, giving him a 23-3 record overall.

"I want that world title," Pimblett said. "Some say I'll never be champ, I'll never get run, I'll never be in the top 10. But what now?"

At nearly 39, Chandler has some decisions to making after winning just two of his most recent seven bouts. He is 23-10.

Featherweight Bryce Mitchell, who fought for the first time since praising Adolf Hitler and denying the

Holocaust on a podcast, was also on the card. He later backed off his comments and though White heavily criticized Mitchell, he didn't discipline him.

Mitchell was little match for Jean Silva in their featherweight fight. Silva won by submission with a guillotine choke with 1:08 left in the second round.

Volkanovski, despite getting cut below his right eye in the second and being floored by an overhand right in that round, dominated the first three rounds. But Lopes' glove caught Volkanovski's other eye in the fourth round and then pounced, but failed to put him away.

That set up the fifth round and, barring a knockout, Volkanovski appeared on his way to victory even though Lopes spent much of the fight verbally challenging him and inviting him to box. Theatrics to the contrary, Volkanovski was the aggressor.

Volkanovski had hoped to get another shot at Ilia Topuria and avenge his loss from more than a year ago at UFC 298. But Topuria moved up to the lightweight division, leaving the featherweight class vacant.

In stepped Lopes, the third-ranked challenger, to take on Volkanovski.



Diego Lopes, left, and Alexander Volkanovski, right, battle during a mixed martial arts fight at UFC 314 in Miami. (AP)

## Barcelona protects lead



Barcelona's Jules Kounde, right, and Leganes' Juan Cruz challenge for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between CD Leganes and Barcelona at the Butarque stadium in Leganes, outside Madrid, Spain. (AP)

### Espanyol overcomes Celta

**BARCELONA, Spain, April 13, (AP) — Barcelona needed an own goal to eke out a 1-0 win at relegation-threatened Leganes and protect its lead of the Spanish league.**

Raphinha, Barcelona's breakout player of the season and the Champions League's leading scorer, came through again for Hansi Flick's team in attack - and defense.

Raphinha's dangerous cross was turned into the net by Leganes defender Jorge Sáenz for the game's only goal in the 48th minute. The Brazil forward then showed hustle when he disrupted a promising pass for Leganes' top scorer, Daniel Rabaseda, late in the first half.

After this weekend there are seven rounds left, including a "clásico" next month.

"These games are where leagues are won," Barcelona's Eric García said. "It was a night to put the pressure (on Madrid)."

Leganes shocked Barcelona 1-0 in December, during a dip in form by the Catalan club. But since

the start of 2025, Barcelona has now gone 24 games without a loss and is in the running for a treble of titles including the Copa del Rey, where it has reached the final against Madrid in two weeks.

"It was a really tough match today. To win this match was very important," Flick said. "I am really proud about my team. What they are doing the last weeks and months is incredible."

Barcelona kept up its momentum before it visits Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday aiming to make good on its 4-0 first-leg win in their Champions League quarterfinal.

Sáenz's error spoiled an otherwise strong performance from the southern Madrid side, which generated more scoring chances than the front-runners.

Like their first match this season, Leganes' five-man backline frustrated the lauded attack of Robert Lewandowski, Lamine Yamal and Raphinha at Butarque Stadium.

At the other end, Barcelona struggled with the counterattacks led by Rabaseda.

Alejandro Balde left with an apparent leg problem in the first half. But his replacement, Gerard Martín, helped decide the match when he stole a ball and

sparked the quick attack that finished with Sáenz's own goal.

Flick said that Balde "was not so good" but added that the team would have to wait to see what Sunday's medical exam of the player determined to see if he would be available for the return leg in Dortmund.

Far from rolling over, Leganes continued to threaten. Substitute Diego García sliced a shot just by the far post, and Inigo Martínez had to disrupt a good scoring chance by Munir El Haddadi in injury time.

Martínez said his slide to strip the ball from the Leganes striker "feels like scoring a goal, or even better." Leganes was left in 19th and two points from safety.

"We leave with our hands empty after having played well against a Barca that wasn't as effective as usual," Leganes defender Renato Tapia said.

Espanyol striker Roberto Fernández, who arrived on loan from Braga in the winter market, scored two goals to lead a 2-0 win at Celta Vigo.

Joan García, who leads the league in saves, added another superb stop to his collection this campaign when he stretched to palm a curler by Iago Aspas over the bar with the visitors up 1-0.

## AFC appoints Kuwaiti officials for Sydney vs Lion City last four clash

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has appointed a team of Kuwaiti officials to oversee the second leg of the AFC Champions League semi-final between Sydney FC and Lion City FC, set to take place on Wednesday in Singapore.

International referee Abdullah Ja-

mali will lead the officiating team, supported by assistant referees Ali Jarraq and Saud Al-Shamali, and fourth official Saud Al-Samhan. Video assistant referee duties will be handled by Abdullah Al-Kandari and Hashim Al-Ibrahim.

Lion City enters the decisive fixture with a 2-0 advantage from the first leg.



The Kuwaiti officials.

### Al-Arabi begins training in Ashgabat

## Al-Qadisiya wraps up preparations in Iraq

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BAGHDAD, April 13: Al-Qadisiya will conclude its final training session this evening in Iraq ahead of tomorrow's decisive second leg against Duhok in the Gulf Champions League final. The first leg, held at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium last Tuesday, ended in a goalless draw.

Montenegrin coach Zeljko Petrovic received a boost in the buildup to the match, with key players Khaled Al-Rashidi, Khaled Ibrahim, and Abdullah Mutawa returning from injuries sustained during or after the first leg. Mutawa had been forced off during the match due to injury. Additionally, Al-Qadisiya will welcome back Moroccan midfielder Mehdi Berrahma and Moaz Al-Dhafiri,

who missed the first leg due to suspension. However, Algerian defender Hussein Dhiri will be sidelined for the second leg after receiving a suspension.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi's delegation has arrived in Ashgabat to prepare for its AFC Challenge Cup semi-final second leg against Turkmenistan's Arkadag, set to take place the day after tomorrow. Al-Arabi holds a 2-0 advantage from the first leg. The squad held a light training session upon arrival after an exhausting journey via transit through Dubai. The team was originally scheduled to fly directly, but Turkmenistan's Civil Aviation Authority denied permission for a private charter.

Al-Arabi will be without Khaled Al-Marshad, who sustained an injury during a recent training session. Badr Tariq is also ruled out of the match.



Al-Qadisiya's Khaled Al-Rashidi throws the ball during training session.

### Chelsea draws against relegation-fighting Ipswich

## Liverpool moves to within six points of title

LIVERPOOL, England, April 13, (AP) — Virgil van Dijk scored a late winner against West Ham on Sunday to move Liverpool to within six points of the Premier League title.

A 2-1 victory at Anfield means Arne Slot's team needs to win just two more games to be certain of a record-equaling 20th English league title to draw level with Manchester

United's total.

Liverpool had looked like dropping points when Andrew Robinson scored an own goal in the 86th minute to level the game at 1-1 after Luis Diaz's opener. But captain Van Dijk rose to head home in the 89th and ensure the league leader took advantage after second-placed Arsenal slipped up on Saturday by drawing 1-1

with Brentford.

Chelsea came back from 2-0 down against relegation-fighting Ipswich to draw 2-2 and Wolves' hopes of avoiding the drop were further boosted by a 4-2 win against Tottenham.

Wolves moved above West Ham on goal difference and up to 16th in the standings. Both teams need five more points to be certain of safety.

Liverpool could be crowned champion as early as next Sunday if Arsenal loses to Ipswich earlier that day.

The Merseyside club is 13 points clear at the top of the standings with six rounds to go.

Victory completed a week of celebrations for Liverpool supporters after top scorer Mohamed Salah ended uncertainty over his future by signing a new two-year contract.

He marked that new deal in style by maintaining his outstanding form this season to cross for Diaz's opener in the 18th minute.

It was his 45th goal or assist in the league this season, which set a new record for a 38-game Premier League campaign, according to statistician Opta.

He left the field late on to a standing ovation from the home fans.

West Ham twice came close to equalizing before Robertson's own goal. Mohammed Kudus hit the bar in the first half and Jarrod Bowen was denied by Alisson when through on goal after the break.

Andre Onana was left out of Manchester United's squad for the game against Newcastle following his latest high-profile errors for the club.



Tottenham Hotspur's James Maddison, left, and Wolverhampton Wanderers' Matt Doherty collide during the English Premier League soccer match between Wolverhampton and Tottenham Hotspur at Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

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Chelsea's Jadon Sancho celebrates scoring their side's second goal of the game during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Ipswich Town at Stamford Bridge in London. (AP) — See Page 15

# Sports



His Highness the Amir's representative announces the opening of the tournament in the presence of Duaj Al-Otaibi.



Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah with other dignitaries during the opening ceremony of the Amir's International Shooting Championship. KUNA photos

## 'Amir's patronage elevates Kuwaiti shooting to global heights'

Amir's International Shooting Championship continues with Skeet qualifiers

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Grand Prix Shooting Championship, hosted by the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club, continues today (Monday) with the men's and women's skeet qualifying rounds. The event kicks off at 9:00 a.m. at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, with the finals scheduled for 2:00 p.m. (women) and 3:00 p.m. (men).

The championship officially launched Saturday evening, with Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah declaring the tournament open. The ceremony was attended by governors, representatives of the International Shooting Federation, and several officials from continental and national shooting federations. In his remarks, the governor wished all participating athletes success in this prestigious global event.

Duaj Al-Otaibi, President of the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club and head of the tournament's higher organizing committee, expressed pride in hosting the cham-



Dancers perform during the opening ceremony.

ampionship under the patronage of His Highness the Amir. Speaking to reporters, Al-Otaibi highlighted the broad international participation and extended deep gratitude to His Highness for his ongoing support, which has significantly boosted the development of Kuwaiti shooting.

"The Amir's patronage reflects his fatherly support for shooting at the local, regional, and global levels," Al-Otaibi said, acknowledging the efforts of various government bodies in ensuring the tournament's success.

He emphasized that the championship features elite

shooters from across the globe, leading to intense and high-level competition. He also thanked the delegations and officials who attended the opening ceremony.

Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, praised the outstanding organization of the event, noting the Kuwait Shooting Club's excellence in hosting international tournaments and achieving Olympic and global milestones. He confirmed the Authority's full support, stressing that successful federations like the Shooting Club deserve continued investment to elevate Kuwaiti sports on the world stage.

In his opening remarks, Alessandro Giacomo, Secretary General of the International Shooting Federation, emphasized the significance of the Amir's Grand Prix in advancing the sport globally. He lauded the Kuwait Shooting Federation, led by Al-Otaibi, for its pivotal role in fostering shooting in the region and for regularly hosting key competitions and specialized training courses for technical and refereeing staff.

The opening ceremony featured a parade of participating teams, a short documentary showcasing the tournament's history and impact on the growth of shooting in Kuwait, and a traditional folkloric performance. The event was attended by sports officials, ambassadors, international delegations, and members of the Shooting Club's Board of Directors.

Al-Jazeera targets player reinforcements

## Zain Premier League title is our top priority: Jovovic

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** Kuwait Club's Montenegrin coach, Nebojsa Jovovic, has reaffirmed that securing the Zain Premier League title remains his top priority, expressing confidence in his squad's ability to maintain momentum in the final stretch of the season.

Kuwait currently sits atop the standings with a four-point lead over second-placed Al-Arabi, with just four rounds remaining.

Following Kuwait Club's 3-0 victory over Al-Jazeera in the preliminary round of the Amir Cup, Jovovic described the win as an important step toward competing seriously in every tournament.

"Reaching the quarterfinals is a great achievement and a reflection of our ambition," he said.

He acknowledged the unpredictable



Montenegrin Nebojsa Jovovic

nature of cup competitions, stating, "Cup matches are often full of surprises."

That's why I instructed the players to score early – and they delivered with three goals in the first 30 minutes."

Jovovic noted that the team's drop in tempo during the second half, attributing it to securing the win early, despite making some substitutions to inject fresh energy. He also highlighted the upcoming league fixture against Al-Fahaheel next Saturday, saying, "We have time to prepare, and we respect the quality of our opponents."

On the other side, Al-Jazeera coach Ibrahim Obaid admitted that his team is facing a "difficult equation" at the beginning of its journey in official competitions.

He revealed that the club is actively seeking to bolster the squad with talented players to improve its future performances. Obaid also mentioned that the

club has inquired about the eligibility of Sultan Al-Enezi, who has already played for both Al-Arabi and Omani club Dhorar this season, possibly ruling him out from joining a third team within the same campaign. "There are several players we hope to bring to Al-Jazeera in the near future. We are carefully evaluating our options," he added.

Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel coach Firas Al-Khatib reflected on his team's narrow 2-1 win over Al-Tadamon in the Amir Cup, attributing the tight scoreline to a lack of focus on key details. The victory sets up a quarterfinal clash with the winner of the Al-Qadsiyac vs. Burgan match, which has been postponed to May 10.

Al-Khatib stressed that his squad is committed to giving their best in the tournament. "Winning the Amir Cup will be a tough task given the level of competition, but nothing is impossible in football," he concluded.

## 2 Kuwaitis clinch gold at Jiu-Jitsu World Tour

**LONDON, April 13, (KUNA):** Kuwaiti athletes Zaid Al-Sleitn and Abdul-Aziz Al-Sleitn clinched two gold medals at the Grand Slam Jiu-Jitsu World Tour held in London.

Zaid Al-Sleitn topped the podium in the Under-14 category, while Abdul-Aziz Al-Sleitn captured gold in the Under-12 division, showcasing Kuwait's growing presence in international Jiu-Jitsu competitions.

With these victories, the duo has now collectively earned five gold medals at this prestigious annual event – marking a historic achievement for Kuwait in the sport.



KUNA photo Zaid Al-Sleitn and Abdul-Aziz Al-Sleitn celebrate.

## Kohli and Salt propel Bengaluru to dominant victory

**JAIPUR, India, April 13, (AP):** Virat Kohli and Phil Salt struck attacking half-centuries to help Royal Challengers Bengaluru register a dominant nine-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League on Sunday.

Salt hit six sixes and five fours in scoring 65 off 33 balls, while Kohli finished 62 not out off 45 balls. Riding on a 92-run opening stand from the duo, Bengaluru reached 175-1 in 17.3 overs.

Yashasvi Jaiswal's 75 off 47 balls proved to be in vain as Rajasthan Royals finished with a below-par 173-4 in 20 overs.

With the win, Bengaluru climbed to fourth in the table with four wins in six games. Rajasthan is seventh after its fourth defeat in six games.

Put into bat, Rajasthan lost skipper Sanju Samson for 15 runs. He was stumped off Krunal Pandya in the seventh over, after putting on 49 off 41 balls with Jaiswal.

Jaiswal made a quick start and raced to 50 off 35 balls, his second half-century of the season.

He added 56 off 39 balls with Riyan Parag (30 off 22 balls) and then another 21 off 16 with Dhruv Jurel. But Bengaluru kept a tight leash on proceedings with no Rajasthan batter able to generate any real momentum.

Pandya finished with figures of 1-29 in four overs, while Josh Hazlewood returned 1-26 in four overs in a controlled all-round bowling performance.

Jaiswal was out lbw to Hazlewood in the 16th over, and it was Jurel's 35 not out off 23 balls, including two sixes, that allowed Rajasthan to score 47 in the last four overs.

Hurting from a home loss against Delhi Capitals, Bengaluru rebounded in spectacular fashion.

Salt made a blistering start and raced to 50 off 28 balls, hitting four sixes. He put on 50 off 30 balls with Kohli and then further pushed the opening stand to 92 off 52 balls, which did half the job for his team.

After Salt was dismissed in the ninth over, Kohli took charge of the chase and never gave Rajasthan a sniff.

Impact player Devdutt Padikkal helped out with 40 not out off 28 balls as Kohli eased to yet another IPL half-century, this one off 39 balls.

Kohli and Padikkal added 83 off 54 balls as Bengaluru won with 15 balls to spare.

See Also Page 14



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, India. (AP)