

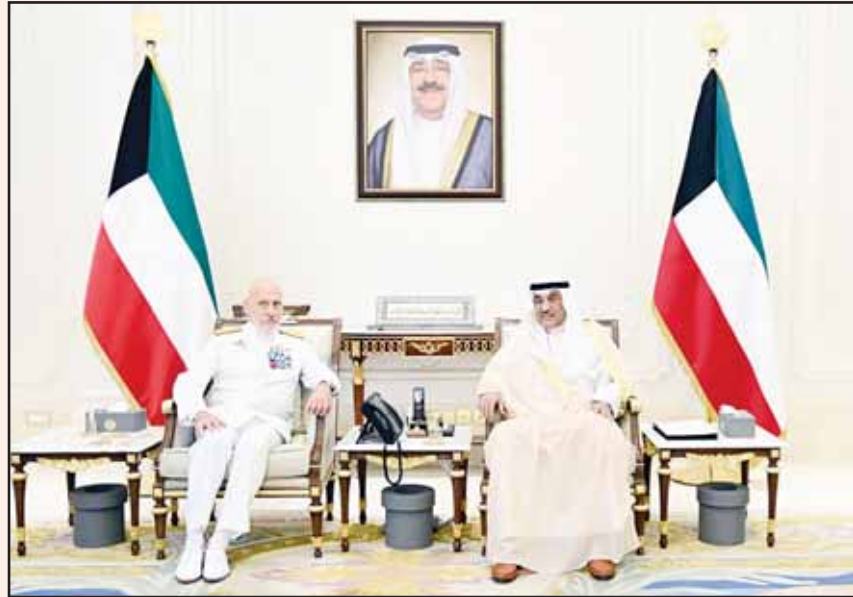
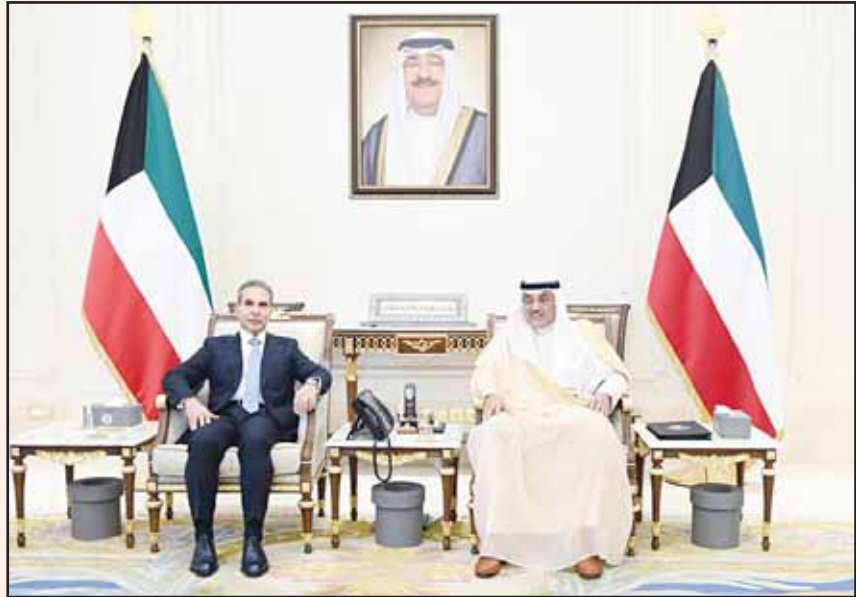


Page 16



stc Page 9

Crown Prince meets top Iraqi judge, NATO military chief



Crown Prince Diwan photos

Left: HH the Crown Prince receives President of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council. Right: HH the Crown Prince receives Chairman of the NATO Military Committee.

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received visiting President of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Faiq Zaidane and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace on Wednesday.

President of the Kuwaiti Supreme Judicial Council and Head of the Court of Cassation, Counselor Adel Bouresli, His

Highness the Crown Prince's Office Chief Jamal Al-Thiyab and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Issa were present at the meeting.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received on Wednesday the visiting Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Gi-

useppe Cavo Dragone and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Chief Jamal Al-Thiyab and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Issa.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Rothschild: "They steal their people's money, then we lend it back to them."

It only takes one finance minister we recruit to carry out our orders.

Countries plagued by corrupt and dishonest individuals are destined to fail.

Money is more sacred than temples and more obeyed than kings.

Is it true that those who own the gold write the law?

When money mixes with power, it becomes the ultimate boss of the corrupt.

Nations become mere sacrifices, offered on the altar of personal interests.

Physical defects can be covered up, but mental defects are always exposed.

Illnesses are not just physical; they are moral as well.

Maintaining privacy is a source of power. No one can destroy what they do not know.

You are the master of what you conceal and the captive of what you reveal. So, be careful.

3

Manslaughter ... debt scams now carry heavier penalties

Kuwait's Justice Ministry rolls out bold Penal Code reforms

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait announced on Wednesday that the Cabinet has approved a draft decree-law that amends certain provisions of the Penal Code issued under Law No. 16/1960, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued after the Cabinet's weekly meeting, Minister Al-Sumait explained that the proposed amendments are in line with real-world developments and aim to close legal gaps identified through practical application.

The draft law aims to enhance penal policy, protect individual rights, and ensure effective deterrence. The Penal Code has not undergone any substantive amendments related to manslaughter and unintentional injury since its enactment in 1960, despite the emergence of new forms of negligence and recklessness that have caused severe harm or loss of life, particularly in cases involving alcohol or drug use, or where the offender fails to provide assistance.

The draft decree-law includes amendments to certain provisions of the Penal Code. Article One of the draft states: "The provisions of Articles 44 (Clause 1), 154, and 164 of the aforementioned Penal Code shall be replaced with the following: Article 44, Clause 1: An unintentional error shall be deemed to exist if the perpetrator, at the time of the act, behaves in a manner in-



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

consistent with what a normal person would do under normal circumstances. This includes behavior marked by recklessness, negligence, carelessness, inattention, or failure to comply with laws and regulations.

Article 154: Anyone who unintentionally causes the death of another person due to recklessness, negligence, carelessness, inattention, failure to observe laws and regulations, or failure to meet the obligations of their job, profession, or trade shall be subject to imprisonment

for up to three years and/or a fine ranging from KD 500 to KD 1,000.

Article 164: Whoever unintentionally causes injury or tangible harm to another person due to recklessness, negligence, lack of concern, inattention, or failure to comply with laws and regulations, or the requirements of their job, profession, or trade, shall be punishable by up to one year of imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from KD 250 to KD 500.

Minister Al-Sumait further explained that Article 2 of the draft decree-law amending certain provisions of Penal Code No. 16/1960 includes the addition of two new articles, numbered "154 bis" and "164 bis", with the following provisions:

Article 154 bis: The offense described in the previous article shall be punishable by up to five years of imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from KD 1,000 to KD 2,000, or by either of these penalties, if the crime is associated with one of the following circumstances:

1. The perpetrator uses an intoxicating, narcotic, or psychotropic substance, or any other substance that impairs the person's natural abilities.

2. The perpetrator's act results in the death of two or more persons.

3. The perpetrator refrains from assisting the victim at the time of committing the act, despite being capable of providing help.

If two or more of the circumstances listed in the previous paragraph are present, the penalty shall be 10 years of imprisonment and/or a fine

of up to KD 10,000. Article 164 bis: The injury mentioned in the previous article shall be punishable by imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years and/or a fine ranging from KD 500 to KD 1,000, if it is accompanied by one of the following circumstances:

1. The perpetrator uses an intoxicating, narcotic, or psychotropic substance, or any other substance that affects a person's natural abilities.

2. The perpetrator's act results in injury to two or more persons.

3. The perpetrator's act results in permanent disability for the victim.

4. The perpetrator fails or neglects to assist the victim at the time of committing the act, even though he is capable of providing assistance.

The penalty shall be imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years and/or a fine ranging from KD 1,000 to KD 2,000, if two or more of the factors stipulated in the previous paragraph are combined.

Article 3 of the draft decree-law that amends certain provisions of the Penal Code promulgated by Law No. 16/1960 stipulates the following: A new clause (No. 8) titled "Debtor's Evasion of Payment," is added to Chapter Three (Crimes Against Property) of Book Three (Crimes Against Individuals) of the aforementioned Penal Code. This new clause includes new articles numbered 283, 284, 285, and 286, with the following provisions:

Continued on Page 5

Lawyers flag flaws in 'salary seizures'

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Head of the Kuwait Society of Lawyers (KSL) Adnan Abul affirmed that seizing a debtor's entire salary immediately to repay debts is a procedure that contravenes the law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He explained that KLA has submitted a comprehensive legal proposal to the Ministry of Justice on this matter. The proposal is backed by legal provisions and highlights the negative consequences of violating them.

It aims to regulate administrative and procedural practices in line with Article 216 of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, as well as the provisions of the Private

Continued on Page 5

FMD detected in Kuwait, but meat and dairy 'safe'

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Eng Salem Al-Hai announced the detection of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) after examining some samples in the laboratories of the authority.

In a press statement, Al-Hai disclosed that these samples were sent to reference laboratories for confirmation. He reassured the livestock breeders that the authority is working hard and spares no effort in curbing the spread of the disease. He stressed that PAAAFR is harnessing all its capabilities and medical staff to quickly address the issue and expedite procedures for importing the vaccine directly.

Continued on Page 5

Efforts for interfaith dialogue praised

Diplomats pay tribute to late Pope's legacy

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: A number of ambassadors and diplomats flocked to the Vatican Embassy on Wednesday to offer their condolences on the passing of Pope Francis.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent said "the world gathers today to remember the great legislative and religious legacy that Pope Francis left to the Catholic Church throughout the 12 years of his papacy. He was the first Pope from South America, the first Jesuit to assume the papacy and the first non-European Pope in centuries."

He revealed that "Pope Francis was known for his simple life and openness, as evident in his deep commitment to migrants and prisoners. Every Thursday, he made sure to visit Rome's prisons. He was also distinguished by his constant calls for peace; especially in Gaza, the Middle East and Ukraine, which earned him international acclaim."

He pointed out that "in our Arab region, his significant contribution to promoting interfaith dialogue and improving relations between Christians and Muslims is evident; particularly through his important visits to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain two years ago and his historic

Continued on Page 5



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq
Ambassadors and dignitaries sign the condolence book.

Day by Day

THE Central Bank must find a solution to protect people's money from being stolen by hackers.

Across the Gulf and around the world, central banks have dedicated departments for monitoring and auditing purposes. Upon receiving the first complaint from a compromised account holder, the transaction is immediately halted and the transfer is blocked. In many cases, the central bank also contacts the receiving bank to prevent the funds from being deposited into the suspicious account.

Dear Central Bank, protect the funds of account holders, just as Gulf and international central banks do. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable of condolences to President of India **Droupadi Murmu** on the tragic loss of life caused by a terror attack targeting tourists in **Pahalgam, Kashmir**.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere condolences over fatalities, wished speedy recovery for the injured. (KUNA)

— See Also Page 7

DUBAI: Kuwaiti teacher **Jawher Al-Osaimi** and student **Kawthar Nasrallah** were honored today at the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation for Medical and Educational Sciences, held at the Dubai World Trade Centre. (KUNA)



8 Al Sager: NBK not only overcomes challenges — It transforms them into opportunities for stronger, more sustainable future

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	05:14	Maghrib ..	18:19
Zohr	11:46	Isha	19:41

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	38	19
Abdaly	40	19

Buayan	31	22
Jahra	42	20
Failaka Island	33	23
Salmiyah	34	23
Ahmadi	33	19
Nuwaisib	36	20
Wafra	42	18



PM Diwan photo
Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives Dr. Faiq Zaidane, President of the Supreme Judicial Council of the Republic of Iraq.



KUNA photo
Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah receiving Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone.

Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister hosts Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Chief

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Wednesday President of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Dr. Faiq Zaidane and his accompanying delegation on occasion of his official visit to the country.

Attending the meeting were President of the Kuwaiti Supreme Judicial Council and Head of the Court of Cassation, Counselor Adel Bouresli, Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz A-Dakheel and Iraqi ambassador to the country Al-Manhal Al-Safi.

Kuwait's Defense Minister, Chair of NATO Military Committee discuss military co-op

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah on Wednesday discussed with Chair-

man of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone the most important issues and topics of common interest.

This came in a statement issued by the Ministry of Defense following the reception of Admiral Dragon and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace on occasion of his official visit to the country.

Kuwait stands strong on Palestine's full UN status

Al-Yahya urges Arab unity, global support

CAIRO, April 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Al-Yahya, emphasized the critical importance of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations for securing the future of Palestinians and their right to an independent state within the 1967 borders.

Speaking at the 163rd meeting of the Arab League Foreign Ministers in Cairo on Wednesday, Al-Yahya reaffirmed that the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital was a non-negotiable issue and a shared aspiration for both Palestinians and the Arab world.

He noted that the year began with a "beam of hope" following a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip brokered by the US, Qatar, and Egypt, which raised hopes of ending the ongoing war. However, Al-Yahya condemned the Israeli occupation's continued violations of international agreements and laws, describing its ongoing attacks on innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank as a ruthless campaign.

The Minister commended the outcome of the Arab Summit held on March 4 in Cairo, which devised a plan for the reconstruction of Gaza once the Israeli occupation ends, facilitated by international peace efforts. Al-Yahya also expressed Kuwait's strong support for the Cairo International Summit for early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza and praised the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) despite ongoing harassment by the Israeli occupation. He welcomed the UN General Assembly's decision to refer the ban on UNRWA to the International Court of Justice, urging a verdict on the legality of halting the agency's vital operations.

Al-Yahya also reiterated Kuwait's firm stance against Israeli attempts to alter the legal status and history of Jerusalem. Regarding Syria, he reaffirmed Kuwait's support for the Syrian people, highlighting the country's role in organizing three humanitarian donor conferences to assist Syria and expressing support for the formation of a new transitional government in Syria, hoping it will lead to a modern, prosperous state.

In his remarks on Lebanon, Al-Yahya expressed Kuwait's solidarity with the Lebanese people, stressing the importance of fully implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and ensuring the ceasefire agreement



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya headed Kuwait's delegation in the 163rd meeting of the Arab League Foreign Ministers.

holds, while calling for an end to Israeli military aggression against Lebanon, its people, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Al-Yahya also reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to monitoring developments in Sudan, urging the maintenance of ceasefire agreements to allow humanitarian aid to reach those in need and protect civilians in accordance with international resolutions. On Yemen, he reiterated Kuwait's support for the unity and stability of Yemen through a comprehensive political solution based on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative, the national dialogue conference's outcomes, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2216.

Regarding Libya, Al-Yahya expressed support for the country's unity and stability. On Somalia, he welcomed the agreement between Somalia and Ethiopia in Ankara, aimed at resolving border issues, and condemned the assassination attempt on President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, reaffirming Kuwait's solidarity with Somalia in its fight against terrorism.

Al-Yahya also called for restraint in maritime routes on the Red Sea, urging respect for international laws, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. He praised Oman's efforts in securing the release of the crew of the "Galaxy Leader," detained off Yemen's coast since 2023, and commended Oman for mediating high-level talks between the US and Iran on the latter's nuclear program, seeing such initiatives as steps toward a more stable and peaceful Middle East.

Other Voices

Falsifying history and stealing others' rights

By Ahmad alsarraf

A few days ago, I addressed a topic that some individuals have seemingly become specialists in, which is producing and sharing videos that appear scientific, yet include statements and achievements falsely attributed to international scientists and celebrities, often in exaggerated praise of religious figures. These claims are frequently far from the truth.

The German orientalist Sigrid Hunke has been quoted as saying: "The achievements of Arab scientists, including physicians, chemists, mathematicians, and astronomers, fell upon Europe like rain, reviving its barren land. However, it was difficult for Europeans to acknowledge the Arabs' right to science, authorship, and innovation. As a result, many inventions and discoveries in medicine, pharmacy, chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, and other fields were attributed to individuals other than their original creators."

The quote goes on to cite several examples, such as:

- The submarine, allegedly invented by a Muslim sailor, but credited to John Holland.
- Eyeglasses, attributed to Roger Bacon instead of Ibn al-Haytham.
- Printing, ascribed to Johannes Gutenberg rather than al-Zahrawi.
- The discovery of America, claimed to have been made by a Muslim sailor, but credited to Christopher Columbus.
- The camera, attributed to Postman, instead of Ibn al-Haytham.
- The automatic robot, said to have been invented by an Algerian scientist, but credited to Karel Capek.
- The compass, attributed to Flavio Gioja, instead of Ibn Majid.
- Germ theory, credited to Louis Pasteur, rather than Shams al-Din.
- The circulatory system, widely attributed to William Harvey, despite being described earlier by Ibn al-Nafis.

While the intention may be to shed light on the often-overlooked contributions of Arab and Muslim scholars, spreading inaccurate or exaggerated claims undermines the credibility of these efforts. Recognition of historical achievements should be grounded in verified scholarship and documented evidence, not revisionist narratives.

Sigrid Hunke, born in Germany (1919–1999),

was a scholar who specialized in Islamic studies. Her most notable work, "The Arab Sun Shines on the West" (1960), explores the influence of Arab-Islamic civilization on Europe. Hunke contributed to shifting some Western perspectives on Islamic culture and history. However, her credibility has been the subject of significant controversy, largely due to her past affiliation with the Nazi Party.

Some serious researchers view her work as highly exaggerated and question both the value and the extent of the influence she attributes to Islamic civilization. It is important to note that there is no such thing as "Islamic civilization", like "Christian," "Jewish," or "Buddhist" civilization.

The problem with the spread of such exaggerations lies not with Hunke herself, but with us. Regardless of the accuracy of her claims, many of which are, of course, incorrect, it is religious institutions, and subsequently official institutions, that continue to promote her views uncritically. This is not due to scholarly conviction, but rather because they refuse to recognize the contributions of these Muslim scholars.

Before the rise of religious and political extremism led by the Muslim Brotherhood, it was common to name educational and medical institutions after scientists like Ibn Sina and Al-Razi. However, this practice came to a halt once the Muslim Brotherhood gained influence over many government institutions. They went so far as to block even minor public recognitions such as naming a side street after these scholars, simply because they did not conform to their ideological beliefs.

Scientist Pierre Curie (1859–1906) is credited with the quote: "We were able to split the atom using the remaining 30 books we had access to from the Andalusian civilization. Had we been able to read the thousands of Muslim books that were burned, we would be traveling between galaxies today". However, this is a complete fabrication.

Pierre Curie died in 1906, decades before the discovery of atomic fission in the late 1930s. It is simply not possible for him to have made such a statement, especially given that nuclear fission was the result of modern scientific research, not ancient texts.

Unfortunately, fake quotes like this are commonly circulated in an attempt to glorify those who are not in need of such glorification. It reflects the mindset of those who feel powerless or uncertain about the strength of their own doctrine, and seek validation through exaggeration rather than truth.

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Awqaf honors winners of Quran awards' competition

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Secretariat General of Awqaf recently organized a ceremony to honor the recipients of the "Prize of Prizes" in the Quran Memorization Competition.

The Secretariat General of Awqaf, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Yarmouk Cooperative Society and Human Excellence Society supported the competition.

In a press statement, Secretary General Nasser Al-Hamad affirmed that the competition is a vital tool in

memorizing and venerating the Holy Quran, as well as cultivating faith in the younger generation through such initiatives.

Al-Hamad said the competition encompasses all age groups like the youth and junior Quran memorization categories.

He affirmed the dedication of the Secretariat General in supporting such competitions, as it recognizes their value in promoting noble competition and spotlighting individuals who are committed to memorize the Holy Quran.

He expressed satisfaction over the organization of the competition, as well as the collaborative sponsorship of governmental and civil society institutions.

He revealed the Secretariat General is undertaking a leading and exemplary endeavor in the service of the Holy Quran, as it is keen on prioritizing it in order to increase the number of individuals who memorized the Holy Quran.

He asserted that the competition is unprecedented in Kuwait, considering that eligibility is limited to the winners of local and Ramadan competitions held in the previous year, including all nationalities.

He confirmed that the Secretariat General fully supports Holy Quran competitions, activities and projects, whether they are initiated by governmental or private entities.

He added that assistance has been extended to more than 50 governmental and private entities for Quran-related projects.

NDHR launches new complaint office at Kuwait Bar Association

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): National Diwan for Human Rights (NDHR) announced on Tuesday the opening of a new office to receive complaints related to human rights violations in Kuwait Bar Association.

In a press release, the National Diwan said that this came to strengthen mechanisms for the protection of human rights, while providing a transparent and safe way for citizens and residents to submit their complaints and grievances related to human rights violations.

It pointed out that this initiative implemented the terms of the memorandum of understanding signed between National Diwan for Human Rights and Kuwait Bar Association, to strengthen joint cooperation.

The opening of the office came from the diwan's keenness in its continuous efforts to promote a culture of human rights and ensure compliance with relevant national and international charters and treaties, and the diwan's commitment to providing effective mechanisms for individuals to submit their complaints.

It explained that 121 complaints



NDHR photo
The new complaints office of the National Human Rights Commission.

were received in 2024, classified according to several areas, and indicated that complaints are also received through e-mail complaintndhr.org.kw and the diwan's official website www.ndhr.org.kw.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Awqaf Secretariat honors winners of Quran Memorization Awards Competition.

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



Rothschild: 'They steal their people's money, then we lend it back to them.'

How is a corrupt network built to bring nations to ruin? - this question is answered by British-Jew financier Jacob Rothschild, who is often cited as saying: "We will make them steal their people's money and deposit it in our banks. We will re-lend their people with their own money. All it takes is a finance minister we can recruit for our benefit."

This is not an economic plan, but rather a reflection of a reality that afflicts many countries around the world, particularly those burdened by deep-rooted corruption.

The concept is rooted in an age-old, obscure doctrine - "He who owns the gold makes the rules."

In this context, money has become more sacred than temples and commands greater obedience than kings. As a result, when wealth merges with power, corruption emerges as the greatest teacher.

In today's world, many countries have been undermined by corrupt individuals, turning them into textbook examples of failed states. In such states, ministers are not appointed for their competence, but for their willingness to execute a destructive agenda.

Thus, he transforms from a finance minister into a priest of the financial temple, fluent in the language of numbers. He blesses those who comply and condemns those who dare to resist.

As for the homeland, it becomes nothing more than a sacrifice laid upon the altar of personal interests. This is how the so-called Rothschild formula takes effect.

- It only takes one finance minister we recruit to carry out our orders.
- Countries plagued by corrupt and dishonest individuals are destined to fail.
- Money is more sacred than temples and more obeyed than kings.
- Is it true that those who own the gold write the law?
- When money mixes with power, it becomes the ultimate boss of the corrupt.
- Nations become mere sacrifices, offered on the altar of personal interests.
- Physical defects can be covered up, but mental defects are always exposed.
- Illnesses are not just physical; they are moral as well.
- Maintaining privacy is a source of power. No one can destroy what they do not know.
- You are the master of what you conceal and the captive of what you reveal. So, be careful.

What we witness today is merely the result of what Rothschild has been told.

Regarding physical and mental flaws, here are a few quotes attributed to those

who have truly experienced life:

- Physical flaws can be hidden beneath two meters of cloth, but mental flaws are exposed in the very first conversation. Illnesses are not only physical, but they can be moral also.
- When you see someone with bad morals, pray for their healing and thank God that you are not as bad as they are. Everything in life seems to get cheaper except good manners. They are the only thing that becomes more valuable.
- Five things are no loss to lose: excess weight, a decayed tooth, an ungrateful friend, a jealous neighbor, and a spiteful relative. Some losses, in truth, are hidden blessings.
- A wise man was once asked: "What are the best things in life?" and he replied: "A religion that intercedes, wealth that brings benefit, a brother who preserves friendship, and good company that guides one to Paradise."
- O God, keep us steadfast in our faith, grant us benefit from our wealth, help us nurture our friendships, and never deprive us of good companionship.
- Privacy is power. People cannot destroy what they do not know. You are the master of what you hide, and the prisoner of what you reveal. Everything you come to realize as you grow older was always there but you were too young to see it before.
- The people most capable of finding happiness are those who focus on what they have, not on what others possess.

■ When people's bank accounts in other countries are hacked, the monitoring departments at their central banks work to protect the funds and prevent them from being transferred to suspicious accounts or moved abroad.



■ The Central Bank of Kuwait must take immediate action to combat hackers who manipulate the accounts of innocent people. Central banks throughout the Gulf and around the world have a responsibility to protect individuals from such thieves.



■ Where are those who once promoted Hezbollah's and Iranian clerics' policies? We no longer hear them talk about resistance and defiance after the devastation in both Gaza and Lebanon.



■ Discussing this topic has become both laughable and futile. They have all faded into the background. Such is life, one day it is in your favor, and the next, it is not.



■ There is an Egyptian proverb - "Don't get angry at the actions of the scum. It is your fault for giving them value that they don't deserve."



■ Why don't we harness electricity from solar energy? The sun roasts us in the summer heat, so why not turn the tables and use it to our advantage?



■ Encourage homeowners (and even palaces) to make use of solar energy for lighting, heating, and cooling water. Offer incentives, such as offering to purchase any excess energy they produce, just as other countries do.

MEW probes Wafra's excessive power use over crypto mining

Consumption exceeds 100,000 kilowatts in March

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Fatima Hayat revealed that the ministry noticed an unusual power consumption increase in several areas over the past two weeks.

She stressed that the ministry "will not hesitate to take legal action against any entity or individual proven to be involved in excessive electricity consumption through unlicensed activities affect-

ing the stability of the electricity system of the country."

She revealed the ministry launched a large-scale inspection campaign in Wafra Residential Area last Sunday, leading to the discovery of about 100 homes whose consumption data show extremely high rates that differ from the usual residential consumption pattern. She said this indicates the possibility of electricity being used for unauthorized activities, particularly cryptocurrency mining.

She added that a thorough technical analysis resulted in the discovery of the unusual power consumption pattern in certain locations, which lack the typical variation between day and night and between seasons. "Consistently high consumption is recorded throughout the day -- a clear indication of intensive and non-stop operation of devices and

equipment," she explained.

She disclosed that data showed some homes in Wafra had electricity consumption exceeding 100,000 kilowatts in March. "This is equivalent to 20 times the usual rate in neighboring homes. This cannot be due to normal residential activities," she asserted.

The ministry will continue monitoring and analyzing consumption data in other areas. It appreciated the cooperation of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) in monitoring Internet Protocol (IP) addresses involved in suspicious activities like cyber mining. It also commended the role of the Ministry of Interior in this regard. It then urged the public to use electricity properly and fully cooperate with its teams in addressing the problem.

Court sets first trial date in case against former Defense Minister

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministerial Court has scheduled the session of next Tuesday for the first hearing in the lawsuit against former Defense Minister Sheikh

Ahmad Al-Fahad, based on a report filed by the Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef concerning secret expenditures.

The Permanent Investigation Committee completed its investigations and decided to refer Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad and his former office manager to court.

Kuwait, Qatar discuss human rights' issues

DOHA, April 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights' Affairs Sheikh Ambassador Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah and Director of the International Organizations Department at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hanouf bint Abdurrahman held discussions on Tuesday.

The Kuwaiti senior diplomat told KUNA that means of boosting cooperation between the two sisterly coun-

tries were discussed.

She noted that she also met with Acting Director of Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Human Rights Department Sara Al-Saadi and focused on some issues on this domain as well.

On Monday, Sheikh Jawaher took part in a seminar on the role of national committees for international humanitarian law in Doha.

Council to review key land requests

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council headed by Fahad Al-Khanin will hold its meeting on Thursday.

The most important item in the agenda of the committee is the allocation of a portion of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy site in the central region, North Subhan, measuring 100,000 square meters, as the site for the headquarters of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The total area of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy site will be 3,247,463 square meters after the allocation.

The committee will also discuss the request of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to allocate a 625-square-meter mosque site and parking spaces to serve the mosque, with an area of 1,100.41 square meters, in Messilah (Block Seven).

It will also deliberate on the letter of the Ministry of Health regarding the sixth report of the Health, Social and Labor Affairs Committee on the proposal of former council member Dr. Mohammad Al-Huwailah regarding his request to allocate land in Qusour for the establishment of an integrated health center.

Judge extends detention of 3 Asians in cyberattack plot

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The detention renewal judge has extended the detention of a Malaysian and two Chinese nationals accused of engaging in activities deemed harmful to the interests of Kuwait and using illegal communication networks to access a large amount of banking data through cyberattacks.

Investigations revealed that the suspects entered the country in coordination with others in China, from whom they received instructions to carry out cyberattacks targeting telecommunications towers by using specialized electronic devices. This enabled them to send an unlimited number of fraudulent messages to the users of these towers; thereby, illegally accessing banking data through their mobile phones.

The Public Prosecution has started interrogating two defendants who confessed to committing the crime.

The prosecution also ordered the seizure of the electronic devices used in the attacks and their referral to the Criminal Evidence General Department in the Ministry of Interior for technical examination. Investigations are still ongoing in order to complete the remaining procedures.

Traffic violations drop 71% after revised law

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Interior has succeeded in implementing the new Traffic Law, considering that citizens and expatriates appear to be more committed to respecting the law.

The ministry announced a 71 percent decrease in automatically recorded violations on the first day of the implementation of the new law. As part of efforts to enhance traffic discipline and raise the level of road safety; statistics issued by the General Traffic Department in the ministry showed a remarkable decrease in the number of violations detected by automated cameras on Tuesday.

The statistics revealed that the number of violations decreased by 71 percent, compared to the violations recorded on April 15.

The violations include not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile phone while driving, disregarding lane line signs and turning against traffic.

MUGHAL MAHAL APP OFFERS

20% OFF + 5% CASHBACK

IN WALLET

ORDER NOW

SCAN QR TO DOWNLOAD THE APP

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

1800 188 / 5501 1985 | www.mughalmahal.com | @mughalmahalkuwait

Energy minister vows to address union demands

Power grid readiness at 80%

By **Mohammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem on Tuesday met with head of ministry's employees union Duaj Khalifa Al-Azmi and a number of members of the Board of Directors of the union.

Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamil also attended the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, Al-Azmi congratulated Al-Mukhaizeem on gaining the confidence of the political leadership.

He presented the demands of the employees like the establishment of permanent work in departments according to the current shift system, approval of the supervisory job allowance, and payment of pollution allowance to all power plant workers without discrimination.

He revealed that the demands presented by the board include specifying the date for the opening of transfers, creation of a cadre for employees in

the administrative and financial affairs sectors, and approval of arduous and hazardous work allowance.

On the allowance for permanent shifts in departments according to the current shift system, he said "the minister promised to coordinate with the relevant authorities on this matter, as it is a fundamental requirement that serves the production process in the technical sectors."



Al-Mukhaizeem

He added the minister promised to study all the demands and consider the possibility of meeting them. He praised the minister and undersecretary for understanding the demands of the union, which aims to create a suitable work environment for all employees.

He affirmed the support of the union for the efforts of the minister, undersecretary and other ministry officials to overcome challenges in the summer season, when electricity consumption increases remarkably.

Meanwhile, around 80 percent of the maintenance work in secondary

stations throughout the country has been completed as part of preparations for the summer, say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. Sources affirmed that the technical teams continue to work at a rapid pace, indicating that all maintenance works are expected to be completed within a month. Sources disclosed that this maintenance is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the electrical grid and ensuring a stable power supply during peak periods.

They added the ministry is following up the implementation of operational plans and periodic maintenance in coordination with the relevant authorities to ensure the readiness of the stations.

Meanwhile, the Power Plants Sector at the ministry on Tuesday dealt with a sudden fault in Steam Unit One at East Doha Power and Water Plant, which resulted in rising smoke.

Official spokesperson of the ministry Eng. Fatima Hayat stated that "at exactly 1:00 pm on Tuesday, heavy smoke was detected rising from Steam Unit One during its trial operation after the comprehensive maintenance. Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) immediately responded and took the necessary measures. The incident neither resulted in human injuries and material damages nor affected the operations and electricity generation at the plant."

'Towards Civilization Awareness'

47th Islamic Book Fair opens

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Social Reform Society on Monday opened the 47th Islamic Book Fair with the theme, "Towards Civilization Awareness," under the patronage of Minister of Information and Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

The fair witnessed massive participation by local, Arab and international publishing houses; with a select group of official and cultural figures, as well as pioneers of intellectual and Islamic work, in attendance.

Director General of Kuwait National Library Suham Al-Azmi, who represented the minister, said "we are proud of the rich history of the fair. It has reached 47 years of remarkable success in fulfilling its mission to enlighten hearts and minds." Al-Azmi revealed that the opening of the fair coincides with celebration of Kuwait's declaration as Capital of Arab Culture and Media -- a manifestation of the inherent commitment of Kuwaitis to engage in charitable work in all fields since the dawn of the modern State.

She pointed out that holding the exhibition reflects the commitment of the Society to raise religious and cultural awareness among various circles of people, not only in Ku-



Photo during the opening of the exhibition.

wait but also throughout the Arab and Islamic world. She said "the theme for this edition of the fair is a testament to the commitment to promote moderation and tolerance of Islam, as well as peaceful coexistence with others."

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Society Dr. Khaled Al-Madhkur affirmed the status of Islamic books as a lever for awareness and civilization and a source for building a conscious Muslim person in times of challenges and change.

He said the Society is committed to consolidating the nation's identity and presenting knowledge in its most beautiful form through activities targeting all age groups. He added "our exhibition's theme is based on our belief that human development is the foundation of every civilization. It is our duty to instill in the hearts of our youth the values of truth, justice, advocacy and awareness of the issues of our Islamic nation."

He affirmed "we strive to ensure that this fair is inclusive and influential, addressing all segments of society -- men, women, youth, children, families, teachers and educators -- through quality books; intellectual, educational and volunteer activities; and cultural competitions that contribute to the development of generations of educated readers who believe in their role in building their homeland and serving their nation."



Photos by Samer Shiqer
Young book enthusiasts at the event.

DGCA sets up technical committee to review Kuwait airport system bidding

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced the formation of a specialized technical committee to study the bid for the operation, maintenance, and management of the passenger registration and early information system, as well as border security training at Kuwait International Airport, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

DGCA affirmed its commitment to transparency and integrity throughout the procedures followed in this regard.

In a press statement, DGCA affirmed that the committee will thoroughly examine all bid details to ensure compliance with approved regulations, preserve the public interest and uphold integrity in project tendering. It clarified that the bidding process has been temporarily suspended until the committee completes its review and submits its final report to the relevant authorities within one month.

MoF unveils utility rationalization plan

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Finance says its strategy to rationalize electricity and water consumption is in line with government directives aimed at increasing energy efficiency and reducing public spending, and reflects its national and societal responsibility, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry highlighted several steps it has taken to achieve this goal, including:

- Gradually turn off central air conditioning units in all buildings from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm.
- Turning off cooling plants and their accessories from 6:00 pm to 3:00 am.
- Reducing the operating hours of all types of ventilation fans
- Turning off all central heaters.
- Installing sensors in washrooms to reduce water consumption.
- Maintaining solar-powered lighting

on the internal roads of the Ministries Complex building.

- Maintaining solar-powered lighting in the eastern and southern parking lots and ensuring proper lighting sensors.
- Reducing internal and external lighting in the Ministries Complex building and maintaining only emergency lighting.
- Turning off all lighting units for agricultural ponds and farms.

Memo outlines eight-point framework

Ministry of Information rolls out bold energy-saving guidelines

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Information has published a comprehensive set of directives aimed at optimizing electricity, energy and water consumption; which will contribute to the long-term viability of resources and preservation of the infrastructural capacities of the country.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the official memorandum: stating these measures are part of the efforts of the ministry to collaborate with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to realize their shared strategic objectives to rationalize electricity and water consumption, in line with the vision of the State to achieve sustainable development and facilitate the most efficient deployment of energy resources.

The ministry has instructed its sectors and personnel to strictly comply with the eight fundamental directives as follows:

- Maintain the ambient temperature of air conditioning systems at 24 degrees Celsius in occupied areas and below 27 degrees Celsius in unoccupied areas, except in certain facilities necessitating continuous cooling like studios, server facilities, data repositories and analogous installations.
- Switch off lighting systems in areas not currently in use, as well as in workspaces

after the standard working hours.

■ Ensure the deactivation of heating systems, particularly those of a centralized nature, when such systems are not required.

■ Refrain from the operation of high-power appliances and industrial equipment (including industrial pumping apparatus and production machinery) during peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, and reschedule their operation at off-peak hours.

■ Discontinue the operation of ventilation systems in lavatory facilities that are unoccupied or not in use, such as at the end of business hours.

■ Maintain the secure closure of all entry and exit points in order to prevent the loss of conditioned air.

■ Use window coverings and external shading devices to mitigate the direct impact of sun rays.

■ Confirm that all office apparatus, such as computing devices, printing systems and similar equipment, are fully powered off at the end of the workday.

Concurrently, the Attendance, Vacation and Scholarships Monitoring Department has established revised schedules for designated segments of the ministry, and has instructed personnel to record their times of arrival and departure accordingly. These schedules are implemented through three operational modalities: rotational shifts, flexible hours and fixed hours.

Ministry targets 212 key projects nationwide

Islamic Affairs unveils procurement plan

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has unveiled its procurement plan for fiscal 2025/2026, including 212 tenders for all of its sectors.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the plan to execute diverse projects designed to develop services in religious, administrative and technical domains. It includes vital construction and service projects like the establishment of Quranic centers, accommodations for imams and muezzins, and Quran memorization facilities throughout the nation; as well as the development of a comprehensive Islamic cultural center in Adan.

The plan confirmed that infrastructure development is one of the priorities; including the operation of a fiber optic network linking ministry locations, provision of integrated services for individuals with special needs in the main ministry building, and ensuring an inclusive environment for all personnel and patrons.

In the field of public awareness and media, the ministry will solicit bids for the production of television content aimed at advancing the religious media system and engaging all demographics amidst contemporary intellectual and moral challenges. This initiative aims to reinforce Islamic values, ideals and principles.

Development of the Hajj and Umrah electronic portal is also part of the plan; specifically the creation of a modern and advanced platform with comprehensive modules for pilgrims, Umrah performers and expeditions.

These modules will include electronic registration units, licensing management, operational control and complaint resolution mechanisms.

This is in addition to a pilot project for the automation of the Islamic Studies Sector, with the objective of developing and maintaining a comprehensive e-learning platform for Holy Quran and Islamic Studies. The platform will support the monitoring of sectoral activities and affiliated centers.

Manpower Authority dispenses support to 3,098 women with revoked citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Public Authority of Manpower begins tomorrow (Thursday) process of dispensing special allowance given to 3,098 private sector female workers with revoked Kuwaiti citizenship and wives of Kuwaiti citizens who are eligible for imbursement. In a press statement, the authority men-

tioned that this is according to cabinet resolution 420 for the year 2025, in relation to continuation of dispensing special allowance to those working in non-government establishments, with revoked or withdrawn citizenship as per Article 8 of the citizenship law, and as per the directives of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah.

APRIL

Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173	BHD 128.000/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000/-net	BHD 145.000/-net

Promo period from 5th April to 30th April 2025 Terms & conditions apply*

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

MoU seals collaboration

Earth Day gets boost from Scientific Center & KAFO

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In a joint effort to commemorate World Earth Day and champion environmental consciousness, the Scientific Center, under the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), and the KAFO platform (Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities) organized a collaborative meeting.

The primary objectives of this meeting are to raise environmental awareness, foster a spirit of cooperation, and instill a sense of social responsibility towards protecting the environment.

The meeting included a comprehensive presentation on World Cleanup Day, a global initiative that witnessed active participation throughout the country.

Adding to the discourse, Researcher Ghadeer Al-Haddad -- a member of KAFO -- shared insights from her masteral thesis, which explored the 'Garden' project of Sabah Al-Salem Charity Foundation as a community-based model for environmental awareness.

The meeting was further enriched by the experience shared by community entrepreneur Yousef Al-Omran (Bu Jarrah) -- a prominent figure who has spearheaded over 120 volunteer initiatives, offering valuable perspectives on environmental volunteerism.

During the meeting, an important announcement was made -- the launching of 'Environment Week' scheduled for June 22-28, 2025.

This initiative underscores the unwavering commitment of the Scientific Center to raise environmental awareness and actively engage individuals in community-driven endeavors that champion

environmental sustainability.

The meeting culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Scientific Center and KAFO platform.

This agreement aims to solidify future cooperation in environmental awareness initiatives and empower national talent through programs centered on sustainability and community engagement.

Deputy Director General of Visitor Experience at the Scientific Center Mohammed Alsanousi stressed the significance of forging partnerships with national initiatives like KAFO. He pointed out the pivotal role of community-based approaches in raising environmental awareness.

Echoing these sentiments, Executive Director of KAFO Dr. Fatima Al-Mousawi stressed the collective responsibility towards environmental protection.

She asserted that the partnership aspires to showcase the capabilities of young Kuwaiti talent in the environmental field.

KAFO, recognized as the pioneering national platform dedicated to showcasing youth talent and fostering communication and collaboration, operates as a registered non-profit organization with a strong focus on creating a positive social impact.

Both the Scientific Center and KAFO extended an invitation to individuals, organizations and enterprises to participate in the 'Environment Week' and contribute meaningfully to the environmental awareness cause.

The collaborative spirit of this initiative encourages active involvement from all sectors of society to create a sustainable and environmentally conscious future for Kuwait.



Photos from the event.

Accountants association marks 50-year legacy

Half a century of trust, transparency and growth

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Kuwait Association of Accountants and Auditors celebrated its 50th anniversary recently under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel and a number of economic and professional figures in attendance.

In his speech, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the association Sabah Al-Jalawi stressed that the association has witnessed many stages of development and achievements in the profession, during which it has presented numerous visions and ideas that have

contributed to improving the business environment.

He pointed out the political leadership is focusing on the accounting and auditing profession and its role in protecting the economy, developing the business environment, ensuring oversight and transparency, combating corruption, and assisting business owners in achieving governance and overcoming challenges.

He affirmed the association is always present; offering ideas, initiatives, programs, training courses and professional workshops that have contributed to the development of practitioners and helped them overcome the challenges they face in the business environment.

He disclosed that the association, in cooperation with its partners from government agencies involved in the accounting and auditing profession like the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has made significant and tangible contributions to the issuance of numerous laws related to the profession.

He cited the laws on commercial companies, the practice of audit profession, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, and bankruptcy.

He also mentioned the contributions of the society to doz-

ens of insights and ideas on economic and social issues that the local economy is facing, as well as the provision of comprehensive solutions for decision-makers.

He explained that throughout its professional career, extending from February 1973 to the present day, the association has introduced numerous initiatives which greatly contributed to improving the business environment and advancing the development of a generation of specialists in the profession among university graduates specialized in accounting.

Meanwhile, honorary President of the association Yousef Al-Othman stated that the establishment and promulgation of the association are the results of a strong desire of a group of young Kuwaiti accounting graduates from foreign and Arab universities and Kuwait University when they called for the establishment of an association that would unite them and seek to raise the level of their profession.

Al-Othman added that the association sought membership in the General Federation of Arab Accountants and Auditors since its inception, and this was achieved in 1974. The association initiated the invitation to hold the union's first

scientific conference in Kuwait, organized by the association in March 1976.

He said the association triumphed over the challenges it faced, particularly in its early days, including the lack of a permanent headquarters, until it achieved its dream of opening its official, permanent headquarters; thanks to the support of the political leadership. He emphasized that this headquarters is a new starting point for developing the association's work and achieving its goals.

He added the association was promulgated in accordance with Law No. 24/1962 for an indefinite period under the Public Benefit Clubs and Societies on Feb 11, 1973.

He confirmed that since that date, the association has been proceeding steadily to achieve the scientific, cultural and professional goals stipulated in its bylaws.

He clarified this is achieved by creating a strong bond between all those working in the fields of accounting and auditing, ensuring the efficiency of professional performance, and supporting practical and specialized application in accordance with the laws, regulations, principles and standards that govern the practice of the profession.

Modern tools for ancient treasures

Kuwait moves to nominate sites for global recognition

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): The French Center for Research in the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA), in cooperation with the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), organized a conference on Sunday titled: "Archaeology and Architecture: Between Modern Technology and National Identity".

The three-day event, held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, discusses heritage preservation strategies.

In his speech, Secretary General of the NCCAL Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, said that this conference highlights the importance of properly preserving historical and archaeological sites.

He added, "We in Kuwait are in the process of developing these sites to become attractive cultural tourism destinations. We are working to develop them properly, sustainably, and at a high level so that we can register them on the World Heritage List and among the world heritage sites, thus achieving sustainable financial and cultural returns."

In a similar speech, the French Ambassador Olivier Gauvin expressed his pleasure at participating in this cultural event, stressing that the cooperation between NCCAL and CEFREPA institutions reflects the depth of the friendship between the two countries.

He pointed to the partnership with the Council on numerous archaeological projects, including excavations on Failaka Island and the preservation of the Hellenistic castle.

He also noted a specialized training program in the study of historic buildings, which was launched with joint support, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the World Heritage Fund in preparation for nominating Kuwaiti sites for the World Heritage List.

The ambassador emphasized the continuation and development of cooperation in the fields of research and heritage preservation, praising the efforts of all teams working in this field.

Meanwhile, Director of the French



Secretary General of the NCCAL Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar



French Ambassador Olivier Gauvin

Center for Arabian Peninsula Research Dr. Makram Abbas said that this important conference coincides with the selection of Kuwait as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media 2025, which gives it a symbolic and cultural dimension.

He explained that cooperation with the National Council includes various fields such as archaeological excavations, heritage conservation, scientific publishing, training of specialists, and data measurement, in addition to cultural initiatives, including work to nominate the Failaka site for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

He added that the cooperation also includes the humanities, the study of manuscript heritage, and related issues of preservation, processing, and access to knowledge, stressing that these efforts pave the way for a deeper expansion of cultural activities.

Manslaughter ...

■ Article 283: Any debtor who commits any of the following acts shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years and/or a fine not exceeding KD 5,000:

1. The debtor conceals, smuggles, transfers, or disposes of his assets, whether by traditional or electronic means, with the intent to avoid paying his debts established by an enforceable instrument.
2. The debtor acknowledges debts that are not due from him, or reduces his assets or rights due from third parties, with the intent to avoid paying his debts established by an enforceable instrument.

The criminal case shall lapse in its original state if the accused pays the debt, reaches a settlement with the creditor, or the creditor pardons him. If the payment, settlement, or pardon occurs after a final judgment convicting the debtor has been issued, the court that issued the judgment may order the suspension of the sentence upon the request of the convicted person.

- Article 284: The same penalty stipulated in the previous article shall apply to anyone who receives, possesses, or acquires funds from a debtor, either through traditional or electronic means, while being aware of the debt established by an enforceable instrument, and with the intent of enabling the debtor to evade repayment.

This provision does not apply to individuals under the debtor's guardianship or trusteeship.

The criminal case shall lapse in its original state if the debtor surrenders the funds to the enforcement department or a relevant investigative authority in preparation for debt recovery, in accordance with the rules governing creditor disputes.

If the funds are surrendered after a final judgment convicting the debtor has been issued, the court that issued the judgment may order a stay of execution of the sentence upon the convicted person's request.

The effects of debt payment, settlement, or pardon, stipulated in the previous article, shall also extend to any individual who received, possessed, or was transferred the debtor's funds.

Continued from Page 1

Lawyers flag

Article 285: Any debtor who disposes of their assets or rights at a value significantly lower than the market or fair value, with the intent to evade the payment of debts established by an enforceable instrument, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years and/or a fine not exceeding KD 3,000.

The effects of debt repayment, settlement, or pardon as stipulated in Article 283 shall also apply to the accused under this article.

- Article 286: The Public Prosecution shall have jurisdiction to investigate, take action on, and prosecute the crimes referred to in this clause.

Sector Labor Law, the Civil Service Commission Law, the Kuwait Army Law, the Police Force System Law, and the Public Institution for Social Security Law.

Creditor rights are protected through legal measures in accordance with binding provisions, so that they do not negatively affect the debtor's entire family.

Abul affirmed the need to differentiate between funds transferred to the debtor's bank account as salaries and other funds. The latter can be seized by creditors, but the former may only be seized in limited cases and within specific percentages as stipulated by law.

He expressed confidence in the diligent efforts of Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait and Head of the General Department for Sentences Enforcement, Counselor Abdullah Al-Othman, in their commitment to upholding justice and preventing violations within the legal framework.

FMD detected

He expects the FMD vaccine to arrive early next month; urging breeders to take all the necessary preventative measures to control the disease, boost immunity of susceptible herds, and implement established procedures to ensure the safety of livestock.

He cited medical research and reports, indicating "the disease does not

affect the health of meat and dairy consumers at all. Meat can be consumed without concern."

He explained that the disease is considered an economic disease that directly affects milk production. "It is a disease that primarily affects cows, but less commonly sheep and goats," he added.

Diplomats pay

visit to Iraq, where he met with various religious authorities. This great legacy requires a long time to fully appreciate its true value. Today is a moment of gratitude for all that he has contributed."

On the mechanism for electing the new Pope, he explained "the procedures begin after the funeral of the late Pope, scheduled for Saturday. The cardinals will hold informal preliminary meetings lasting five days in order to exchange views and get to know each other better, especially since the cardinals are coming from all over the world. The official meeting to elect the Pope will begin at least 10 days after the funeral. A secret ballot will be held, with the participation of cardinals under the age of 80 -- 135 cardinals are eligible to vote. Historically, this process has not taken more than two or three days. We hope that the new Supreme Pontiff will be chosen within a similar period."

Meanwhile, Ambassador of the UAE Matar Al-Neyadi said "the world has lost a Pope; a figure who loved peace, tolerance and coexistence. He was also one of the global figures who opposed wars and the spread of violence. With his death, the world lost a figure who loved peace and coexistence. My sincere condolences to the Catholic Christians around the world who lost a man of tolerance, a statesman, and a man who advocated for peaceful coexistence."

Omani Ambassador Saleh Al-Kharousi asserted that "with the passing of Pope Francis, the whole world lost a person known globally for his efforts and attempts to bring peace to the world, as well as his efforts to bring about rapprochement between Catholic Christianity and Islam, and all other religions and faiths."

He added "the Pope, who had a well-known background in Argentina and outside the European framework, was a man imbued with humanity and compassion. Not only the Catholic Church lost the Pope, but also the entire world that lost the efforts of this man. We hope that whoever comes after him will toe the same path and pursue interfaith rapprochement and preserve the spirit of hope for peace; because peace is an important value shared by the entire world, along with its various orientations, religions, and political and social ideas."

Russian Ambassador Vladimir Zheltov stated "we offer our condolences on the passing of Pope Francis. There is still a long way to go between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic churches. We are currently on the path of building bridges in pursuit of dialogue between the two churches and civilizations."

Zheltov expressed his sincere condolences on the death of the Pope; saying, "we are convinced that the Christian religion is one in all its aspects. Lofty human values unite believers from all Christian churches. We are also on the path of building bridges between civilizations, and between the Islamic and Christian religions. We hope to find the basis that will enable us to achieve the desired peace, regardless of the circumstances; while taking into account the interests of everyone, not just one party. We are looking for solutions that are acceptable for everyone, without political concession."

Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Totonji added "in these difficult global circumstances, the world lost Pope Francis -- one of the most courageous religious figures who valiantly defended the causes of peoples; specifically the immigrants, and the Ukrainian and Palestinian causes. He condemned the barbaric bombing of innocents in Gaza. He called for reforms within the Catholic Church and the rejection of the prevailing consumerist culture."

He pointed out that "the late Pope had the utmost respect for Iran and all countries following ancient civilizations. His passing at this sensitive time, as the spiritual leader of millions of his fellow believers, is an irreplaceable loss."

'Advisers don't get along with each other'

As controversies pile up, US President Trump allies increasingly turn on one another

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP): The infighting and backstabbing that plagued President Donald Trump's first term have returned as a threat to his second, with deepening fissures over trade, national security and questions of personal loyalty.

The latest turmoil threatens to engulf the Pentagon, where Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has pushed out top advisers and faces fresh controversy over sharing sensitive information about airstrikes in Yemen outside of classified channels. A former Pentagon spokesperson who was ousted last week wrote in Politico that Trump should fire Hegseth for presiding over a "full-blown meltdown."

Hegseth lashed out on Tuesday on Fox News Channel, where he was a weekend host before joining Trump's administration, by faulting the people who used to work for him.

"Those folks who were leaking, who have been pushed out of the building, are now attempting to leak and sabotage the president's agenda," he said.

The interpersonal drama is not at least yet - a dominant plot line of Trump's return to the White House. But its reemergence after a period of relative discipline in his ranks reflects a turbulent management style that has

been suppressed or papered over, not reformed.

Trump's national security team was recently rattled by an Oval Office visit from Laura Loomer, a far-right conspiracy theorist who has been questioning his staff's trustworthiness. The Republican president fired some of the officials, emboldening Loomer to continue scrutinizing people across the administration.

In an interview with independent journalist Tara Palmeri released on Monday, Loomer mocked the idea that the White House is "one big happy family."

"The advisers don't get along with each other," she said. "The heads of agencies don't get along with each other."

Much of the tension is connected to Trump's determination to use tariffs to rebalance the global economy, with officials often contradicting each other and occasionally turning to insults. Trump adviser Elon Musk, the billionaire entrepreneur whose companies could suffer from higher costs brought on by import taxes, sharply criticized Peter Navarro, Trump's top counselor on trade, as "dumber than a sack of bricks."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt dismissed the idea of growing dissension within the admin-



US President Donald Trump speaks while meeting with Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (unseen) in the Oval Office of the White House on April 17 in Washington, as Vice President JD Vance, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth listen. (AP)

istration, saying there are "far more examples of the president's team working together enthusiastically and collaboratively to advance the administration's goals."

"The numbers and results of this administration speak for themselves," she said. "The president and his team are getting work done."

Trump has always had a high

tolerance for chaos, shunning traditional policy deliberations to entertain divergent opinions and viewing unpredictability as a negotiating tool. He's spent years fostering a competitive atmosphere among his staff members, who are often chosen for their devotion and penchant for aggression.

But now the increasing strife un-

derscores the risks for more turmoil in the months ahead, as Trump presses forward with a dramatic overhaul of the federal bureaucracy, international trade, foreign policy and more.

John Bolton, who served as national security adviser in Trump's first term before writing a tell-all book critical of the president's inner circle, said the drama reflects the lack of a consistent ideology and the inexperience of many administration officials.

"The only thing they have in common is the belief that they should show personal fealty to Trump," Bolton said. "That got them the job. That may in fact keep them in the job. But it shows how fundamentally un-serious they are."

The situation is a test for Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff, who helped run Trump's presidential campaign last year. She earned a reputation for imposing an unusual level of order on Trump's chaotic orbit - though she carefully avoided trying to control Trump or his impulses - and he praised her as "the ice maiden."

During Trump's first term, he had four chiefs of staff - one of them serving in an acting capacity for more than a year. The second, former U.S. Marine Gen. John Kelly, became a

sharp critic of the president after he left the job, describing him as a fascist during the 2024 election.

With his new administration, Trump has surrounded himself with loyalists, and he's been reluctant to throw anyone overboard in response to negative coverage from the mainstream media, which he considers to be an enemy. Allies say the hesitance to make personnel changes in this term is meant to deny giving a win to critics, even if it means leaving troubled officials in place.

On Monday, the president brushed off reports that Hegseth participated in a second group chat to talk about pending airstrikes in Yemen last month. The first chat, which used the encrypted messaging application Signal, involved top administration officials as well as the editor of The Atlantic, who was accidentally included in the discussion.

The second, first reported by The New York Times on Sunday, included Hegseth's wife, who does not have a government job, and his brother and his personal lawyer, both of whom work at the Pentagon.

"Same old stuff," Trump said when reporters questioned him about it during the White House Easter egg roll. He said Hegseth is "doing a great job" and "it's just fake news."

'US State Dept to go thru major reorganization plan'

Qatar PM, Rubio discuss strategic partnership

WASHINGTON, April 23, (Agencies): Visiting Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Al-Thani and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed regional and international issues, including situation in Gaza and Lebanon as well as other issues of common interest.

In a press statement on Tuesday, State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce pointed to the important strategic partnership between the United States and Qatar, including security and economic cooperation and shared efforts to address regional challenges in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

Secretary Rubio also expressed gratitude for Qatar's efforts in securing the release of American citizens from Afghanistan, she added. Bruce affirmed that the two reiterated both countries' support for greater security and stability in the Middle East and emphasized the importance of increased collaboration on bilateral and regional issues.

She also mentioned that Deputy Secretary of State, Christopher Landau, met with Qatari Minister of State, Dr. Mohammad Al-Khulaifi, in Washington, D.C. and discussed President Trump's upcoming trip to Qatar and the importance of building strong economic and commercial relationship.

Also:
WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, on April 22 at the State Department in Washington. (AP)

Marco Rubio unveiled a massive overhaul of the State Department on Tuesday, with plans to reduce staff in the US by 15% while closing and consolidating more than 100 bureaus worldwide as part of the Trump administration's "America First" mandate.

The reorganization plan, announced by Rubio on social media and detailed in documents obtained by The Associated Press, is the latest effort by the

White House to reimagine US foreign policy and scale back the size of the federal government.

The restructuring was driven in part by the need to find a new home for the remaining functions of the US Agency for International Development, an agency that Trump administration officials and billionaire ally Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency have dismantled.



Smoke rises from a wildfire on April 23 near Barnegat Township, NJ. (AP)

Evacuation orders lifted as fast-moving New Jersey wildfire burns

A fast-moving wildfire was burning in New Jersey's Pine Barrens, but officials on Wednesday lifted earlier evacuation orders and a stretch of a major highway that was closed due to the blaze has reopened.

More than 1,300 structures were threatened and about 3,000 residents had been evacuated, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service said. Officials said Wednesday morning that evacuation orders

were lifted. Shelters were open at two high schools, according to the Barnegat Police Department.

The Garden State Parkway, one of New Jersey's busiest highways, reopened Wednesday morning after officials closed a roughly 7-mile (12-kilometer) stretch in the southern part of the state.

The fire service planned to give an update at a news conference late Wednesday morning. Video released by the state agency over-

seeing the fire service showed billowing white and black clouds of smoke, intense flames engulfing pines and firefighters dousing a charred structure.

Forest fires are a common occurrence in the Pine Barrens, a 1.1 million-acre (445,000-hectare) state and federally protected reserve about the size of the Grand Canyon lying halfway between Philadelphia to the west and the Atlantic coast to the east. (AP)



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (center), speaks to troops during a visit to a military base training Ukrainian troops with New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, in the west of England on April 22. (AP)

London talks on ending Russia-Ukraine war pared down as drone attack on bus kills nine

KYIV, Ukraine, April 23, (AP): A planned meeting Wednesday between top US, British, French and Ukrainian diplomats to push forward a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine was scrapped at the last minute, with US Vice President JD Vance saying negotiations are reaching a moment of truth.

"We've issued a very explicit proposal to both the Russians and the Ukrainians, and it's time for them to either say yes or for the United States to walk away from this process," Vance told reporters during a visit Wednesday to Agra, India.

He said it was "a very fair proposal" that would "freeze the territorial lines at some level close to where they are today," with both sides having to give up some territory they currently hold. He did not provide further details of the proposal.

Vance's comments came a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy ruled out ceding territory to Russia as part of any potential peace agreement, calling it a nonstarter. The Ukrainian leader spoke Tuesday in response to reports the Trump administration was proposing a deal that would allow Russia to keep occupied Ukrainian territory as part of a poten-



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, rescuers carry out bodies of passengers after a Russian drone hit a public bus in Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk region on April 23. (AP)

tial peace agreement.

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy announced the talks in London to find an end to the more than three-year war would involve only lower-ranking officials after the US State Department said Tuesday that Secretary of State Marco Rubio was unable to attend because of a scheduling issue.

Rubio's abrupt cancellation raised

doubts about the direction of the negotiations.

Commenting on those attending the London talks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that "as far as we understand, they so far have failed to bring their positions closer on some issues."

He said the Kremlin was still in consultations with American officials but wouldn't publicly discuss details.

US special envoy Steve Witkoff is expected to visit Moscow again later this week, according to Russian officials.

Even achieving a limited, 30-day ceasefire has been beyond the reach of negotiators, as both sides have continued to attack each other in a grinding war of attrition along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line and launch long-range strikes.

A Russian drone struck a bus carrying workers in Marganets, in eastern Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region on Wednesday morning, killing eight women and one man, regional head Serhii Lysak wrote on his Telegram channel. More than 40 people were injured, he said.

Lysak published photos of a bus with its windows blown out and shards of glass mixed with blood spattered on the bus floor.

Spain govt to meet NATO's defense spending goal of 2% of GDP this year

MADRID, April 23, (AP): Spain will meet NATO's defense spending target this year, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Tuesday, as pressure grows on the eurozone's fourth-largest economy to boost its military expenditure.

Sánchez said the government will raise defense spending by 10.5 billion euros (\$12 billion) to reach NATO's target of 2% of GDP. The spending will go toward telecommunications, cybersecurity and buying military equipment, he said, as well as raising salaries and adding troops.

Spain spent the least of all NATO members last year on defense as a share of GDP. It previously committed to reaching the 2% target by 2029. But it has come under pressure for not spending enough amid a widening chasm in the transatlantic alliance as the Trump administration says its security priorities lie elsewhere.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly taken European allies to task for not spending enough on their own defense and has pushed NATO allies to raise defense spending to as much as 5% of GDP.

While European allies consider Trump's 5% target to be unrealistic, NATO leaders are expected to set a fresh



Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez speaks during a press conference at the Spanish Embassy in Beijing on April 11. (AP)

spending target at the military alliance's next summit this summer in The Hague, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte has said the new goal should be "north of 3%." Facing what he called a "changing era," Sánchez on Tuesday said that it was time for Spain to "take control of our own destiny" and contribute to Europe's rearmament.

"If you asked me years ago about my government's investment priorities

in security and defense, it's obvious my response would have been different," Sánchez said. "That's not because our values have changed ... it's because the world has."

The Socialist leader heads a minority government with hard-left coalition partners that oppose defense and military increases. Sánchez said his plan to boost defense spending would not go through Parliament.

Macron brings new promises to cyclone-battered Mayotte

PARIS, April 23, (AP): Traditional songs and dances welcomed French President Emmanuel Macron when he arrived this week on the Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte - unlike his last visit, when he was greeted by furious, desperate residents reeling from a devastating cyclone.

But while daily life is improving, the impact of Cyclone Chido in December still dominated Macron's latest trip to this archipelago near Madagascar, the poorest corner of France. Mayotte's worst cyclone in a century killed dozens and left more than 2,000 injured, flattened homes and cut off power, communications and water supplies.

After a contentious visit in December, Macron was careful as he toured Mayotte on Monday. He brought new promises for reconstruction aid for the territory's 320,000 residents, and for a crackdown on illegal immigration. French authorities estimate another 100,000 migrants live in Mayotte, many in tin-roof shantytowns easily flayed by storms.

Electricity and telephone service have now been restored, and the drinking water network is functioning again



Residents wave flags at French President Emmanuel Macron upon his arrival in Antananarivo, Madagascar on April 23. (AP)

- though with intermittent outages because of chronic production shortages that often left Mayotte thirsty even before the cyclone.

"Mayotte isn't down, but it isn't up yet," summarizes Estelle Youssouffa, a lawmaker representing Mayotte in France's National Assembly.

Residents of the village of Tsingoni

- known for a centuries-old mosque considered the oldest operating in France - still come to their mayor for reconstruction help. Some homes still need roofs replaced, or to be entirely rebuilt.

When the president visited Tsingoni, Mayor Isslamou Hamada said he was afraid residents' emotions would "overflow."

Asia

Bridge collapses in Beijing: A bridge in Beijing's northeastern Shunyi district collapsed Wednesday morning after a fire broke out in its structure, according to authorities and images circulating on social media.

No casualties were reported on the bridge, which was already closed to traffic, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport wrote on the social media platform Weibo.

The Chaobai River Bridge was damaged after a fire broke out in the morning, the commission said. The fire was later put out, and authorities were investigating its cause.

A person answering the phone at Shunyi District Emergency Bureau said they didn't have extra details about the incident.

Access to the bridge was shut down in both directions and traffic was rerouted. Videos circulating on social media showed plumes of gray smoke coming out of the sides of the bridge. Police cars were seen blocking access to the bridge with fire trucks nearby.

An eyewitness interviewed by China National Radio said he was fishing near the bridge around 4 am when the lights on the bridge suddenly went off. About 40 minutes later, smoke started coming out from under the bridge. The witness said he reported a fire to emergency services shortly afterward. (AP)

S.Korea successfully launches spy sat: South Korea successfully launched its fourth homegrown military spy satellite from a US space base in Florida, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

Yonhap News Agency reported that this came in efforts to strengthen its independent surveillance capabilities on North Korea.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, carrying the spy satellite, lifted off at 8:48 pm Monday (US time) from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station as planned and placed the satellite into orbit 15 minutes after liftoff, according to the ministry.

The launched satellite succeeded in communicating with an overseas ground station at 11:27 pm, indicating the satellite's normal operation.

"This is anticipated to reinforce the grouped operation of the satellites, alongside the three satellites in normal operation, and enhance capabilities to detect signs of North Korea's provocations," the ministry said. (KUNA)



Chinese President Xi Jinping, (left), and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev attend a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 23. (AP)

China, Azerbaijan establish strategic partnership

China and Azerbaijan announced on Wednesday the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership by signing 20 cooperative documents to promote bilateral relations in various areas.

This came following talks held between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, who arrived in Beijing earlier on Tuesday on a three-day state visit to China.

During the talks, the Chinese president underlined the need to boost

political confidence, deepen practical cooperation and promote international coordination between China and Azerbaijan to open a new chapter of bilateral relations, according to Xinhua news agency. He added that both countries have committed to mutual respect, justice, fairness and win-win cooperation and exchanged support in issues pertinent to their essential interests. But, Xi warned that tariff and trade wars undermine global economic order and hurt multilateral systems. (KUNA)

Police hunt for perpetrators

Indian troops beef up security in Kashmir following deadly attack on tourists

SRINAGAR, India, April 23, (AP): Security has been beefed up across Indian-controlled Kashmir a day after an attack killed at least 26 people, most of them tourists, as Indian forces launched a manhunt for the perpetrators of one of the deadliest attacks in the restive Himalayan region.

As investigators began probing the attack, many shops and businesses in Kashmir closed to protest the killings following a call from the region's religious and political parties.

Tens of thousands of armed police and soldiers fanned out across the region and erected additional checkpoints. They searched cars and in some areas summoned former militants to police stations for questioning, reports said.

Police called the incident a "terror attack" and blamed militants fighting against Indian rule. The group's messages could not be independently verified.

Earlier this month, the local government told its legislature that 83,742 non-local Indians were granted domicile rights in Kashmir in the last two years.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi cut short his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and returned to New Delhi early Wednesday. Some Indian media and some commentators immediately blamed Islamabad for directing such attacks, while Pakistan extended condolences to the victims' families.

Officials said 24 of the people killed were Indian tourists, one was from Nepal and one was a local tourist guide. At least 17 others were injured.

Separately, soldiers killed two suspected militants in a gunfight after they tried to cross into Indian side from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir in northwestern Baramulla district along the heavily militarized Line of Control dividing the region, the Indian army said in a statement on Wednesday. There was no independent confirmation of the incident.

Kashmir has seen a spate of deadly attacks on Hindus, including immigrant workers from Indian states, since New Delhi ended the region's semi-autonomy in 2019 and drastically curbed dissent, civil liberties and media freedoms.

New Delhi has vigorously pushed tourism and the region has drawn millions of



Indian soldiers guard after tourists were killed in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir on April 23. (AP)

visitors to its Himalayan foothills and exquisitely decorated houseboats. Officials have claimed that as a sign of normalcy returning, despite the presence of ubiquitous security checkpoints, armored vehicles and patrolling soldiers. Until Tuesday, tourists were not targeted.

Following the attack, panicked tourists started to leave Kashmir.

Monojit Debnath, from the Indian city of Kolkata, said Kashmir was undoubtedly beautiful but his family did not feel secure anymore.

"We are tourists, and we should think about what safety we have here for us," Debnath told the Press Trust of India news agency as he was leaving Srinagar, the region's main city, with his family.

"It's heartbreaking to see the exodus of our guests from the valley after yesterday's tragic terror attack," Omar Abdullah, the region's top elected official, wrote on social media. "But at the same time we totally understand why people would want to leave."

On Wednesday, India's powerful home minister Amit Shah attended a ceremony at a police control room in Srinagar, where the slain tourists were paid floral tributes. He also met families of several victims.

Shah vowed to "come down heavily on the perpetrators with the harshest consequences."

Later, Shah visited the site of the killing at Baisaran meadow, some 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the resort town of Pahalgam.

The meadow in Pahalgam is a popular destination, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and dotted with pine forests. It is visited by hundreds of tourists every day.

Meanwhile, security officials intensified operations to search for the attackers and the Indian army said in a statement that its efforts "focused on bringing the attackers to justice."

The military used helicopters to search the forested mountains for signs of the attackers.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer a part of Kashmir but both claim the territory in its entirety.

Militants in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir have been fighting New Delhi's rule since 1989. Many Muslim Kashmiris support the rebels' goal of uniting the territory, either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

Ivory Coast court removes ex-Credit Suisse CEO from presidential ballot

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, April 23, (AP): A court in Ivory Coast ruled on Tuesday that Tidjane Thiam, a former CEO of Credit Suisse, is not eligible to run for president because of his dual Ivorian-French nationality, according to a lawyer representing him.

Thiam won his party's primary on Friday in an uncontested vote and was widely seen as the main challenger to President Alassane Ouattara.

In a video posted to social media Tuesday night, Thiam vowed to fight this decision.

"I will not accept this disbarment because it is unjust, unjustified and incomprehensible," he said. "I am absolutely determined to fight so that Ivorians can freely choose their next president."

The latest court case follows the rejection on April 16 of 10 similar appeals by the Independent Electoral Commission, also known by its French acronym CEI. Although deemed admissible, these cases were declared "ill-founded" by the electoral institution.

Speaking to The Associated Press following the decision, Me Ange Rodrigue Dadjé, one of Thiam's lawyers, said that "the president of the tribunal delivered her decision."

"She considered that ... Thiam had lost his Ivorian nationality when he acquired French nationality (in 1987), and therefore granted the petitioners' requests and ordered ... Thiam's removal from the electoral roll," Dadjé said.



Tidjane Thiam, CEO of Credit Suisse, speaks at the Bloomberg Global Business Forum on Sept 25, 2019, in New York. (AP)

Thiam's lawyers didn't offer any challenge to the ruling.

Ivory Coast is set to hold the vote in October. Ouattara won in 2020 after a disputed election left dozens dead and opposition candidates boycotted the election.

Also:

DAKAR, Senegal: Police raids have rescued 33 West Africans from a human trafficking ring in Ivory Coast that lured people into paying fees and providing coerced labor by promising them jobs in Canada, the international police agency Interpol said Tuesday.

Victims paid as much as \$9,000 to supposed recruiters who instead trafficked them to the city of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, where they were held under physical and psychological coercion, the agency said in a statement.

They also were forced to help scam others with the same promise of finding a job abroad by taking photos of themselves in upscale restaurants and hotels and posting them online as though they were in Canada. The traffickers allowed them limited contact with their families to maintain the illusion of living overseas.

Brazilian judges accept charges against more Bolsonaro allies in alleged coup plot

SAO PAULO, April 23, (AP): A panel of Brazil's Supreme Court justices unanimously accepted criminal charges Tuesday against six more key allies of former President Jair Bolsonaro over an alleged coup plot to keep him in office after his 2022 election defeat.

Last month, the panel unanimously accepted charges against Bolsonaro and seven close allies over the alleged coup plot following his loss to current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and ordered the former right wing leader to stand trial.

When Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet accused Bolsonaro and 33 others of attempting a coup, he divided them into five different groups, based on their roles and positions in the alleged plot.

Bolsonaro and his closest allies, including running mate Gen. Braga Netto, were placed in the "core group," according to the charges. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court panel reviewed charges against the second group, which Gonet said held managerial roles.



Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro arrives at a rally on Copacabana Beach in support of a proposed bill to grant amnesty to those arrested for storming government buildings in an alleged coup attempt in 2023, in Rio de Janeiro on March 16. (AP)

The second group includes former presidential aide Col. Marcelo Câmara and two federal police officers, Fernando Oliveira and Marília Alencar.

lice director Silvinei Vasques, former presidential aide Col. Marcelo Câmara and two federal police officers, Fernando Oliveira and Marília Alencar.



A bus carrying migrants from Central Asia and India, deported from the United States, arrives at the Juan Santamaría International Airport in San Jose, Costa Rica on Feb 20. (AP)

Costa Rica to give migrants deported from US permits to stay in country for 3 months

MEXICO CITY, April 23, (AP): Costa Rica announced Tuesday it will allow some of the approximately 200 migrants deported from the United States and held in detention in the Central American country to stay and move about freely for three months.

The move comes just days after human rights lawyers sued Costa Rica, alleging the government violated the rights of 81 migrant children by detaining them in a rural camp without any legal recourse, access to education or psychological services.

There was no immediate word how many migrants - who are mostly from Afghanistan, Russia, China, Pakistan, India and other countries - would be given the permits but the children are expected to be among those allowed to stay.

The government said the permits would be given "for humanitarian reasons" and would last for three months while the migrants seek asylum in Costa Rica or look for ways to leave the country.

The migrants were deported to Panama and Costa Rica this year as the Trump administration sought to ramp up deportations. What was once said to be a temporary stay in Central America stretched on for months, fueling criticisms by rights groups as many of the deportees expressed fear over returning to their own countries.

Critics warned the US was exporting its deportation process and that Panama and Costa Rica were becoming a "black hole" for deportees.

Migrants, whose passports were previously confiscated and who were detained in a former factory turned migrant camp along the Panama-Costa Rica border, were told they could have their passports returned upon signing a document accepting the government's conditions, said Silvia Serna Roman, one of the attorneys that filed the lawsuit at the United Nations.

"It's a step in the right direction," the lawyer said.

The Associated Press has repeatedly been denied access to the camp since the deportees arrived.

El Salvador slams Venezuela's Maduro for rejecting prisoner swap proposal

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador, April 23, (AP): The Salvadoran president on Tuesday criticized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's rejection of a swap that would see Venezuelan deportees from the United States detained in El Salvador exchanged for what he said were "political prisoners" in Venezuela.

Maduro has demanded the immediate release of 250 Venezuelans held in an El Salvador mega-prison built by Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele to house gang members. Maduro claimed in his weekly televised address on Monday that "Bukele is a serial violator of the right to freedom, fair treatment, and human dignity."

He urged that Bukele, instead of an exchange, sign "a decree granting unconditional freedom" to the deportees.

For his part, Bukele, in a post on X on Tuesday goaded Maduro, asking wasn't the Venezuelan leader the one who said he'd do "whatever it takes" to secure the



President of El Salvador Nayib Armando Bukele addresses the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 24, 2024. (AP)

release of the Venezuelans detained in El Salvador.

Bukele and Maduro's comments un-

derscore the two leaders' longstanding animosity, rooted in diametrically opposed political visions. While both governments have faced fierce democratic and human rights criticisms in recent years, Bukele has increasingly cozied up to U.S. President Donald Trump while right-wing figures have long held up Maduro as an example of democratic decay.

Among those Bukele wants set free by Maduro are the son-in-law of former Venezuelan presidential candidate Edmundo González, several political leaders seeking asylum in the Argentine Embassy in Venezuela, and what he said were 50 detained citizens from a number of different countries across the world.

In his initial proposal on Sunday, Bukele also listed the mother of Venezuela's opposition leader María Corina Machado, whose house remains allegedly surrounded by Venezuelan police since January.

Speaking at the 1Q 2025 earning conference call

Al Sager: NBK not only overcomes challenges – It transforms them into opportunities for stronger, more sustainable future

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), expressed unwavering confidence in the bank's ability to swiftly adapt to the evolving economic landscape, all while maintaining its leadership position in the local market.

On the sidelines of the analyst conference call for the first quarter of 2025, Al-Sager stated, "We not only overcome these challenges, but we seize them as opportunities to build a stronger and more sustainable future." He emphasized that NBK continues to enhance its flexibility, investment, and technology, all while maintaining a steadfast commitment to the highest quality standards in addressing the evolving needs of its customers.

He highlighted that NBK's regional and international presence remains a key factor in mitigating risks, stabilizing revenue, and improving operational efficiency. He further stressed that the Group's ongoing goal is to drive value and profitability by strengthening the integration of its businesses and expanding cross-selling opportunities across the various markets in which it operates.

Al-Sager emphasized that the Group's wealth management business will continue to leverage its extensive experience in delivering a comprehensive approach to portfolio management, advisory services, and investment opportunities. Meanwhile, its Islamic banking arm, represented by Boubyan Bank, will further reinforce NBK's distinctive position in the local market and play a pivotal role in diversifying its sources of profitability.

He attributed the 8.5% year-on-year decrease in the bank's net profit for the first three months of 2025 primarily to the introduction of the new Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax (DMTT), which took effect this quarter. This led to an increase in the effective tax rate to 16.3% in 1Q2025, compared to 9.2% in the corresponding period of 2024. He noted that,



Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait

excluding the impact of the new tax, pre-tax profit actually saw a 0.8% year-on-year increase, reaching KD 173.4 million in the first quarter of 2025.

Al-Sager stated that the Group's returns remained robust despite the impact of the new tax system, with the return on average assets reaching 1.33% in the first quarter of 2025. Meanwhile, the return on average shareholders' equity stood at 13.1%. He also highlighted that the Group's loan portfolio is strategically allocated, with 70% originating from Kuwait and 30% generated through its international presence.

"NBK reaffirms its unwavering commitment to sustainability and advancing its sustainable financial agenda. The successful issuance of the first green bonds in 2024 stands as one of the bank's most significant achievements, attracting strong interest from international investors and reaffirming the market's confidence in our ESG strategy," Al-Sager added.

He highlighted that the bank continues to



NBK headquarters.

make significant strides in integrating climate-related standards into its operations, with a particular focus on reducing the carbon footprint of its investment portfolio and effectively managing climate risks. He noted that these efforts align with leading international standards, strengthening NBK's role as a key player in supporting Kuwait's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality, while also reflecting its crucial role in driving the transition toward a low-emission economy.

Kuwait's Economy

On the performance of the Kuwaiti economy, Al-Sager stated that despite the slowdown in macroeconomic activity in 2024, the near-term growth outlook for 2025 remains optimistic. He attributed this positive outlook to several key factors, including the anticipated easing of voluntary production cuts by OPEC+, the gradual recovery of consumer spending, credit growth, the resurgence of momentum in project market activities, and the potential acceleration of public investment.

He explained that, supported by these factors, Kuwait's GDP is expected to grow by 3.0% in 2025.

Regarding the projects market, Al-Sager noted, "The market experienced some slowdown in the first quarter of 2025, following a strong year of activity in 2024. The value of projects awarded in the first quarter reached over KD 400 million. However, the outlook remains promising, with projects in preparation estimated to exceed KD 10 billion, reflecting the government's strong commitment to advancing its development and reform agenda at an accelerated pace".

As for the short-term outlook for oil prices, Al-Sager remarked that as the government continues to focus on implementing its development plan, oil price fluctuations have become less impactful on capital spending. He explained that this type of spending now accounts for less than 10% of the total government budget, reducing the likelihood of significant savings should oil revenues face pressure. He also noted that the first two years of capital spending will primarily focus on addressing infrastructure gaps, with the provision of basic services to meet population growth remaining a key priority.

He stated that the recently approved Financing and Liquidity Law provides the government

with greater flexibility in managing its financial resources, enabling the issuance of debt instruments worth up to KD 30 billion.

On the mortgage law, Al-Sager explained that several important meetings have recently been held to approve the law, including discussions with the Public Authority for Population Welfare to sign advisory service agreements with real estate developers. He indicated that the law is expected to be approved due to its strategic importance, particularly given the more than 100,000 pending housing applications and the growing population of Kuwaiti youth, which adds approximately 10,000 new applications annually.

Furthermore, Al-Sager emphasized that the banking sector's strong liquidity position strengthens its ability to play a key role in addressing the housing problem in Kuwait.

The GCC & The Global Economy

Al-Sager pointed out that, supported by robust fiscal reserves, ambitious economic reform programs, continued progress in major projects, and strong demand, the economies of the GCC are expected to maintain relatively strong performance in 2025. However, he cautioned that tightening global financial conditions could dampen investment and trade flows, increase financing costs, and potentially lead to a decline in demand, along with volatile oil prices.

Regarding the global economy, Al-Sager noted that it has recently navigated a complex environment marked by shifting monetary policies and escalating geopolitical tensions. He pointed out that the recent trade war and tariffs imposed by the US administration have cast a shadow over the economic landscape, potentially contributing to higher inflation rates and a slowdown in growth, further deepening the uncertainty surrounding the global economic outlook.

Robust Operational Performance

In the meantime, Mr. Sujit Ronghe, NBK Group Chief Financial Officer, stated that despite the impact of the new tax regime, the Group maintained strong operating performance in the first quarter of 2025, driven by significant growth in business activities, particularly in lending and investment. He highlighted that the operating income mix remains well-balanced, with non-interest income comprising 24% of total revenue sources.

Ronghe emphasized that NBK Group's financial position remains robust, characterized by high levels of credit quality, strong capitalization, and the bank's ability to generate operating profits that enhance its capacity to absorb credit losses.

He further noted that the Group continues to leverage its unique advantage among Kuwaiti banks, particularly through its broad geographical presence via a network of overseas branches and subsidiaries, along with its ability to offer both conventional and Islamic banking services.

He highlighted that operating income during the first quarter of 2025 was distributed across key business segments, with overseas branches and subsidiaries contributing 26%, Islamic banking 22%, consumer banking 20%, corporate banking 12%, and NBK Wealth 9%.

Ronghe further explained that overseas branches and subsidiaries accounted for 27% of the Group's net profit during the first quarter of 2025, while Islamic banking contributed 19%, corporate banking 17%, consumer banking 16%, and NBK Wealth's contribution reached 10%.

He also noted that IBG and Boubyan Bank collectively contributed 44% and 23%, respectively, to the Group's total assets, reinforcing the Group's strategy of diversifying its revenue sources.

Ronghe noted that the Group's loans and advances saw impressive growth during the first quarter of 2025, reaching KD 24.6 billion, reflecting a 9.9% increase compared to March 2024 and a 3.8% rise on a quarterly basis. This growth was driven by higher loan volumes in both Kuwait and international markets, across conventional and Islamic banking services.

He further pointed out that, amidst the prevailing economic uncertainty, loan growth in 2025 is expected to remain in the single-digit range. However, any improvement in global conditions, a faster pace of project implementation, or the approval of the mortgage law in Kuwait could significantly boost the growth of loan activities.

Regarding the recently implemented DMTT tax in Kuwait and its impact on the bank's profits for the current year, Ronghe stated: "The executive regulations of the law are expected to be issued within six months of its adoption. In the absence of detailed regulations at this stage, current estimates suggest that the effective tax rate for 2025 will range between 16% and 17% of pre-tax profits."

He pointed out that the net interest margin for the first quarter of 2025 was impacted, reaching 2.45%, due to an unfavorable shift in the asset mix, along with the annual effect of the depreciation of the Egyptian pound and the decline in historically high interest rates. However, the recent approval of the Finance and Liquidity Law in Kuwait boosts expectations for the upcoming issuance of sovereign debt instruments this year, which will allow the bank to repurpose liquidity into interest-bearing assets.

He emphasized the bank's capacity to provide the necessary financing for development projects currently in the pipelines, supported by its diversified and stable financing base, which aligns with NBK's strategy for sustainable growth.

Regarding his outlook for the operating environment, Ronghe stated: "Despite the prevailing uncertainty in the economic landscape, we remain cautiously optimistic that the overall operating environment, although challenging, stabilize in due course during 2025".

- NBK remains confident in its ability to adapt to evolving economic conditions while maintaining its leadership in the local market
- The bank's strong regional and international footprint continues to play a key role in mitigating risks, stabilizing revenues, and boosting operational efficiency
- Excluding the impact of the recently introduced tax, NBK reported a 0.8% year-on-year increase in first-quarter profits
- The bank sustained solid performance metrics, delivering a return on average assets of 1.33% and a return on average shareholders' equity of 13.1%
- NBK continues to strengthen its operational resilience and invest in advanced technologies, all while upholding the highest standards of quality to meet evolving customer needs
- With over KD 10 billion in projects currently underway, the government reaffirms its unwavering commitment to advancing its ambitious development and reform agenda
- The recently enacted Financing and Liquidity Law is expected to provide greater flexibility in managing public finances
- The banking sector's strong liquidity position reinforces its capacity to support national priorities, including playing a central role in addressing the country's housing challenges

Ronghe:

- NBK Group maintains a solid financial position, supported by robust capitalization and high credit quality
- The Bank's diversified and stable funding base continues to provide the flexibility needed to finance major development projects currently in the pipeline
- The anticipated issuance of sovereign debt instruments by the Kuwaiti government is expected to create opportunities for redeploying liquidity into interest-bearing assets, further enhancing returns
- International operations remain a key pillar of the Group's performance, contributing 26% of operating income and 27% of net profit
- IBG and Boubyan Bank accounted for 44% and 23%, respectively, of the Group's total assets—highlighting the strength and balance of NBK's diversified business model.

Zain publishes 14th annual sustainability report, titled 'The New Paradigm Shift'

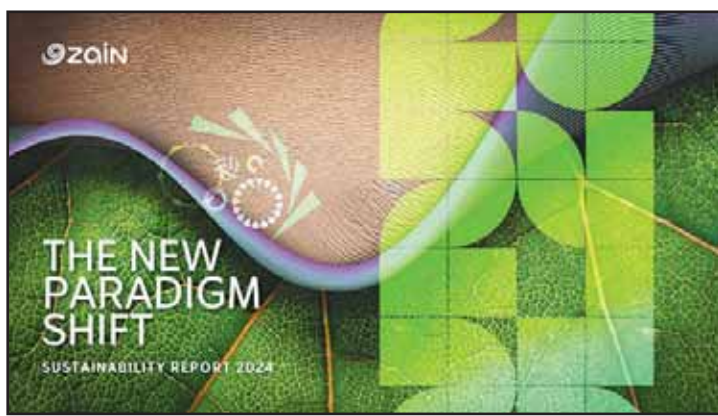
KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communication services operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, released its 14th annual sustainability report, entitled: 'The New Paradigm Shift,' reflecting the company's dedication to responsible business practices. Zain remains one of the most transparent and accountable corporate entities in the entire Middle East and North Africa region with respect to the publication of its sustainability programs and their outcomes.

As in previous years, the report reflects Zain's commitment to meaningful connectivity that leads to equitable systemic change and empowers the communities that Zain proudly serves, which is at the center of Zain's Corporate Sustainability strategy on development and economic empowerment.

"The New Paradigm Shift" highlights the numerous sustainability programs and their outcomes implemented under the four pillars of Zain's corporate sustainability strategy – namely 'Climate Change; Operating Responsibly; Inclusion; and Generation Youth'; that embrace and emphasize the material importance to the company of addressing issues related to preserving the planet and safeguarding it for future generations; access to connectivity and reducing the digital literacy gap; displacement; as well as employee development and social well-being, given the rise in geo-political and economic issues regionally.

Commenting on the publication, Zain Group Chief Sustainability Officer, Jennifer Sulieman said, "We are in an era of technological innovation that allows us to develop and introduce initiatives that are the most impactful they have ever been. Zain takes responsibility as a regional pioneer in bringing the latest technologies that drive positive societal development and meaningful connectivity across our footprint."

Sulieman continued, "What Zain does matters, and we continue to



Zain's 2024 sustainability report: The New Paradigm Shift.

implement ESG principles, climate action, children rights, displacement, connectivity, advancing digital transformation, literacy, and stakeholder collaboration to build resilience, so that amid socio-economic challenges and regional conflicts, Zain may remain a beacon of hope, delivering life-changing solutions for the benefit and upliftment of current and future generations."

Key highlights

During 2024, the company's agenda continued to be driven by efforts to address socio-economic and environmental challenges across its footprint. Zain cemented the four pillars of its sustainability strategy through a comprehensive engagement process with various stakeholders. These included:

Climate Change: Focused on decarbonizing the business and transition towards Net-Zero by 2050 by receiving official approval from SBTi on its Net-Zero targets, Zain developed its water management plan to the unique conditions of each country operation. The plan detailed specific measures aimed at improving water usage across all of Zain's markets that saw the company achieve a 5.89% reduction of water consumption in comparison to 2023.

Furthermore, Zain continued in its commitment to CDP and provided its Climate Change Action, demonstrating a commitment to biodiversity conservation and nature

preservation as integral components of its broader dedication to climate action. For example, Zain Omantel International (ZOI) requires its partners to conduct thorough environmental impact assessments aligned with regulatory and international standards.

Operate Responsibly: Embedding Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles across the entire value chain, the company further developed and scaled the supplier training program, launching its second training video highlighting the importance of upholding human rights, promoting ethical labor practices, as well as setting up grievance mechanisms. Zain trained 185 suppliers in 2024 in Zain's Supplier Code of Conduct, human rights and anti-corruption. Additionally, Zain continued its Supplier Self-Assessment questionnaire process with 604 suppliers group wide to validate their commitment and alignment to sustainability policies and ethical principles.

In addition, the company continued to contribute to employment opportunities through Zain's distribution channel, in 2024 the company generated around 114,000 jobs across its value chain.

Inclusion: Aiming to reduce the digital inequality gap, the fourth cycle of 'Women in Tech' program launched in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan to better address the needs of the target



Zain's vision and strategic pillars for sustainable growth.

community through focus groups, surveys, and feedback sessions. A total of 485 young women joined the program across the Group, reflecting a 16% increase from 2023. Similarly, to better serve customers from the disability segment, the company provided specialized bundles for this demographic in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Zain continued to place a high priority on enhancing the skills of its employees either by upskilling or reskilling its workforce in line with the company's 4SIGHT digital transformation strategy. The Zain Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity University (IDEU) continued its collaboration with the prestigious IE University in Spain with the aim of extending learning opportunities to 2,000 Zain employees to participate in an inclusive online Digital Transformation program, also offering the possibility of attaining a master's degree.

Generation Youth: Aimed at building resilience across communities by targeting 16 million children and youth, the company was recognized amongst 3,000 of the largest

corporations globally on key children's rights categories, whereby the company scored higher than the sector and industry averages, tripling the ranking of many regional corporates. In the benchmarking rankings, Zain scored 8.4/10 overall against a sector average of 5.6/10 and a regional average of 2.8/10. The average of all companies benchmarked was 4.3/10.

As an advocate for children's rights and in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16.2, which aims to end all forms of violence against children by 2030, Zain continued to support the cause by introducing a powerful campaign in response to the rising global violence that is impacting children disproportionately. This initiative followed the escalating crises and conflicts worldwide, where children are bearing the brunt of severe hardships and violence, affecting their physical and mental well-being. The campaign, titled #EveryChildHasRights, was designed to highlight the critical threats faced by children in conflict-affected regions and support for their protection. It included a compelling

video underscoring the urgent need to safeguard children's rights, engaging audiences in meaningful and emotional dialog. Through this campaign, Zain aimed to create a global call to action and foster a deeper understanding of the pressing issues at hand. The campaign successfully garnered 16.5 million impressions across Zain's footprint during 2024, amplifying its message and driving significant awareness on this crucial issue.

Also in 2024, Zain launched a two-phase campaign on excessive screen time focusing on both children and parents, reaching 43.9 million impressions and prompting 82% of viewers to set screen time boundaries. Polls undertaken of the successful campaign indicated a 100% increased awareness on managing screen use.

Moreover, Zain continued its partnership with Child Helpline International (CHI), advancing its three-year MoU to support and improve the effectiveness of child helplines across Zain's footprint. This collaboration strengthens engagement between helplines and key child protection stakeholders, including governments and regulators, while advancing platform technologies and expanding services to instant messaging and social media.

Towards the end of 2024, Zain unveiled a new enhanced five-year corporate strategy, '4WARD-Progress with Purpose'. The new program builds on the success of the 4SIGHT strategy and is focused on continuity, acceleration, collaboration and innovation, and is designed to foster value creation by accelerating the company's evolution from a predominantly mobile centric operator into a purpose driven and sustainability focused technology entity. Zain looks to maximize its full potential as a customer-centric, future-proof, and impactful leading regional TechCo conglomerate, and its sustainability strategy will be adapted accordingly.

"The New Paradigm Shift" is accessible in a digital-only format and can be downloaded here.

Net profit rises to KD 9.1 mn, up 2.8% YoY

stc reports 5.5% revenue growth in Q1 2025

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the three months period ended 31 March 2025, highlighting the most significant achievements as well as the financial and operational performance.



Eng. Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab, stc CEO



stc logo

the same period last year. This growth was primarily driven by the rise in consumer segment revenues, which accounted for 78.3% of total revenue. Meanwhile, the enterprise segment contributed to 21.7% of total revenue, supported by the ongoing efforts to enhance the company's business model, advance digital services, and provide integrated technical solutions that meet the needs of businesses across various industries.

Aldharrab added: "These results led to a 2.2% growth in EBITDA, reaching KD 22.3 mn during the first three months of 2025, compared to KD 21.8 mn for the same period in 2024. This growth was supported by higher revenues and improved operational efficiency."

Net profit reached KD 9.1 mn (EPS 9 Fils), reflecting a growth of 2.8% during the first three months of 2025, compared to KD 8.8 mn (EPS 9 Fils) for the same period in 2024. This resilient financial performance highlights the company's success in cost management, maintaining a balance between growth and future investments, and capitalizing on the accelerated digital transformation in the local market.

These results, along with the continued focus on efficiency and innovation, highlight stc's ability to enhance profitability and achieve sustainable growth. It is worth noting that stc's customer base reached approximately 2.2 million customers by the end of March 2025.

Commenting on the company's financial position as of March 31, 2025, Aldharrab stated: "The company's total assets reached KD 480.2 mn by the end of the first quarter of 2025, while total shareholders' equity amounted

the world's strongest telecom brands in addition to its recognition among the world's top ten most valuable telecom brands, according to the Brand Finance 2024 report, reflecting its digital leadership and successful strategy in expansion and innovation. stc also takes pride in being the first company in Kuwait to receive the ISO 37301:2021 certification for Compliance Management Systems, which stands as a testament to its success in fostering a culture of compliance, adhering to laws and regulations, and building trust with all stakeholders, including customers, shareholders, and regulators, during the first quarter of this year. Furthermore, stc was recognized with the "Best Telecommunications Company in Corporate Governance - Kuwait 2024" award, while its subsidiary, solutions by stc, received the "Best Digital Platform for Enterprise Customer Experience - My Business - Kuwait 2024" award, highlighting the company's excellence and leadership in digital solutions and information technology."

Commenting on the financial results for the period ended March 31, 2025, Eng. Muataz Aldharrab stated: "stc delivered a strong financial performance during the first quarter of 2025, supported by sustainable growth across various operational segments. Total revenue reached KD 87.4 mn, reflecting a 5.5% increase during the first three months of 2025 compared to KD 82.8 mn during

Commenting on stc's key achievements during the first three months of 2025, Eng. Muataz Aldharrab, the Company's CEO, stated: "During the first quarter of 2025, stc achieved key milestones, including the enhancement of its 5G infrastructure as part of its efforts to deliver an exceptional digital experience to its customers. This has helped stc to provide unparalleled, high-quality products and services for both individual and enterprise segments. The enterprise segment has also seen progress, as stc's subsidiaries secured several projects across various sectors. stc Kuwait is proud that stc Group was ranked third among

The financial results for three months period 31 March 2025	
Revenues	KD 87.4 mn
EBITDA	KD 22.3 mn
Net Profit	KD 9.1 mn
Earnings per share	9 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 480.2mn
Shareholders' equity	KD 214.6 mn
Book value per share	215 fils per share
Customer base	2.2 mn customers

to KD 214.6 mn, reflecting the strength of the company's financial position and the stability of its capital structure.

stc continues to maintain a strong solvency position, considered among the strongest in the regional telecom sector. This enables the company to continue investing in growth and expansion projects without compromising its financial stability. Such a strong financial position also allows the company to respond flexibly to future opportunities and market shifts, while supporting its expansion strategies in line with its vision for digital transformation and sustainable growth, striking a balance between investment-driven growth and operational returns.

Aldharrab Noted: "Driven by our understanding of the importance of adopting a strong and comprehensive financial strategy as a key pillar for success and sustainability, stc remains committed to regularly reviewing and updating its financial strategy in line with the company's direction and ambitious strategic projects in the coming years. This strategy supports stc's vision to diversify revenue streams, enhance the efficiency of financial resource management, and ensure sustainable returns that benefit both the company and its shareholders."

stc also maintains a continuous focus on monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs), while efficiently executing its operational and investment projects, leveraging its advanced digital infrastructure and long-term growth plans. These efforts are

aligned with the company's financial and strategic objectives, further strengthening its operational efficiency and reinforcing the adoption of best practices in governance and internal controls to ensure business continuity and long-term excellence."

About stc

Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2008. Accordingly, stc launched

its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014.

stc Kuwait is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and solutions to customers, both for individuals and enterprises, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc Kuwait has expanded its portfolio by acquiring companies such as Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait, and e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries.



stc headquarters.



Group photo during the headquarter visit.

EQUATE hosts YPO for industry insight & networking

EQUATE welcomed members of the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) to our headquarters and plants in Kuwait, offering them an in-depth look into the petro-

chemical industry.

This visit provided a valuable opportunity for networking and knowledge exchange.

Business Councils unite for dynamic networking

AmCham Kuwait co-hosts Inter-Council Speed Networking Event



AmCham and partners host successful Inter-Council Speed Networking Event.

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In a collaborative effort to foster cross-cultural business engagement, AmCham Kuwait, the British Business Forum Kuwait, Canadians in Kuwait, German Business Council Kuwait, Indian Business and Professional Council Kuwait, Lebanese Business Council Kuwait, and the Portuguese Business Council Kuwait successfully co-hosted the Inter-Council Speed Networking Event at the Park Inn by Radisson.

The dynamic, in-person gathering brought together professionals from a wide range of industries for an engaging and fast-paced networking experience. Designed to maximize interactions in a short timeframe, the event allowed participants to efficiently connect with multiple businesses and industry leaders, fostering new partnerships and business opportunities.

Attendees also enjoyed an exciting raffle draw featuring a diverse array of prizes, including dining experi-

ences at Crowne Plaza's Ayam Zaman and Al Noukhaza restaurants, complimentary meals at Holiday Inn's Tang Chao, Al Diwan's Seafood Night, and Friday Brunch. Additional prizes included KD 25 gift vouchers from Mezzan Pharmacy, luxury accessories from Alshaya's Next, one-night stays at Park Inn by Radisson, a curated selection of home appliances and healthy snacks from UTC, and a deluxe overnight stay with breakfast for two at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait.

Events like this play a crucial role in connecting different business sectors and providing members of the business councils with unique opportunities to network beyond the scope of traditional events. By promoting fast-paced networking and strategic collaborations, the Inter-Council Speed Networking Event highlights the importance of united efforts in advancing B2B deals and businesses in Kuwait.

stc

The Board of Directors of **Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc)** is pleased to announce the financial results for the three-months period ended 31 March 2025.

Total Revenue

87.4

KD Million

+5.5%

EBITDA

22.3

KD Million

+2.2%

Net Profit

9.1

KD Million

+2.8%

EPS

9

Kuwaiti fils per share

+2.8%

Results are compared to the same period last year

Global shares moderately rise

Nikkei 225 gains 1.9%

TOKYO, April 23, (AP): Global shares mostly rose Wednesday, with markets showing relief after President Donald Trump indicated he won't dismiss the head of the U.S. Federal Reserve. France's CAC 40 jumped 2.1%

in early trading to 7,480.99, while Germany's DAX rose 2.5% to 21,820.14. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 1.6% to 8,461.24. U.S. shares were set to drift higher with Dow futures up 1.5% at 39,960.00. S&P 500 futures rose 2.0% to 5,421.75.

In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.9% to finish at 34,868.63. Australia's S&P/ASX

200 surged 1.3% to 7,920.50. South Korea's Kospi gained 1.6% to 2,525.56. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 2.4% to 22,072.62, while the Shanghai Composite edged down 0.1% to 3,296.36.

Trump had previously said he could fire Fed chair Jerome Powell after the Fed paused cuts to short-term interest rates. But Trump told reporters Tuesday, "I have no intention of firing him."

Investors were also cheered by comments from U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in a Tuesday speech. He said the ongoing tariffs showdown with China is unsustainable and he expects a "de-escalation" in the trade war.

"Of course, markets will continue to listen out for the latest White House rhetoric on tariffs and any hints of upcoming trade deals."

Other Voices

Why is China not afraid of a tariff war? Here are the reasons and facts

By Zhang Jianwei

Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Kuwait

The US tariff policy recently sparked global controversy, due to the United States imposing unusually high tariffs on China.

China has made it clear that it does not seek to engage in any tariff or trade war. However, it has also emphasized that it is not afraid of such a war.

In this context, I would like to explain to our Kuwaiti friends why China is not afraid of a tariff war. The solid foundations and pillars of China's economic development:

China is the only country in the world that possesses all the industrial categories listed in the United Nations Industrial Classification. This gives China a manufacturing advantage that other countries cannot easily match in the short term.

Relying on its well-established supply chains, Tesla's Shanghai factory has an annual production capacity of 950,000 vehicles, nearly half of Tesla's global production.

China's strong economic resilience: In 2024, total retail sales of consumer goods in China reached 48.8 trillion yuan (approximately 2.05 trillion Kuwaiti dinars), with consumption contributing 44.5 percent to economic growth. Domestic consumption, rather than exports, is now the primary driver of the Chinese economy.

China's foreign trade structure is steadily improving, and its exports to the United States account for only 14.7 percent of its total exports.

In the first quarter of 2025, China's GDP grew

by 5.4 percent, which showcased the resilience and strength of the Chinese economy.

China is a staunch advocate of international fairness and justice. It prioritizes the common interests of all nations.

Committed to promoting high-level opening-up, China shares its opportunities with the world. It has become a major trading partner for over 150 countries and regions, and has signed more than 20 free trade agreements with over 30 nations and regions.

On December 1, 2024, China granted zero tariffs on the goods of 43 least developed countries (LDCs) with diplomatic relations, resulting in an 18.1 percent increase in their exports to China.

In contrast, the United States uses tariffs as a weapon for exerting maximum pressure and pursuing its own interests. This action seriously infringes on the legitimate rights and interests of other countries, flagrantly violates WTO rules, and severely damages the rules-based multilateral trading system. It also destabilizes the global economic order, going against the interests of the entire world.

China, however, has taken the necessary measures to not only protect its own interests but also defend international justice, fairness, and the common interests of all countries. The US tariff policy harms others rather than benefiting itself.

In today's highly integrated global industrial

and supply chains, imposing high tariffs disrupts these networks, reduces the efficiency of various industries, and negatively impacts the economic development of all countries.

The US's imposition of tariffs and its isolationist policies will harm its cooperation with other countries and weaken the foundations of international collaboration. Its decisions have faced strong opposition and countermeasures from many countries, including its own allies.

Research conducted by the US-China Business Council shows that the first trade war launched by the United States against China in 2018 resulted in the loss of 245,000 jobs in the US. After the US announced a new tariff policy in early April 2025, former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers warned that it could lead to losses of \$30 trillion. Also, JPMorgan raised the probability of a global recession to 60 percent.

There is a Chinese proverb, "When the sun sets in the east, the west rises."

China's economy is closely integrated with the economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Kuwait.

As the largest trading partner of the GCC, China is ready to collaborate with the GCC to expedite the completion of Free Trade Agreement negotiations and jointly promote the development of economic and trade cooperation between China, the GCC, and Arab countries.

China is also committed to strengthening practical cooperation with Kuwait, guided by the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two friendly countries, for the benefit of both the Kuwaiti and Chinese peoples.



Zhang Jianwei

Benefits showcased

ABK sets up Elite banking booth at 360 Mall

• **Johair Marafi:**

The benefits of joining Elite and Elite Plus extend beyond mere banking; they are designed to elevate the overall customer banking experience.



Johair Marafi, General Manager – Retail Banking

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its Elite banking booth at 360 Mall, offering visitors an exclusive opportunity to learn about the myriad benefits of its Elite and Elite Plus banking. The booth will be open for three days, from April 24 to April 26, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. till 8:00 p.m.

This initiative is part of ABK's ongoing commitment to providing tailored financial solutions that cater to the diverse needs of its clientele. The Elite and Elite Plus offer a range of premium banking services designed to enhance the financial well-being of its customers.

Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, shared her enthusiasm for the upcoming event stating, "We are thrilled to introduce our Elite and Elite Plus offerings at 360 Mall. Our goal is to provide our customers with personalized banking experiences that meet their unique financial requirements, and this booth will serve as an informative platform for potential members to explore the unmatched benefits we offer."

Visitors to the booth will have an opportunity to engage with ABK representatives and discover how the Elite and Elite Plus can be seamlessly integrated into their financial strategies. Elite Plus is available to customers who either transfer a salary of KD 3,000 or more or maintain deposits between KD 100,000 and KD 299,999. Similarly, the Elite is open to customers with salary transfers starting from KD 1,500 to KD 2,999 or maintaining deposits from KD 50,000 in their accounts.



ABK logo

Marafi further commented, "The benefits of joining Elite and Elite Plus extend beyond mere banking; they are designed to elevate the overall customer experience. We invite everyone to visit us at 360 Mall to learn more about these exclusive opportunities."

For additional details regarding the Elite and Elite Plus, customers can contact Ahlan Ahli or visit ABK's official website. ABK remains dedicated to offering innovative financial solutions and exceptional services to its valued customers.

Group's landmark hunger-free world initiative officially launched

Malabar Group to provide 10,000 meals daily to students in Zambia



The Honourable Douglas Syakalima, Zambia's Minister of Education officially unveils Malabar Group's Hunger Free World initiative in Zambia. Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group; HE. Gerry Muuka, Zambia Consul General for Dubai; HE Duncan Mulima, Ambassador of Zambia to KSA; Mr. Arif Saeed, Deputy High Commissioner, Indian High Commission in Zambia, other government & school officials, students & well-wishers in attendance.



Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group meets H.E Mutale Nalumango, the Vice President of Zambia.



The Honourable Douglas Syakalima, Zambia's Minister of Education; Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice Chairman of Malabar Group and other dignitaries feed students at the John Laing Primary School in Lusaka, Zambia as part of Malabar Group's Hunger Free World initiative launch.

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In a major stride towards combating global hunger and food insecurity, Malabar Group has officially launched its groundbreaking Hunger-Free World initiative in Zambia. The initiative was unveiled by the Honourable Douglas Syakalima, Zambia's Minister of Education at an event held at John Laing Primary School in Lusaka. Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group; HE. Gerry Muuka, Zambia Consul General for Dubai; HE Duncan Mulima, Ambassador of Zambia to KSA; Mr. Arif Saeed, Deputy High Commissioner, Indian High Commission in Zambia, other government & school officials, students & well-wishers were in attendance.

This extension is part of Malabar Group's commitment – announced last year during an event at the Malabar International Hub in Dubai – to contribute USD 1 Million in the next 3 years towards providing nutritious mid-day meals to school students in Zambia. With the launch of the program, Malabar Group will now provide 10,000 meals daily across John Laing Primary School, Chingwele Primary School, and Mambilima Primary School in Zambia.

"Malabar Group has always been at the forefront of social welfare initiatives aimed at uplifting society. Through our Hunger-Free World initiative, we provide meals to thousands of underprivileged individuals in India – a feat we take immense pride in. Over the past year, our ESG wing has been working relentlessly on ground in Zambia to bring this project to fruition and I am confident that our efforts will yield a positive outcome to the students and the future of Zambia. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the President, H.E Hakaide Hichilema; Vice President, H.E Mutale Nalumango and the entire Zambian government for their staunch backing of this trans-



Chairman of the Malabar Group, Mr. M.P Ahammed; Zambia's Minister of Education, Honorable Douglas Syakalima; Zambia Consul General for Dubai, H.E Gerry Muuka; the Vice Chairman of the Malabar Group, Mr. Abdul Salam K.P.; MD of International Operations at Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Shamlal Ahamed; other diplomats from the Zambian Consulate in Dubai; as well as senior management team members from the Malabar Gold & Diamonds at the announcement event of Hunger Free World expansion into Zambia held at the Malabar International Hub (MIH) in the UAE.

formative initiative", commented Mr. M.P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group.

"The launch of the Hunger Free world initiative in Zambia is a remarkable initiative by Malabar Group and represents a powerful collaboration between the government, private sector and the community to improve the lives of children. Quality education is the cornerstone of a child's development and through this school feeding program, we are not only providing nutritious meals but a conducive environment where children can grow & thrive. On behalf of Zambia, I extend heart-

felt gratitude to Malabar Group for their generosity and commitment to our children's future", commented Mr. Douglas Syakalima, Minister of Education, Government of Zambia.

The Hunger Free World initiative was launched by the Malabar Group in 2022, envisioning a world free of hunger. Presently, the program operates numerous kitchens across India, providing around 55,00 nutritious meals daily across 81 locations in the country.

"The expansion of the Hunger-Free World initiative to Zambia is driven by our steadfast belief that access to nutritious meals and quality educa-

tion forms the foundation of a brighter future for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. Our vision for Zambia extends beyond addressing hunger. It encompasses infrastructure development, equipping students with essential digital skills, and awarding scholarships to empower the next generation. With the invaluable support of the Zambian government and our collective commitment to this noble cause, we are confident in our ability to transform lives, nurture talent, and create a lasting impact for generations to come.", commented Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice Chairman of Malabar Group.

Malabar Group has announced that it will invest over USD 400,000 this financial year to construct kitchens, enabling the program to reach more schools across Zambia. This expansion will not only enhance the initiative's impact but also create employment opportunities for numerous individuals, further contributing to community development.

"The Hunger-Free World Initiative is more than a project – it is a promise to communities around the world that no one should go to bed hungry. Through the ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) initiatives that Malabar Gold & Diamonds undertake globally, we have managed to establish ourselves as a key stakeholder in society and have consistently invested in its overall betterment. As we primarily source raw material for our jewellery from the African continent, we believe it is our responsibility to give back to the people of Africa, a large section of whom suffer from acute hunger. We are deeply grateful to our customers across the world whose continued trust and support make it possible for us to drive meaningful change across the world", commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) initiatives have been the pri-

mary commitment of Malabar Group since its inception in 1993, with 5% of net profits set aside towards such initiatives in each country of operations. The key focus is in the areas of Health, Hunger Free World, Housing, Education, Women Empowerment & Environment.

Additionally, Malabar Group has also established 581 micro learning centers across India to provide basic education to impoverished children and facilitate their transition into formal schooling. So far, 25,800 children have been enrolled in these centres, where they receive one year of foundational education to help them return to or begin formal education. Children who graduate high school will receive support for higher studies on campuses across various states, with additional scholarships available to girls as part of the Group's commitment to women's empowerment.

The "Grandma Home" is another project by Malabar Group, which provides free accommodation to needy and destitute women. Currently, homes have been set up in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, with plans to establish similar facilities in Kerala, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, and Mumbai.

The ESG goals of Malabar Group are periodically strengthened to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization.

Filmmaker Cameron Crowe has a memoir out this fall

Oprah picks Knowles' 'Matriarch' for book club

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP) — Oprah Winfrey's latest book club pick is a memoir by an old friend and personal hero, Tina Knowles.

Winfrey announced Tuesday that she had selected Knowles' "Matriarch," which was published this week. Their interview, recorded at a Starbucks in Chicago, can be watched on Winfrey's YouTube channel.

"Some of you might know Tina Knowles as the mother of a superstar - as in Beyoncé - but she is also a highly successful entrepreneur, fashion designer, philanthropist, and now author of this fascinating memoir of her journey to become the global figure she is today," Winfrey said in a statement. "We learn how the strength and wisdom of the women who came before her fueled Tina's passion to achieve and gave her the ability to nurture her own daughters into the incredible women they are today."

Winfrey likes to surprise her book club choices when she tells them the news, sometimes even popping up during a Zoom conversation. Knowles said in a statement that she had been told that a printing company was on the phone, only to find herself speaking with Winfrey. She later told The Associated Press, during an interview Tuesday, that Winfrey's endorsement was "like a dream come true. I mean, that's the

ultimate."

She also recalled appearing in 2002 on Winfrey's talk show, when Knowles was interviewed with her daughter and other members of Destiny's Child. Winfrey had insisted she join the conversation.

"I was like in the back with hair uncombed, no makeup. And I was like 'Oh god, no!'" she told the AP, remembering how frightened she was to go on camera. "But I came out, and it was my first time actually on a major show like that. I mean, my voice was shaking. I was so nervous, but you know, it got me past that fear."

□ □ □

Cameron Crowe was planning to compile some of his old music interviews for a book when he realized he had a more intimate story to tell.

Avid Reader Press announced recently that the Oscar-winning filmmaker and onetime Rolling Stone journalist will have a memoir out Oct. 28. It's called "The Uncool."

"I spent the last decade or so re-interviewing those early subjects like (David) Bowie and Fleetwood Mac,

Joni Mitchell and Led Zeppelin," Crowe told The Associated Press in a recent email. "The act of looking back on their

younger selves brought out the same in me. The book split into two, the first one being a personal memoir. The second one will come out next year, with a lot of new interview material."

Crowe, 67, is known for such films as "Jerry Maguire," "Singles" and "Almost Famous," a fictionalized take on his years in the 1970s as a teen contributor to Rolling Stone that brought him an Academy Award for best original screenplay. Crowe is also the author of "Conversations with Wilder," a book of interviews with director Billy Wilder.

According to Avid Reader, a Simon & Schuster imprint, Crowe's memoir will offer "a front-row ticket to the 1970s."

"He spends his teens dodging bouncers and turning down cocaine from roadies and rock stars," the publisher's statement reads in part. "He talks his San Diego City College journalism teacher into giving him class credit for his road trip covering Led Zeppelin's 1975 tour, which lands him - and the band - on the front cover of Rolling Stone. He embeds with publicity-shy David Bowie for eighteen months as the sequestered genius transforms himself: 'Young enough to be honest!' Bowie declares of Crowe."



This cover image released by One World shows 'Matriarch' by Tina Knowles. (AP)

People

New charges

Harvey Weinstein's retrial opens in NY

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP) — Five years after Harvey Weinstein's original #MeToo trial delivered a searing reckoning for one of Hollywood's most powerful figures, the ex-studio boss is on trial again after an appeals court threw out the landmark rape conviction.

Opening statements are set for Wednesday in a trial that could take six weeks.

It's happening at the same Manhattan courthouse as his first trial, and two accusers who testified then are expected to return.

But Weinstein's retrial is playing out at a different cultural moment than the first, which happened during the height of the #MeToo movement. And along with the charges being retried, he faces an additional allegation from a woman who wasn't involved in the first case.

The jury counts seven women and five men - unlike the seven-man, five-woman panel that convicted him in 2020 - and there's a different judge.

The #MeToo movement, which exploded in 2017 with allegations against Weinstein, has also evolved and ebbed.

At the start of Weinstein's first trial, chants of "rapist" could be heard from protesters outside.

TV trucks lined the street, and reporters queued for hours to get a seat in the packed courtroom. His lawyers decried the "carnival-like atmosphere" and fought unsuccessfully to get the trial moved from Manhattan.

This time though, over five days of jury selection, there was none of that.

Testimony

Those realities, coupled with the New York Court of Appeals' ruling last year vacating his 2020 conviction and 23-year prison sentence - because the judge allowed testimony about allegations Weinstein was not charged with - are shaping everything from retrial legal strategy to the atmosphere in court.

Weinstein, 73, is being retried on charges stemming from alleged assaults involving two women: a movie and TV production assistant, Miriam Haley, in 2006, and an aspiring actor, Jessica Mann, in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013.

Weinstein also faces a criminal charge related to an alleged incident involving a woman at a Manhattan hotel in 2006. Prosecutors stated that the woman, who has not been publicly identified, came forward shortly before his first trial but was not included in that case. They revisited her claims after his previous conviction was overturned.

The Associated Press does not generally identify people alleging sexual assault unless they consent to be named, as Haley and Mann have done.

Weinstein has pleaded not guilty and denies raping or sexually assaulting anyone. His acquittals on the two most serious charges at his 2020 trial - predatory sexual assault and first-degree rape - still stand.

Lindsay Goldbrum, a lawyer for the unnamed accuser, said Weinstein's retrial marks a "pivotal moment in the fight for accountability in sex abuse cases" and a "signal to other survivors that the system is catching up - and that it's worth speaking out even when the odds seem insurmountable."

This time around, the Manhattan district attorney's office is prosecuting Weinstein through its Special Victims Division, which specializes in such cases, after homicide veterans helmed the 2020 version. At the same time, Weinstein has added several lawyers to his defense team - including Jennifer Bonjean, who is involved in appealing his 2022 rape conviction in Los Angeles. She helped Bill Cosby get his conviction overturned and defended R. Kelly in his sex crimes case.

"This trial is not going to be all about #MeToo. It's going to be about the facts of what took place," Weinstein's lead attorney, Arthur Aidala, said recently. "And that's a big deal. And that's the way it's supposed to be."



Harvey Weinstein appears in state court in Manhattan as jury selection continues in his retrial on Tuesday, April 22, in New York. (AP)

Film



This image released by Amazon shows Cynthia Addai-Robinson in a scene from 'The Accountant 2.' (AP)

Ben Affleck returns as a dangerous CPA

'Accountant 2' isn't quite a write-off

LOS ANGELES, April 23, (AP) — Hordes of horror films line up for Halloween and a sleigh full of Christmas movies arrive annually in December, but there is slightly less competition around the paper-pushing rite of Tax Day.

Yet on the heels of tax season, here is "The Accountant 2," Gavin O'Connor's sequel to the 2016 film that did not, exactly, leave audiences clamoring for another. But in a movie world where anything successful immediately gets a second one, "The Accountant 2" has the benefit of not having much to live up to. Just balancing the books a little would count as a win for "The Accountant 2."

And by the low standards of the original, O'Connor's film, an untidy thriller about a fastidious CPA (Ben Affleck) whose powers of deduction are enhanced by his autism, just succeeds at punching up the numbers for "The Accountant" in this belated follow-up.

It's a role that was always an odd fit for Affleck. In a way, that's the intention. Affleck's Christian Wolff is a monotone bean counter who used to help criminal organizations launder money and clean their books. Now, he's a combination of stickler and vigilante whose insight into tax filings and other paper trails helps him hunt down any clue. The best scene in "The Accountant 2" might be when he exposes a human trafficking scheme at a pizza company by rapidly calculating a dubious gap of under-reported pizza box expenses. (There, if ever, is a reason to keep your receipts.)

Affleck, of course, has always been a more garrulous, charismatic screen presence. The role of savant wasn't

for him; it was for his "Good Will Hunting" co-star, Matt Damon. Here, though, he's an emotionless android who speaks in clipped sentences and avoids eye contact. And while the "Rain Man" shtick of "The Accountant" always feels forced, you can tell Affleck is enjoying himself.

In "The Accountant 2," that's most true when he's paired up with Jon Bernthal. He plays Wolff's more outgoing and freewheeling brother, Braxton, who has a knack for bloody mayhem but harbors hurt feelings from his brother's distance in recent years. The two make a fine action duo of opposites. The problem? It takes a long time in Bill Dubuque's unhurried and disordered script to get to them.

Message

The movie begins with a set piece of misdirection that adds to the muddled nature of the first act. Retired FBI financial crimes boss Raymond King (J.K. Simmons) is meeting someone at a restaurant who might help in his search for a family of Central American refugees. It's a hit job, though, with snipers in position, and a separate, mysterious assassin (Daniella Pineda) lurking about. The scene ends with King's body taken out with a message he's written on his forearm: "Find the accountant."

Marybeth Medina (Cynthia Addai-Robinson), King's former protegee and financial crimes deputy, takes up the case. She knows enough about Wolff to know how to summon him - not with a Bat signal, exactly, but by phoning a neurological research center in New England and leaving a message with a receptionist.

Wolff is living contentedly out of an Airstream RV, with an office back at the research center full of young autistic computer hackers. The scenes here are clunky and don't always move the story along - there's an aimless but moderately funny one of Wolff speed dating. But once Braxton shows up - another awkward and labored character introduction, by way of a "Wizard of Oz" surrounded by dead bodies - "The Accountant 2" clicks into idiosyncratic place.

What that place "The Accountant 2" occupies probably wouldn't stand up to scrutiny, let alone an audit. For a movie about a detail obsessive, it's curiously messy. But - and this might matter more - the film has a reasonably firm sense of just how serious and how knowingly silly a movie about an uber-talented accountant ought to be.

There is also just a wisp of real-life relevancy. By centering an accountant thriller on the fate of a migrant family, "The Accountant 2" might even be said to be timely. The Trump administration is in the midst of cutting IRS employees, some of whom, including acting commissioner Melanie Krause, have resigned in part over a decision to use IRS data to help deport undocumented immigrants. For departing IRS workers, "The Accountant 2" might just be the most cathartic movie of the year.

"The Accountant 2," an Amazon MGM Studios release that opens in theaters Thursday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong violence, and language throughout. Running time: 125 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Variety

BRISTOL, Conn.: Mike Patrick, ESPN's first play-by-play announcer for its NFL coverage, has died. He was 80.

Patrick's physician and longtime friend sent a text to friends of the longtime announcer that Patrick passed away in Fairfax, Virginia, on Sunday due to natural causes.

Patrick joined ESPN in 1982, and was with the network for 35 years.

"Mike Patrick called countless significant events over decades at ESPN and is one of the most influential on-air voices in our history. In addition to calling ESPN's first-ever regular season NFL game and voicing the 'Sunday Night Football' franchise, Mike's work on college sports was exceptional," said Burke Magnus, president of content for ESPN. "For 36 years, he called football and men's and women's basketball, including the Women's Final Four and so many historic matchups between ACC rivals Duke and UNC. Our deepest condolences to Mike's family and his many friends throughout the industry."

Even though he called countless college football and basketball games, he is best known for his work on ESPN's "Sunday Night Football" from 1987 through 2005.

Patrick was teamed with Roy Firestone for the first season in 1987, before Joe Theismann became the lead analyst the following season. Paul Maguire came aboard in 1998 to make it a three-man booth. Patrick missed most of the 2004 season due to open heart surgery.

NBC took over the Sunday night package in 2006 when ESPN became the home of "Monday Night Football."

Dick Vitale called Patrick "Mr. ACC" because of his love for doing big games from the conference.

"Mike had great energy and a keen knowledge of ACC basketball, and I truly enjoyed sitting next to him calling so many special games over the years," Vitale said in a statement.



Patrick

Patrick also did play-by-play for the women's Final Four from 1996 through 2009 and the College World Series from 2003-14. (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: After winning one of the top literary prizes last year for his children's book "The Eyes & The Impossible," Dave Eggers has a sequel set for this fall.

Eggers' "The Eyes, The Fire, & The Avalanche Kingdom" will be published Nov. 18, Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers announced Tuesday. Illustrated by Shawn Harris, the new novel continues the journey of the free dog Johannes, along with friends Helene (a goat) and Bertrand (a seagull).

"I was sure 'The Eyes & The Impossible' was a once in a lifetime book," Eggers' editor, Melanie Nolan said in a statement. "So I was very, very happy to be proven wrong when Dave hinted that Johannes and Bertrand had more adventures in store, and that opossums might somehow be involved."

In 2024, "The Eyes & The Impossible" won the Newbery Medal for the year's outstanding children's book. Eggers is otherwise known for the fictionalized memoir "A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius," and such novels as "What Is the What" and "A Hologram for King." (AP)

Former Alaska governor loses defamation suit again

Jury finds The New York Times did not libel Sarah Palin

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP) — The New York Times did not libel former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in a 2017 editorial that contained an error she claimed had damaged her reputation, a jury concluded Tuesday.

The jury deliberated a little over two hours before reaching its verdict. A judge and a different jury had reached the same conclusion about Palin's defamation claims in 2022, but her lawsuit was revived by an appeals court.

Palin was subtitled as she left the courthouse and made her way to a waiting car, telling reporters: "I get to go home to a beautiful family of five kids and grandkids and a beautiful property and get on with life. And that's nice."

Later, she posted on the social platform X that she planned to "keep asking the press to quit making things up."

Danielle Rhoades Ha, a Times spokesperson, said in a statement that the verdict "reaffirms an important tenet of American law: publishers are not liable for honest mistakes."

Palin, who earned a journalism degree in college, sued the Times for unspecified damages in 2017, about a decade after she burst onto the national stage as the Republican vice presidential nominee.

Her lawsuit stemmed from an editorial about gun control published after US Rep. Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, was wounded in 2017 when a man with a history of anti-GOP activity opened fire on a Congressional



Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin leaves Manhattan federal court, Tuesday, April 22, in New York. A jury has concluded The New York Times did not libel Palin for an error in a 2017 editorial she says damaged her reputation. (AP)

baseball team practice in Washington.

In the editorial, the Times wrote that before the 2011 mass shooting in Arizona that severely wounded former US Rep. Gabby Giffords and killed six others, Palin's po-

litical action committee had contributed to an atmosphere of violence by circulating a map of electoral districts that put Giffords and 19 other Democrats under stylized crosshairs.

The Times corrected the article less than 14 hours after it was published, saying it had "incorrectly stated that a link existed between political rhetoric and the 2011 shooting" and that it had "incorrectly described" the map.

During the trial, former Times editorial page editor James Bennet tearfully apologized to Palin, saying he was tormented by the error and worked urgently to correct it after readers complained to the newspaper.

Palin testified Monday that death threats against her increased and her spirits fell after the editorial was published.

In his closing argument Tuesday, Palin's attorney, Kenneth Turkel, had urged the jury to find the Times liable for defamation on the grounds that Bennet either knew what he was publishing was wrong or acted with "reckless disregard" for the truth.

He asked the jury to award Palin compensatory damages for the harm done to her reputation and private mental anguish, adding that they should "find a number and let her get some closure to this thing."

"To this day, there's been no accountability," he said. "That's why we're here."

He told jurors not to be deceived by Palin's "bouncy

persona on the witness stand.

"She doesn't cry a lot," Turkel said. "It may have been to them an honest mistake. For her, it was a life changer."

Felicia Ellsworth, an attorney for the Times, told jurors in her closing that there was not "one shred of evidence showing anything other than an honest mistake."

Ellsworth said Bennet and the Times "corrected the record loudly, clearly and quickly" once the error was discovered.

The lawyer pointed out that several Times editors testified consistently about the effort to correct the error and the importance they placed on accuracy while Palin's claims were "supported by nothing other than her say so."

"To Gov. Palin, this is just another opportunity to take on fake news. To James Bennet, the truth matters," Ellsworth said.

In February 2022, Judge Jed S. Rakoff rejected Palin's claims in a ruling issued while a jury deliberated. The judge then let jurors deliver their verdict, which also went against Palin.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan restored the case last year.

The appeals court said Rakoff's dismissal ruling improperly intruded on the jury's work. It also cited flaws in the trial, saying there was erroneous exclusion of evidence, an inaccurate jury instruction and a mistaken response to a question from the jury.

Free press

Judge blocks VOA closure

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP) — A federal judge agreed Tuesday to block the Trump administration from dismantling Voice of America, the 83-year-old international news service created by Congress.

US District Judge Royce Lamberth ruled that the administration illegally required Voice of America to cease operations for the first time since its World War II-era inception.

Attorneys for Voice of America employees and contractors asked the judge to restore its ability to broadcast at the same level before President

Donald Trump moved to slash its funding. Lamberth mostly agreed, ordering the administration to restore Voice of America and two of the independent broadcast



Trump

networks operated by the US Agency for Global Media - Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks - until the lawsuits are settled.

The judge denied the request for two other independent networks, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Open Technology Fund.

In a March 26 court filing, plaintiffs' attorneys said nearly all 1,300 of Voice of America's employees were placed on administrative leave, while 500 contractors were told that their contracts would be terminated at the end of last month.

The US Agency for Global Media, which runs Voice of America, has operated other broadcast outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and Radio Free Afghanistan. Congress has appropriated nearly \$860 million for the Agency for Global Media for the current fiscal year.

Funding

Voice of America went dark soon after Trump issued an executive order on March 14 that pared funding to the Agency for Global Media and six other unrelated federal entities. It also moved to terminate VOA contracts with news agencies, including The Associated Press.

Voice of America has operated since World War II, beaming news into authoritarian countries that don't have a free press. It began as a counterpoint to Nazi propaganda and played a prominent role in the US government's Cold War efforts to curb the spread of communism.

Trump and his Republican allies have accused Voice of America of having a "leftist bias" and failing to project "pro-American" values to its audience.

Plaintiffs' attorneys say it reports and broadcasts the news "truthfully, impartially, and objectively."

"That simple mission is a powerful one for those living across the globe without access to a free press and without the ability to otherwise discern what is truly happening," they wrote.

Government attorneys argued that the plaintiffs failed to show how they have been irreparably harmed.

"Rather, Plaintiffs take aim at what is best described as a temporary pause on its activities while Global Media determines how to bring Voice of America into compliance with the President's directive," they wrote.

The Agency for Global Media's leadership includes special adviser Kari Lake, a former TV news anchor and political candidate.

In his written ruling, Lamberth noted that the US Agency for Global Media never finalized its grant agreement with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for the current fiscal year, and the Open Technology Fund withdrew its legal request for a temporary restraining order earlier this year.

Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks do have current grant agreements in place, and like Voice of America, are funded by Congressional appropriations.

Lamberth said the funding cuts "reflect a hasty, indiscriminate approach" - particularly since they were made the same day that President Trump signed the congressional appropriation that funded Voice of America and the networks through September of this year.

Not only is there an absence of "reasoned analysis" from the defendants; there is an absence of any analysis whatsoever," Lamberth said.

Television



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Jacob Elordi in a scene from 'On Swift Horses.' (AP)

Epic adaptation of Booker-winning novel

Elordi walks a 'Narrow Road' of war, love

BERLIN, April 23, (AP) — Jacob Elordi is gearing up for another busy year.

He'll soon be seen in Guillermo del Toro's much-anticipated "Frankenstein" and is currently filming Emerald Fennell's "Wuthering Heights." But during a recent interview in Berlin, Elordi, complete with wild curly Heathcliff hair and sideburns, had his TV series "The Narrow Road to the Deep North" on the mind.

Fellow Australian Justin Kurzel directs the adaptation of Richard Flanagan's Man-Booker prize-winning novel of the same name, which tells the story of medical officer Dorrigo Evans (Elordi). Evans was forced to work on the Thai-Burma railway in the jungle of a Japanese prisoner of war camp during World War II.

Kurzel and Flanagan are friends from Tasmania, where they both live, and celebrated in London together when Flanagan won the esteemed literary award. But in true Australian style, the idea for the TV series came from a chat back home at a barbecue. Kurzel says with a chuckle.

Fittingly, "The Narrow Road to the Deep North" is showing on Prime Video in Australia, the US, Canada and New Zealand before reaching Sky and WOW in Germany this summer.

The story spans three different timelines - pre-, during and post-war - and three different points of view, which start to merge and overlap as the story unfolds.

Although the series is about the courage and horrors of war, a love story is at its heart. Through his ordeal, the married Dorrigo is both sustained and tormented by memories of a love affair he had with

his uncle's wife Amy, his one true love, played by Odessa Young.

While Kurzel describes the romance as "the absolute spirit of the whole series," Elordi admits he was initially "pretty frightened" about bringing it to the screen.

"I was worried that it would kind of overtake the elements of the novel that kind of interested me, which was the war parts," says Elordi.

But the way Kurzel shot and directed those scenes prompted a change of heart.

"He allowed us this space for it to be incredibly raw and real and gentle and it ended up becoming my sort of favorite part of the filmmaking process because we shot it in halves."

Cautious

Kurzel says he had never done a love story and was "extremely careful and cautious and fiercely curious about what that would be with Jacob and Odessa."

With the love story shot first, Elordi, who had a major year in 2023 after starring as Elvis Presley in "Priscilla" and Fennell's "Saltburn," adds he was better able to shape his portrayal of the haunted Dorrigo, when it came time to film the Japanese POW scenes.

"Being able to have those memories while we were shooting the camps, of shooting with Dess (Odessa Young) and Olivia (DeJonge), was a core part of the performance, which goes back to Richard's book. The two just inform each other, like it's a whole life."

Casting Elordi was easy for Kurzel who said he

"knew right away" that he was right for the role but adds that a special dedication and focus was needed from all the actors cast as soldiers, as they underwent dramatic weight loss to play prisoners of war.

"The crew looking at them coming on set ... there's a 'Wow, we'd better be on today because we can see kind of what these boys have done for it.' So that was really, really powerful," Kurzel says.

Their dedication allowed him to shoot those brutal scenes in a very grounded and truthful way.

"These boys are incredible, but they're incredibly tired. They're kind of wasted away, you know, the level of sort of focus, you can't have it for the whole day. So you've got to be really kind of precise about that."

Elordi says that the six-week weight loss journey was a cumulative effort that also included the background actors. "Seeing that many, especially young people put that effort into something. It was genuinely amazing to see that when we came back from that break, it was like, oh, my God."

This series marks the second time Elordi has co-starred with an older version of himself in the same movie.

Last year Elordi played a young version of Richard Gere in Paul Schrader's "Oh, Canada" and in this series Irish actor Ciarán Hinds plays him in his later years, looking back on his time in the war. Asked who he would like to see play an older version of himself next, Elordi laughed and suggested "Meryl Streep."

And while fans wait for that collaboration, Elordi says he will not be letting the inevitable rise in fame phase him.

Snoop named Webby Entrepreneur of the Year

Taylor Swift, Rihanna and Simone Biles win Webby Awards

LOS ANGELES, April 23, (AP) — Kendrick Lamar, Taylor Swift, Rihanna, Travis Kelce and Simone Biles all won honors at the Webby Awards, which recognize the best internet content and creators.

The International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences announced winners Tuesday in a variety of categories. The 29th annual ceremony will take place at Cipriani Wall Street in New York on May 12.

The Webby Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Snoop Dogg for breaking through as a versatile businessman with Death Row Records along with two alcohol brands, an ice cream and cannabis brands. Walton Goggins won best actor award for his performances across streaming projects including "The White Lotus," "The Righteous Gemstones" and "Fallout."

The ceremony will be hosted by comedian-actor Ilana Glazer and will honor major brands and platforms including Nike, Netflix, Letterboxd and Apple. Dr. Fei-Fei Li will receive the Life-

time Achievement Award for her contributions to artificial intelligence and leadership in advancing human-centered AI.

"This year's winners represent a masterclass of creativity and innovation," said Jesse Feister, executive director for the Webby Media Group. "They've harnessed the power of the Internet to drive change, spark conversations and connect us in new ways. With the introduction of new categories, these creators are being recognized for shaping the future of the digital world."

The awards started in 1996 by recognizing websites. They have grown to embrace new technologies, from apps and software to social media and games.

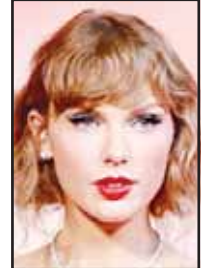
Google won their first-ever Brand of the Year achievement. NBCUniversal was honored for being best Media Company.

Special achievement recipients include Amelia Dimoldenberg, Rep. Jasmine Crockett, Jools Lebron, Marcello Hernandez, the MeidasTouch Podcast and Norman Teague.

Other winners include Lady Gaga for her website, Mariah Carey's "It's Time" partnership with KAY Jewelers, RuPaul's "Drag Race: The Pit Stop," Lamar's "Not Like Us" music video and Brian Cox's "Brian Cox Goes to College."

Some mission-driven organizations that won included The Elton John AIDS Foundation, National Immigration Law Center and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

This year marked a new suite of categories that shed a spotlight on the booming creator economy and growing influence of creators. Some of the winners included Zach King, Caleb Simpson and Jameis Winston.



Swift

Tour ahead

Push to pardon singer Jelly Roll

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 23, (AP) — The Tennessee Board of Parole on Tuesday recommended a pardon for country music star Jelly Roll, a Nashville native who has spoken openly about his criminal record and what it has taken to overcome it. The board's action leaves the final decision on a pardon up to Gov. Bill Lee.

The rapper-turned-country singer wants to be able to travel internationally to perform and share his message of redemption, after spending time behind bars as a young person.

The board issued its nonbinding recommendation unanimously after a hearing that lasted about an hour and 45 minutes with several witnesses, including Nashville Sheriff Daron Hall, advocating for the 40-year-old musician named Jason DeFord. One board member recused themselves from voting.

Jelly Roll broke into country music with the 2023 album "Whitsitt Chapel" and crossover songs like "Need a Favor." He has won multiple CMT Awards, a CMA Award and earned four Grammy nominations, including for new artist of the year.

"This was incredible," he said of the board's decision. "I pray this goes through. But today was special for me, regardless."

His most serious convictions include a robbery at age 17 and drug charges at 23. In the first case, a female acquaintance helped Jelly Roll and two other young men enter a house in 2002. Both of the others were carrying guns, although Jelly Roll was unarmed. They demanded money, and received \$350 and a wallet with no money in it. Because the victims knew the female acquaintance, she and Jelly Roll were arrested right away. He was sentenced to serve a year in prison and additional time on probation.

Sentenced

Later, in 2008, police on patrol found both marijuana and crack cocaine in his car. He was sentenced to eight years of court-ordered supervision.

He also has two misdemeanor offenses for driving without a license and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Lee, a Republican, said every case seeking clemency, such as pardons, is equally important and goes through a thorough process.

"The reporting on Jelly Roll, that's encouraging for his situation, but there are steps yet to happen in that case," he told reporters Tuesday.

Jelly Roll told the board that while in a detention center, he fell in love with songwriting. "It started as a passion project that felt therapeutic and would end up changing my life in ways that I never dreamed imaginable and opened doors that I've never thought possible."

These days, he often visits jails and rehabilitation centers before performing concerts. He has bought restaurants out for the day to feed people who are homeless and played basketball with kids at a youth center the same day that he performed in Winnipeg. He said he generally doesn't seek out news coverage when he makes these visits.

As a part of the pardon application, friends and civic leaders wrote to the board about Jelly Roll's transformation and generosity. Hall, who runs Nashville's jail, wrote that Jelly Roll had an awakening in one of the jails he managed. Live Nation Entertainment CEO and President Michael Rapino also wrote in his favor, pointing out all the money he's given from his performances to charities for at-risk youth.



Jelly Roll onstage during the Pollstar Awards on Wednesday, April 16, at The Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

Move to ban synthetic dyes aims to protect kids

US plans to phase out artificial dyes from food supply

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP): US health officials on Tuesday said they would urge food makers to phase out petroleum-based artificial colors in the nation's food supply, but stopped short of promising a formal ban and offered few specifics on how they intended to achieve the sweeping change.

Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Marty Makary said at a news conference that the agency would take steps to eliminate the synthetic dyes by the end of 2026, largely by relying on voluntary efforts from the food industry. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who joined the gathering, said he had heard from food manufacturers, but had no formal agreements with them.

"We don't have an agreement, we have an understanding," Kennedy said.

The officials said the FDA would establish a standard and timeline for industry to switch to natural alternatives, revoke authorization for dyes not in production within coming weeks and take action to remove remaining dyes on the market.

"Today, the FDA is asking food companies to substitute petrochemical dyes with natural ingredients for American children as they already do in Europe and Canada," Makary said.

The proposed move is aimed at boosting children's health, he added.



Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. speaks during a news conference on the FDA's intent to phase out the use of petroleum-based synthetic dyes in the nation's food supply at the Hubert Humphrey Building Auditorium in Washington, Tuesday, April 22. (AP)

"For the last 50 years we have been running one of the largest uncontrolled scientific experiments in the world on our nation's children without their consent," he said.

The process to revoke approved additives from the food supply typically takes several years and requires public comment, agency review and final rulemaking procedures.

Industry groups said that the chemicals are safe and suggested they would try to negotiate with regulators to keep them available.

"FDA and regulatory bodies around the world have deemed our products and ingredients safe, and we look forward to working with the Trump Administration and Congress on this issue," said Christopher Gindlesperger, spokesman for the National Confectioners Association. "We are in firm agreement that science-based evaluation of food additives will help eliminate consumer confusion and rebuild trust in our national food safety system."

Health advocates have long called for the removal of artificial dyes from foods, citing mixed studies indicating they can cause neurobehavioral problems, including hyperactivity and attention issues, in some children. The FDA has maintained that the approved dyes are safe and that "the totality of scientific evidence shows that most children have no adverse effects when consuming foods containing color additives."

The FDA currently allows 36 food color additives, including eight synthetic dyes. In January, the agency announced that the dye known as Red 3 - used in candies, cakes and some medications - would be banned in food by 2027 be-

cause it caused cancer in laboratory rats.

Artificial dyes are used widely in U.S. foods. In Canada and in Europe - where synthetic colors are required to carry warning labels - manufacturers mostly use natural substitutes. Several states, including California and West Virginia, have passed laws restricting the use of artificial colors in foods.

The announcement drew praise from advocates who say the dyes carry health risks and serve no purpose beyond the cosmetic.

"Their only purpose is to make food companies money," said Dr. Peter Lurie, president of the Center for Science in the Public Interest and a former FDA official. "Food dyes help make ultraprocessed foods more attractive, especially to children, often by masking the absence of a colorful ingredient, like fruit."

Removing artificial dyes from foods has long been a goal of so-called MAHA moms, key supporters of Kennedy and his "Make America Healthy Again" initiatives. They were among protesters who signed petitions and rallied outside the Michigan headquarters of WK Kellogg Co. last year, demanding that the company remove artificial dyes from its breakfast cereals in the US.

Health officials insisted that food-makers wanted clarity on the issue and were receptive to the changes, but the response from industry groups was mixed.

Scientists warn of permanent coral damage

84% of coral reefs hit by worst bleaching

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP): Harmful bleaching of the world's coral has grown to include 84% of the ocean's reefs in the most intense event of its kind in recorded history, the International Coral Reef Initiative announced Wednesday.

It's the fourth global bleaching event since 1998, and has now surpassed bleaching from 2014-17 that hit some two-thirds of reefs, said the ICRI, a mix of more than 100 governments, non-governmental organizations and others. And it's not clear when the current crisis, which began in 2023 and is blamed on warming oceans, will end.

"We may never see the heat stress that causes bleaching dropping below the threshold that triggers a global event," said Mark Eakin, executive secretary for the International Coral Reef Society and retired coral monitoring chief for the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"We're looking at something that's completely changing the face of our planet and the ability of our oceans to sustain lives and livelihoods," Eakin said.

Last year was Earth's hottest year on record, and much of that is going into oceans. The average annual sea surface



Bleaching is visible on coral reef off the coast of Nha Trang, Vietnam, Oct. 24, 2024. (AP)

temperature of oceans away from the poles was a record 20.87 degrees Celsius (69.57 degrees Fahrenheit).

That's deadly to corals, which are key to seafood production, tourism and protecting coastlines from erosion and storms. Coral reefs are sometimes dubbed "rainforests of the sea" be-

cause they support high levels of biodiversity - approximately 25% of all marine species can be found in, on and around coral reefs.

Coral get their bright colors from the colorful algae that live inside them and are a food source for the corals. Prolonged warmth causes the algae to release toxic compounds, and the coral eject them. A stark white skeleton is left behind, and the weakened coral is at heightened risk of dying.

The bleaching event has been so severe that NOAA's Coral Reef Watch program has had to add levels to its bleaching alert scale to account for the growing risk of coral death.

Efforts are underway to conserve and restore coral. One Dutch lab has worked with coral fragments, including some taken from off the coast of the Seychelles, to propagate them in a zoo so that they might be used someday to repopulate wild coral reefs if needed. Other projects, including one off Florida, have worked to rescue corals endangered by high heat and nurse them back to health before returning them to the ocean.

But scientists say it's essential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that warm the planet, such as carbon dioxide and methane.

Hundreds of kidney patients died

Dialysis patients struggle to get treatment in 'blockaded Gaza'

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, April 23, (AP): Twice a week, Mohamed Attiya's wheelchair rattles over Gaza's scarred roads so he can visit the machine that is keeping him alive.

The 54-year-old makes the journey from a temporary shelter west of Gaza City to Shifa Hospital in the city's north. There, he receives dialysis for the kidney failure he was diagnosed with nearly 15 years ago. But the treatment, limited by the war's destruction and lack of supplies, is not enough to remove all the waste products from his blood.

"It just brings you back from death," the father of six said.

Many others like him have not made it. They are some of Gaza's quieter deaths from the war, with no explosion, no debris. But the toll is striking: Over 400 patients, representing around 40% of all dialysis cases in the territory, have died during the 18-month conflict because of lack of proper treatment, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

That includes 11 patients who have died since the beginning of March, when Israel sealed the territory's 2 million Palestinians off from all imports, including food, medical supplies and fuel. Israeli officials say the aim is to pressure Hamas to release more hostages after Israel ended their ceasefire.

COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of coordinating aid, declined comment on the current blockade. It has said in the past that all medical aid is approved for entry when the crossings are open, and that around 45,400 tons of medical equipment have entered Gaza since the start of the war.

Attiya said he needs at least three dialysis sessions every week, at least four



Mohamed Attiya, 54, receives dialysis treatment at Shifa hospital in Gaza City, Monday, April 14. (AP)

hours each time. Now, his two sessions last two or three hours at most.

Israel's blockade, and its numerous evacuation orders across much of the territory, have challenged his ability to reach regular care.

He has been displaced at least six times since fleeing his home near the northern town of Beit Hanoun in the first weeks of the war. He first stayed in Rafah in the south, then the central city of Deir al-Balah. When the latest ceasefire took effect in January, he moved again to another school in western Gaza City.

Until recently, Attiya walked to the hospital for dialysis. But he says the limited treatment, and soaring prices for the mineral water he should be drinking, have left him in a wheelchair.

His family wheels him through a Gaza that many find difficult to rec-

ognize. Much of the territory has been destroyed.

He said he now has hallucinations because of the high levels of toxins in his blood.

"The occupation does not care about the suffering or the sick," he said, referring to Israel and its soldiers.

Six of the seven dialysis centers in Gaza have been destroyed during the war, the World Health Organization said earlier this year, citing the territory's Health Ministry. The territory had 182 dialysis machines before the war and now has 102. Twenty-seven of them are in northern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people rushed home during the two-month ceasefire.

"These equipment shortages are exacerbated by zero stock levels of kidney medications," the WHO said.

Musk foundation honors innovation

Indian carbon-capture firm wins \$50m prize

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP): An Indian company that spreads crushed rock on farmers' fields to help draw climate-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere has been awarded a \$50 million grand prize in a global competition funded by Elon Musk's foundation.

Mati Carbon was among more than 1,300 teams from 88 countries that participated in the four-year XPRIZE Carbon Removal competition, launched in 2021 to encourage deployment of carbon-removal technologies. Many scientists believe removing carbon is crucial in the fight against global warming, caused by the burning of fossil fuels like gasoline, coal and oil, which release carbon dioxide.

"It's important that we not promote carbon dioxide removal as a replacement for emissions reduction," said Michael Leitch, the technical lead for the competition. "But the race is really on both to dramatically reduce our existing emissions (and) also ... deploy carbon dioxide removal solutions at very, very large scales globally."

The prize is being awarded at a time when Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency are making steep cuts to federal funding and staff at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Weather Service and other science-based agencies that carry out important climate research. The Trump administration has also moved to roll back myriad environmental regulations, including some that regulate carbon emissions. While the Musk Foundation sponsored XPRIZE Carbon Removal, which distributed a total of \$100 million, it is not formally affiliated with



XPRIZE Carbon Removal winners from Mati Carbon, Founder & CEO Shantanu Agarwal, (left), and Chief Science Officer Jake Jordan. (AP)

the California-based organization, XPRIZE officials said.

XPRIZE runs other contests to try to solve societal challenges. Executive director Nikki Batchelor said the organization is considering more climate-related competitions addressing such issues as removal of the potent greenhouse gas methane, reforestation and climate adaptation and resilience.

Mati Carbon CEO Shantanu Agarwal believes his company's relatively low-cost approach "has a potential to really solve some planetary scale problems" while helping small farmers who often bear the brunt of climate change, as extreme weather events like drought and floods destroy crops.

Doha event spotlights nursing innovation

DOHA, Qatar, April 23, (AP): Global maternal and infant brand Momcozy joined a major pregnancy and childbirth event at Sidra Hospital in Doha, Qatar, organized by My Pregnancy Arabia, in collaboration with CellSave, a leading provider of advanced stem cell preservation services. The event gathered over 50 pregnant women, medical experts, and families for a day focused on maternal wellness, childbirth preparation, and breastfeeding education.

At the event, attendees engaged with Momcozy representatives - present through the support of local partner Qatarmoms - and explored the brand's featured innova-

tions: the M9 and M5 wearable breast pumps, designed for hands-free, discreet, and quiet use to support mobility and flexibility. Also featured were silver-plated nipple shields, offering safe, soothing relief for soreness, irritation, or latch issues - especially valuable during the early postpartum period.

Complementing these offerings were customized gift sets, curated with thoughtful combinations of products for pregnancy and postpartum needs. These sets are tailored for gifting occasions such as baby showers or hospital visits and include essential items that demonstrate both functionality and emotional consideration for mothers.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: 69994428 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: **69994428**

E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE

الفحاحيل FAHAHEEL

Dr. Sabitha Venkitesh MBBS, DNB (Ophthal)

Dr. Vivek P.S MBBS, DO, DNB (Ophthal)

Dr. Reshma Ravindra MBBS, MS (Ophthal)

Special package for family available for eye check up

HOTLINE: 65 95 95 34

Comprehensive Eye screening
Paediatric visual assessment
Glaucoma screening
Diabetic Retinopathy Screening
Foreign Body removal

Mecca Street, Near Roundabout, Life Tower
Fahaheel.
Tel: +965 2391 9020
www.shifaaljazeeera.com.kw

Player discounts attention on her

Rising tennis star Eala stays focused at Madrid Open

MADRID, April 23, (AP): Teenage sensation Alexandra Eala is trying to stay grounded despite all the sudden attention she's attracted following her breakthrough run in Miami.

The 19-year-old Eala, a product of Rafael Nadal's academy, has climbed to No. 72 in the WTA rankings after reaching the Miami Open semifinals as a wild-card entry last month. She's the first Filipina to be ranked inside the top 100.

"Now that the dust has settled, I try not to think about Miami so much," she said. "Of course, it comes to mind when everyone's asking, but in my mind I have my whole life to look back at those moments and I'll always have those memories. But the tour goes on, competition goes on, so right now I'm fully focused on Madrid."

Eala defeated Viktoriya Tomova 6-3, 6-2 in her opening match at the clay-court Madrid Open, setting up a rematch against four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek, whom she beat in straight sets in the Miami quarterfinals.

"I definitely think that each match is a different story," Eala said. "Even if it's against the same player every time - doesn't matter if I play her at the same time next year in Miami or in Madrid next year, it's going to be a different story than the last one."

The left-handed Eala also defeated two other Grand Slam champions - Jelena Ostapenko and Madison Keys - in Miami.

"A lot of external factors have changed (since Miami)," Eala said. "More eyes on me. I guess there's more exposure."

But in the day-to-day and how I feel internally, nothing has changed much because the work ethic always been there. My team has been so down to earth, keeping me grounded and reminding me what's important to focus on right now."

In Miami, Eala became the first Filipino player in the Open Era to win four main-draw matches at a WTA 1000 event.

"What was quite a shock to me was that I've won against top 10 and top five players. Happy shock, of course," she said. "But the mindset is still, especially before the matches, is that you can beat them."

Eala, who lost to Panna Udvardy in the round of 16 at a WTA 125 tournament last week in Oeiras, Portugal, clinched her first WTA 1000 win in Madrid last year.

Eala moved to Spain at age 13 after an invitation from

the Rafa Nadal Academy following one of her victories in a youth tournament.

"I definitely think it was a big milestone when I moved to the Rafa Academy. They've been a part of my journey, for sure," she said. "It was a tough decision to send me to Spain, at such a young age, but I was super excited. I knew it was a big opportunity to get out of the Philippines and develop my tennis."

"They're very experienced people," she said. "The coaching staff have a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge. And they have a structure that enables me to grow and to figure things out by myself and to develop as a player."

Nadal was among those congratulating Eala after her surprise run in Miami.

Star yet to collect any silverware

Ronaldo is rested and returning his attention to Asian CL title

RIYADH, April 23, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo has rested and now is returning his attention to winning his first major trophy in Saudi Arabia.

Despite breaking the Saudi Pro League's scoring record last season with 35 goals and leading the standings in this campaign, the 40-year-old Ronaldo is yet to collect any silverware since signing for Al-Nassr in December 2022.

On Saturday, he'll be leading Al-Nassr against Japan-based Yokohama F. Marinos in the Asian Champions League Elite quarterfinals.

The Riyadh club, still yet to win a continental championship, is expected to progress to the last four, particularly after Ronaldo's domestic league win over Damac.

Even without the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, coach Stefano Pioli has a star-studded roster at his disposal. It includes Jhon Duran, signed from Aston Villa in January for over \$100 million, former Liverpool star Sadio Mane and Spanish international defender Aymeric Laporte.

Al-Nassr also has home advantage, as all playoff games are taking place in Jeddah along the Red Sea coast.

"We're now fully focused on Asia," Pioli said Tuesday. "We have been working hard to prepare for it and I'm satisfied with the performance of the players."

Yokohama was a beaten finalist last season but is struggling in last place in

Japan's domestic league after collecting just two points from the last seven games. The club last week fired Steve Holland, a former England national team assistant to Gareth Southgate, after just four months as coach.

"To fill the void," the club said in a statement, Australian Patrick Kisnorbo will serve as an interim manager for the time being."

Nassr's Riyadh rival Al-Hilal has won a record four Asian titles and plays Friday against Gwangju FC, a South Korean club making its first appearance in the tournament.

Hilal was the best performer in the ACL group stage and, as it is unlikely to catch Al-Ittihad at the top of the Saudi Pro League, is focused on its bid for a fifth continental championship.

"The Asian Champions League is a personal dream for me, as I have not yet achieved it with the team," Hilal coach Jorge Jesus said. "It is also a dream for the fans and the club president, and we will continue to play to win every match."

Al-Ahli is the third contender from Saudi, and the two-time finalist is determined to lift the trophy in its home stadium in Jeddah on May 3. First, though, it must win a quarterfinal against Thai powerhouse Buriram United.

The only one of the four ties not to feature a Saudi club takes place on Sunday when two-time champion Al-Sadd of Qatar takes on Kawasaki Frontale, a Japanese club looking for a first title.



Delhi Capitals' Karun Nair plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Delhi Capitals at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Rahul and Kumar lead Delhi to 8-wicket win over Lucknow

Lokesh reaches the 5,000-run mark in IPL

LUCKNOW, India, April 23, (AP): Lokesh Rahul anchored Delhi Capitals to an emphatic eight-wicket win over his former franchise Lucknow Super Giants and reached the 5,000-run mark in Indian Premier League on Tuesday.

Rahul made an unbeaten 57 off 42 balls with three fours and three sixes as Delhi romped to 161-2 in 17.5 overs and joined Gujarat Titans atop the points table with 12 points from six wins.

Opener Abishek Porel made 51 off 36 balls in Delhi's aggressive run-chase as off-spinner Aiden Markram claimed both wickets for 30 runs.

Earlier, Lucknow couldn't capitalize on Markram (52) and Mitchell Marsh's (45) 87-run opening stand off 60 balls and was restricted to 159-6 with fast bowler Mukesh Kumar returning with impressive figures of 4-33.

With five wins and four defeats Lucknow is at No. 5 on the table.

Rahul was unavailable when Delhi recorded a thrilling one-wicket win over Lucknow earlier this season, but he controlled the chase well with



Delhi Capitals' Rahul celebrates after scoring fifty runs during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Delhi Capitals at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

captain Axar Patel in his first game since parting ways with his former franchise.

Rahul became the quickest batter

to complete 5,000 runs in the IPL as he reached the landmark in 130 innings. David Warner held the previous record of completing the milestone in 135 innings.

After losing Karun Nair to Markram in the fourth over of the run-chase, Rahul revived the chase with Porel. They countercharged against leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi as Porel raised his first half-century of the season off 33 balls.

With 55 needed off the 49 balls, Patel smashed four sixes in his unbeaten 34 off 20 balls and Rahul completed his half-century off 40 balls to guide Delhi home.

Markram and Mitchell had provided Lucknow a solid platform in the first half of the innings despite Patel (0-29) bowling four steady overs of his left-arm spin on the trot with the new ball.

"In the powerplay we didn't take a wicket but we kept it under control," Patel said. "I had an injury issue earlier that hampered my bowling, (but) now I'm better and I took on the responsibility of bowling in the powerplay."

Markram was more aggressive than Mitchell, hitting three sixes and

two boundaries, before Dushmanta Chameera of Sri Lanka, playing his first game of the season, had him caught in the deep in the 10th over.

Kumar clean bowled Marsh with a superb yorker and also removed Abdul Samad, who struggled to keep the momentum going and fell for 2. Lucknow's in-form batter Nicholas Pooran was undone by Mitchell Starc's slow short ball and was bowled for nine.

Kumar then returned for the final over and clean bowled Ayush Bandoni (36), and captain Rishabh Pant's below-par season continued when he was out for duck as he dragged the ball back onto his stumps while going for a reverse lap shot against the fast bowler.

Pant surprisingly demoted himself until the fifth wicket fell with two balls left in the innings. The left-hander missed the first ball he faced from Kumar before he got dismissed in a bizarre fashion.

"We were 20 runs short," Pant said. "Whoever is bowling first gets a lot of help from the wicket ... it always happens in Lucknow, wicket becomes better in the second innings."

BERLIN, April 23, (AP): As an Olympic gold medalist and Champions League winner, Almut Schult was one of the top goalkeepers in women's soccer. She believes her career ended early because clubs were reluctant to sign a player with children.

The 34-year-old former Germany goalkeeper announced her retirement in March, three months after her contract ended with the Kansas City Current in the National Women's Soccer League in the U.S.

"I feel like in Europe it is still not yet normal for a female soccer player to have children. Whether the clubs admit it or not, that's my subjective impression," Schult told Germany's Kicker magazine in an interview published Tuesday. "Many clubs worry that there could be adversity and difficulties with mothers even though that doesn't have to be the case."

Schult said she felt she could have played another "one, two years at the highest level" and that she believes being a mother was "the main reason" talks didn't work out. Schult said top clubs only offered her the role of a third-choice backup.

Schult gave birth to twins in 2020 and a third child in 2023. "I was already out of contract after my second pregnancy," said Schult, who played 66 times for the German national team. "No club believed I could still help, even though I had already proven it after my first pregnancy."



In this file photo, Germany goalkeeper Almut Schult celebrates after winning the gold medal in the women's Olympic football tournament at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (AP)

Schult won the Champions League with Wolfsburg in 2014 and the Olympic gold medal with Germany at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro and has also built a career as an expert commentator on German TV.

She suggested that European clubs could have something to learn from those in the U.S. in helping players to continue their careers after having children.

"My career would presumably have taken a different course if I'd had the same support as I recently received in the U.S.," she said.

Biles undecided on competing at LA Olympics, says 2028 'seems so far away'

PARIS, April 23, (AP): Simone Biles is unsure whether she will compete at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

For now, the most decorated gymnast of all-time has other priorities and is listening to her body, too.

"I'm really trying to enjoy life, to spend time with my husband (Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens), go support him at his games, live my life as a woman," she said in an interview with French sports daily L'Equipe published on Tuesday. "I've accomplished so much in my sport. For me to come back, it would

really have to excite me."

The 28-year-old American will be in Los Angeles for the Games but does not yet know in which capacity.

"Whether on the apparatus or in the stands, I still don't know that," she told L'Equipe. "But 2028 seems so far away, and my body is aging. I felt it in Paris."

The American gymnast won three gold medals and a silver at the Paris Olympics, taking her career tally to seven Olympic golds and 11 medals overall.

But her body cracked from the

strain.

"I went back to the village, I took the elevator and my body literally collapsed. I was sick for 10 days," she said, before recounting another experience. "The other day, we were sprinting in the garden with friends, I had aches and pains for three days. So, I honestly don't know. We'll see."

She praised her rival, Rebeca Andrade of Brazil, for recovering from injury and for "pushing me beyond my limits," but also said gymnastics no longer needs both of them.

"It only needs one of us, no? Es-

pecially since (Andrade) will not be alone," Biles said. "A young generation will knock at the door and everything will start again."

The interview took place before Monday's Laureus Awards in Madrid, where she was named sports-woman of the year.

Whatever she decides regarding her career, Biles will continue to speak about mental health.

"I am very proud of the work accomplished to reach this point," she said, "and I will continue to be the voice of the voiceless."

Best of the Rest

Thorns down Gotham: Rookie Caiya Hanks had a goal and an assist and the Portland Thorns downed Gotham FC 4-1 Tuesday night in the National Women's Soccer League.

Mimi Alidou, Jayden Perry and Deyna Castellanos also scored for the Thorns (2-2-2), who snapped a four-game losing streak in the all-time series with Gotham.

The loss snapped a two-game winning streak for Gotham (2-2-2). It was the team's first loss on the road this season.

Alidou scored in the sixth minute from out in front of the goal off a cross from Hanks to give Portland the early lead. It was her first NWSL goal.

But moments later Esther Gonzalez scored off a pass from Gabi Portillo to pull Gotham even. It was Esther's fifth goal in three games.

Hanks scored the go-ahead goal in the 60th minute, taking a feed from Sam Coffey and blasting it past diving Gotham goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger to give the Thorns a 2-1 lead.

Perry converted a penalty in the 74th. Some six minutes later, Castellanos scored her first goal for the Thorns. (AP)

Change Name

I, ABDUL VAHID PAROLA VALAPPI, S/O ABOOBACKER PAROLA VALAPPI, PAROLA VALAPPI (HOUSE), TRIKANAPURA (MPOST), MADIRASSERY MALAPPURAM (DISTRICT) 679873 (PIN CODE), KERALA HOLDER OF PASSPORT NO: R5016605, DO HERE BY CHANGE MY SURNAME AS KARINKAPPARAKODALAM PALLATH AS PER MY AADHAR CARD AND VOTER ID FOR ALL PURPOSES

Stackpole, former Wisden cricketer of the year, dies at age 84

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 23, (AP): Ex-Australia test vice-captain Keith Stackpole, one of Wisden's cricketers of the year in 1973, has died, Cricket Australia said Wednesday. He was 84.

Stackpole made his international debut in 1966 and played 43 tests, scoring 2,807 runs and taking 15 wickets with his wrist spin, in an era when batters usually didn't wear helmets or much in the way of protective clothing.

He also played in the very first one-day international, taking three wickets in Australia's five-

wicket win over England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1971.

He produced his best cricket in the Ashes, averaging 50.6 in 13 tests including his high score of 207 against England at the Gabba in 1970. He led the scoring in the 1972 Ashes series when he was deputy to Ian Chappell.

Stackpole had a long and distinguished career in the media and broadcasting after his international retirement in 1974.

Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird said

Stackpole's "legacy will live long into the future."

"Not only was he an outstanding player for Australia and Victoria, his work in the media, radio and TV commentary and as a mentor to many players who followed in his footsteps demonstrated his enduring passion and influence in the game," Baird said. "It is testament to his talent and standing that he was one of the five 'Wisden Cricketers of the Year' in 1973."

Merv Hughes, who was also from Victoria state and later became a fast bowler for Australia, paid

tribute to Stackpole in a social media post.

"Very sad news indeed - Stacky was a fantastic cricketer. ... but more so a great bloke - and one hell of a cricket coach," Hughes said. "R.I.P. Keith."

Stackpole was initially selected as a legspinner and middle-order batter for Australia but he was quickly promoted to open the batting. Former Victoria and Australia bowler Damien Fleming said Stackpole, his former coach, revolutionized the approach to opening a test match innings.

Nunes strikes deep into stoppage time

Man City boost Champions League hopes

MANCHESTER, England, April 23, (AP) — Pep Guardiola celebrated wildly as Manchester City took a big step toward Champions League qualification with a 2-1 victory over Aston Villa in the Premier League.

With clenched fists, the City manager roared with delight after Matheus Nunes struck deep into stoppage time at the Etihad Stadium.

"I was so happy, I have to admit it," Guardiola said after a win that could help salvage a troubled season for his once dominant team.

The late winner moved four-time defending league champion City up to third in the standings, with the top five securing a place in European club soccer's top competition.

Nunes fired home from a tight angle in the fourth minute of added time after Jeremy Doku's low cross through the box.

The game had looked destined to end in a draw after Bernardo Silva's first-half goal had been canceled out by a Marcus Rashford penalty.

There is still likely to be a tense battle for the Champions League with a clutch of teams in contention going into the final weeks of the season and just four points separating third to seventh in the standings.

But City's fate is in its own hands after a troubled campaign that saw its title defense unravel before Christmas and its hopes of winning the Champions League end in the playoffs.

A top-five finish would go some way to ending the season on a high - and Guardiola's celebration was evidence of just how important the win could prove to be.

"We have a lot of pressure for the club to go to the Champions League," said Guardiola, whose City team won the competition for the first time in 2023.

"If we win the next four games, it will have been so important," he added.

Victory moved City up to 61 points and above Notting-

ham Forest in fourth and Newcastle in fifth.

Chelsea is sixth and Villa, with 57 points, is seventh. England's top flight will be given a bonus fifth Champions League place because of the performances of English teams in Europe this season.

Both City and Villa have played a game more than their top-five rivals. But City knows a perfect record from its remaining four league games would guarantee a place in next season's Champions League.

It would be the 15th season in a row that City has qualified for the competition and would provide an uplifting finale to a campaign that brought an end to Guardiola's recent dominance of English soccer.

There is likely to be a rebuild in the offseason, with Kevin De Bruyne leaving and Silva and Ilkay Gundogan also in the latter stages of their careers.

But it was Silva who provided the opener for City in the seventh minute from close range after Omar Marmoush's cutback.

Rashford had already hit the post for Villa by that point after bursting into the box seconds after kickoff.

And the on-loan Manchester United forward was on the score sheet in the 18th - equalizing from the penalty spot following a VAR review of Ruben Dias' foul on Jacob Ramsey in the box.

Defeat was a blow to Villa's hopes of making it back-to-back seasons in the Champions League after returning to the competition for the first time in 41 years this term and advancing to the quarterfinals.

"Of course, today we lost, but there are still matches to play, still points to play (for). We will have chances to get the Champions League," Villa manager Unai Emery said. "I am happy how we are reacting, how every player is facing the moment we are (in)."



Manchester City's Josko Gvardiol, centre, heads the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Aston Villa at Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Barcelona holds off Mallorca to continue La Liga title push



Barcelona's Hector Fort, right, fights for the ball with Mallorca's Mateu Morey during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Mallorca at the Lluís Companys Olympic stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Espanyol's three-game winning streak ends

MADRID, April 23, (AP) — Dani Olmo scored early in the second half as Barcelona defeated Mallorca 1-0 to increase its Spanish league lead.

Barcelona, seeking its first league title since 2023, has five league games left.

Olmo's winner came a minute into the second half at Montjuic stadium, with the playmaker finding the net from inside the area.

It was the third consecutive victory for Barcelona in the league. The Catalan side had 40 attempts on

goal, while Mallorca had only four - none on target. "We created many scoring opportunities and we should have taken advantage of them, but that's soccer," Barcelona midfielder Gavi said. "We can't always score easily. We insisted until we finally scored and that's what's important."

Mallorca, which has only two wins from its last nine matches, stayed in seventh place.

Barcelona and Madrid will meet in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday in Seville.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick made several changes to his starting lineup, with forward Ansu Fati making his first league start in nearly six months. Striker Robert Le-

wandowski was absent because of a muscle injury.

"We played a great match," Gavi said. "I'm happy for the players who rotated and got to play."

Earlier, Espanyol's three-game winning streak ended with a 1-1 draw at Valencia, which has drawn two in a row after three straight victories.

The result left both teams tied on 39 points, though Espanyol has a game in hand. Valencia was in 14th place, just behind Espanyol.

On Thursday, third-place Atletico Madrid hosted midtable Rayo Vallecano, while sixth-place Real Betis visits last-place Valladolid, which has lost 12 of its last 13 matches.

Relijec's debut looms, Al-Qadsiya prepares for Kuwait Club clash

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Al-Qadsiya Club has appointed Serbian coach Sinisa Relijec as the new head coach of its volleyball team, following the departure of Bahraini coach Redha Ali, whose contract was terminated by mutual consent with the club's board of directors.

Relijec brings significant international experience to the role. His coaching resume includes leading the Serbian U-21 national team, as well as stints with Qatar S and Lebanese club Al-Anwar.



Sinisa Relijec

The club hopes his appointment will mark a turning point in their Premier Volleyball League cam-

paign.

The coaching change comes in the wake of a disappointing 0-3 loss to Al-Arabi in the highly anticipated "Derby" match in the sixth round of the Premier League. In another match on the same day, Kuwait Club swept Al-Shabab 3-0.

Premier Volleyball League Standings after Round 6:
Burgan - 8 points
Kuwait Club - 7 points, Kazma - 6 points, Al-Arabi - 3 points, Al-Qadsiya - 3 points (lower set difference)
Al-Shabab - 0 points.

After winning its opening match against Al-Shabab, Al-Qadsiya suffered defeats to both Kazma and Al-Arabi. Its next challenge will be a tough clash against reigning champion Kuwait Club on Friday.

The seventh round of the Premier League kicks off today, with Al-Arabi facing league leaders Burgan at 5:00 pm, in a tightly contested matchup after strong showings from both teams. This will be followed at 7:00 pm by Kazma taking on bottom-ranked Al-Shabab in what is expected to be a more one-sided encounter.

PSG inches closer to invincible League 1 season after 1-1 draw against Nantes

PARIS, April 23, (AP) — French champion Paris Saint-Germain is within four games of finishing the Ligue 1 season unbeaten following a 1-1 draw at Nantes.

It was only the sixth draw of the season for PSG and the point moved it 23 points clear of second-place Marseille, while 14th-place Nantes moved four points above Le Havre in the relegation-playoff spot.

PSG coach Luis Enrique hugged his Nantes counterpart Antoine Kombouaré - a former PSG player and coach - at the final whistle.

Portugal midfielder Vitorinha put PSG ahead in the 33rd minute with a neat half-volley from just inside the penalty area.

After winger Moses Simon caused problems for PSG's defense

early into the second half, Nantes almost equalized in the 60th when Jean-Charles Castelletto's low shot was saved by goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Nantes goalie Patrik Carlgren then made a smart save to deny PSG winger Bradley Barcola.

Nantes equalized in the 83rd when striker Matthijs Abline made a fine run and Douglas Augusto latched onto the loose ball before sending a powerful shot into the top right corner.

PSG almost won the game in stoppage time when striker Gonçalo Ramos hit the crossbar from Désiré Doué's cross.

PSG hosts fifth-place Nice on Friday, with the southern club chasing one of the two remaining automatic places in next season's Champions League.

Rehab Boursesli hails program

Special Olympics Kuwait launches first MATP event with Al-Ikhlaf Foundation

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In collaboration with Special Olympics Kuwait, Al-Ikhlaf Rehabilitation Foundation successfully hosted its first-ever Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) sports competition, with the participation of 50 male and female athletes representing 13 educational and rehabilitation institutions for people with disabilities.

The event featured a foot health screening for the athletes, carried out by Dr. Ghada Ibrahim and Dr. Salma Khuraibat - both accredited physicians with Special Olympics Kuwait - alongside Dalal Bou Hamdi, Health Program Officer at Special Olympics.

Rehab Boursesli, National Director of Special Olympics Kuwait, commended the competition's strong organization and expressed her appreciation to Al-Ikhlaf Rehabilitation Foundation for partnering with Special Olympics Kuwait to launch this important initiative. She emphasized that the event aims to enhance the motor and athletic skills of children with severe and multiple disabilities.

Boursesli noted that this competition marks the first practical outcome of the regional training course for MATP coaches, hosted recently by Special Olympics Kuwait. The three-day course, held under the supervision of Special Olympics International and Special Olympics MENA, trained 50 coaches from Kuwait, GCC states, and other Arab countries in the latest meth-



MATP sports competition in progress.

ods for supporting athletes with severe disabilities.

She reaffirmed Special Olympics Kuwait's ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities through tailored programs and inclusive sports opportunities.

Jassim Safar, Director of Al-Ikhlaf Rehabilitation Foundation, shared his pride in the Foundation being the first institution in Kuwait to implement the Special Olympics MATP program. He highlighted the program's value in providing individuals with severe disabilities the chance to participate in sports through customized, accessible competitions.

Best of the Rest

Pogacar surges to victory: Cycling star Tadej Pogacar launched a trademark attack on a steep climb to win the Flèche Wallonne classic for the second time in his stellar career on Wednesday.

The three-time Tour de France champion won the Belgian race in 2023 and showed his outstanding climbing ability when he surged ahead on the final ascent up the Mur de Huy. None of his rivals could even follow and he crossed the line alone in 4 hours, 50 minutes, 15 seconds.

Frenchman Kevin Vauquelin was 10 seconds behind Pogacar in second place with British rider Tom Pidcock 12 seconds back in third.

Last year, Stephen Williams became the first British winner of the race after battling snowy conditions.

This time the riders dealt with driving rain and wet roads along the 205.1-kilometer (127.2-mile) race that culminated in a short and sharp climb up Huy, which has an average gradient of 9.6% and sections as steep as 19%.

A trio of Norwegian riders rode out in front but the chasing pack caught them seven kilometers from the end as they reached the bottom of the Huy ascent.

Double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel was alongside Pogacar, but could not respond to his attack about halfway up. (AP)

ARAB TIMES
Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

For Subscriptions and Complaints

Please Call
51508991
51526559





Damian Moreno of Argentina's Lanus, right, is challenged by Hugo Moura of Brazil's Vasco da Gama during a Copa Sudamericana Group G soccer match at Sao Januario Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. The match ended 0-0. (AP)

Sports



The victorious Elite Swim Team Kuwait.

Elite Swim Team Kuwait clinches first place at Elite Cup 7.0 in Doha

DOHA, Qatar, April 23: In a landmark achievement for Kuwait's sporting community, Elite Swim Team Kuwait emerged as the overall champion at the highly anticipated Elite Cup 7.0, held recently in Doha, Qatar. The event featured elite swimmers from across the region, competing at the highest level of excellence.

The team delivered a truly dominant performance, securing a total of 220 medals, including:

85 Gold
73 Silver
62 Bronze

Alongside an impressive 11 new championship records, and with 9 team members named among the tournament's top swimmers.

In a statement following the victory, Mr. Mishari Razouqi, CEO of Elite Swim Team Kuwait, said:

"This outstanding achievement reflects the relentless dedication of our coaching staff, the hard work and discipline of our swimmers, and the steadfast support of our athletes' families. At Elite, we are committed to nurturing world-class talent and preparing champions who represent Kuwait with pride on the global stage."

He added: "This victory is not only a result of training and commitment, but also a testament to our long-term vision of sporting excellence and youth empowerment."

The Elite Cup is recognized as one of the premier swimming competitions in the region, attracting top-tier teams and showcasing the best of young athletic talent.

Lakers regain momentum

OKC rolls past Grizzlies to take 2-0 lead

LOS ANGELES, April 23, (AP): Rui Hachimura got smacked in the face early in Game 2, and he headed to the Los Angeles Lakers' locker room with a bleeding nose. He was back on the court just one quarter later wearing a mask, which he discarded shortly afterward because it annoyed him.

The Lakers said they collectively got smacked in the mouth by the blowout loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves in their first-round series opener. Game 2 was all about their response - and LeBron James loved his team's tenacity.

Luka Doncic had 31 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists, and the Lakers fought back to even their series with Minnesota with a 94-85 victory Tuesday night. Game 3 is Friday night in Minneapolis.

Austin Reaves added 16 for the third-seeded Lakers, who jumped out to an early 22-point lead and hung on through a physical matchup with sixth-seeded Minnesota.

Los Angeles scored only 60 points in the final three quarters, but the Wolves never got closer than nine points. Coach JJ Redick was proud of his players' response - even if he had to unload on them in the fourth quarter during a profanity-laden timeout to maintain their focus down the stretch.

James added 11 rebounds and seven assists for the Lakers, who never lost control of a chippy, choppy game with 46 personal fouls and multiple video reviews. James and Hachimura both took hard shots to the face, and Hachimura donned a second mask after halftime.

The Wolves hit 21 3-pointers while blowing out the Lakers 117-95 in Game 1. Los Angeles went up by 19 in the first quarter of Game 2 while Doncic exploited isolations on Rudy Gobert.

Thunder 118, Grizzlies 99

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder dominated the Memphis Grizzlies to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Oklahoma City delivered a strong follow-up to its record-setting 131-80 win on Sunday in the series opener. Though Memphis was the team with something to prove, the Thunder came out with the energy. Oklahoma City opened with a 9-0 run and held Memphis scoreless for the first 3 1/2 minutes as the Grizzlies missed their first 10 shots.

The Thunder led 32-17 at the end of



Indiana Pacers forward Obi Toppin (1) shoots around Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) during the second half of a first-round NBA basketball playoff game in Indianapolis. (AP)

the first quarter and never trailed.

Jalen Williams added 24 points and Chet Holmgren had 20 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks for the top-seeded Thunder.

Oklahoma City's offense produced, despite Gilgeous-Alexander making just 10 of 29 shots.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who had been off for the first five quarters of the series, found his shot in the second quarter. He hit two 3-pointers 55 seconds apart to put Oklahoma City up 55-38. Oklahoma City led 70-52 at the break

after setting a team playoff record with 12 3-pointers in the first half.

Memphis started hot in the third and cut its deficit to single digits, but the Thunder took a 90-79 lead into the fourth.

Pacers 123, Bucks 115

In Indianapolis, Pascal Siakam and Tyrese Haliburton played the perfect pair for the Indiana Pacers on Tuesday. Again.

Now they're two wins away from ousting the Milwaukee Bucks in the first round of the playoffs. Again.



Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) goes to the basket against Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (27) and forward Jaden McDaniels (3) during the second half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff in Los Angeles. (AP)

Qadsia tops standings

Kuwait announces 23-player squad for the 10th Arab Cup

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Icelandic head coach Aron Kristjansson, along with his Danish assistant Ansen, has named a 23-player squad for Kuwait's national handball team ahead of the 10th Arab Cup for Men's National Teams, which will be hosted in Kuwait from May 4 to 12. The tournament coincides with the International Handball Federation Week and will feature the participation of nine Arab countries.

The selected players are: Hassan Safar, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, Mohammed Bouyabes, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Haidar Dashti, Fawaz Al-Mishari, Saif Al-Adwani, Fawaz Mubarak, Abdullah Al-Khamis, Abdulaziz Salmeen, Saleh Al-Raghib, Hamoud Al-Adwani, Mohammed Al-Hindal, Abdulaziz Dhaif, Abdulrahman Al-Enezi, Mishaal Al-Harbi, Hussein Al-Mutawa, Mohammed Al-Aryan, Ibrahim Dhaif, Youssef Dhaif, Mohammed Ghadanfar, Mohammed Al-Sanea, and Abdulrahman Al-Shammari.

The national team kicked off its training yesterday and will continue preparations through an internal training camp until the tournament begins.

Meanwhile, in local handball action, Qadsia Club topped the First Division League standings after a dominant 32-21 win over Al-Sahel in the 14th round, held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. In another match,



National team player warms up with stretches before training.

Fahaheel defeated Yarmouk 35-28.

First Division Handball

League Standings:

Qadsia: 26 points

Al-Nasr: 22 points

Al-Qurain: 20 points

Fahaheel: 16 points

Khaitan: 14 points

Yarmouk: 6 points

Al-Tadamon: 5 points

Al-Sahel: 0 points

Following the latest round of matches, the First Division Handball League will be temporarily suspended to allow the national team to fully focus on preparations for the Arab Cup.

Zimbabwe tops Bangladesh by 3 wickets in opening test

SYLHET, Bangladesh, April 23, (AP): Fast bowler Blessing Muzurabani claimed 6-72 and opener Brian Bennet scored 54 as Zimbabwe beat Bangladesh by three wickets in the first cricket test on Wednesday.

Offspinner Mehidy Hasan gave Bangladesh an outside chance at victory by taking 5-50 on day four, but Zimbabwe's batters held their nerve to reach 174-7 for their first test victory since 2021.

Bangladesh was dismissed for 255, adding just 61 to their overnight 194-4, after Muzurabani hastened the collapse by becoming the joint-fastest to 50 test wickets for his country.

Zimbabwe appeared set for a comfortable victory by racing to 95 in the 21st over without losing a wicket as it chased a modest target of 174.

Mehidy then broke through with the wicket of Ben Curran, who made 44 off 75 balls.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who finished with 2-70, had Nick Welch leg-before for 10 as Bangladesh pulled itself back into the match.

Bennet clipped Taijul's full-length delivery past mid-wicket for two to raise his second half-century in the last over of the second session.

But Mehidy gave Bangladesh a genuine chance by dismissing Sean Williams and Bennet in consecutive overs before Taijul got the better of captain Craig Ervine.

Batting against spinners became increasingly tougher as the light faded but Wesley Madhevere, who was 19 not-out, held things together with grit and patience to ensure his side's victory.

Earlier, Blessing gave Zimbabwe its small target by taking advantage of reckless Bangladeshi batings.