



Pages 14-16



Retirement approved for 'Article 8' women

By Saud Al-Farhan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusef Saud Al-Sabah has announced that instructions have been issued to the Minister of Finance Noura Al-Fassam to approve the retirement applications of women whose citizenship was revoked under Article 8 of the Nationality Law, and grant them the same treatment as Kuwaiti citizens.

In a press statement, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef explained that the directive applies to cases where the individuals were still employed at the time of the revocation and meet the eligibility criteria for retirement, specifically, 15 years of service and a minimum age of 50, under the Public Institution for Social Security Law No. 61/1976 (Article 17, Clause 5).

The qualifying service period must not include any days of absence, unpaid leave, or previously compensated service periods that were excluded at the employee's request.

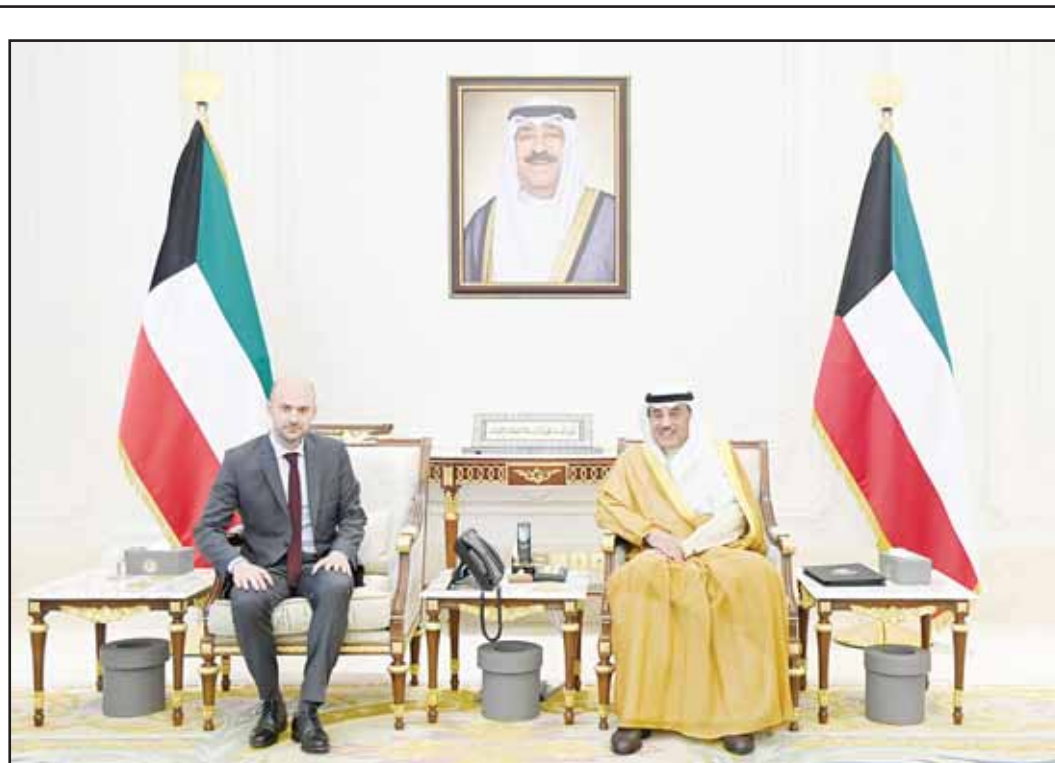
Once the Civil Service Commission (CSC) verifies that the individuals in question were not employed under contractual terms with their respective employers, they will be allowed to proceed with retirement procedures, similar to other female retirees whose citizenship was revoked under Article 8 and who have already received their pensions.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that these instructions are being implemented in line with the Cabinet's decision issued during its December 2024 meeting, based on Law No. 158/2024, which amended Article 16 of the Nationality Law No. 15/1959. The amended law includes

Continued on Page 5



Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef



HH the Crown Prince receives French FM.

Crown Prince Diwan photo

Kuwait Crown Prince welcomes French FM

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received visiting French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace on Thursday.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Chief

Jamal Al-Theyab, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Issa, Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Mohammad Hayati and French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin, were present at the meeting. (KUNA)

50% seizure cap

Central Bank asked to stop full salary grabs

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Head of the Enforcement Secretariat General Judge Abdullah Al-Othman sent a letter to the Central Bank governor, requesting the issuance of a directive to the banks to seize only half of the debtor's salary.

Al-Othman stated in the letter "in view of the issuance of Decree-Law No. 59/2025 amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law issued through Decree-Law No. 38/1980, which approved the amendment of Articles

Continued on Page 5

Top Kuwaiti, Iraqi judges discuss legal cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): President of Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and Head of the Court of Cassation Dr. Adel Bouresli received his Iraqi counterpart Dr. Faiq Zidane to discuss ways to enhance judicial cooperation.

The meeting, held at the Palace of Justice on Wednesday in the presence of judiciary top brass from both sides, focused on the deep-rooted relations between the two neighbors in the legal, legislative and judicial fields, according to a statement from the Ministry of Justice.

Both sides affirmed desire to enhance the visit exchanges and experience sharing between members of the judiciary and public prosecution in both countries, and agreed to work out a memorandum of understanding in this regard.

Kuwait leads charge against human trafficking

Minister Al-Sumait calls for unified regional approach

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait has affirmed the importance of the Sixth Government Forum to Combat Human Trafficking in the Middle East in 2025, with the theme "Protecting Rights and Promoting Justice in Combating Trafficking in Persons."

In his opening remarks at the forum, Al-Sumait pointed out that Kuwait's hosting of this forum is an extension of its consistent approach to protecting rights, promoting justice, and improving measures; particularly in areas related to human dignity and labor rights.

He stressed that this is a vital regional forum for exchanging experiences and strengthening collective efforts. He said the forum reflects the shared commitment to combating one of the most dangerous forms of organized crime that poses a challenge to criminal justice systems.

He praised the pioneering role played by the brotherly Sultanate of Oman in organizing the previous edition of the forum and its efforts to follow up the outcomes, specifically the recommendations that led to the adoption of best practices.

He commended the commitment of the State of Kuwait to join the

international community in promoting human rights and sustainable development goals, asserting that this is part of the development plan of the country (Kuwait 2035).

He called for a regional initiative to integrate national strategies through a unified digital platform -- managed by the Secretariat General of the forum -- for the exchange information and experience; strengthen legislative, judicial and executive cooperation; and create broader avenues and a common ground for sharing ideas, visions and challenges.

He said the forum is important, considering the current turbulent world, some parts of which are torn apart by wars. "This creates a fertile environment for the proliferation of human trafficking and migrant smuggling; hence, the need for unifying efforts and strengthening cooperation to address the causes of the escalation of this crime in region," he added.

He hopes that the forum will conclude with the presentation of valuable and plausible recommendations.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi disclosed that "since its inception, the forum has contributed to the creation of a convergent Gulf vision to combat human trafficking. This distinct vision is based on the economic and geographical specificities of GCC states and the challenges they face in light of the evolving tools and methods used in committing this crime, particularly those related to the use of modern technology and transnational organized crime networks."

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait delivers his opening remarks at the Sixth Government Forum to Combat Human Trafficking in the Middle East.

Heat turns up this weekend

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecast that Kuwait will experience generally hot weather during the day this weekend, with temperatures becoming mild at the start of the night and moderate by early morning.

Director of the department Dr. Dharar Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is currently under the influence of an extended high-pressure system, which is expected to gradually weaken. This will allow a surface low-pressure system to develop, bringing with it a hot air mass and light to moderate southern winds. These winds may become active at times, stirring up dust, particularly in open areas, along with scattered clouds.

Dr. Al-Ali explained that the weather during the day on Friday will be hot, with increasing cloud cover throughout the day. Winds will be light to moderate, shifting from southwesterly to southeasterly, and may become active at times,

Continued on Page 5

Kuwaiti Air Defense chief visits US Central Command in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Kuwait Air Defense Force Commander Maj. Gen. Khaled Al-Shariaan paid a field visit to the US Central Command Ground Force in Kuwait on Thursday, where he was welcomed by its Commander Gen. Patrick Frank.

The visit came within the framework of promoting military cooperation and joint collaboration between both Ku-

waiti and American sides, the Kuwaiti Army General Staff said in a press release.

Both sides exchanged views about a number of issues of mutual interest and ways of promoting bilateral cooperation and training, and unifying joint operational concepts in a way that contributes to upgrading both sides' readiness, it said.



Kuwait Army photo

Part of the field tour.

Outpouring of sympathy at Vatican Embassy in Kuwait

Pope Francis remembered as global voice of peace

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: For two consecutive days, the Vatican Embassy has been receiving condolences on the passing of Pope Francis from the heads of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions, and private individuals.

Ambassador of Bahrain to Kuwait Salah Al-Malki stated that Pope Francis dedicated his life to the service of humanity and the promotion of peace. He expressed his deepest sympathy for the Vatican and the global community.

He said the late Pope bequeathed a substantial humanitarian and spiritual legacy, commending his endeavors to foster interfaith discourse and cultural convergence.

He added the Kingdom of Bahrain, under the auspices of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, affirms the significance of cultivating avenues for dialogue and understanding among nations and creeds. He underscored the seminal role of



Left: Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud offers condolences to Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent at the Vatican Embassy. Right: Arab Times and Al-Seyassah CEO Sattam Al-Jarallah extends sympathy to Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent during a condolence visit at the Vatican Embassy.

the King Hamad Centre for Coexistence and Tolerance in promoting peace, tolerance, and dialogue between religions and cultures.

Ambassador of Greece Ioannis



Plotas pointed out that "humanity as a whole sustained the loss of an eminent figure and an exceptional spiritual leader."

Continued on Page 5

Humane campaign targets stray dogs

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) has announced the launch of a field campaign aimed at controlling the spread of stray dogs using internationally approved, humane methods implemented by its field teams, reports Al-

Seyassah daily. It stated that the campaign is part of its ongoing efforts to limit the presence of stray dogs, particularly in residential areas, and to reduce the risk of dog attacks.

Continued on Page 5

TDAC eases Thai entry

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Thai Ambassador to Kuwait Ekapol Poolpipat has announced a new procedure for travelers entering Thailand effective May 1, 2025.

In a press statement, Poolpipat disclosed that all travelers entering Thailand will be required to complete the Thai Digital Arrival Card

Continued on Page 5

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Forbes magazine has ranked the Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) **Abdullatif Al-Meshari** among the top 10 government officials leading transformative change in the real

estate sector in their respective countries, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Forbes highlighted that in February 2024, PAHW signed approximately four new contracts to establish 6,455 housing units in seven neighborhoods as part of the Low-Cost Housing Project. With these agreements, PAHW completed a total of six contracts valued at \$2.5 billion.



Iraqi youth ambassador visits Arab Times HQ

2



NBK's Shaikha Al-Bahar partakes in the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Cooperation Council Delegation in Cairo

9



11 Failaka: Many layers of civilizations

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:49 Asr 15:22
 Sunrise .. 05:13 Maghrib .. 18:20
 Zohr 11:46 Isha 19:42

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southwesterly wind changing to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h.
By Night: Rather hot to mild

and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h.

Station Max Exp Min Rec
 Kuwait Airport 41 21

Abdaly	42	25
Bubyan	35	25
Jahra	41	25
Failaka Island	37	25
Salmiyah	32	26
Ahmadi	32	22
Jal Aliyah	39	24
Nuwaisib	32	21



Iraqi Youth Ambassador Fahad Al-Zibari during his interview at the Arab Times HQ. Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

No rift can break bond

Kuwaiti-Iraqi friendship unshaken, says Al-Zibari

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Iraqi Youth Ambassador Fahad Al-Zibari has affirmed that Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations will remain strong and will not be undermined by the attempts of a few to inflame emotions between the two nations.

He said the Iraqi people were surprised by the extent of the Kuwaitis' love and hospitality for their Iraqi brothers, especially when they welcomed Iraqi fans to Kuwait during the match between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti national teams late last year.

In an exclusive interview with the newspaper on the sidelines of his meeting with Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Al-Zibari asserted that "the true image of the Kuwaiti people has not been presented in the media as desired, but I have found all the love from them."

Regarding the components of the Iraqi people, he stressed that Iraq is a united nation of Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis. He said the number of Iraqi Kurds has reached around six million and they enjoy full rights to government jobs.

Following are excerpts of the interview:

Question: First, tell us about your impressions of the Kuwaiti visit.

Answer: This is my third visit to Kuwait. Frankly, I have the utmost appreciation and respect for Kuwait. Its people are among the most welcoming and hospitable. This was evident when Iraqi fans came to Kuwait to watch the match between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti national teams at the end of last year.

Although I do not represent sports, as a social worker, I observed how the Kuwaiti people welcomed their Iraqi brothers despite the atmosphere of tension that preceded the match from a very small group of parties who do not represent the Iraqi people.

This is especially true given the strong and historic Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. Some of the incidents that occurred will not be repeated and will not diminish the intensity of the love between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples.

Q: What is the reason behind the tension instigated by a small group in Iraq?

A: Because the true image of the Kuwaiti people has not been portrayed in the media as desired, I have found love from the Kuwaiti people. What connects me to Kuwait is my love for Kuwait and the Kuwaitis alone, and there are no personal interests.

Q: How many Kurds are there in Iraq?

A: Around five to six million.

Q: Are Kurds welcome in all jobs, or are there some aspects that bother you?

A: Yes, we have a stake. We participate in all government agencies and the Iraqi Army, which consists of many Kurds. There are also Kurdish security leaders.

Q: To what extent does the Iraqi Council of Ministers cover all components of the Iraqi people? What is the Kurdish share in this?

A: Yes, the Iraqi Council of Ministers covers all components of the Iraqi people. The President of Iraq is Kurdish, the Prime Minister, as executive authority, is Shiite, and the Speaker of Parliament is Sunni. This confirms that the Iraqi people are a melting pot and a single unit.

Personally, I view Iraq as a single people, and I am not concerned with any affiliation. What matters to me is the Iraqi person and the loyalty they hold within them to Iraq first. Their affiliations come after that, whether Kurdish, Shiite or Sunni.

However, these affiliations should not overshadow their love for the country, because those who do not protect their country will not protect their affiliations.

Q: What about your message, which you believe in as an ambassador for Iraqi youth?

A: I aim to spread peace and love and strive to unite hearts. This stems from Islam.

Q: Iraq has suffered from fragmentation and conflict over sectarian identity in the past. Is it currently on the right path?

A: We are moving toward a new Iraq, powered by the energy of its youth, through figures who love Iraq, and through visionaries with a long history represented by the wise leadership.

Frankly, the Iraqi people, after the previous conflict and fragmentation, have learned their lesson well. Everyone is now striving for full integration and to foster brotherhood among all citizens -- whether Kurdish, Sunni or Shiite, as well as other components.

Q: What about the external actors seeking to sow discord among the components of the Iraqi people?

A: External actors must not seek to incite discord among the components of the Iraqi people. We hope that love and harmony will prevail among the internal and external components, but within a framework of mutual respect; hence, no external actor should interfere in the fraternal relations among the people of one nation.

As for the State, it views relations with other countries according to the concept of economic and other interests.

Thus, other countries seek rapprochement with Iraq because of its important strategic location, in addition to the fact that Iraq is a historical civilization dating back to time immemorial and has a powerful people with determination and resolve. Without this, Iraq would have collapsed. But, by the grace of Almighty Allah, the people always renew themselves and their energies.

Q: The leader Saladin was Kurdish. Is he a source of pride for you?

A: We are the descendants of Saladin, who led the Islamic armies and liberated Jerusalem. We, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, thank the wise government represented by leader Masoud Barzani, who gave us an experience in Iraq that we are proud of.

We own a part of Iraq called Kurdistan, which was once mountains and today has become towers. We have watered this civilization with our blood.

We follow the path of our late father, Mustafa Barzani, and the old leaders, as well as many leaders who stood with the Kurds, such as Sayyid Mohsen Al-Hakim, who has left a wonderful mark on the Kurds.

Q: It is said that our Kurdish brothers do not like assimilation and intermarriage with Sunnis or Shiites. What is your response to that?

A: Unfortunately, a few Sunni and Shiite religious figures have described the Kurds as a tribe of jinn, and that intermarriage with them is forbidden. The Kurds are people of relationships and loyalty. My maternal uncles are Arabs, my paternal uncles are Kurds, and we intermarry with Arabs.

Q: Did the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad affect the Kurds in Syria?

A: We believe that the Kurds in Syria should have many rights, just like the Kurds in Iraq. They should be accorded special status, appreciation and respect, just like us. We were very happy when the new Syrian government included some Kurdish leaders. We hope that peace will prevail in Syria in general, and for the Kurds in particular.

Q: Do you think that Syria is progressing after Bashar Al-Assad or the opposite?

A: We hope the new regime in Syria learns from the mistakes of the previous regime, especially since Syria possesses much potential and will return to being one of the best countries.

On rumors that he is the son of 'Hoshyar Zibari', he stressed "this is not true. Leader Hoshyar Zibari is from my tribe and we are connected only by tribe. I am honored by that, but he is not my father. I am proud of him as an Iraqi Kurdish political figure, not being my father"



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah welcomes the Iraqi Youth Ambassador Fahad Al-Zibari.



Deputy Editor-in-Chief Suleiman Al-Jarallah welcomes the Iraqi Youth Ambassador Fahad Al-Zibari.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Fahad Al-Zibari during a meeting attended by Major General (ret.) Faisal Al-Jazzaf, and colleague Mohammed Al-Farhan. Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Iraqi youth ambassador visits Arab Times HQ

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received the Iraqi Youth Ambassador Fahad Al-Zibari at the Al-Seyassah Printing and Publishing House.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Editor-in-Chief Suleiman

Al-Jarallah, Chairman of the Retired Officers Association Major General (ret.) Faisal Al-Jazzaf, and colleague Mohammed Al-Farhan.

Following the meeting, Al-Zibari toured the newspaper offices and was briefed on the workflow in its various departments.

French Foreign Minister lauds long-standing ties with Kuwait

Ministers reaffirm commitment to peace and stability

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met, Thursday, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the friendly French Republic, Jean-Noel Barrot, on the occasion of his official visit and the accompanying delegation to the country.

During the meeting, the two sides touched on the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and the frameworks for strengthening and developing them in various fields, in addition to discussing regional and international developments.

A number of agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed, reflecting the two friendly countries' determination to strengthen and develop bilateral relations in various fields.

French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noel Barrot, lauded the depth of the long-standing friendship between his country and the State of Kuwait



French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot during his meeting with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya. KUNA photo

in many fields, especially diplomacy, economy, and defense.

In a press release Thursday, the French Embassy in Kuwait, on the occasion of Minister Barrot's visit to Kuwait, said that these relations, which also include culture, higher edu-

wishes to strengthen coordination between the two countries in response to regional crises, it added.

During a meeting between the French foreign minister and his Kuwaiti counterpart Abdullah Al-Yahya, both sides discussed the situation in the Middle East.

Moreover, the minister Barrot reaffirmed France's commitment to a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages, saying that France and Saudi Arabia will co-chair an international conference in the summer in support of the two-state solution, the only one capable of ensuring lasting peace.

Regarding Syria, the Minister reiterated France's commitment to a rigorous political transition that respects Syrian pluralism and addresses collective security challenges, especially the fight against terrorism.

On Lebanon, the Minister expressed France's deep concern over renewed tensions in the south and called on all parties to respect the ceasefire agreement reached in November 2024, to avoid an escalation that could have serious consequences for the entire region.

The ministers also discussed global issues, particularly the protection of oceans.

News in Brief

Kuwait information minister, Chinese official eye closer ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Kuwait's Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi held talks on Thursday with the deputy governor of China's Guangdong province Liu Hongbing, focusing on efforts to bolster bilateral relations.

Much emphasis will be placed on the fields of culture and tourism, where Kuwait stands to gain from Beijing's vast experience on the matter, the Kuwaiti minister told the press, citing national plans to strengthen the local tourism industry in a bid to develop a more multi-faceted economy, he said.

On his talks with the Chinese official, the Kuwaiti minister spoke of plans to pursue joint initiatives with Beijing across sectors running the gamut from sports to media, saying that such endeavors are instrumental in strengthening relations.

Discussing these ties, the Chinese official expressed his country's mutual desire to enhance relations with Kuwait, citing the rapid growth in the tourism industry in Beijing, at a time where the number of Kuwaitis visiting China has been on the rise, he said.

FM receives letter from counterpart: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Thursday a written letter from Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan concerning ties and ways to develop them.

Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud delivered the letter to Foreign Minister Al-Yahya.

ter to Foreign Minister Al-Yahya.

NATO official delivers lecture: Chair of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone delivered on Thursday a lecture on Operational Level Leadership to the 29th Joint Command and Staff of the Mubarak Al-Abdullah College.

A statement by the Kuwaiti army said that the event was part of a series of lectures to boost military, political and strategic experiences and knowledge.

The army added that prior to the lecture, Admiral Dragone met with Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College Air Vice Marshal Fahad Al-Khuraimej.

9th Kuwaiti-Turkish consultations begins: The ninth round of political consultations between the Kuwaiti-Turkish Foreign Ministries began Thursday in Ankara.

Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Turkish counterpart Nuh Yilmaz headed the consultations.

The consultations focused on ways to bolster ties in all fields and recent happenings in the region and the world.

Will the new Traffic Law reduce road accidents?

"ALTHOUGH we are a small nation, living in a geographically small country with densely populated residential areas and a network of highways; we suffer from severe traffic congestion, especially during official business hours, forcing drivers to drive extremely slowly. However, we also suffer from a high incidence of fatal road accidents due to the recklessness and negligence of some drivers."

Hamad Salem Al-Marri wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.



Al-Marri

"In 2024, the number of road accidents in the country reached 65,991; claiming 284 lives on black asphalt and 90 percent of these accidents were caused by inattention and distraction."

"The General Traffic Department explained that the rates of traffic violations and accidents have increased in recent years due to the increase in the wrong behavior of drivers. This necessitated the enactment of a new Traffic Law with harsher penalties to deter reckless drivers and correct the wrongdoing of those who disrespect the law."

"The department's statistics indicated that 1,926,320 speeding violations and 174,793 running the red light violations were recorded."

"These two types of violations are considered among the most serious, causing fatal traffic accidents. The reason behind the high number of these violations is the lax enforcement of traffic rules, which encouraged disregard for the law among some drivers who are unaware of the immediate consequences of these violations."

"In many countries, traffic monitoring systems are connected to a high-speed communications network. As soon as a driver commits a violation, they receive a message sent to their mobile phone informing them about the violation, giving them about one month to pay the fine."

"If the fine is not paid, all transactions in the country are suspended and the violator is barred from traveling until payment is made. This prevents the violator from traveling until payment is made, whether he is a citizen, resident or visitor. It makes the violator feel the force of the law and the severity of the violation, which prompts him to respect and abide by the law. Unfortunately, in our country, traffic violations are not immediately apparent to the violator, as they are not informed until a year or more has passed, when the vehicle registration or driving license is renewed."

"Despite the harsher penalties stipulated in the new Traffic Law, it will not be enough to deter reckless drivers and reduce traffic violations and road accidents unless traffic violations are linked to text messages sent to the violator immediately upon committing the violation, and a one-month grace period is given to pay the fine. The government should not consider it merely a means of making money. It should be fair in its traffic rulings, so that no one is wronged due to a traffic policeman's mistake. The human soul is prone to evil and some may exploit their work to take revenge or harm others. It is unfortunate that we have witnessed some such cases announced by the Ministry of Interior, just as some weak-willed employees of the ministry did by trying to pin the charge of drug trafficking on an expatriate doctor."

□ □ □

"The Battle of Ksar El-Kebr captured global attention for a long time

due to its significant consequences. For Muslims in Morocco and across the Islamic world, it was akin to the Battle of Poitiers or the "Battle of the Martyrs in Europe", columnist **Mohammad Al-Fawzan** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The battle also had far-reaching results that left a clear imprint on the contemporary world map. Lasting six hours, the battle resulted in the defeat of Portugal and its allies, with only 100 men managing to escape capture or death. This defeat shattered the myth of Portugal's military power at the time and exposed the failure of the Crusades against the Islamic world, through which Portugal had aimed to gain favor with the Papacy in the Maghreb and other Islamic countries."

"The battle unfolded when the Portuguese king led a massive force, with historical sources estimating its size to range from 150,000 to 80,000 fighters."

"He anchored his entire fleet in the city of Asilah, which had been chosen as the launch point for the invasion of Morocco. The attacking forces arrived on Monday, July 12, 1578, and set up camp on the outskirts of Asilah, alongside the forces of Al-Mutawakkil, which numbered only about 500 cavalry. The Portuguese expeditionary forces remained on the outskirts of Asilah for about two weeks."

"Meanwhile, Al-Mu'tasim Abd al-Malik al-Sa'di had camped with his forces at Souk al-Khamis, located six miles south of the Wadi al-Qasr al-Kabir. Al-Mu'tasim sent a letter to King Sebastian, stating, "I have come to you from Marrakesh after traveling sixteen stages (600 to 700 kilometers), yet you have not approached me even a single stage."

"A stage is approximately 44 kilometers. Sultan Abd al-Malik's intent with this speech was to lure Sebastian and his forces further away from their bases and supply centers, making it easier to defeat them, even if only by a single stage."

"Realizing that Al-Mu'tasim and his forces would not advance further, Sebastian moved his troops. The two sides eventually neared the Wadi al-Makhazin after the Portuguese crossed the river, south of the city of Ksar el-Kebr, also known as "Katama Palace," in northern Morocco, on August 4, 1578."



Al-Fawzan

so that the Portuguese would have no way to retreat."

"In his book "Al-Istiqs" li-Akhbar al-Maghrib al-Aqsa", Al-Salawi described the circumstances in the following way: "When the two armies met and charged at each other, the battle intensified. The air was thick with the sound of horses and the smoke of cannons as war raged on. Sultan Abu Marwan (Abd al-Malik), may God have mercy on him, died in the midst of the chaos. He was ill and was being carried in a litter. By God's will and mercy, his death was known only to his chamberlain, Ridwan al-Alj. He concealed the Sultan's passing and continued to visit the troops, issuing orders: 'The Sultan commands so-and-so to go to this place, so-and-so to hold the banner, so-and-so to advance, and so-and-so to retreat.'"

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyye/Simi K. Kutty

Wrongfully convicted man wins freedom after decade

Gulf nationals jailed for citizenship fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In what legal experts are calling an unusual court case, a defendant appeared before the Court of Cassation to begin serving a 10-year prison sentence; only for his lawyers to reveal that he was not the intended subject of the conviction.

Attorneys Hawra Al-Habib and Abdul Hamid Mirza, representing the accused in a theft case, presented a compelling argument before the court; asserting that their client had been mistakenly identified and wrongfully convicted due to a procedural error. The defendant, who repeatedly maintained his innocence, was convicted in absentia through the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeals without ever being present or properly notified.

According to his legal team, the man was neither seeking to appeal his sentence nor explain his actions, because he did not commit any crime. Instead, the defense requested the court to acknowledge that their client had no connection to the case at all, and that the real suspect was already incarcerated.

In a dramatic courtroom moment, the court ordered the defendant to be temporarily detained while it verified the claims. Upon investigation, it was discovered that a clerical error resulted in the wrong civil identification number being associated with the case. The prosecution confirmed the mix-up, and the court promptly ordered the defendant's release; restoring

his freedom after confirming his innocence.

This case mirrors another incident previously reported in which a man wrongfully served a full 10-year sentence before discovering the mistake. This highlights the critical importance of due process and accurate identification in legal proceedings.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Dr. Khaled Al-Omara, sentenced three Gulf nationals - a father and his two sons - to seven-year imprisonment and imposed a fine of KD 2.5 million, equivalent to the salaries and benefits they received from the government after obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship through forgery.

The case centers on a Gulf citizen who conspired with a Kuwaiti citizen in 1989 to add his children to the Kuwaiti citizenship file under false names.

The defendants submitted false information and documents to the General Department of Nationality and Passport Affairs to obtain Kuwaiti passports and civil ID cards.

The investigating officer revealed that the Kuwaiti citizen implicated in the case had passed away. Investigations uncovered 12 cases of citizenship forgery registered against him. The court has ordered the Gulf nationals to repay the salaries and benefits they unlawfully received.

Additionally, the Criminal Court ordered the release of a lawyer on bail of KD1 million and a businessman on bail of KD3,000 - both were banned from traveling, while an employee of the Public Authority for Industry remained in custody.

The Public Prosecution ordered the detention of the defendants on charges of bribery, forgery of official documents, profiting from industrial plots worth KD120 million, and money laundering worth KD 26 million.

Call to enforce law

MoSA flags illegal charity activities

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Ministry of Social Affairs has called on the Kuwait Municipality to rectify the status of violating branches and committees in various charitable and public benefit associations and to enforce the law regarding violations in private and model residential areas, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a letter sent to Kuwait Municipality, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi affirmed the ministry's commitment to overseeing and regulating charitable work in Kuwait.

He highlighted the importance of ensuring that the activities of public benefit associations comply with the provisions of Law No. 24/1962 that governs clubs and public benefit associations.

Dr. Al-Ajmi referred to Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009, which regulates construction work and its attached schedules and amendments. These regulations prohibit the use of private residential buildings in private and model residential areas for any purpose other than private housing.

He also called for the implementation of Cabinet Resolution No. 867/2001, which mandates the establishment of a proper legal framework for charitable societies and their branches.



Dr. Al-Ajmi

38 gov't bodies join forces to boost Sahel e-platform

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: As part of the intensified efforts to integrate government services and streamline user experience, 38 government agencies convened on Wednesday in an expanded coordination workshop to discuss enhancements to the unified e-services application -- Sahel, reports Al-Anba daily.

The executive committee of Sahel app organized the coordination workshop at the Information Systems General Department in the Ministry of Interior.

Chairman of the executive committee Colonel Bashar Ibrahim told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the workshop focused on easing user procedures and strengthening inter-agency coordination to overcome technical and procedural barriers. He stressed the need for continuous collaboration to ensure a seamless and unified digital experience for citizens and expatriates.

He affirmed the workshop is part of a national drive to improve the quality of digital government services and foster greater integration among service providers.

Advisor to the Minister of State for Communication Affairs and a member of the committee Eng. Tariq Al-Darbas described the workshop as a pivotal step toward launching integrated user paths; such as the 'Newborn Path', 'Marriage Path' and 'Resident Path'. He disclosed these paths will offer users comprehensive digital solutions for life events through Sahel.

Al-Darbas also presented Sahel performance statistics in a visual presentation; indicating that more than 91 million services have been delivered since the launching of the application in September 2021 while the number of registered users increased to 2.7 million -- a reflection of increased public trust and government engagement.

He stressed the need for all agencies to reengineer their services be in line with digital path standards in order to boost operational efficiency, minimize bureaucratic steps, and enhance the overall user experience.

Amina Abdul Rahim, another member of the executive committee, stressed the urgency of accelerating digital transformation in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. 135/6-2025. She urged all agencies to submit monthly progress reports detailing service development and activation, along with regularly documenting results and achievements.

Fajr Al-Yassin, also from the committee, pointed out that in the past six months, Sahel has launched more than 40 new services, expanded its infrastructure, activated a central notification system, and rolled out its English-language version to cater to a wider audience.



KUNA photo
Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwait Artificial Intelligence Society.

Kuwait's AI Chairman stresses need to integrate AI with human expertise

DOHA, April 24, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait AI Society, Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Al-Sabah, stressed on Tuesday the importance of systemically integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and human expertise to generate deeper insights and increase policy alignment with societal needs.

This came during Sheikh Mohammad's participation in the "Harnessing AI for smart governance and sustainable development in the GCC" session

which kicked at Msheireb in the capital Doha, under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser Al-Mesned.

He also stressed the importance of adopting a policy development model that integrates specialized human expertise with large language models (LLMs), warning that the absence of this organized integration of AI and human expertise could lead to the random and uncontrolled use of AI tools such as ChatGPT.

News in Brief

15 print vans removed, 8 food trucks warned

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that a recent inspection by the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department of Hawally Municipality resulted in the removal of 15 mobile printing vehicles and the issuance of 8 warnings to mobile food trucks in Hawally.

□ □ □

Partial closure on Route 30: The General Traffic Department has announced the closure of the fast lane, the fast center lane, and half of the slow center lane on King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud Road (Fahaeel Road 30) towards Kuwait City between Salwa and Rumaithiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The closure will begin on Wednesday evening and will remain in effect until the morning of May 13.

□ □ □

Bedoun, Gulf national arrested: Jahra police have arrested a young Bedoun in Qasr, as he was found to be in possession of narcotics, reports Al-Anba daily.

He was referred to the Drugs Control General Department in the Interior Ministry for investigation and other legal action.

In another case, Farwaniya police apprehended a Gulf national who was found with a pack of shabu (methamphetamine). He was referred to the concerned authorities.

□ □ □

KD1,500 stolen from car: An Asian man has reported the theft of KD1,500 and damage to his vehicle in Hawally Governorate, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the man -- born in 1985 -- filed a complaint at a local police station after discovering the side window of his car was broken. He stated that upon exiting his home, he was surprised to find the damage. When he checked his car, he discovered that KD1,500 cash and his car registration documents were missing.

Forensic personnel were dispatched to the scene to lift fingerprints and launch an investigation into the incident.

□ □ □

9mn traffic violations recorded yearly: Brigadier General Khaled Al-Adwani, a lawyer, said nine million traffic violations are recorded annually in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Adwani revealed this has compelled the Ministry of Interior to amend the Traffic Law; indicating that the number of car drivers does not exceed one million, meaning each driver commits six to seven violations per year. He added "we lost many of our children on the roads due to traffic accidents."



KFF photo

Kuwait Fire Force conducted a practical drill at Muath bin Jabal Preparatory School in Khaitan.

KFF carries out fire rescue drill at Muath bin Jabal School in Khaitan

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: As part of the collaboration between the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Ministry of Education, Kuwait Fire Force conducted a practical drill at Muath bin Jabal Preparatory School in Khaitan on Tuesday morning.

According to a press release is-

sued by KFF, the drill involved evacuating the school, rescuing the injured, and controlling a simulated fire. These exercises carried out by KFF are designed to ensure a rapid response to such incidents, with the goal of protecting lives and property, and enhancing community security in the country.



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LOCAL

MoE, PAAET join forces to bolster vocational training

Kuwait hosts GCC education meet

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei recently met with Deputy Director General of Training at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Khaled Al-Rasheed, Director of the Vocational Training Institute Dr. Mazid Al-Fadhli, deputy directors of the institute Jassar Al-Jassar and Salem Al-Zaid.

During the meeting, Al-Tabtabaei affirmed the importance of the role of the institute in qualifying nationals; thereby, providing them with the technical and professional skills that the local labor market needs, as well as specialized training programs that respond to development needs.

The officials of the institute talked about the plan to hold introductory seminars in the educational districts. They said seminars aim to introduce the capabilities of the institute to the parents and students; as well as its technical and vocational programs, and the career prospects it offers.

They added that the seminars will con-

tribute to raising awareness on the importance of technical and vocational education and encouraging students to enroll in such a promising educational option. "This will be achieved by strengthening cooperation between the institute and various sectors in the ministry," they asserted.

They also confirmed their readiness to activate the partnership with the ministry and intensify efforts to enhance the presence of vocational and technical education within the academic system.

Al-Tabtabaei

Meanwhile, the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education will host the 15th meeting of the Supervisory Committee of the Gulf Network for Quality in Higher Education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries on April 28.

Director General of the bureau Jassim Al-Ali will preside over the meeting in view of Kuwait's presidency of the Gulf Network for Quality in Higher Education for 2025. This is part of the efforts of the bureau to strengthen Gulf cooperation in

improving the quality of higher education and the development of academic systems in GCC countries.

Members of the Supervisory Committee, with the rank of undersecretary, will attend the meeting; along with representatives of entities concerned with higher education quality in GCC countries.

The meeting will tackle the development of academic accreditation policies and enhancing the alignment of Gulf standards with the best international practices in higher education.

The bureau stated that hosting this meeting is an affirmation of Kuwait's pioneering role in supporting Gulf initiatives with the aim of raising the quality of education, developing national competencies, and strengthening the scientific research and innovation systems in line with the aspiration of the GCC countries for a more integrated and advanced educational future.

It also commended the participants' efforts in supporting the advancement of education in the region; while stressing the importance of the meeting in unifying visions, exchanging expertise, and exploring mechanisms for the sustainable development of higher education in the GCC.

It then expressed gratitude and appreciation to all participating delegations, wishing them a pleasant stay in Kuwait and for the success of the meeting.

Kuwait Acting PM receives French FM

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Thursday French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot and the accompanying delegation.

The French Minister handed Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Saud a letter on bilateral ties addressed to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah from French counterpart Francois Bayrou.

Head of His Highness the Prime Minister Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipality Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari, Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Noura Al-Fassam, and Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Managing Director for the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) Sheikh Saoud Salem Al-Sabah, and French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin were present at the reception.



PM Diwan photo
His Excellency the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives His Excellency the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of the friendly French Republic, Jean-Noël Barrot, and his accompanying delegation.

\$20bn stake bolsters robust bilateral trade

Kuwaiti-Egyptian co-op talks kick off

CAIRO, April 24, (KUNA): The joint Kuwaiti-Egyptian Cooperation Council meeting and the Investment and business forum kicked off today to discuss economic and investment cooperation between the two countries, with a number of officials in attendance.

In his opening remarks, the head of the Kuwaiti side Mohammad Al-Saqer said that the meeting embodied the brotherly and historical ties between Kuwait and Egypt, which are deeply rooted in the peoples of both countries and is constantly renewed through cooperation and joint work.

Al-Saqer explained that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian Cooperation Council is a comprehensive framework for developing bilateral relations in various fields, emphasizing that economic cooperation has become a necessity in light of a new and turbulent global economic order, which requires seeking opportunities for solidarity and cooperation within regional space to confront trade wars.

He pointed out that Kuwaiti investments in Egypt amount to approximately USD 20 billion and are expected to achieve significant leaps in



Mohammed Al-Saqer, Head of the Kuwaiti side of the Kuwaiti-Egyptian Cooperation Council.



KUNA photos
Ghanem Al-Ghanim, Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt.

size and quality, Egyptian exports to Kuwait averaged an annual value of USD 367 million between 2014 and 2023, representing 0.7 percent of total Egyptian exports for 2023.

Al-Saqer continued that the average annual value of Kuwaiti exports to Egypt during the same period reached USD 71 million, and in 2023, Kuwaiti exports to Egypt reached USD 120 million, 88 percent being re-exports.

He pointed out that statistically around 1,500 Kuwaiti companies invest in Egypt, particularly in the finance, construction, and manufacturing sectors, Kuwait ranks fifth on the list of the most important countries investing in Egypt and third in Arab countries, after UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Al-Saqer referred to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, meeting with Egypt's Prime Minister, in which he emphasized Kuwait's appreciation for Egypt's support since the beginning.

He also considered Egypt's stability to be Kuwait's stability, and that all support provided by Kuwait to Egyptian people supports the interests of Kuwaiti people as well.

PAAET opens summer semester registration

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the start of the first registration period for summer semester courses for the 2024/2025 academic year. Registration will begin on April 27 and continue until May 8, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It explained that each student will be allocated two time

slots: the first for two hours and the second for one hour. Students are encouraged to log into their official accounts via the PAAET website to check their specific registration times.

In the same context, the deanship also announced the opening of the electronic registration issue resolution system (e-Form) for students expected to graduate in the summer semester, with 12 credit hours or fewer remaining.

The submission period for issue resolution requests will be from May 9 to 13.



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Kuwait joins 674 publishers at Muscat International Book Fair

MUSCAT, April 24, (KUNA): The 29th Muscat Book Fair kicks off Thursday, with the participation of 674 publishing houses representing 35 countries, including Kuwait.

The fair will feature a variety of cultural and literary events and will run until May 3.

The exhibition will witness the holding of 211 cultural events and various programmes, distributed between entertain-

ment competitions, scientific initiatives, theatrical performances and cultural workshops, including the "Challenge Time with Reading" initiative.

Regarding media coverage, more than 74 media professionals from 50 media organizations from several countries were invited, in addition to a number of social media activists.

Kuwait chairs pivotal talks

GCC news agencies strengthen ties with unified media strategies

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Heads of news agencies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries approved recommendations to enhance joint cooperation in several areas, including publication of economic reports, a unified Gulf bulletin, as well as exchange of news and archive materials and programs between official and unofficial media institutions.

During their 24th meeting held via videoconference and chaired by the Acting Director-General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Mohammad Al-Mannai, the committee has agreed that Kuwait, the host country, will publish a weekly report on the most important events and activities in the GCC countries, in addition to economic reports, short podcasts, and the unified Gulf bulletin.

In accordance with these recommendations, Kuwait, in cooperation with the GCC General Secretariat, will monitor and combat misleading and false news.

The recommendations also assigned Oman the responsibility for implementing a recommendation on cooperation in global coverage of major events, in addition to exchanging news archives of GCC countries and exchanging archival news materials and programs between official and unofficial media institutions.

The committee approved Saudi Arabia's initiative for each agency to prepare a visual documentary film in one of the following fields (economy, tourism, or environment) to be published through the Gulf News Agencies Network.

It also approved a program for the exchange of visits between editors, photographers, and technicians starting in January 2026.

The participants approved a proposal to hold a virtual photo exhibition during the upcoming 46th GCC Summit in the UAE, which will be presented at the next meeting of information ministers.



KUNA photo
Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammed Al-Mannai chairs the 24th meeting of heads of Gulf news agencies via videoconference.

Regarding cooperation between Gulf news agencies with Jordan and Morocco, the committee agreed to a program for the exchange of visits between editors, photographers, and technicians.

The program would include diversifying areas of cooperation, particularly those related to the exchange of experiences in combating fake news and the use of artificial intelligence in news processing, starting in mid-August 2025.

The meeting, chaired by Al-Mannai, included Acting Director-General of Emirates News Agency, Mohammed Al-Hammadi, Director-General of Bahrain News Agency, Abdullah Buheji, Director-General and Editor-in-Chief of Oman News Agency, Ibrahim Al-Azri, and Director-General of Qatar News Agency, Ahmad Al-Rumaihi, The Saudi Press Agency was represented by Vice President for the News Sector, Hassan Al-Asmari, in addition to Director of the Office of the Director-General of KUNA, Omar Al-Omar.

Jahra Council OKs mosque allocation

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Jahra Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Hathal Al-Enezi, held its sixth meeting for the third legislative round on Wednesday.

The committee approved only one out of six items on its agenda -- the request of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to allocate a mosque and parking area measuring 1,100 square meters in Abdally Agricultural Area (Block Six).

It referred the case of farms located outside the planning zone in Abdally Ag-

ricultural Area to the executive body to obtain the opinion of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and determine the nature of the problems that farms are facing.

It returned the proposal of member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the road leading to the popular café in Jahra Governorate to the executive body for further study.

It retained the proposal of member Walid Al-Dagher to establish an entrance to Mutlaa City on its agenda; while the executive body responded to his question about the road from Sulayl Al-Jahra Bridge, which connects the Sixth Ring Road to Mutlaa City.

LOCAL

SMEs take center stage in Kuwait's growth plan

Mubader Plus powers up entrepreneurs

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development has celebrated the conclusion of the National Program for the Rehabilitation and Development of Small and Medium Enterprises Owners ('Mubader Plus Forum').

The program, which started in November 2024 and continued until February this year, highlighted the importance of economic empowerment for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as the challenges that entrepreneurs are facing.

Director General of the fund Heba Al-Rifai revealed the fund was established based on the firm belief that national economic advancement can only be achieved by empowering entrepreneurs and creating an integrated environment that prepares them, supports their capabilities, and provides the necessary tools to transform their ambitions into tangible projects.

She added that since its inception, the fund has been built on a vision focused on building an integrated growth system that offers no alternative to financing, as it rather extends to qualification, training, guidance and knowledge transfer.

"Based on this approach, the launch of the Mubader Plus Forum is a manifestation of the vision of the fund to build entrepreneurial capabilities that keep pace with economic transformations and align with the State's priorities in supporting a knowledge-based economy, innovation and sustainability," she explained.

She affirmed that the program was designed to serve as a unique platform for the development of skills, consolidation of entrepreneurial concepts, and enhancement of strategic thinking among entrepreneurs for them to overcome challenges and achieve sustainable growth and development.

She asserted the program embodies the shared commitment to support Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and business leaders, while underscoring their role as partners in comprehensive and sustainable economic development.

Empower

She added "the Mubader Plus Forum comes at a critical time, as the pace of economic and technological change accelerates and the need to empower national talent with the tools to compete, innovate and innovate grows. Through specialized workshops, mentoring and guidance sessions, and close follow-up; Mubader Plus has demonstrated that true investment lies not only in financial resources, but also in building entrepreneurs and empowering them with the tools of understanding, analysis and management."

She said the program has contributed to a tangible impact on the participating projects in terms of clarity of vision, planning ability, and business model development. "These indicators confirm the program's success in achieving its development goals," she explained.

She confirmed the commitment of the fund to support entrepreneurs and expand the scope of non-financial programs, in line with the State's drive toward digital transformation and developing the national economy by stimulating the spirit of innovation and production.

"The results we see today reflect the maturity of this approach and confirm that relying on Kuwaiti youths and their promising potential are successful bets that deserve full support," she asserted.

She commended the efforts of everyone who contributed to the success of this program; including the work

teams, trainers, entrepreneurs, and strategic partners in the public and private sectors.

She said the success of the initiative is a reflection of a collective vision that believes empowerment is a path to renaissance based on partnership, with the goal of building a competitive national economy led by qualified and inspired Kuwaiti minds.

On the other hand, Jasser Al-Najdi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, said around 10 workshops were held during the forum, with the participation of a group of specialists and entrepreneurs from the public and private sectors.

Several mentoring sessions were also organized to qualify and develop the performance of the owners of SMEs.

The event included a panel discussion on "Economic Empowerment of Small and Medium Enterprises between Policies and Government Support," moderated by Al-Najdi; with the participation of Assistant Secretary General for Award and Advisory Services at the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) Dr. Alia Al-Kandari, Director General of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity Nada Al-Daihani, Deputy Director General of the Finance and Investment Sector at the National Fund Mohammad Al-Furaij, and CEO of Rasameel Company Dakheel Al-Dakheel who represented the private sector

Support

Al-Kandari affirmed the support of CAPT for SMEs through the Tenders Law, in which Article 62 stipulates granting 20 percent shares to small businesses that meet specifications and are ranked lowest among other enterprises.

She said CAPT approved the awarding of 82 projects worth KD 64.377 million from January 2022 to December 2024; indicating that the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Ministry of Endowments, and State Ministry of Municipality were among the largest participating entities.

She pointed out that the fund's regulations set certain requirements for assets and capital to protect small enterprises from financial problems, emphasizing the need for small business owners to familiarize themselves with the culture of tenders and the required documents to avoid financial problems.

Al-Daihani pointed out that Kuwait is among the first countries to begin financing small businesses through the Industrial Bank, which began by financing industrial projects and then expanded to other types of projects.

She added that since its establishment in 2010, the center has developed and nurtured patent holders and has provided patent registration, development, and marketing projects worth between KD6 and 6.7 million; indicating the center is keen on developing projects in medical and engineering fields.

Al-Furaij stated that the fund, under the direction of the Board of Directors, approved deducting the COVID-19 period from the grace period, provided the project complies with specific programs. He added the fund grants projects a 15-year grace period, including a three-year grace period and 12-year repayment period.

He affirmed the launch of a linkage program between the National Fund and Customs to facilitate the work of entrepreneurs and project owners, revealing that several new programs will be launched soon in cooperation with several companies. He added the fund has financed 964 projects and received 1,483 applications.

Al-Dakheel stressed the importance of educating and raising awareness among business owners about the necessary regulations and requirements, emphasizing that culture and communication are among the most important challenges that business owners are facing, not legislation.



Group photo during the signing ceremony.

Governor Al-Athbi praises efforts behind recognition

West Abdullah Al-Mubarak joins WHO Healthy Cities list ... Farwaniya's third

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received in his office on Monday morning the Head of the Healthy Cities Office Dr. Amal Al-Yahya, who was accompanied by members of the office Dr. Hassan Al-Qattan and Dr. Ahoud Al-Kazemi, as well as Head of the Coordinating Committee for the West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Health City Faisal Al-Bidan and other committee members.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, a signing ceremony was held during the meeting to register West Abdullah Al-Mubarak City in the World Health Organization's Regional Healthy Cities Network, making it the third city in Farwaniya Governorate to receive this designation.

During the meeting, the governor praised the outstanding cooperation that led to the successful completion of the project. He highlighted its significance in serving the local community.

He also expressed hope for the establishment of more healthy cities in the governorate to achieve the implementation of the standards of Healthy Cities initiative in Kuwait.

The governor expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry of Health and its commitment to adopting initiatives that enhance the quality of life.

He commended Dr. Amal Al-Yahya and her team, as well as the head and members of the Coordinating Committee for West Abdullah Al-Mubarak City, for their dedication and tireless efforts in facilitating the implementation of the standards of healthy cities.

Dr. Amal Al-Yahya highlighted that the Healthy Cities Initiative in Kuwait began a decade ago.

She expressed her delight at West Abdullah Al-Mubarak City joining



Photos during the meeting.

the WHO Regional Healthy Cities Network, which brings the total number of Kuwaiti cities registered in the network to 21.

Head of the Coordinating Committee Faisal Al-Bidan stated that this milestone marks an important achievement, as it paves the way for enhanced services through the implementation of a comprehensive work plan to develop public facilities, which will position West Abdullah Al-Mubarak as a true model of a modern healthy city in Ku-

wait. At the end of the meeting, the head of the Healthy Cities Office, along with the head and members of the Coordinating Committee for West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, expressed their gratitude to the governor for his dedication, and his active role in developing the health system, as well as his continuous support for initiatives aimed at improving public services in Farwaniya Governorate.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait leads

He stressed the need to review the collective efforts and achievements of the GCC countries in combating human trafficking. He then revealed that the achievements include the decision of the Supreme Council of the GCC during its 27th session in 2006 to adopt the Abu Dhabi Document on the Unified Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons for the GCC States.

He explained "this law aims to prevent and end the abuse of human beings in any form. The document includes the GCC countries' ratification of the Palermo Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, which is a solid and fundamental international legal and legislative framework for combating human trafficking. All Gulf countries have issued national laws criminalizing this act. It establishes clear mechanisms to protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, specialized national mechanisms, national committees and bodies, and the provision of shelters, hotlines and national referral systems to deal with potential victims; as well as the training of security and judicial personnel, and the adoption of regulatory reforms in the labor market by developing legislation regulating migrant labor. This is in addition to regulating the relationship between workers and employers, strengthening wage protection systems, and documenting contracts in a bid to reduce exploitation in the workplace."

He added that another objective is to strengthen regional and international cooperation with organizations like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and International Labor Organization (ILO) to implement joint prevention and awareness programs.

He cited Resolution No. 8-1 issued at the 10th meeting of the GCC Labor Ministers Committee, which mandated the Executive Office of the Council of Labor Ministers and the Council of Social Affairs Ministers of the GCC states to update the joint Gulf vision to combat forced

labor and human trafficking.

He disclosed "this will be done in coordination with a team of experts in the field of labor and international relations, and guided by pioneering initiatives and successful international and regional practices." He stated that in confirmation of this direction, the Executive Office is organizing a dialogue on the sidelines of the forum to begin the first phase of updating this vision, which is expected to constitute an integrated Gulf strategic framework that responds to the challenges of reality, keeps pace with transformations in the labor market and related technologies, and enhances protection and prevention against this crime.

He reaffirmed the GCC countries' commitment to combat trafficking in persons, develop legislative and regulatory frameworks, and strengthen regional and international cooperation to ensure the protection of victims, the prosecution of perpetrators, and the consolidation of the values of justice and human rights in societies.

He pointed out this stems from their firm belief that cooperation and the exchange of expertise are the most effective means of combating this cross-border crime. He called for working together for a future free of exploitation and human trafficking.

Other speakers at the forum include ministers and heads of national committees for combating human trafficking in GCC countries; such as Minister of Labor in the State of Qatar Ali bin Smaikh Al-Marri, Chairman of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking in Oman Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali Al-Harthy, Minister of Justice and Chairman of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking in the United Arab Emirates Abdullah Al-Nuaimi, undersecretaries of ministries in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Chairperson of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking in the Arab Republic of Egypt Ambassador Naila Jabr.

The forum included a panel dis-

ussion on "Protecting Rights and Promoting Justice in Combating Human Trafficking," and a Gulf working session on the updated Gulf strategy to combat human trafficking in the labor market.

Pope Francis

Pope Francis will last in human memory due to his humanitarian principles and his unwavering support for refugees, the ill, and the vulnerable and marginalized populations in our societies. He left a legacy that transcends the confines of the Catholic Church, influencing all of humanity, including the Muslim community. It is incumbent upon us to perpetuate the humanitarian message that he championed and defended throughout his lifetime.

Ambassador of Palestine Rami Tahboub stated "the Pope was not just a religious figure, but a conscience embodied. He conveyed messages of fraternity and the defense of the oppressed in all regions."

He added "Pope Francis played a pivotal role in establishing bridges of interfaith dialogue and was resolute in promoting mutual respect between Christians and Muslims."

He lauded the Pope's supportive stance on Arab rights, particularly Palestine; citing his recurrent denunciation of the occupation, rejection of the injustice endured by the Palestinian people, and persistent condemnation of the genocide and massacres perpetrated against children in the Gaza Strip.

He went on to assert that the Pope's voice lent significant moral support to the Palestinian cause in international forums. "The world is now deprived of an exceptional individual and a steadfast advocate for peace. We shall remain committed to his values and messages," he added.

President of the Women's Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jouan expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Pope Francis,

asserting that with his departure, the world lost "a figure of sagacity and peace, a proponent of justice and equality."

Al-Jouan said "we are compelled to recall the Pope's honorable stances, even in his twilight, when he dispatched a forceful message to the world and its major powers, calling for the cessation of hostilities in Gaza. His pronouncements invariably embodied principles of love, justice, and an exhortation for peace. His stances were not circumscribed to a singular nation or issue, but rather articulated a comprehensive humanity that surmounted borders. The Pope's noble principles shall persist in our memory, particularly since they were not confined to the defense of Christian causes alone, but encompassed support for Arab and Islamic causes as well."

Heat turns

reaching speeds between 10 and 42 km/h, with a chance of blowing dust. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 43°C and 45°C, and sea conditions will be calm to moderate, with wave heights between two and five feet.

The weather on Friday night will be mild to moderate with partly to mostly cloudy skies. Winds will be light to moderate, ranging from southeasterly to variable at 10 to 35 km/h, with a possibility of suspended dust. Minimum temperatures are expected to be between 23°C and 25°C, and sea conditions will remain calm to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

The weather during the day on Saturday will be hot, with partly to mostly cloudy skies. Winds will be light to moderate, shifting from northeasterly to southeasterly, and may become active at times, reaching speeds between 12 and 40 km/h. The maximum temperature is expected to range between 41°C and 43°C, with sea conditions remaining calm to moderate and wave heights between two and five feet.

The weather on Saturday evening will be mild to moderate, with partly cloudy skies and light to moderate winds shifting from southeasterly to

variable, blowing at speeds between 8 and 32 km/h. Minimum temperatures are forecast to range between 21°C and 23°C, and the sea will be calm to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

Humane campaign

PAAAFR affirmed the importance of cooperation from both citizens and residents with field teams to ensure the success of its stray dog control campaign and achieve its intended goals.

It called on the public to report sightings of stray dogs by contacting the Stray Dog Control Team's Hotline, either through a direct call or by sending the location via WhatsApp to 56575070.

The authority stressed that the joint efforts of relevant agencies and the community are essential to the campaign's success and to achieving tangible results on the ground.

PAAAFR's campaign comes in response to reports of stray dog attacks on individuals in some areas. The recurring attacks have sparked growing concern over the stray dog population and public safety.

Retirement approved

a clause stating that, "The Cabinet may, by decision, retain some of these rights or benefits if it deems it to be in the public interest."

In a related development, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced in a press release that the national labor subsidy for 3,098 individuals for the month of April will be deposited into their bank accounts on Thursday. In addition, retroactive payments will be included with their May salaries.

PAM clarified that this step is based on Cabinet's Resolution No. 420/2025, which ensures the continued disbursement of national labor support to female workers in the private sector whose citizenship was withdrawn or revoked under Article 8. The move also reflects the directives of the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, who emphasized the importance of upholding justice and protecting the rights of female employees of the private sector.

TDAC eases

(TDAC) online to ensure a faster, easier and safer entry process.

He said the Thai Immigration Bureau affirmed this is a fundamental change to entry procedures. "This new system will replace the traditional paper arrival card; providing a more streamlined process for all foreigners entering the country by air, land or sea. Foreigners must complete the TDAC online at least three days prior to their arrival in Thailand," he explained.

He asserted there are no changes to the visa requirements, as the implementation of the TDAC does not affect visa regulations or the visa exemption system. He then clarified that TDAC is not a visa.

He reiterated that by filling the TDAC online, travelers can expect a faster and more efficient entry experience without having to fill traditional paper forms upon arrival.

Central Bank

227 and 230/e of the aforementioned law on the seizure of the debtor's assets held by third parties and the amended provision for the continuation of the seizure unless lifted by the Enforcement Department; it has been observed that some banks seized the whole salary in the accounts of clients working in State institutions, ministries, and private and oil sectors."

He said this violates Article 216 of the Civil Procedures Law, Paragraph (z); which states "without prejudice to the provisions of any other law, the following should not be seized: wages and salaries for which no specific law has been issued regulating the conditions for the non-seizure of such assets, unless only half is seized."

He urged the governor to instruct the banks to adhere to the salary seizure conditions in accordance with the aforementioned article.

He added this article and the special laws associated with it regulate the seizure of salaries, especially since the seizure reports issued by the Enforcement Department states "adherence to the rules established by law regarding the seizure of salaries."

US Senator Durbin won't seek reelection to sixth term in 2026

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): US Sen **Dick Durbin** of Illinois said Wednesday he will not seek reelection in 2026, ending his more than four-decade career representing Illinois and accelerating a generational shift in Senate Democratic leadership where he has long held the No. 2 position.



Durbin

Durbin, 80, is in his fifth Senate term and was first elected to the House in 1982. His decision not to run will set off a scramble for his Senate seat in solidly Democratic Illinois and for his leadership position in Washington as many in the party agitate for a new and more aggressive approach to confronting Republican President Donald Trump in his second term.

Durbin served seven terms in the House before succeeding his mentor, Paul Simon, in the Senate in 1996. Durbin has been the No. 2 Senate Democrat since 2005. From that post, he helped shape

the career of an up-and-comer from Illinois, Barack Obama, who was only four years into his first term in the Senate when he was elected president. Obama said in a post on X after Durbin's announcement that "I would not have been a United States Senator - and certainly would not have been President - had it not been for Dick's support."

Also:

ATLANTA: Georgia state Sen **Bill Cowser** of Athens announced Wednesday that he would run for state attorney general, becoming the second Republican to join the race.

Current Republican Attorney General **Chris Carr** is running for governor in 2026, meaning the seat will be open. State Sen. **Brian Strickland** of McDonough has also filed papers to run. No Democrats have yet announced they will seek the office.

Cowser served in the Senate since 2007 and now represents parts of Athens-Clarke, **Oconee**, **Walton**, **Barrow** and **Gwinnett** counties. The brother-in-law of Gov. **Brian Kemp**, he served four years as Senate majority leader from 2014 to 2018.

Abbott signs bill creating another DOGE-inspired effort at state level

Gov Walz pledges to protect Minnesotans from 'chaos'

ST PAUL, Minn., April 24, (AP): Governor **Tim Walz** pledged Wednesday night to do everything in his power to protect Minnesotans from the chaos that he said President Donald Trump has unleashed on the country and the world.

Delivering his annual State of the State speech to a joint session of the Legislature, the Democratic governor said Minnesota is as strong as it has ever been, but it is a "moment of great uncertainty for our nation." And he said that is no accident, but the result of the Republican president's choices.

"The president of the United States has chosen - chosen! - to throw our economy into turmoil," Walz said.

"Global markets are teetering on the brink of collapse," he continued. "Businesses across this country and here in Minnesota are already laying off employees by the thousands. Working people are paying more for basic goods. And if you haven't checked your 401(k) lately, don't do it."

It was Walz's first major address to a statewide audience since the 2024 campaign, when he was Vice President **Kamala Harris'** running mate, and they lost to Trump and Vice President **JD Vance**. He got frequent standing ovations from Democrats but no more than silence or polite applause from Republicans.

"As governor, I will continue to do everything in my power to protect Min-



Minnesota Gov **Tim Walz** delivers his State of the State address before a joint session of the Legislature at the state Capitol in St. Paul, Minn on April 23. (AP)

nesotans from getting hurt and continue to provide shelter from the storm for Minnesotans," the governor vowed.

Walz has said that he will decide after the legislative session whether to seek a third consecutive four-year term as governor, a prize no candidate has won since Minnesota switched to four-year instead of two-year gubernatorial terms after the 1962 election.

He is also frequently mentioned as

a potential Democratic presidential candidate for 2028, and he has been keeping his name in the national eye by making frequent appearances on cable TV news, sounding similar themes to those he explored Wednesday night.

And he went to Iowa - where its precinct caucuses are the traditional first major test of the presidential campaign season - to kick off his recent series of town hall meetings in competitive dis-

tricts held by Republicans, after House Speaker **Mike Johnson** advised GOP representatives to avoid town halls.

Also:

AUSTIN, Texas: Texas Gov **Greg Abbott** signed a bill Wednesday creating an office inspired by the Department of Government Efficiency and aimed at reducing state regulations, joining other Republican governors who have pledged their own versions of billionaire **Elon Musk's** cost-cutting group.

In establishing the Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office, Abbott welcomed cutting regulations and putting stricter standards on new ones. He made no mention during a ceremonial bill signing at the state Capitol of intentions to slash jobs like DOGE, which has divided the country. "The regulatory environment in Texas is getting too burdensome," said Abbott, who made the bill the first he has signed this year. "It will put a check on the growth of the administrative state in Texas."

The law also states that courts are not required to comply with a state agency's interpretation of its rules or regulations in legal challenges.

More than 20 states have initiated DOGE-style efforts to varying degrees. Most have done so by introducing legislation to create DOGE offices or have created their own legislative committees.

US president signs executive orders targeting colleges

Trump to hold rally in Michigan next week to mark first 100 days in office

LANSING, Mich., April 24, (AP): US President **Donald Trump** will mark his first 100 days in office next week with a rally in Michigan, his first since returning to the White House earlier this year.

Trump will visit Macomb County on Tuesday, the White House press secretary said. The region just north of Detroit, known as an automotive hub.

"President Trump is excited to return to the great state of Michigan next Tuesday, where he will rally in Macomb County to celebrate the FIRST 100 DAYS!" **Karoline Leavitt** said Wednesday on social media.

The rally will take place one day before Trump's 100th day in office - a traditional early milestone in which a president's progress is measured against campaign promises. Michigan was one of the key battleground states Trump flipped last year from Democrats on his path back to the White House.

Trump has not traveled much since taking office outside of personal weekend trips. His only other official trip in his second term was during the first week, when he visited disaster zones in North Carolina and California and held an event in Las Vegas to promote his plan to eliminate taxes on tips.

But later this week, Trump will trav-

el to Pope Francis' funeral in Rome, the first foreign trip in his second term.

Trump's upcoming trip to Michigan follows a series of meetings and phone calls with the state's high-profile Democratic governor, **Gretchen Whitmer**. Once a sharp critic of Trump, Whitmer said that she hopes to find common ground with the president in his second term.

A key area of potential cooperation that Whitmer has pointed to is Selfridge Air National Guard Base, long a concern for Whitmer and Michigan lawmakers amid uncertainty over its future as the A-10 aircraft stationed there are phased out. The base is located in Macomb County, where he is set to appear Tuesday.

Trump mentioned Selfridge during an April 9 executive order signing in the Oval Office, an event that Whitmer was present for, saying he hoped to keep the base "open, strong, thriving." "I think we're going to be successful, Governor. I think we'll be very successful there," Trump said about Selfridge.

Whitmer - whom Trump praised during his remarks - later said she was unexpectedly brought into the Oval Office during her visit. A photo captured her trying to shield her face from cameras with a folder.



US President **Donald Trump** holds a signed executive order relating to Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Oval Office of the White House on April 23, in Washington. (AP)

Asked Wednesday if Whitmer would appear with the president in Michigan, a spokesperson for the governor said they "don't have anything to share at this time."

Whitmer and other Michigan officials have long advocated for a new fighter mission to replace the outgoing A-10 squadron at Selfridge.

and the nation."

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President **Donald Trump** has ordered sharper scrutiny of America's colleges and the accreditors that oversee them, part of his escalating campaign to end what he calls "wokeness" and diversity efforts in education.

In a series of executive actions signed Wednesday, Trump targeted universities that he views as liberal adversaries to his political agenda. One order called for harder enforcement of a federal law requiring colleges to disclose their financial ties with foreign sources, while another called for a shakeup of the accrediting bodies that decide whether colleges can accept federal financial aid awarded to students.

Trump also ordered the Education Department to root out efforts to ensure equity in discipline in the nation's K-12 schools. Previous guidance from Democratic administrations directed schools not to disproportionately punish underrepresented minorities such as Black and Native American students. The administration says equity efforts amount to racial discrimination.

Colleges' financial ties with foreign sources have long been a concern among Republicans, especially ties

with **China** and other countries with adversarial relationships with the U.S. It became a priority during Trump's first term and reemerged last week as the White House grasped for leverage in its escalating battle with Harvard University.

The White House said it needed to take action because Harvard and other colleges have routinely violated a federal disclosure law, which has been unevenly enforced since it was passed in the 1980s. Known as Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, the law requires colleges to disclose foreign gifts and contracts valued at \$250,000 or more.

Last week, the Education Department demanded records from Harvard over foreign financial ties spanning the past decade, accusing the school of filing "incomplete and inaccurate disclosures." Trump's administration is sparing with Harvard over the university's refusal to accept a list of demands over its handling of pro-Palestinian protests as well as its diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

In the executive order, Trump calls on the Education Department and the attorney general to step up enforcement of the law and take action against colleges that violate it, including a cutoff of federal money.

US President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threats upended Canada election

TORONTO, April 24, (AP): US President **Donald Trump's** trade war and annexation threats have upended Canada's election and improved the fortunes of the Liberal Party, which could win a fourth consecutive term in power next week. The Liberals and the country's new prime minister, **Mark Carney**, looked headed for a crushing defeat in Monday's election until the American president started attacking Canada's economy and even threatening its sovereignty, including suggesting it should become the 51st state.

Trump's dumping on Canada has infuriated its people and stoked a surge in Canadian nationalism that has helped the Liberals flip the election narrative.

"Trump has immersed himself into our lives and has defined the ballot question," former Quebec premier **Jean Charest** said. "What Trump has done is shed light on who we are," he said.

Even separatists in French-speaking Quebec "are very much aligned with other Canadians in defending the country and responding very firmly to the fact that we're not going to be the 51st state," Charest said.

The opposition Conservative Party's leader, **Pierre Poilievre**, hoped to make the election a referendum on former Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, whose popularity declined toward the end of his decade in power as food and housing prices rose and immigration surged.

But Trump attacked, Trudeau resigned and Carney, a

two-time central banker, became the Liberal Party's leader and prime minister.

"We were looking at a scenario where the Conservatives were going to rake in a huge majority," said Charest, a Conservative. "Here we are months later in another world."

Trump's trade war and attacks have led Canadians to cancel trips to the US and refuse to buy American goods. And it might have contributed to record early voting, with 7.3 million Canadians casting ballots before election day.

Carney said the 80-year period when the US embraced the mantle of global economic leadership and forged alliances rooted in trust and respect is over.

"The key question in this election is who is the best to respond that. Who will stand up to President Trump?" he said.

Poilievre, a career politician and firebrand populist, has campaigned with Trump-like bravado, even taking a page from the "America First" president by adopting the slogan "Canada First." But his similarities in style to Trump might cost him.

In a mid-January poll by Nanos, Liberals trailed the Conservative Party by 47% to 20%. In the latest Nanos poll that ended April 23, the Liberals led by 4 percentage points. The January poll had a margin of error of 3.1 points while the latest poll had a 2.7-point margin.



Federal Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** holds a Canada First Rally For Change, in Vaughan, Ontario on April 22. (AP)

Danish King Frederik X to visit Greenland next week to meet with new PM and govt

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, April 24, (AP): Danish King **Frederik X** will visit Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, next week to meet with the new prime minister and his government, the royal house said Wednesday.

The trip comes weeks after US Vice President **JD Vance** visited a remote US military base in Greenland and accused Denmark of underinvesting in the strategic Arctic island. President **Donald Trump** seeks control of mineral-rich Greenland, saying it's crucial for US security. Trump has not ruled out taking the island by military force, even though Denmark is a NATO ally of the United States.

King **Frederik X** will visit the capital city of **Nuuk** on Monday, his office said in a news release. From there, he will travel to **Station Nord**, the island's northernmost military and scientific station, and meet with an elite dog sled unit of the Danish special forces that patrols the remotest parts of northeast Greenland. The king visited Greenland last July, months after he took the Danish throne upon his mother's abdication.

Denmark's government said Wednesday that the new Greenlandic



Denmark's King **Frederik X** attends a ceremony at the Danish monument outside of **Sainte Marie du Mont**, Normandy, France on June 6. (AP)

Prime Minister **Jens-Frederik Nielsen** will fly this weekend to Denmark to meet with Danish Prime Minister **Mette Frederiksen**. Frederiksen visited Greenland earlier this month.

Nielsen will return to Greenland with King **Frederik X** for the royal visit to the island.

Political parties in Greenland, which has been leaning toward eventual in-

dependence from Denmark for years, recently agreed to form a broad-based new coalition government in the face of Trump's designs on the territory.

"President Trump says that the United States 'will get Greenland.' Let me be clear: The United States will not get it. We do not belong to anyone else. We decide our own future," Nielsen said in a Facebook post last month.

Trump urges Putin to 'STOP!' after attack on Kyiv

Zelensky cuts short South African trip

KYIV, Ukraine, April 24, (AP): Russia attacked Kyiv with an hours-long barrage of missiles and drones, killing at least nine people and injuring more than 70 in its deadliest assault on the Ukrainian capital since last July and just as peace efforts are coming to a head.

Ukraine President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** said after the attack he is cutting short his official trip to South Africa and returning home as the city reeled from the bombardment that kept residents on edge for about 11 hours. It appeared to be Russia's biggest attack on Kyiv in nine months, and Zelenskyy called it one of Russia's "most outrageous."

The attack drew a rare rebuke of Russian President **Vladimir Putin** from US President **Donald Trump**, who said he was "not happy" with it.

"Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP!" Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social.

Senior US officials have warned that the Trump administration could soon give up its efforts to stop the war if the two sides don't compromise.

Kyiv Mayor **Vitalii Klitschko** an-



South Africa's President **Cyril Ramaphosa** and Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** address the media following their meeting at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa on April 24. (AP)

nounced that Friday would be an official day of mourning in the capital.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 66 ballistic and cruise missiles, four plane-launched air-to-surface missiles, and 145 Shahed and decoy drones at Kyiv and four other regions of Ukraine. Rescue workers with flashlights scoured the charred rubble of partly collapsed homes as the blue

lights of emergency vehicles lit up the dark city streets.

The attack came as weeks of peace negotiations appeared to be culminating without an agreement in sight and hours after Trump lashed out at Zelenskyy, accusing him of prolonging the "killing field" by refusing to surrender the Russia-occupied Crimean Peninsula as part of a possible deal.

Truth commission halts probe into adoption fraud, hundreds of cases in limbo

South Korea's former liberal president Moon Jae-in indicted for alleged bribery

SEOUL, South Korea, April 24, (AP): South Korean prosecutors indicted former liberal President Moon Jae-in on bribery charges Thursday, saying that a budget airline gave his son-in-law a lucrative no-show job during Moon's term in office.

Moon's indictment adds him to a long list of South Korean leaders who have faced trials or scandals at the close of their terms or after leaving office.

Prosecutors allege that Moon, who served as president from 2017-2022, received bribes totaling 217 million won (\$151,705) from Lee Sang-jik, founder of the budget carrier Thai Eastar Jet, in the form of wages, housing expenses and other financial assistance provided to Moon's then-son-in-law from 2018-2020. South Korean media reported that Moon's daughter and her husband were divorced in 2021.

The Jeonju District Prosecutors' Office said in a statement that Lee was also indicted on charges of paying bribes to Moon and committing breaches of trust.

The prosecutors' office said Moon's former son-in-law was hired as a director-level employee at Lee's company in Thailand even though he had no work experience in the airline industry. The office said he spent only brief periods at the company's office in Thailand and carried out only minor duties while claiming to be working remotely from South Korea.

The prosecutors' office said it had not found evidence that Moon directly performed political favors for Lee, but that Lee, who worked on Moon's campaign, likely expected his assistance to be repaid.

Lee was later named the head of the state-funded Korea SME and Startups Agency and was nominated by Moon's party to run for parliament while Moon was in office. A former Moon aide on personnel affairs was earlier indicted over Lee's agency job appointment, but prosecutors said she refused to testify during questioning so they were unable to find any direct evidence that Moon helped Lee win that position.

Moon's indictment comes before South Korea elects a new president on June 3 to succeed conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was ousted over an



Then-South Korean President Moon Jae-in speaks during a meeting of the National Security Council at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, on Feb 22, 2022. (AP)

ill-fated imposition of martial law in December. Yoon, a former top prosecutor, now stands a criminal trial on rebellion charges connection with his martial law decree.

It's unclear if Moon's indictment will influence prospects for liberals to win back the presidency. But observers say liberal presidential aspirant Lee Jae-

myung is heavily favored to win the vote as conservatives remain in disarray over Yoon's ouster, although Lee also faces criminal trials on allegations of corruption and other charges.

Also:

SEOUL: The South Korean government's fact-finding commission suspended its groundbreaking investigation into the extensive fraud and abuse that tainted the nation's historic foreign adoption program, a decision stemming from internal disputes among commissioners regarding which cases warranted recognition as problematic.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission confirmed human rights violations in just 56 of the 367 complaints filed by adoptees before suspending its investigation Wednesday night, just one month before its May 26 deadline.

The fate of the remaining 311 cases, either deferred or incompletely reviewed, now hinges on whether lawmakers will establish a new truth commission through legislation during Seoul's next government, which takes office after the presidential by-election on June 3.

After a nearly three-year investigation into adoption cases across Europe, the United States, and Australia, the commission concluded in a March interim report that the government bears responsibility for facilitating a foreign adoption program riddled with fraud and abuse, driven by efforts to cut welfare costs and carried out by private agencies that often manipulated children's backgrounds and origins.

However, some adoptees, and even members of the commission, criticized the cautiously-worded report, arguing that it should have more forcefully established the government's complicity. Disputes also arose after the commission's nine-member decision-making panel, dominated by conservative-leaning members appointed by recently ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol and his party, voted on March 25 to defer the assessments of 42 adoptee cases, citing insufficient documentation to conclusively prove the adoptions were problematic.

India, Pakistan cancel visas of each others' nat'ls as tensions rise after Kashmir attack

SRINAGAR, India, April 24, (AP): India and Pakistan cancelled visas for their nationals to each other's countries Thursday amid rising tensions between the two nuclear armed neighbors after India blamed Pakistan for a deadly attack by gunmen that killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in disputed Kashmir.

Indian authorities said all visas issued to Pakistani nationals will be revoked with effect from Sunday, adding that all Pakistanis currently in India must leave before their visas expire based on the revised timeline. The country also announced other measures, including cutting the number of diplomatic staff and closing the only functional land border crossing between the countries.

In return, Pakistan closed its airspace for all Indian owned or Indian operated airlines, and suspended all trade with India including to and from any third country.

Tuesday's attack was the worst assault in years targeting civilians in the restive region that has seen an anti-India rebellion for more than three decades.

The rare attack, which targeted mostly tourists who were visiting a popular scenic meadow, shocked and outraged India and prompted calls for action against their country's archenemy, Pakistan. The Indian government did not publicly produce any evidence connecting the attack to its neighbor, but said it had "cross-border" links to Pakistan. Pakistan denied any connection to the attack, which was claimed by a previously unknown militant group that called itself the Kashmir Resistance.

Pakistan's National Security Committee condemned India's "belligerent measures." It said that while Pakistan remained committed to peace, it would never allow anyone to

"transgress its sovereignty, security, dignity and inalienable rights."

India and Pakistan each administer a part of Kashmir, but both claim the territory in its entirety. New Delhi describes all militancy in Kashmir as Pakistan-backed terrorism. Pakistan denies this, and many Muslim Kashmiris consider the militants to be part of a home-grown freedom struggle.

The killings have put pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government to respond aggressively. At a public rally Thursday, Modi said "India will identify, track and punish every terrorist, their handlers and their backers."

"We will pursue them to the ends of the earth," Modi said. His government announced a series of diplomatic actions against Islamabad while hinting at plans for more punishment.

India's foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, announced Wednesday that a number of Pakistani diplomats were asked to leave New Delhi and Indian diplomats were recalled from Pakistan. Diplomatic missions in both countries will reduce their staff from 55 to 30 as of May 1, and the only functional land border crossing between the countries would be closed.

India's foreign ministry advised Indians citizens not to travel to Pakistan and asked those currently there to return.

India also suspended a landmark water-sharing treaty that has survived two wars between the countries, in 1965 and 1971, and a major border skirmish in 1999.

The Indus Water Treaty, brokered by the World Bank in 1960, allows for sharing the waters of a river system that is a lifeline for both countries, particularly for Pakistan's agriculture.



Tourists and local enjoy boat ride in Dal Lake in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir on April 24. (AP)

Belgian teenagers to be sentenced in 2 weeks

Ruto vows closer ties to China during visit

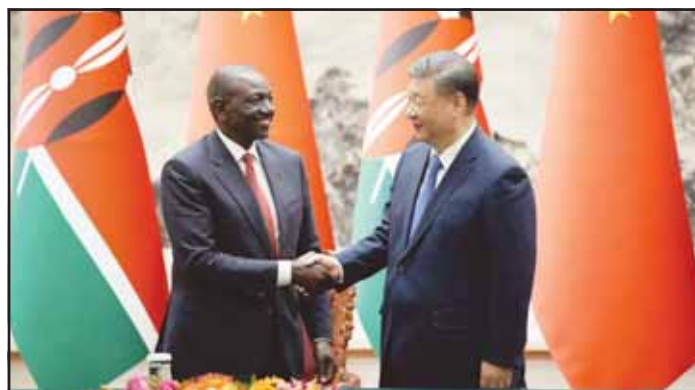
BEIJING, April 24, (AP): Kenyan President William Ruto pledged to build closer ties with China on Thursday, a day after saying a global trade war triggered by Washington could deal a "death blow" to the current world order.

Ruto is on a five-day visit to China, his third trip to Beijing since taking office in 2022. The visit comes at a time when both Kenya and China are seeking to expand ties amid a tariff fight between Washington and Beijing.

Kenya wants to learn from "China's remarkable journey of transformation in governance, economic development and global leadership," Ruto said. He thanked Chinese leader Xi Jinping for tens of millions of dollars in support for health, education and disaster relief, as well as for the planned construction of a new complex for Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ruto, an evangelical Christian from a modest background, was elected on promises to help Kenya's poor in a country struggling with debt. Earlier in his presidency, Ruto favored the West and the United States over China. But as US President Donald Trump pulls back from engagement with Africa and slaps tariffs on trade partners, Ruto is making overtures to Beijing.

Xi told Ruto that "China attaches great importance to China-Kenya relations" and that Beijing would work with Kenya to develop the



Chinese President Xi Jinping, (right), and Kenyan President William Ruto shake hands during a signing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 24. (AP)

"unity and cooperation of the global South." Xi is looking to shore up partnerships and find solutions for the high trade barrier that the US has imposed on Chinese exports.

Kenya is a key participant in China's Belt and Road Initiative, the ambitious plan that aims to connect Africa, Asia and Europe through massive infrastructure and energy projects. China has funded billions of dollars' worth of Kenyan roads, ports and a railway that runs from the coastal city of Mombasa through the capital, Nairobi.

Also:

NAIROBI, Kenya: Two Belgian teenagers who were found with thousands of ants valued at \$9,200 and allegedly destined for European

and Asian markets will be sentenced in two weeks, a Kenyan magistrate said Wednesday.

Magistrate Njeri Thuku, sitting at the court in Kenya's main airport, said she would not rush the case but would take time to review environmental impact and psychological reports filed in court before passing sentence on May 7.

Belgian nationals **Lornoy David** and **Sepp Lodewijckx**, both 19 years old, were arrested on April 5 with 5,000 ants at a guest house. They were charged on April 15 with violating wildlife conservation laws.

The teens have told the magistrate that they didn't know that keeping the ants was illegal and were just having fun.

Macron in Madagascar for first state visit by French leader to ex-colony in 20 years

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar, April 24, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron started a two-day visit to the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar on Wednesday and spoke of the need for his country to find new markets and boost economic cooperation in the region.

Macron's trip is the first state visit by a French leader to the former colony off the east coast of Africa since President Jacques Chirac's in 2005.

Macron met with Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina in the capital, Antananarivo, and they signed several agreements and memoranda of understanding, including in energy, agriculture and education.

The trip delved into disputes between the nations stemming from the colonial era, including Madagascar's claims over a group of small islands that are French territory, and its demands that France return the remains of a local king who was killed by French colonial forces in the late 1800s.

Macron also announced funding from the French Development Agency and a loan for the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Volobe, in eastern Madagascar, which has been planned for nearly a decade.

Macron is due to attend a summit Thursday of the Indian Ocean Commission, a bloc comprising Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles and the French territory of Reunion. China, India and the European Union are among a group of countries and international bodies that have observer



Residents wait for French President Emmanuel Macron to arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar on April 23. (AP)

status at the commission.

"We need to conquer, at least, the market of the (Indian Ocean Commission)," Macron said. "And then, more widely, East Africa and the Indian Ocean."

On some of their disagreements, Rajoelina said there would be a new round of meetings on June 30 over the fate of the Scattered Islands, five small islands around Madagascar that fall under France's overseas territories but are claimed by Madagascar.

France favors a system where the islands would be jointly managed by the two countries, but the UK's decision last year to hand over control of the

Chagos Islands, in the Indian Ocean, to Mauritius has spurred some in Madagascar to push for full control of the Scattered Islands - which are known as the Eparses Islands in France.

Madagascar and France "are determined to find a solution together," Rajoelina said.

Macron said he would work with Madagascar over the agreed return of three skulls that were taken from Madagascar more than 125 years ago and are being kept in a Paris museum. One of them is believed to be the skull of King Toera of the Sakalava people, who was beheaded by French troops in 1897.

Congo's govt and M23 rebels working toward truce in east

DAKAR, Senegal, April 24, (AP): Congo's government and a coalition of insurgents in the country's east including the M23 rebels have agreed to work toward a truce following peace talks in Qatar, a joint statement said Wednesday. The statement was posted online by spokesman Lawrence Kanyuka of the M23 rebels, and confirmed by government spokesman Patrick Muyaya in comments to local media outlets.

The statement said the parties had agreed to "work towards concluding a truce" and that they were reaffirming their commitment to "an immediate end to hostilities." Previous commitments to a ceasefire, announced unilaterally, have not held, and Wednesday's statement was the first such commitment to be announced jointly. Delegations from Congo's government and the M23 rebel group met earlier this month in Doha, Qatar's capital, according to officials from both sides.

The Associated Press was not immediately able to verify if the latest announcement had changed conditions on the ground in Congo's mineral-rich



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

eastern region.

The decades-long conflict in eastern Congo escalated in January, when the M23 rebels advanced and seized the strategic city of Goma, followed by the town of Bukavu in February.

M23 is one of about 100 armed

groups that have been vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo near the border with Rwanda, in a conflict that has created one of the world's most significant humanitarian crises. More than 7 million people have been displaced.

Lat/Am

Guatemala arrests Indigenous leader: Guatemalan authorities on Wednesday arrested an Indigenous leader of nationwide protests in 2023 that sought to ensure then President-elect Bernardo Arévalo's transition to power while also demanding the resignation of the country's attorney general.

The Attorney General's Office accuses Luis Pacheco, now serving in Arévalo's government, of terrorism and illicit association, according to an official who requested anonymity to speak about a case under seal.

In October 2023, Pacheco led an alliance of 48 Indigenous communities in peaceful protests that shut down highways across Guatemala for three weeks.

Despite Arévalo's resounding victory that August, the Attorney General's Office continued to investigate the election and members of his party, accusing them among other things of improperly gathering signatures required for the party to form. Attorney General Consuelo Porras has been the focus of much of that ire as she has refused to step down or halt her investigations into Arévalo's party. The U.S. government has sanctioned her for allegedly impeding corruption investigations. (AP)

Dominican club owner speaks for first time: A roof that collapsed at a popular club in the Dominican Republic and killed 232 people this month had filtration problems for decades and had been repeatedly fixed with plasterboard, according to its owner.



An aerial view of the Jet Set club days after its roof collapsed, killing more than 200 people, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on April 11. (AP)

Antonio Espailat, who also serves as manager of the Jet Set nightclub in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo, spoke with local TV station Telesistema on Wednesday in his first interview since the April 8 disaster.

Espailat told a reporter with El Día news program that employees had added new plasterboard to the roof hours before the collapse.

He noted that plasterboard had fallen repeatedly throughout the years for reasons including water that filtered through the club's air conditioning units. However, Espailat said no one ever inspected the roof or water filtrations.

"We always bought plasterboard. Always," said Espailat, who spoke in a subdued manner throughout the nearly one-hour interview. (AP)

Kuwait crude rises to \$72.17 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil rose USD 1.06 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 72.17 per barrel compared with USD 71.11 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures however dropped USD 1.32 to USD 66.12 pb and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) lost USD 1.40 to USD 62.27 pb.

Business

On the occasion of Earth Day and as part of its efforts to promote environmental sustainability

InvestGB organizes sustainable commuting experience for its employees

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In celebration of Earth Day and as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, Gulf Capital Investment Company "InvestGB" – the investment arm of Gulf Bank, organized an eco-friendly commuting experience for its employees to and from its headquarters at Al Hamra Business Tower using BYD electric vehicles.

Through this collaboration with BYD Alghanim, InvestGB aims to highlight the practical applications of green technology and the benefits of integrating sustainability concept into daily business operations.

This Earth Day activation is one of many initiatives under InvestGB's broader Environmental, Social, and Gov-



A group photo of the Invest GB team, with CEO Hani AlAwadhi in the middle.

ernance (ESG) strategy. By promoting environmentally responsible practices within the workplace, InvestGB seeks to raise awareness about the importance of sustainability, inspire positive behavioral change, and contribute to a greener future for Kuwait.

InvestGB remains dedicated to embedding sustainability into its corporate culture and operational framework, continuously introducing initiatives that empower employees to take part in protecting the environment. This initiative serves not only as a celebration of Earth Day but as a reaffirmation of InvestGB's long-term vision to lead by example in building a more sustainable and resilient economy.

Ministry discusses warranty issues & spare parts crisis with auto industry

Kuwait to partner with China for auto spare parts

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Director of the Technical Department for Supervision and Pricing of Goods at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari recently met with representatives of vehicle sales companies, Automobile Dealers Association, and representatives from the Al-Rai and Shuwaikh centers of the ministry.

They tackled issues affecting the automotive market and consumers, particularly the warranty being waived when engine oil is changed outside the dealership.

A mechanism for addressing this issue was discussed, ensuring consumer rights and preserving companies' obligations.

A proposal was put forward that companies cover the cost of the oil and filter in the vehicle invoice to avoid the warranty being waived when the oil

is changed outside the dealership. A consensus formula was also developed between all parties.

They looked into the problems of technical inspection centers and emphasized the need for continuous coordination between the relevant authorities to ensure the smooth flow of technical services and control the quality of technical inspections of vehicles.

On the other hand, the spare parts crisis was discussed as well, particularly for Chinese cars, which are in high demand in the local market.

A number of trade centers have complained about the unavailability of original parts, which hinders maintenance operations.

In this context, plans were announced to connect with Chinese companies to establish regional offices in Kuwait to secure spare parts and facilitate after-sales services.

All those present at the meeting affirmed that these issues are being resolved in coordination with the relevant authorities, with the aim of safeguarding the interests of consumers and developing the automotive market environment in Kuwait.

Kuwait delegation partakes in India Steel '25 exhibition

NEW DELHI, April 24, (KUNA): An industrial delegation from Kuwait, led by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), participated on Thursday in the India Steel 2025 exhibition being held in Indian city of Mumbai.

In a statement to KUNA, Acting Deputy Director General for Export Development at PAI Mshari Al-Mnawer, who heads the delegation, said that this visit came within the framework of Kuwait's strategy aimed at supporting the Kuwait industrial sector.

The Kuwait delegation includes a group of Kuwait businessmen rep-

resenting prominent factories in the metal industries sector.

The India Steel 2025 exhibition, being held from April 24 to 26, is one of the most important global events specialized in the iron and steel sector, bringing together a group of international companies and factories.

The Kuwait delegation looks forward to learning about the latest technology in the field of iron and steel manufacturing and exploring partnership and investment opportunities with their counterparts, Al-Mnawer said.

Qatar leads profit decline

GCC banks see sequential profit shrink in Q4-2024 amid rate cuts

By KAMCO Invest

Quarterly net income for banks in the GCC region registered a sequential decline during Q4-2024 mainly reflecting the recent rate cuts implemented by global central banks as well as central banks in the GCC. Total profits reached USD 14.6 Bn during the quarter, a decline of 1.8% as compared to USD 14.9 Bn during Q3-2024, although y-o-y growth in profits remained robust at 12.8%. At the country level, the q-o-q trend remained mixed with three countries reporting sequential declines while the remaining three registering growth in net profits. Banks in Qatar reported the biggest decline in profits with a q-o-q fall of 13.5% to reach USD 1.9 Bn. Oman and UAE-listed banks also reported decline in profits during the quarter. On the other hand, Bahraini banks registered the strongest q-o-q growth in profits at 8.2% reaching USD 219.5 Mn during Q4-2024 followed by aggregates for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia with profit growth of USD 3.8% and 1.9%, respectively.

In terms of topline performance, aggregate banking sector revenues reached a new record high during the quarter at USD 34.5 Bn led by healthy growth in both net interest income and non-interest income. Aggregates for all countries in the GCC showed q-o-q growth in total bank revenue during Q4-2024, barring Qatari banks that reported a marginal decline. Banks in Kuwait and Bahrain registered double-digit growth in revenues during the quarter while UAE-listed banks reported the biggest absolute q-o-q growth in profits with an increase of USD 646.4 Mn or 5.4% during Q4-2024.

Factors that weighed on the bottom-line performance were a q-o-q increase in operating expenses as well as higher loan impairments booked during the quarter that partially offset the healthy topline growth during Q4-2024. Total operating expenses registered the biggest sequential growth in five quarters during Q4-2024 with an increase of 8.9% to reach USD 14.2 Bn led by growth in almost all markets in the GCC. Aggregate impairments also continued to show growth for the second consecutive quarter to reach a four-quarter high level of USD 3.2 Bn during Q4-2024. The increase in impairments was led by double-digit growth in impairments booked by banks in UAE, Qatar and Kuwait. Saudi-listed banks, on the other hand, reported a 7.0% q-o-q decline in impairments during Q4-2024.

Fed to rely on inflation readings to decide the future trajectory of interest rates

The interest rate outlook for global central banks underwent significant volatility, especially over the last one month post the announcement of the tariffs. The biggest volatility was seen in expectations for Fed funds rates that came after speculations post the tariffs showed that the Fed may cut rates significantly this year to counter any economic pressure on the US economy due to the tariffs. Some forecasts suggested as high as four to five cuts by the end of the year. However, the Fed clearly announced that the rate cuts would only be targeted on taming inflation. This calmed down rate cut bets, and the current Bloomberg consensus forecast shows lower probability of rate cuts this year, indicating one or a maximum of two rate cuts of 25 bps by the end of the year and during the second half of the year. Fed rates have remained unchanged since

the start of the year after the 100 bps cuts last year. In terms of interest rates in the GCC region, central banks followed the rate cut policy of the US Fed with no cuts since the start of the year.

The most recent developments on the tariff front, especially with respect to China, shows a possible US-China trade deal and a deal with respect to currency as the USD losing its value to the lowest in almost two years could affect global financial markets and at the same time the Chinese yuan cannot strengthen as it would affect its exports. The Chinese economy is already started to feel the effects of the tariffs and its recently announced goal to attain 5% GDP growth seems stretched as of now. There is also news of new tariffs in the pipeline on semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and critical minerals. Consensus now expects that the Chinese central bank would cut key rate and may announce fiscal stimulus to offset the impact of external shock and boost domestic demand along with structural reforms.

In terms of inflation, global central bank's efforts are at varying levels of success. In the US, inflation has remained above the Fed target for more than four years. The latest inflation reading from the US showed CPI falling more than expected to the lowest level in six months at 2.4% during March-2025. When compared to monthly change, the index fell 0.1% from February-2025. This was the first decline on a monthly basis since May-2020. The annual core inflation increased by 2.8%, also below consensus estimates. However, the slowing inflation might not trigger a rate cut as the Fed faces a dilemma over whether to slash interest rates to prevent a possible slowdown triggered by the tariff war or hold the rates steady against an anticipated rise in inflation in the near term. In its most recent forecast, the IMF increased its inflation expectation for the US by 100 bps to 3.0% from its previous forecast in January-2025.

In the Euro area, inflation slowed further in March-2025 led by an easing of energy prices and prices in the services sector. CPI declined to 2.2% during the month vs. 2.3% during February-2025 while core inflation also eased to 2.4%. The falling inflation in the region also reflects the impact of the consistent rate cuts by the ECB that has lowered borrowing costs seven times since June last year. The ECB lowered deposit rates last week by 25 bps to 2.25%, in line with expectations. Economists expect the ECB to further lower rates this year as inflation risks have subsided. A recent comment from the ECB president said that the trade tensions may probably have a disinflationary impact on the region rather than inflationary. Also, the ECB's wage tracker suggested that the region does now have an inflation problem.

Meanwhile, the most recent inflation release came from the UK which saw CPI decelerating faster than the forecast to reach an annual growth of 2.6% in March-2025 from 2.8% in February-2025. Core inflation was also lower at 3.4% as compared to 3.5% during the previous month. The downward reading came from a fall in recreation and culture, and motor fuels sub-group that was partially offset by an upward swing in prices for clothing. The latest forecast from economists suggests that the UK could cut rates at an accelerated pace as economic growth is expected to be slow and inflation is expected to decelerate further.

Company focuses on clean energy and global growth

GPIC profits drop to \$74 mln amid geopolitical tensions

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The net profits of Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC) declined to \$74 million in 2024, compared to \$90 million in 2023 and \$303 million in 2022.

GPIC is based in Bahrain and jointly owned by Kuwait's Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), Bahrain's Bapco Energy and Saudi Arabia's SABIC Agri-Nutrients Investment Company.

This decline is attributed to several factors, primarily the geopolitical tension in the Middle East that started in October 2023. Political conflicts have disrupted shipping operations and raised shipping costs, resulting in considerable losses for the petrochemical and oil sectors.

The entry of Asian and African nations into global petrochemical markets in late 2023 and

2024 led to an oversupply relative to demand, causing a decrease in petrochemical product prices and a contraction in global demand.

The exceptional profit of \$303 million in 2022 was the result of the increased need of the global market for petrochemical products due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a surge in purchases in early 2022; following the reduced global economic activity in 2020 and 2021.

GPIC is considering the expansion of its activities and projects domestically and internationally, in collaboration with its three partners, to enhance profitability in future years; particularly since it is keen on realizing its 2040 strategic objectives.

The production of ammonia, urea and methanol in GPIC's three plants reached a 1.7 million tons in 2024 – 1.2 million tons of which were exported through 63 vessels.

The company improved product quality in re-

cent years by optimizing equipment performance and operational methods, in addition to the comprehensive workforce training.

GPIC aims to increase sales, targeting annual exports of at least three million tons by 2030 through expansion of its global export network. Its products are exported to numerous countries in Asia, Europe, North America, South America and the Middle East.

The Marketing Department of the company is currently focusing on the expansion of its customer base; capitalizing on the company's production of high-quality, sustainable products that are in demand in developed nations.

GPIC prioritizes clean energy, as manifested in its implementation of a solar panel project in its facilities last year to decrease carbon emissions. It also started its carbon dioxide processing unit project to reduce volatile gases associated with global warming and improve production processes.

All graduates receive globally accredited professional certificates

KIBS honors graduates of 2023-'24 banking certificate programs

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) held a celebratory ceremony to honor the graduates of its internationally accredited training certificate programs for the academic year 2023-2024. Under the patronage of KIBS Director General, Ms. Rana Abdullah Al Nibari, and was attended by senior officials from local banks, including heads of training and human resources departments, training teams, faculty members, and the distinguished trainers who contributed their expertise to the program's success.

The event featured Mr. Faisal Al-Dakhil, a legendary football icon who led his country to victory in the 1980 Asian Cup and proudly represented Kuwait on the world stage at the 1982 FIFA World Cup. Al-Dakhil's presence highlighted Kuwait's continued progress relies on the dedication and success of its people across all fields.

Ms. Al Nibari delivered an inspiring address to the graduates, expressing pride in their achievements and commending them for earning prestigious certifications that underscore KIBS's unwavering commitment to excellence. She emphasized that this milestone marks a significant chapter in the mission to empower and advance Kuwaiti banking professionals – key pillars of the nation's banking sector, which stands as the second largest economic driver in Kuwait. She highlighted that KIBS's efforts are rooted in a deep understanding



A group photo of the Institute's Director General with human resources managers at Kuwaiti banks.

of the evolving financial landscape, and the vital need to equip professionals with cutting-edge knowledge and skills to stay ahead in a rapidly changing industry.

Highlighting KIBS's role as a leading center for professional development, Ms. Al Nibari noted the importance of collaboration with global partners in delivering impactful joint training initiatives. She also acknowledged the pivotal role of human resources and training leaders at local banks, whose continued support has been essential to KIBS's success. She further credited the Board of Directors for their unwavering guidance in advancing the Institute's mission.

This year, graduates received nine accredited certificates, nine of

which are awarded by the London Institute of Banking and Finance, a globally respected authority in banking and finance education. These programs included as examples:

- Certified Bank Branch Manager
- Risk Management Certificate
- Certified Bank Wealth Manager

The tenth program, Certified Credit Management, was delivered in collaboration with Moody's Analytics the US-based business and financial services company.

Representing the graduating class, Mr. Husain Jamal Bohamad from Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, expressed deep appreciation for the unwavering support of Kuwaiti banks in nurturing young national talent.

Gulf Bank graduate, Ms. Nour Al-Enezi, emphasized the vital role women play as essential contributors to society and partners in success across all sectors. She highlighted how empowering women in the banking and financial industries has enabled them to rise to leadership roles and achieve remarkable milestones, affirming their position as true partners in driving progress and shaping the future.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Al Nibari urged graduates to continue investing in their personal and professional growth to meet the challenges of an ever-changing global landscape. She thanked all attendees and wished the graduates continued success and fulfillment in their careers.



A group photo with the Egyptian Foreign Minister.



Shaikha Al-Bahar during the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Investment and Business Forum.

Visit focuses on advancing bilateral collaboration across business, economic, and trade sectors

NBK's Shaikha Al-Bahar partakes in the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Cooperation Council Delegation in Cairo

CAIRO, April 24: Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait, participated in the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Cooperation Council's visit to Cairo, aimed at exploring avenues to strengthen bilateral cooperation and unlock new opportunities across various sectors.

The Kuwaiti delegation, headed by Mr. Mohammed Al-Sager Head of the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Cooperation Council – comprised senior representatives from prominent Kuwaiti banks and corporations.

The delegation was received by His Excellency President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi at the Presidential Palace in Cairo, where he extended an invitation to Kuwaiti investors to explore the wealth of opportunities available in Egypt. He emphasized the incentives and facilities provided by the Egyptian government, encouraging the development of industrial cooperation through the establishment of strategic partnerships between Egyptian and Kuwaiti companies. El-Sisi underscored the immense potential of the Egyptian market, emphasizing its expansive scale, robust growth prospects, and significant demand across diverse sectors. He highlighted the substantial opportunities available for investors, particularly in high-value industries, where they stand to reap considerable returns.

The delegation also held a meeting with Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Mostafa Madbouly at the Government Headquarters in the New Administrative Capital. The meeting was attended by Eng. Hassan El-Khatib, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade; Ambassador Ghanem Saqr Al-Ghanem, Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt; and Ambassador Osama Shaltout, Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Madbouly invited Kuwaiti investors to tap into the wide array of investment opportunities available in Egypt, affirming the government's willingness to grant the "Golden License" to projects mutually agreed upon by both sides – streamlining

procedures and reinforcing Egypt's commitment to facilitating foreign investment.

Madbouly expressed his keen interest in seeing the Kuwaiti side explore the diverse investment prospects Egypt has to offer across a range of sectors. He emphasized Egypt's openness to forging various forms of partnerships with Kuwaiti investors, underscoring the country's commit-

ment to fostering mutually beneficial collaboration that serves the shared interests of both nations.

He outlined several promising investment opportunities within the Egyptian market, particularly in key sectors including food security, oil and petrochemicals, logistics, tourism, and hospitality.

The Egyptian Prime Minister also reaffirmed the freedom to transfer foreign funds abroad, noting that the economic reforms implemented by the Egyptian government since March 2024 – most notably the adoption of a flexible exchange rate policy – have significantly bolstered the country's foreign currency reserves.

The delegation also held discussions with Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Badr Abdelatty, who expressed pride in the longstanding and historic ties between Egypt and Kuwait. He provided an overview of the recent economic reforms and national projects undertaken by Egypt, highlighting efforts to enhance the investment climate and strengthen the role of the private sector across various industries.

Furthermore, the Kuwaiti delegation engaged in a meeting with Egyptian Minister of the Public Business Sector, Eng. Mohamed Shemy, alongside Mohamed Jubran, Minister of Labor, to explore avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation across business, economic, and commercial sectors. The discussions also focused on the investment opportunities available for Kuwaiti investors in the Egyptian market.

Additionally, the delegation participated in the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Investment and Business Forum, attended by a range of ministers and senior officials. The forum, which aimed to bolster economic and investment ties between Kuwait and Egypt, facilitated discussions on enhancing collaboration across various business, economic, and commercial sectors.



The Egyptian Prime Minister and Shaikha Al-Bahar on the sidelines of a meeting of the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Cooperation Council delegation.

GCC utilities sector could save \$22 billion by 2034: Strategy&

DUBAI, April 24: The GCC utilities sector has the potential to reduce operational costs by 15% to 30%, which could generate up to US\$22 billion in savings over the next decade. This can be achieved through a mix of short-term tactical actions and long-term changes to how utilities operate.



Anthony Yammine

The analysis was part of a new report by Strategy& Middle East, part of the PwC network, which outlines how utilities in GCC could break free from outdated assumptions and leading practices to enable effective transformation. GCC countries have put in place ambitious national emissions reduction programs and other energy-related programs to meet net-zero targets. For instance, electricity demand in Saudi Arabia alone is expected to surge 58% from 330 terawatt hours (TWh) in 2024 to more than 520 TWh by 2030, with the cost of the Kingdom's energy transition expected to reach \$235 billion by 2030. Some countries across the GCC are setting targets via regulatory frameworks as part of efforts to cap costs, with both Saudi and the United Arab Emirates embedding efficiency mandates for utilities. In Abu Dhabi, the sector has been tasked with achieving an efficiency improvement of 0.5% annually through 2026.

Utilities sector must balance between growth and efficiency

With GCC utilities expected to play a major role in implementing these programs, they face significant pressure to reshape themselves to deliver. Increasingly, they have been tasked with implementing advanced technologies such as smart grids, integrating renewable energy at unprecedented scale, and implementing wide-ranging digital transformation programs, all while continuously enhancing reliability and efficiency; key elements for achieving national sustainability goals.

"As energy systems evolve and electricity demand surges, GCC utilities must redefine performance to optimize costs," said Anthony Yammine, Partner at Strategy& Middle East. "Through a set of targeted actions, the sector can unlock up to US\$22 billion in operational savings over the next decade. This can be achieved without sacrificing service quality, and embracing smarter, more agile ways of operating aligned with national trans-

formation goals."

Despite this, the report finds that three common misconceptions surround utility operating costs: first, that costs are fixed and unaffected by output or change initiatives; second, that reallocating resources degrades service quality and network performance; and third, that unique conditions - such as network design, climate, and customer distribution - prevent the adoption of practices successfully used elsewhere. These misconceptions are hindering transformation and limiting progress on cost optimization.

Globally, leading practices suggest that cost efficiency can be a cornerstone of utility regulation, with various models designed to balance financial sustainability with operational performance. Such models - including a revenue cap, performance-based regulation, and the setting of tariffs based on the performance of top, or average, utilities in the market - push utilities to improve efficiency while maintaining service quality and profitability. Statistics show service quality can improve even as spending is cut, with operational expenditure (OpEx) among European utility providers falling by 16-17% since 2005, during which service interruptions decreased by 33%.

Opportunities for transformation

To rise to these challenges and adjust to new regulatory requirements, utilities must eliminate inefficiencies and reallocate resources to strategic investments. These investments include spending to upgrade their infrastructure, enhance digitization, and reskilling the workforce for the future. Additionally, broader adoption of automation, AI-driven grid management, predictive maintenance, and digitalized customer services can also reduce operational expenditure.

The report identifies nine key areas for optimizing utility operations, each with clear cost-saving potential. Among them, risk-based maintenance, procurement excellence, and support services optimization could deliver savings of up to 20%, 10%, and 15% respectively.

"Utilities in the GCC have a clear opportunity to optimize operations by reengineering workflows, adopting proven practices from more mature markets, and integrate cutting-edge technologies that boost productivity. A strategic allocation of resources from legacy operations to smart grid technologies - alongside a focus on cybersecurity and workforce upskilling - can help the sector support growth priorities, close critical gaps and build long-term resilience," said Aditya Harneja, Principal at Strategy& Middle East.

Environmental awareness blossoms at Earth Day Event for Girls

Weyay Bank celebrates Earth Day at Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In celebration of World Earth Day, Weyay Bank, Kuwait's leading digital bank, organized an event for girls at Al-Kharafi Activity Center for Disabled Children in collaboration with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The event aimed to raise environmental awareness among girls and encourage them to adopt sustainable practices in an interactive and engaging way.



Fawaz Al-Qaban



Fawaz AlNakib

The event featured an inspiring activity where a group of girls participated in a hands-on experience of planting and caring for plants, symbolizing the growth of environmental awareness and care for the planet. Additionally, an educational book published by KFAS was distributed to provide them with the necessary knowledge and understanding of the importance of preserving natural resources and biodiversity.

Fawaz Al-Qaban, Public Relations and Media Manager at Al-Kharafi Center, commended Weyay Bank's role in creating such a positive atmosphere that brought smiles to the girls' faces. He stated in his speech during the Bank team's visit to the center: "We thank Weyay Bank for their presence at the center to celebrate Earth Day, and we look forward to more visits and initiatives in the coming days."



Photos during the Earth Day celebration.

This initiative stems from Weyay Bank's belief that promoting environmental awareness is not merely an ethical responsibility but a necessary investment in the future of coming generations and ensuring their quality of life. Through this initiative, the Bank seeks to instill the values of sustainability and environmental responsibility in members of society, encouraging them to adopt environmentally friendly daily behaviors and practices.

This has been demonstrated through the Bank's full reliance on digital operations, which significantly reduces the need for paper and traditional resources, thereby contributing to the

preservation of natural resources. Furthermore, Weyay Bank is committed to providing recyclable plastic cards to its customers and continuously works to enhance digital banking options and solutions that minimize the environmental impact of its operations and services, which all solidifies Weyay Bank's leading position as the first digital bank in the country.

Moreover, this significant environmental initiative aligns with Weyay Bank's comprehensive vision for social responsibility, which includes supporting initiatives that serve the community in various vital areas such as education, health, and youth empowerment. The Bank strives to achieve

balance and integration between the economic, social, and environmental dimensions in achieving comprehensive sustainable development. In this context, Fawaz AlNakib, Campaign and Partnership Manager at Weyay Bank, stated: "We firmly believe that our future is closely linked to the health of our planet. Our initiative to celebrate World Earth Day embodies our commitment to building a more sustainable future for our coming generations. We always strive to be an active part in bringing about positive change in our society through our diverse initiatives that serve both people and the environment."

New AP-NORC poll findings released

Most Americans expect higher prices as a result of Trump's tariffs

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): Americans' trust in President Donald Trump to bolster the U.S. economy appears to be faltering, with a new poll showing that many people fear the country is being steered into a recession and that the president's broad and haphazardly enforced tariffs will cause prices to rise.

Roughly half of U.S. adults say that Trump's trade policies will increase prices "a lot" and another 3 in 10 think prices could go up "somewhat," according to the poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About half of Americans are "extremely" or "very" concerned about the possibility of the U.S. economy going into a recession in the next few months.

While skepticism about tariffs is increasing modestly, that doesn't mean the public is automatically rejecting Trump or his approach to trade. However, the wariness could cause problems for a president who promised voters he could quickly fix inflation.

Three months into his second term, Trump's handling of the economy and tariffs is showing up as a potential weakness. About 4 in 10 Americans approve of the way the Republican president is handling the economy and trade negotiations. That's roughly in line with an AP-NORC poll

conducted in March.

Matthew Wood, 41, said he's waiting to see how the tariffs play out, but he's feeling anxious.

"I'm not a huge fan of it, especially considering China and going back and forth with adjustments on both ends," said Wood, who lives in West Liberty, Kentucky, and is unemployed. "Personally, it hasn't affected me as of yet. But, generally, I don't know how this is going to come to an end, especially with the big countries involved."

Still, Wood said he changed his registration from Republican to independent, having been turned off by Trump's attitude and deference to billionaire adviser Elon Musk. Wood voted for Trump last year and said he's willing to give the president until the end of the year to deliver positive results on tariffs.

About half of U.S. adults, 52%, are against imposing tariffs on all goods brought into the U.S. from other countries. That's up slightly from January, when a poll found that 46% were against tariffs. Driving that small shift largely appears to be adults under age 30 who didn't previously have an opinion on tariffs.

Trump supporter Janice Manis, 63, said her only criticism of Trump on tariffs is that he put in a partial 90-day pause for

trade negotiations with other countries.

"Actually, I think he shouldn't have suspended it," said Manis, a retired sheriff's deputy from Del Rio, Texas. "Because now China is trying to manipulate all of these other countries to go against us, whereas if he would have left all the tariffs in play then these countries would be hit hard. But, oh, well, things happen."

Not quite 100 days into Trump's second term in the White House, people around the country are bracing for possible disruptions in how they spend, work and live. The U.S. economy remains solid for the moment with moderating inflation and a healthy 4.2% unemployment rate, yet measures such as consumer confidence have dropped sharply.

Trump has used executive actions to remold the global economy. He's imposed hundreds of billions of dollars a year in new import taxes - albeit partially suspending some of them - launching a full-scale trade war against China and pledging to wrap up deals with dozen of other countries that are temporarily facing tariffs of 10%. Financial markets are swinging with every twist and turn from Trump's tariff pronouncements.

Many Americans are not convinced this is the right approach. About 6 in 10 say Trump has "gone too far" when it

comes to imposing new tariffs, according to the poll.

Stocks are down this year, while interest charges on U.S. government bonds have climbed in ways that could make it more costly to repay mortgages, auto loans and student debt. CEOs are scrapping their earnings guidance for investors and seeking exemptions from Trump's tariffs, which hit allies such as Canada and even penguin-inhabited islands.

Trump seemed to recognize the drag from tariffs as he highlighted this week the possibility of a deal with China. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had also said in a closed-door speech that the situation with China is not "sustainable."

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults are "extremely" or "very" concerned about the cost of groceries in the next few months, while about half are highly concerned about the cost of big purchases, such as a car, cellphone or appliance. Less than half are highly concerned about their ability to purchase the goods they want - a sign of the economy's resilience so far.

Retirement savings are a source of anxiety - about 4 in 10 Americans say their retirement savings are a "major source" of stress in their lives. But fewer - only about 2 in 10 - identify the stock market as a major source of anxiety.

European benchmarks slide while Asia finishes mixed

Uncertainty persists over Trump's plans

TOKYO, April 24, (AP): Global shares traded mixed Thursday, as worries crept back following a Wall Street rally that came after President Donald Trump appeared to back off his criticism of the Federal Reserve and his tough talk in his trade war.

France's CAC 40 slipped 0.9% in early trading to 7,412.26, while the German DAX shed early 1.0% to 21,755.04. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.3% to 8,375.06. U.S. shares were set to drift lower with Dow futures declining nearly 0.9% at 39,433.00. S&P 500 futures fell 0.8% to 5,359.25.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.5% to finish at 35,039.15. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.6% to 7,968.20. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.1% to 2,522.33. Hong Kong's Hang Seng declined 0.7% to 21,909.76, while the Shanghai Composite was little changed, inching up less than 0.1% to 3,297.29.

Calling Trump's policy announcements "headline turbulence," Tan Jing Yi of the Asia & Oceania Treasury Department at Mizuho Bank warned that global economies could be hurt in the long run, adding, "Sentiments swing from hopes of intense relief to inflicted economic gloom."

Much of the recent market volatility is because of uncertainty about what Trump will do with his economic poli-



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, April 23, 2025. (AP)

cies. Adding to some relief was Trump saying late Tuesday that he has "no intention" to fire the head of the Federal Reserve.

Trump's tough talk had frightened investors because the Fed is supposed to act independently, without pressure from politicians, so that it can make decisions that may be painful in the short term but are best for the long term.

While a cut to interest rates by the Fed could give the economy a boost,

it could also put upward pressure on inflation. Trump also said U.S. tariffs on imports coming from China could come down "substantially" from the current 145%.

"It won't be that high, not going to be that high," he said.

Investors are hoping Trump would lower his tariffs after negotiating trade deals with other countries. Trump said this week that he would be "very nice" to the world's second-largest economy and not play hardball with Chinese

President Xi Jinping.

"There is an opportunity for a big deal here," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Wednesday.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude rose 55 cents to \$62.82 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added 56 cents to \$66.68 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar slipped to 142.67 Japanese yen from 143.15 yen. The euro cost \$1.1375, up from \$1.1322.

Global growth threatened

IMF chief urges countries to move 'swiftly' to resolve trade tensions

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): The head of the International Monetary Fund urged countries to move "swiftly" to resolve trade disputes that threaten global economic growth.

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said the unpredictability arising from President Donald Trump's aggressive campaign of taxes on foreign imports is causing companies to delay investments and consumers to hold off on spending.

"Uncertainty is bad for business," she told reporters Thursday in a briefing during the spring meetings of the IMF and its sister agency, the World Bank.

Georgieva's comments came two days after the IMF downgraded the outlook for world economic growth this year. The 191-country lending organization, which seeks to promote global growth, financial stability and to reduce poverty, also sharply lowered its forecast for the United States. It said the chances that the world's biggest economy would fall into recession have risen from 25%, to about 40%.

Georgieva warned that the economic fallout from trade conflict would fall most heavily on poor countries, which do not have the money to offset the damage.

Since returning the White House in January, Trump has aggressively imposed tariffs on American trading partners. Among other things, he's slapped 145% import taxes on China and 10% on almost every country in the world, raising U.S. tariffs to levels not seen in more than a century. But he has repeatedly changed U.S. policy - suddenly suspending or altering the tariffs - and left companies bewildered about what he is trying to accomplish and what his end game might be.

Trump's tariffs - a sharp reversal of decades of U.S. policy in favor of free trade - and the resulting uncertainty around them have caused a weekslong rout in financial markets. But stocks rallied Wednesday after the Trump administration signaled that it is open to reducing the massive tariffs on China.

"There is an opportunity for a big deal here," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Wednesday.

Beijing denies Trump claims

China says 'no negotiations' with Washington over tariffs

BANGKOK, April 24, (AP): China on Thursday denied U.S. President Donald Trump's assertion that the two sides were involved in active negotiations over tariffs, saying that any suggestion of progress in this matter was as groundless as "trying to catch the wind."

China's comments come after Trump said Tuesday that the final tariff rate on China's exports would come down "substantially" from the current 145%.

"China's position is consistent and we are open to consultations and dialogues, but any form of consultations and negotiations must be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and in an equal manner," said Ministry of Commerce spokesman He Yadong. "Any claims about the progress of China-U.S. trade negotiations are groundless as trying to catch the wind and have no factual basis."

Trump had told reporters earlier in the week that "everything's active" when asked if he was engaging with China, although his Treasury Secretary had said there were no formal negotiations.

Trump had put 145% tariffs on imports from China, while China hit back with 125% tariffs on U.S. products. While Trump has given other countries a 90-day pause on the tariffs, as their leaders pledged to negotiate with the U.S., China remained the exception. Instead, Beijing raised its own tariffs and deployed other economic measures in response while vowing to "fight to the end." For example, China restricted exports of rare earth minerals and raised multiple cases against the U.S. at the World Trade Organization.

China also made it clear that talks should involve the cancellation of all tariffs it currently faces.

"The unilateral tariff increase measures were initiated by the United States. If the United States really wants to solve the problem, it should face up to the rational voices of the international community and all parties at home, completely cancel all unilateral tariff measures against China, and find ways to resolve differences through equal dialogue," said He, the spokesman.

Despite the economic measures leveled against China, Trump said Tuesday that he would be "very nice" and not play hardball with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"We're going to live together very happily and ideally work together," Trump said.

UK says at an energy summit that green power will boost security, as US differs

LONDON, April 24, (AP): Britain announced a major investment in wind power Thursday as it hosted an international summit on energy security - with Europe and the United States at odds over whether to cut their reliance on fossil fuels.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the government will invest 300 million pounds (\$400 million) in boosting Britain's capacity to manufacture components for the offshore wind industry, a move it hopes will encourage private investment in the U.K.'s renewable energy sector.

Surging energy prices and the Russia-Ukraine war have made European leaders think hard about global energy security as their reliance on Russian natural gas. Ukraine halted Russian gas supplies to European customers through its pipeline network in January.

"As long as energy can be weaponized against us, our countries and our citizens are vulnerable and exposed," U.K. Energy Secretary Ed Miliband told delegates.

He said "low-carbon power" was a



Britain's Secretary for Energy Security Ed Miliband looks on as Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) speaks on day one of the International Summit on the Future of Energy Security at Lancaster House in London, Thursday April 24, 2025. (AP)

route to energy security as well as a way to slow climate change.

Britain now gets more than half its

electricity from renewable sources such as wind and solar power, and the rest from natural gas and nuclear en-

ergy. It aims to generate all the U.K.'s energy from renewable sources by 2030.

The last U.K. coal-fired power plant closed last year, ending 142 years of coal-generated electricity in the nation that sparked the Industrial Revolution.

Other European nations including Germany and France have committed to more wind energy production, and some are also phasing out coal.

The Trump administration is doing the opposite - prioritizing fossil fuels, including boosting coal, canceling financing for clean energy and climate-friendly projects, and targeting the wind industry.

Tommy Joyce, U.S. acting assistant secretary of energy for international affairs, told participants they should be "honest about the world's growing energy needs, not focused on net-zero policies."

He called policies that push for clean power over fossil fuels "harmful and dangerous," and claimed building wind turbines requires "concessions to or coercion from China" because it supplies necessary rare minerals.

First under digital rules

EU hits Apple and Meta with 700m euros in fines

LONDON, April 24, (AP): European Union watchdogs fined Apple and Meta hundreds of millions of euros Wednesday as they stepped up enforcement of the 27-nation bloc's digital competition rules.

The European Commission imposed a 500 million euro (\$571 million) fine on Apple for preventing app makers from pointing users to cheaper options outside its App Store.

The commission, which is the EU's executive arm, also fined Meta Platforms 200 million euros because it forced Facebook and Instagram users to choose between seeing personalized ads or paying to avoid them.

The punishments were smaller than the blockbuster multibillion-euro fines that the commission has previously slapped on Big Tech companies in antitrust cases.

Apple and Meta have to comply with the decisions within 60 days or risk unspecified "periodic penalty payments," the commission said.

The decisions were expected to come in March, but the self-imposed deadline slipped amid an escalating



The Meta logo is seen at the Vivattech show in Paris, France, June 14, 2023. (AP)

trans-Atlantic trade war with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly complained about regulations from Brussels affecting American companies.

The penalties were the first issued under the EU's Digital Markets Act, also known as the DMA. It's a sweeping rule book that amounts to a set of do's and don'ts designed to give consumers and businesses more choice and prevent Big Tech "gatekeepers" from cornering digital markets.

The DMA seeks to ensure "that citizens have full control over when and how their data is used online, and businesses can freely communicate with their own customers," Henna Virkkunen, the commission's executive vice president for tech sovereignty, said in a statement.

Swiss pharmaceuticals company to create 12,000 jobs

Roche announces \$50b investment in US

GENEVA, April 24, (AP): Swiss pharmaceuticals powerhouse Roche announced Tuesday it plans to invest \$50 billion in the United States over the next five years, creating 12,000 jobs.

The Basel-based company, whose array of products includes cancer medicines and multiple sclerosis treatment Ocrevus, said the investment would go toward high-tech research and development sites and new manufacturing facilities in places including California, Indiana, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Some of the \$50 billion in investments were already underway or planned for the next several years, Roche spokesperson Rebekka Schnell said in an e-mail, adding that the company was not specifying how much was announced for the first time on Tuesday.

The announcement comes as U.S. President Donald Trump has urged foreign businesses to invest more in the United States, and announced sweeping tariffs earlier this month on imports as part of hopes to reduce a large U.S. trade deficit when it comes to sales of goods.

Before the Trump administration backed off its most stringent tariff plans, products imported from Switzerland had



The logo of the pharmaceutical company Roche pictured in Basel, Switzerland, on Feb. 1, 2017. (AP)

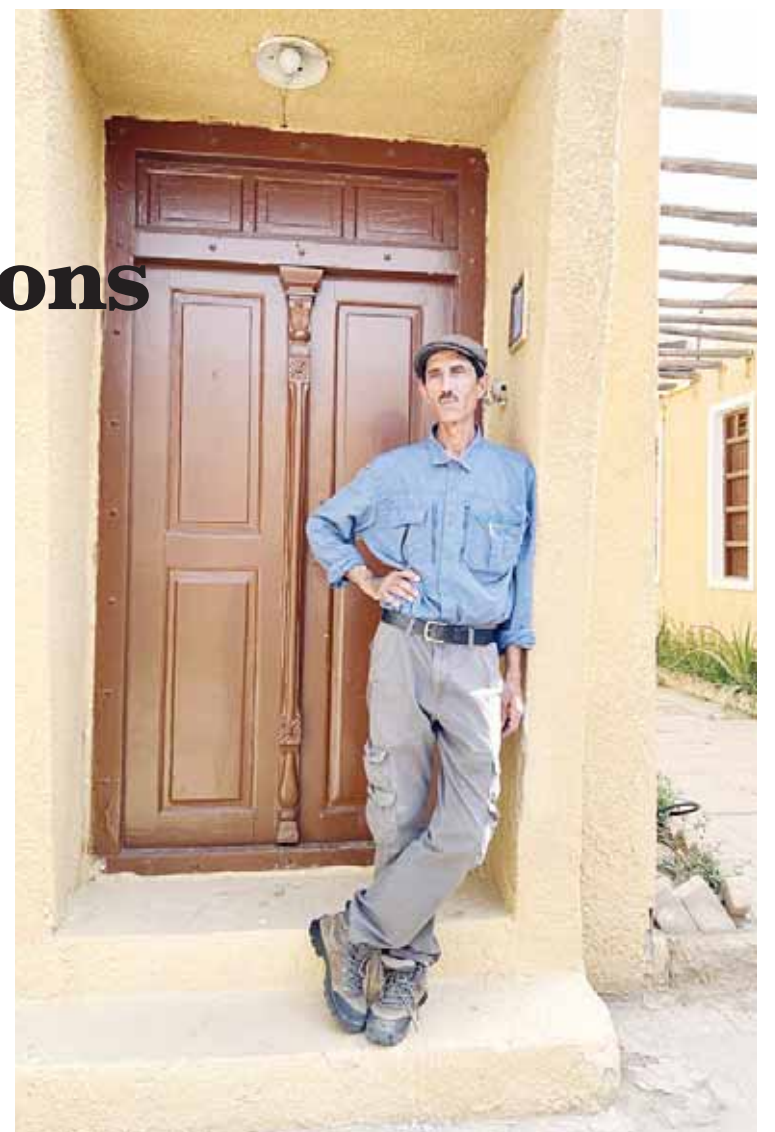
been set to face tariffs of 31% - more than the 20% tariff on goods from the European Union. Switzerland is not a member of the 27-country bloc but is virtually surrounded by four EU countries.

From shores to soul ... Failaka through the eyes of an island son

Failaka: Many layers of civilizations



The Sheikh's rest house near the Dilmun village.



Hassan Al Failakawi, standing in front of his old family home that belongs to AZ-zour village, which dates back at least 300 years.

By Chaitali B. Roy

Special to the Arab Times

On a breezy April morning, the Bint Al Khair gently pushed off from Marina Crescent, Salmiya. The sea bus, a sleek vessel with plush interiors and panoramic views, carried a curious and enthusiastic group of fifty, most of them female diplomats, their families and friends. Their destination: Failaka Island, a windswept island in the Arabian Gulf, steeped in history.

As the vessel sliced through the moody waters of the Gulf, Failaka gradually emerged, its ancient silence unbroken by the passage of years. The ride was smooth for the most part, though the sea was choppy at times, prompting many to retreat indoors while a few brave souls remained on deck.

Failaka may seem like a quiet island today, but its soil holds secrets that stretch across millennia. It was once the northernmost outpost of the Dilmun Kingdom – an enigmatic civilization that linked two of the ancient world's greatest powerhouses: Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. That Saturday, we visited two of the island's oldest sites: Tell Sa'ad and Tell Sa'eed.

Our group was led by an extraordinary Kuwaiti, Hassan Al Failakawi, an ardent archaeologist, member of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and a former resident of Failaka.

As a boy, Hassan spent many hours in the various archaeological digs scattered across his island home. On our way to the island, Hassan shared his childhood memories of the island. "In the summer, everybody slept off lunch while I roamed barefoot with a slingshot," he recalled. "There were people and shops, and one could find fishermen going about their work. On your way home from school, you would get a lift from a car or a bike passing by. Everyone knew everyone else on the island."

Mainland

He painted a happy picture of a bucolic island where life was laid-back and slow-paced. "Failaka was always twenty years behind Kuwait, but we liked it that way. Even the public buses were the ones mainland Kuwait did not want," he smiled. Before the invasion, around 5000 people lived on Failaka. Fifty-one per cent of them were non-Kuwaitis. Speaking of the island's vibrant community, its diverse cultural integration and communal discipline, Hassan said, "The beautiful thing is Indians, Pakistanis, Syrians, Palestinians and Egyptians all lived on the island as Failakawis. We intermarried among ourselves. We did not differentiate. Everyone was equal."

Six thousand years ago, there were no islands in this area, shared Hassan Failakawi. Because of geological events, they emerged from the sea, and two thousand years later were inhabited. "Failaka is unique as it is home to five different civilizations," said Hassan. At one point, Hassan Failakawi, extolling the island's importance, said, "It is wrong to say that Kuwait's history and heritage goes back 200 to 300 years. Many of our practices and behaviours go back four thousand years. For example, the Danish archaeologists found evidence that Failakawis dove for pearls 4000 years ago, but the elementary history books say that the profession began recently."

Beneath Failaka's windswept surface is a rich archaeological tapestry that stretches across Bronze Age kingdoms, Greek conquests, and early Christian communities,



The most iconic archaeological site on the island is the Hellenistic fortress.



Dr. Mathilde Gellin and Dr. Jean-Michel Gellin from the French archaeological team.

each leaving behind their stories in stone, clay, and whispers. Hassan narrated the island's archaeological history: "In 1937, the British agent Harold Dickson visited Failaka," he recounted.

While walking near the Sheikh's rest house near the later discovered Hellenistic fortress, he saw the Failakawis demolishing old buildings and carrying the stones to build their homes. One of the Failakawis held a stone on which he noticed Greek writing. Col Dickson bought the stone from the man and sent it to England. What was written on it was part of a longer message from an Athenian sailor."



A team of French geological engineers at work in Failaka.

- 'The study of the fortification can be related to the geopolitical situation in the Gulf'. -- Dr Jean Michel.
- 'The island's rich history, from Ancient Greek temples to remnants of the Gulf War, offered a profound glimpse into Kuwait's past'. -- Neera Dukhi, Chargé d'affaires of the Guyanese Embassy
- 'My family and I so enjoyed the visit to Failaka Island and were struck by its rich history, and the diverse stories and civilisations imprinted there.' -- Aliya Mawani, Canadian Ambassador

That discovery began the interest of scholars and researchers in Failaka. In 1957, Sheikh Abdullah Salem invited the Danish archaeological team working in Bahrain to excavate on Failaka. "In their first week of excavation, they found the Greek fortress and the Dilmun village," said Hassan. Since then, six missions have worked in Failaka, each specializing in a certain civilization.

The Dilmun village near the Sheikh's Palace on Failaka dates back 4000 years. The settlement on Failaka includes a temple of the Dilmun god Inzac, a governor's palace, homes for the working people, and much more. Archaeologists have long been fascinated by Failaka's role in the Dilmun civilisation. While Dilmun's more prominent associations are with Bahrain, Failaka has emerged as a vital northern outpost, with significant discoveries at Tell Saad, Al Khidr, and Tell F6. These sites have revealed a thriving Bronze Age community dating back to 1800 BC, complete with residential quarters, a copper forge, religious temples, and an administrative residence that hints at a sophisticated governance structure.

As time progressed, Failaka found itself swept up in the tides of the Hellenistic world. A small temple at Tell Al-Khazne is believed to belong to the pre-Hellenistic period, a quiet precursor to what came next. In 1958, archaeologists unearthed the jewel of Failaka's Hellenistic era: a massive fortress that saw continuous occupation from the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD. Founded by Antiochos I, son of Selucos—the powerful general of Alexander the Great – the fortification is a testament to the island's strategic and cultural importance.

Within its formidable walls lies the famed "Temple A," a stunning architectural fusion where East meets West. Ionic Greek capitals rise above Achaemenid-style bases, embodying the cultural synthesis that Alexander's empire sought to inspire. Here, in stone and structure, is the vision of a united world—a bridge between Greece and the Orient, standing quietly under the Failakan sun. "When Alexander the Great died, his generals shared the empire," shared Dr Mathilde Gellin, a French archaeologist working on Failaka. "General Seleucus became the king of the Oriental section. Failaka



Door with a view from Failaka.

was on the border of his empire, and as the border, he maintained a garrison of soldiers here and built a strong fortress. These soldiers left behind many inscriptions," she said.

Inspire

While presenting the fortress and temple, which includes a sacrificial altar, Dr Jean Michel Gellin said, "The style of the columns showed a merging of Greek and Persian styles. Earlier, it was unusual, but after Alexander's conquest, the confluence of Hellenic with Oriental culture became common." The fortress saw three periods, which included its construction by the Greeks, a period under locals, and a time when the Greeks took back the fortress. "The study of the fortification can be related to the geopolitical situation in the Gulf," said Dr Jean Michel. "The fortress showed the Greeks controlled this part of the Arabian Gulf and the trade between India and Mesopotamia."

Today, several French archaeological expeditions continue exploring these ruins, carefully peeling back layers of history that speak of conquest and commerce, ritual and religion, and cultures meeting and mingling on this seemingly quiet shore.

But even with evidence in hand, the whole story remains elusive. The sequence of settlements on Failaka is yet to be understood entirely. As archaeologists from around the world continue to unearth layers of civilisation, many questions remain unanswered. What happened here during the transitions from Dilmun to Assyrian to Neo-Babylonian rule? What lives were lived in these ruins, and what legacies have we failed to preserve?

On our way back to the mainland, Aliya Mawani, Canadian Ambassador, said, "My family and I so enjoyed the visit to Failaka Island and were struck by its rich history, and the diverse stories and civilisations imprinted there. We were fortunate to meet and learn from a team of French archaeologists and geological engineers currently working there, and of course to have with us such a knowledgeable guide, who himself is from Failaka. I look forward to seeing this site further developed so that more people can learn about its unique history." Neera Dukhi, Chargé d'affaires of the Guyanese

Embassy, said, "The island's rich history, from Ancient Greek temples to remnants of the Gulf War, offered a profound glimpse into Kuwait's past. Exploring the Failaka Island Heritage Village provided an immersive experience into traditional Kuwaiti culture, with its narrow streets and old houses. The trip was an amazing experience, and to have experienced it with a few friends in the diplomatic community made it worthwhile."

Driving through the heart of the island, the sense of abandonment is overwhelming. Once-inhabited homes now lie in disrepair—some charred, some collapsed, and others seemingly paused in time, hinting at a hasty departure.

Testimony

A school building stands forlornly by the sea, windows shattered. Bullet-ridden facades and skeletal mosques bear grim testimony to the ravages of the 1990 invasion. Failaka, which once boasted uninterrupted human presence for nearly 4,000 years, now sits deserted, save for occasional research groups and day-trippers like us.

And yet, Failaka is not entirely without voice. Hassan Failakawi laments the ecological and socio-economic damage that has crept in. He advocates for restoration and regeneration under the leadership of Dr Mohammed Al Jassar of the NC-CAL. He urges that natural reserves and archaeological sites be built on the island. "We don't need to build new buildings," he says. "All these homes can be restored, fixed, and made beautiful. Archaeological areas can be developed and rebuilt. And we are trying to register them with UNESCO to rebuild them."

After all, Failaka is not just a ruin to be observed – it is a living ecosystem that remembers every footprint. There is a haunting beauty to Failaka, but sadly, despite its immense archaeological and ecological significance, the island has seen little restoration or development. Its tourism potential remains woefully untapped, and its historical treasures risk being lost not to war or conquest but to indifference.

Failaka deserves more than passing visits and whispered regrets. It deserves a future that honours its past.

'Bullet Train Explosion' honors Japan's high-speed icon

Higuchi's new bullet train thriller blasts onto Netflix

TOKYO, April 24, (AP): The high-speed bullet train says Japan as much as Godzilla, sushi and Mount Fuji. And it takes center stage in Shinji Higuchi's new film, "Bullet Train Explosion," which premiered on Netflix Wednesday.

Higuchi, the director of the 2016 "Shin Godzilla" (or "New Godzilla.") has reimaged the 1975 Japanese film "The Bullet Train," which has the same premise: A bomb will go off if the train slows down below 100 kph (62 mph.) That original movie also inspired Hollywood's "Speed," starring Keanu Reeves, which takes place mostly on a bus.

Higuchi recalls being fascinated by the aerodynamically shaped bullet trains growing up as they roared by, almost like a violent animal. To him, as with many Japanese, the Shinkansen - as the trains are called in Japan - symbolize the nation's efforts to become "top-rate," superfast, precise, orderly and on time.

"It's so characteristically Japanese," Higuchi said in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday. "To complete your work, even if it means sacrificing your personal life, is like a samurai spirit living within all Japanese."

The film's realism was achieved by a smooth combina-

tion of computer graphics and miniature train models, built to one-sixth the size of the real thing.

A huge LED wall was used on the set to project visuals of passing landscapes as seen from the train window, and those shots were juxtaposed seamlessly with footage shot on a real train.

The explosions are strangely exhilarating, and beautifully depicted with scattering sparks and smoke.

Higuchi stressed that the filmmakers were careful to make sure the criminal act, as depicted, is not physically possible today.

He said "Bullet Train Explosion" marked a challenging departure from his past movies that were about heroes and monsters.

"I examined the question of evil, and how we pass judgment on a person," he said.

"That's what my predecessors did as directors before me: Try to show what happens if you commit evil," he added. "And I tried to give my answer."

One departure from the original, which starred the late Ken Takakura as the bomber, is that Higuchi chose to focus on the train workers.

Tsuyoshi Kusanagi, formerly a member of the popular

boy band Smap and known for his acclaimed role in Eiji Uchida's "Midnight Swan," delivers a convincing performance as a dedicated Shinkansen worker.

"I always have fun working with the director," Kusanagi said of Higuchi at a Tokyo premiere earlier this week. "I've loved him for 20 years."

Kusanagi starred in "Sinking of Japan," Higuchi's 2006 science-fiction thriller about a natural catastrophe that threatens Japan's very existence.

East Japan Railway Co., formed after the national railway was privatized, which operates the bullet train featured in Higuchi's reboot, gave full support to the film. It allowed the use of real trains, railway facilities and uniforms, as well as helping train the actors to simulate its workers and their mannerisms.

The bullet trains have long been a symbol of Japan's blossoming as a modern economy and peaceful culture in the decades following World War II.

The first leg, connecting Tokyo with Osaka, opened with much fanfare in 1964. The system now connects much of Japan, from the northernmost main island of Hokkaido through southwestern Kyushu. The train featured in Higuchi's work connects Tokyo with northern Aomori.



This image released by Netflix shows Tsuyoshi Kusanagi in a scene from 'Bullet Train Explosion'. (AP)

Retrial opens

Weinstein faces new allegations

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): Harvey Weinstein's #MeToo retrial opened Wednesday, giving a new jury a fresh look at familiar assault allegations - plus a newly added claim from a former model.

For the first time, prosecutors publicly identified Kaja Sokola and outlined her account of interactions with the Oscar-winning movie producer in the early 2000s. He faces criminal charges related to an alleged assault in 2006, and she also accused him in a civil lawsuit of inappropriate physical contact when she was 16, four years earlier.



Weinstein

Like the two other accusers in the case, Sokola alleges a complex series of encounters and reactions - being sexually assaulted, yet staying in touch, wary of Weinstein but wanting to remain on good terms with a power broker who dangled the possibility of an acting career.

"Why did the defendant hold this level of power and control in the eyes of these three women?" ... It's because Harvey Weinstein defined the field," prosecutor Shannon Lucey told jurors in an opening statement. "He knew how tempting promises of success were. He produced, he choreographed, he therefore directed, their ultimate silence for years."

Weinstein has pleaded not guilty, and defense lawyer Arthur Aidala countered by portraying the accusers as willing partners in a showbiz quid pro quo.

"The casting couch is not a crime scene," Aidala told the majority-female jury. He compared prosecutors' allegations to the preview of a movie that "falls flat on its face."

The 73-year-old Weinstein, seated in the wheelchair he now uses because of health problems, didn't look at Lucey or the jury during her presentation. But Weinstein watched intently as Aidala outlined his defense.

The retrial is happening because New York's top court last year threw out Weinstein's conviction, which in 2020 was a watershed moment for the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct. The high court found that the previous trial judge allowed prejudicial testimony about allegations separate from the charges.

Weinstein's retrial is playing out at a different cultural moment than the first. #MeToo, which exploded in 2017 with allegations against Weinstein, has evolved and ebbed.

When Weinstein's first trial began, chants of "rapist" could be heard from protesters outside. This time, there was none of that.

Sokola's lawyer, Lindsay Goldbrum, has called Weinstein's retrial 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 photo issued by Sotheby's shows The First Folio of William Shakespeare, which contains 36 of the writer's plays and is one of four folios which are due to go on sale at Sotheby's in London on May 23. (AP)

Television



Victoria Pedretti attends a special screening of the fifth season of Netflix's 'You' at The Plaza Hotel on Wednesday, April 23, in New York. (AP)

Disney+ drama digs for the truth

'Suspect' revisits London tragedy

LONDON, April 24, (AP): It's hard to imagine what it's like to have the most traumatic event of your life reenacted as television drama.

For one Brazilian family, it is cathartic.

"I want them to see the reality that my boy was innocent," said 80-year-old Maria de Menezes, whose son was shot dead by London police in 2005 after being mistaken for a suicide bomber. The shooting remains a scar on the reputation of the Metropolitan Police, and an unhealed wound for the dead man's family.

"Suspect: The Shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes," which will be released April 30 on Disney+, dramatizes the killing of the 27-year-old electrician, which happened a day after failed bombing attempts on the London Underground. The botched attacks, in which the home-made explosives failed to detonate, came two weeks after suicide bombers attacked three London subway trains and a bus on July 7, killing 52 people.

De Menezes, who lived in an apartment building that police believed was home to one of the on-the-run suspects, was on his way to work when he was shot seven times at close range by police who followed him onto a subway carriage. The two officers who shot him testified at an inquest that they believed de Menezes was one of the failed bombers.

Screenwriter Jeff Pope said a "poorly planned and poorly executed" police operation was followed "by obfuscation, by denial, by evasion."

"And that has denied his family proper closure," said Pope, whose previous forays into fact-based drama include Laurel and Hardy biopic "Stan



This image released by Disney+ shows Edison Alcaide in a scene from 'Suspect'. (AP)

& Ollie" and Irish church-abuse story "Philomena," which garnered him an Academy Award nomination.

The first two episodes of the four-part miniseries recreate the build-up to the shooting with agonizing suspense, showing how bad luck and police missteps led to tragedy at a time when the city was on edge and officers under intense pressure.

The surveillance officer watching the building where de Menezes lived had stopped to urinate and didn't get a good look at him. The team of armed officers was too late to stop him as he made his way by bus to a subway station and boarded a train.

"There's so much horrendous chance involved," Pope said. "But it was the misinformation that really got me."

The police force initially told re-

porters de Menezes' bulky clothing and panicked manner had caused commanders to fear he was a suicide bomber, and that he ignored a shouted warning from officers before being shot.

Those claims were contradicted by witnesses and rejected by an inquest jury. But false details lingered. "Suspect" is, in part, an exploration of the long afterlife of false information.

Like millions of people in Britain, Pope said he vividly remembers the 7/7 bombings and the shooting of de Menezes 15 days later. But he said that "at the back of my mind, I had retained these details - that unfortunately he was wearing bulky clothing. He'd vaulted the barriers, he'd run down the escalator, and that somehow his behavior tragically had led to his death."

"I then started to really dig into it

... and what I discovered made me angry because it's not true," he said.

In Pope's telling, misinformation about the shooting spread not through an organized cover-up but through confusion and buck-passing, as police officers closed ranks to protect the force's reputation.

No officers were charged over the killing, though the Metropolitan Police force was fined for endangering public safety.

De Menezes' family waged a long legal battle for accountability that included suing the police in civil court. That case was settled for an undisclosed amount in 2009. In 2016, the European Court of Human Rights concluded that British authorities were correct not to charge any police officers.

Both Cressida Dick, the officer in charge of the botched surveillance operation, and then-Metropolitan Police chief Ian Blair were cleared of wrongdoing. Dick rose to become head of the force. Blair was later appointed to the House of Lords.

The series comes not long after ITV's "Mr. Bates vs The Post Office" and Netflix drama "Adolescence," two recent British docudramas that started conversations and sparked pressure for action on social ills - respectively, a miscarriage of justice that led to the prosecution hundreds of post office managers and the pernicious impact of social media on children.

Actor Russell Tovey, who plays Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick, a senior officer who pressed the force to set the record straight, said "Suspect" is "a hard watch and it's disappointing watch," because there is no big moment where justice is served.

Variety

NEW YORK: Carlos Santana was forced to postpone a concert at the Majestic Theatre in San Antonio on Tuesday night.

The guitar virtuoso's Oneness Tour kicked off April 16 in Highland, California, at the Yaamava' Resort & Casino at San Manuel.

Santana was suffering from dehydration, according to a statement that Santana's manager Michael Vronis provided to The Associated Press.

"Mr. Santana was at the venue (Majestic Theatre) preparing for tonight's show when he experienced an event that was determined to be dehydration," Vronis said in the statement. "Out of an abundance of caution and the health of Mr. Santana, the decision to postpone the show was the most prudent course of action."

Vronis continued: "He is doing well and is looking forward to coming back to San Antonio soon as well as continuing his US Tour. Thank you all very much for your understanding. The show will be rescheduled soon."

Santana is still scheduled to perform in Sugar Land, Texas, on Wednesday night, in Thackerville, Oklahoma, on Friday and Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Saturday.

Next week, he is scheduled to perform in Nashville and at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival before heading to Las Vegas for his "An Intimate Evening with Santana: Greatest Hits Live" residency.

Earlier this month, Santana told the AP that fans could expect "a whole lot of energy and freshness and high consciousness and hope and courage" from his Oneness Tour. (AP)



Santana

NEW YORK: Ryan Fleur was promoted Wednesday to president and CEO of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts, leading an institution that he has worked for since 2012.

Fleur had been interim president since January, when Matias Tarnopolsky left to head the New York Philharmonic. Fleur said he will concentrate on trying to fill seats for the roughly 20% of capacity that is not being regularly sold.

"I also want to aggressively make our venues available to both community groups and education groups that might not otherwise realize that these spaces are open to them," he said. "I want every Philadelphia school student, K (kindergarten) through 12 to walk through our doors at least three times in their formative years, whether it's coming to a Philadelphia Orchestra open rehearsal or a school concert or to our jazz for freedom program, which connects the history of jazz with the civil rights movement."

Now 53, Fleur was president and CEO of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra from 2003-12, when he became Philadelphia's executive director of orchestra advancement. He also served as interim president in 2018 after Allison Vulgamore left to run the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and before Tarnopolsky started in Philadelphia.

Fleur had been Philadelphia's executive director since 2021, the year the orchestra merged with the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the orchestra's home. The institution rebranded as Ensemble Arts Philly last year.

Revenue for the 2023-24 season was \$132.6 million, of which 38% was ticket sales, 24% from ancillary streams such as parking and rentals and 38% from contributions and endowment. Capacity for all presentations was 76% in 2023-24, up from 69% in 2022-23. This season is on track for 77%. (AP)

Most important literary work

Shakespeare's plays first editions set could fetch \$6m at auction

LONDON, April 24, (AP): A set of the first four editions of William Shakespeare's collected works is expected to sell for up to 4.5 million pounds (\$6 million) at auction next month.

Sotheby's auction house announced the sale on Wednesday, Shakespeare's 461st birthday. It said the May 23 sale will be the first time since 1989 that a set of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Folios has been offered at auction as a single lot.

The auction house estimated the

sale price at between 3.5 million and 4.5 million pounds.

After Shakespeare's death in 1616, his plays were collected into a single volume by his friends John Heminges and Henry Condell, actors and shareholders in the playwright's troupe, the King's Men.

The First Folio - fully titled "Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies" - contained 36 plays, of which half were published there for the first time. Without the book, scholars say, plays includ-

ing "Macbeth," "The Tempest" and "Twelfth Night" might have been lost. Sotheby's called the volume "without question the most significant publication in the history of English literature."

About 750 copies were printed in 1623, of which about 230 are known to survive. All but a few are in museums, universities or libraries. One of the few First Folios in private hands sold for \$9.9 million at an auction in 2020.

The First Folio proved successful

enough that an updated edition, the Second Folio, was published in 1632, a third in 1663 and a fourth in 1685.

Although the First Folio is regarded as the most valuable, the third is the rarest, with 182 copies known to survive. It is believed the third book's rarity is because some of the stock was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666.

The Third Folio included seven additional plays, but only one - "Pericles, Prince of Tyre" - is believed to be by Shakespeare.

MoH achieves world first in consecutive robotic surgeries

Kuwaiti doctors achieve regional, global milestones

KUWAIT CITY, April 24, (KUNA): Kuwaiti doctors continue to prove their high professional competence and consistent progress through achievements in complex surgeries, and outstanding medical innovations and research.

A number of Kuwaiti doctors have in recent years achieved notable regional and global accomplishments conducted in local hospitals, and were discussed in regional and international conferences, leaving a distinct mark on the progress of global medical development.

In April, Kuwait recorded an unprecedented achievement when the surgeons at the Ministry of Health (MoH) successfully performed five consecutive remote robotic surgeries using robots on patients in Kuwait suffering from kidney and prostate cancer. These surgeries, conducted using telerobotic surgery technology, involved direct external medical participation from more than 7,000 kilometers away.

This accomplishment set a new world record, being the highest number of consecutive remote robotic surgeries performed in a short time span in any hospital worldwide.

In September 2024, the MoH announced the success of the first kidney transplant exchange procedure between families, coinciding with the launch of the national kidney exchange program. This initiative aims to enhance organ transplant services in Kuwait, reduce waiting times, and improve success rates.

A month earlier, glaucoma specialist Dr. Abdullah Al-Kandari successfully performed a delicate eye surgery to treat glaucoma - a major advancement in the precise treatment of this critical eye disease.

In July 2024, the vascular surgery and catheterization team at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, led by Dr. Abdullah Al-Fawwaz, performed a surgery, the first in the Middle East, to repair an aortic arch aneurysm using a customized stent graft that was surgically modified to fit the patient's arterial dimensions and then implanted via catheter.

In December 2023, Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital witnessed several complex surgeries for patients with lymphedema, for the first time in Kuwait, during a four-day workshop led by national

professionals and supervised by Professor J.P. Hong from South Korea.

In June 2023, the same hospital used a smart mesh for the first time in Kuwait to repair hernias and reconstruct the abdominal wall in patients with advanced cases.

That same month, the MoH announced the successful implantation of Kuwait's first artificial heart pump, the second of its kind in the Arab world, for a patient in his 60s. Additionally, another permanent artificial heart pump was implanted on the left side.

In May 2023, a Kuwaiti surgical team led by Dr. Talal Al-Qoud, Saja Suror, and Mohammad Zain successfully performed a rare kidney transplant with urinary tract reconstruction for a 29-year-old male patient - using a globally rare transplant method.

Also in May, under the supervision of Dr. Noura Al-Ibrahim, a Kuwaiti medical team used fluorescent dye and gamma camera sentinel node tracking technology during a laparoscopic hysterectomy to treat endometrial cancer, marking the first use of this method in Kuwait.

In March 2023, Jaber Al-Ahmad



Kuwaiti doctors are earning global recognition for pioneering medical breakthroughs and precision surgeries.

Hospital witnessed five pediatric neurosurgeries, including the first-ever spinal nerve operation in Kuwait to

relieve muscle spasticity in a child and help improve mobility.

In January 2023, Jaber Al-Ahmad

Hospital introduced a new plastic surgery approach, combining three operations into one using a collaborative approach from multiple specialties - a first in Kuwait and the Middle East. Dr. Hmoud Al-Rashidi called the procedure "Hidden Tummy Tuck," which represents a revolution in reconstructive and cosmetic surgery.

In the same month, the hospital also successfully performed Kuwait's first simultaneous hip and knee replacement surgery for an 82-year-old patient suffering from a pelvic fracture and severe knee osteoarthritis.

In November 2022, Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital conducted Kuwait's first AI-assisted endoscopy to detect colon and stomach tumors, using cutting-edge artificial intelligence for precision diagnostics.

In April 2022, Dr. Abdullah Al-Fawwaz, the vascular and general surgery consultant at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, successfully performed Kuwait's first abdominal aortic aneurysm repair via catheter using intravascular ultrasound, a safer alternative to contrast dye, especially for kidney patients.

New licensing rules

MoH to regulate private mental health services

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: In an effort to regulate professional practices, protect beneficiaries, and improve the quality of mental health care in the community, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has officially requested the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to regulate the process for the licensing of psychological treatment and counseling services in the private medical sector.

The directive includes granting licensed psychotherapy offices and psychological and social counseling companies a one-year grace period to comply with the Ministry of Health's requirements.

The ministry affirmed that no new commercial licenses for these services will be issued or renewed after April 20, 2026, unless they are reviewed and approved by the ministry to ensure full compliance with the established regulations.

The Ministry of Health explained that the new regulations are designed to protect patients' rights and enhance the quality of mental health services

in Kuwait, in line with the highest international professional and scientific standards.

The main components of the regulations are as follows:

■ Location and equipment requirements:

Psychological units must be easily accessible and equipped with treatment rooms that meet technical specifications. Secure storage areas must be available for maintaining patient files, ensuring complete privacy and confidentiality.

■ Staff qualifications:

All practitioners must hold valid professional licenses. Each unit must include at least one psychotherapist with a PhD, along with specialists in fields such as behavioral therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other related disciplines as defined in the regulations.

■ Legal and ethical compliance:

Full adherence to professional ethics is required in accordance with Law No. 70/2020. Approved technical standards for healthcare facilities and practitioners must also be implemented in psychological units.



Chinese astronauts for the Shenzhou 20 mission, (from right), Chen Zhongrui, Chen Dong and Wang Jie wave as they attend a send-off ceremony for their manned space mission at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China, Thursday, April 24. (AP)

Lucy's asteroid photos

China sends 3 astronauts to replace Tiangong crew

JIUQUAN, China, April 24, (AP): China has launched three astronauts into space to replace the crew on the Chinese Tiangong space station, marking a further step in the country's ambitions for a crewed mission to the Moon and explore Mars.

The Shenzhou 20 spaceship took off as planned atop China's workhorse Long March 2F rocket at 5:17 p.m. local time (0917 GMT). It will reach the Tiangong about 6.5 hours later.

The rocket lifted off from the launch center in Jiuquan, on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China. The spaceship will remain in space before returning the current crew.

The Tiangong, or "Heavenly Palace," space station has made China a major contender in space, especially since it was entirely Chinese-built after the country was excluded from the International Space Station over US national security concerns. China's space program is controlled by the People's Liberation Army, the military branch of the ruling Communist Party.

The addition of mechanical arms to the three-module station has also raised concerns from some that China could use them to disable satellites or other space vehicles during a crisis.

Since first launching a man into space in 2003 - becoming only the third country to do so - China's space program has advanced at a steady pace. The space agency has also landed an explorer on Mars and a rover on the less-explored far side of the Moon, and aims to put a person on the Moon before 2030.

NASA's Lucy spacecraft has beamed back pictures from its latest asteroid flyby, revealing a long, lumpy, odd-shaped space rock.

The space agency released the images Monday, a day after the close approach. It was considered a dress rehearsal for the more critical asteroid encounters ahead closer to Jupiter.

This asteroid is bigger than scientists anticipated, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) long and 2 miles (3.5 kilometers) wide at its widest point - resembling an irregular bowling pin. It's so long that the spacecraft couldn't capture it in its entirety in the initial downloaded images.

Data returned over the next week should help clarify the asteroid's shape, according to NASA.

Flying fears take off

Experts offer 'tools' to beat air travel anxiety

NEW YORK, April 24, (AP): Adelynn Campbell's last plane trip ended with a panic attack that she got through largely with the help of a kind flight attendant.

That was last year - before 67 people died in January when an American Airlines jet collided with a helicopter over Washington, DC, in the deadliest US air disaster in almost a quarter century.

Now, Campbell is even more hesitant to book a flight.

"It's definitely spiked my concern about getting on a plane and it's making the whole situation a little more stressful than it used to be," said Campbell, 30, who manages a coffee shop in San Diego.

Being at least a little nervous about flying is understandable. But for some people it causes deep anxiety that could require professional help.

Here's a look at air travel anxiety and ways to cope with it.

The evidence is anecdotal, but psychologists and flight attendants say they've seen and heard increased worries - and not only in people who already had anxieties about flying.

"Even people who didn't have a fear of flying are talking about it, given recent events," said Jennifer Dragonette, a California-based psychologist who treats people with air travel anxieties.

Attributed

U.S. air travel was down in March and early April compared with last year, according to TSA statistics. Airlines have attributed the decline to economic uncertainty, a decline in government and corporate travel and - yes - concern about recent aviation incidents.

FAA officials recently acknowledged they weren't doing enough to ensure air safety. Recent polling by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that fewer Americans report feeling safe about flying this year.

Flight attendants who work

planes out of the Washington, DC, airport were particularly rattled by the January collision, said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants union. Some asked for time off to process their emotions, and at least one flight attendant left the job, she said.

Fear of flying - sometimes called aerophobia - goes beyond just being nervous about a flight. It is an intense form of anxiety that centers on certain aspects of air travel. Many aerophobes get most rattled during take-off and landing, or when they think about being locked in a plane.

Research

Some research has suggested it affects about 25 million U.S. adults. Psychologists say it often surfaces in adulthood, developing in people who didn't mind flying as kids but grew more rattled as they aged.

In many cases, it starts when people are in their 20s or 30s, at a time they are experiencing big life changes and new responsibilities - like getting married or becoming a parent - and they start to think that "everything counts," said David Carbonell, a Chicago-based psychologist who authored a workbook to help people cope with flying fears.

A bad flight with heavy turbulence or some other problem may trigger an anxiety that persists, he said.

Campbell, who has other forms of anxiety, developed a fear of flying a few years ago. She is transgender, and said travel can be stressful because of concerns about how she'll be treated by airport security or in other interactions.

Aerophobia can be complicated, Carbonell said. For many people, it's not so much a fear of crashing as it is claustrophobic feelings of being in an enclosed cabin and not having control.

Campbell said that's what she experiences: "feeling trapped and unable to breathe."

COVID-19 shot is on track for full FDA approval - Novavax

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): Novavax's closely watched COVID-19 vaccine is on track for full approval after additional discussions with the Food and Drug Administration, the company said Wednesday.

The news sent company shares soaring more than 21% in morning trading and appeared to resolve concerns that Trump administration officials might be holding up a decision on the shot.

Novavax makes the nation's only traditional protein-based COVID-19 vaccine. It is still being sold under emergency use authorization - unlike mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna that have earned full FDA approval for certain age groups.

The FDA recently asked Novavax to

develop a plan for collecting additional clinical data from those who have gotten the shot, the company said in a statement. It said it is "engaging with the FDA expeditiously" in hopes of receiving approval "as soon as possible."

At FDA, full vaccine approval is the gold standard. The agency was on track to sign off on Novavax's license by its April 1 target date, according to two people with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential agency matters. But FDA's acting commissioner, Dr. Sara Brenner, directed the agency's lead official overseeing the vaccine to pause the decision, according to one of the people.

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Klaasen's 71 off 44 balls had earlier saved Sunrisers from complete destruction

Boult, Sharma shine for Mumbai in 7-wicket win over Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, India, April 24, (AP): Mumbai Indians broke into the top three of the Indian Premier League with a commanding seven-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Impact player Rohit Sharma (70) hit his second straight half-century as Mumbai motored to 146-3 in 15.4 overs, propelling the five-time champions to third place on the points table after struggling early in the season.

Heinrich Klaasen's 71 off 44 balls had earlier saved Hyderabad from complete destruction to score 143-8 with new ball bowlers Trent Boult (4-26) and Deepak Chahar (2-12) doing the most damage.

It's a remarkable turnaround for Mumbai, which won only one of its first five games before bouncing back with four straight wins. Hyderabad is at No. 9, just ahead of last-place Chennai Super Kings.

Sharma had a quiet start to the season with a top-score of 26 in his first six games. But the seasoned T20 batter got back into his groove when he smacked unbeaten 76 against Chennai at home three days ago.

Sharma continued where he left off and despite the slowness of the wicket he smacked three sixes and

eight fours in his fluent half-century. Sharma also became the highest six hitter for Mumbai with 259 sixes and surpassed Kieron Pollard's Mumbai record of 258.

Ryan Rickelton (11) yet again couldn't capitalize on a good start and offered a one-handed return catch to Jaydev Unadkat, who had replaced struggling Mohammed Shami in Hyderabad's playing XI.

Sharma then shared two half-century stands with Will Jacks (22) and Yadav before chipping a regulation catch at mid-wicket when Mumbai was just 14 runs away from victory.

Yadav summed up a dismal night for Hyderabad when the ball burst through the hands of Nitesh Kumar Reddy at deep mid-wicket for a four as the fielder seemed to have lost the ball in the floodlights and it crossed the ropes.

"Glad the boys are taking the momentum in the right way," Mumbai skipper Hardik Pandya said. "I've felt, once everyone starts clicking in this team there will be domination. ... Overall, a wonderful win."

Hyderabad's top-order had showed early sparks in the tournament when it not only racked up 286

against Rajasthan Royals in its opening game but also chased down 246 against Punjab Kings at home last week.

Other than those two bright moments, Hyderabad batters had mostly struggled this season.

Head fell for a four-ball duck when he top-edged Boult's length delivery outside the off stump and Abhishek Sharma was caught at cover point when he got deceived by left-armers' slow knuckle ball.

In between those two wickets, Chahar had removed Ishan Kishan in a bizarre fashion. On-field umpire first declared Chahar's leg-side delivery a wide but changed his decision and lifted his finger when he saw Kishan walking back. However, Ultra edge later showed on television that the ball had missed the bat as Kishan got strangled for the second time this season.

Klaasen revived the innings by combining in a 99-run stand with Abhinav Manohar (43) off 63 balls before Jasprit Bumrah completed 300 wickets in T20 cricket when Klaasen missed out the low full toss and was caught at deep mid-wicket in the penultimate over.



Mumbai Indians' Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Milan ruins Inter treble bid to book spot in Italian Cup final



Inter Milan's Alessandro Bastoni, left, and AC Milan's Christian Pulisic vie for the ball during an Italian Cup semifinal second leg soccer match between Inter Milan and AC Milan at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Juventus wastes chance to move back into Champions League places

MILAN, April 24, (AP): AC Milan hasn't achieved much this season - except when playing city rival Inter Milan.

Milan ruined Inter's bid for a treble and advanced to the Italian Cup final with a 3-0 derby win courtesy of two goals from Luka Jovic.

It was Milan's third win over Inter this season, having also beaten the Nerazzurri in the Italian Super Cup final in January.

"It was a very important game for us. As you know we are not that good in Serie A. We had to show the quality today. We had to show the character," Jovic said. "And we showed it and we are going to Rome."

And if Milan can win another trophy, coach Sergio Conceicao might have a chance at keeping his job - despite the seven-time European champion sitting ninth in Serie A.

Winning the Italian Cup - which carries a Europa League berth - could be Milan's only route to a spot in continental play for next season.

Milan advanced on 4-1 aggregate following a 1-1 first leg.

Bologna brings a 3-0 lead over Empoli into the second leg of the other semifinal on Thursday.

The final is scheduled for May 14 in Rome.

Inter pressed forward early on and



AC Milan players celebrate after the Italian Cup semifinal second leg soccer match between Inter Milan and AC Milan at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Federico Dimarco struck the crossbar in the 23rd. But Jovic put Milan ahead 13 minutes later with a powerful header and then doubled the advantage from close range shortly after the break.

Tijjani Reijnders added another for Milan in the 85th by finishing off a full team move.

"We have a lot of belief," Reijnders said. "We have difficulties in the league but we know this is the fastest way to reach (Europe). And if we play

like we did today we can win this trophy."

It was Inter's second straight loss after the Serie A leader fell 1-0 at Bologna on Sunday. Inter will play Barcelona in the Champions League semifinals.

Juventus wasted a chance to move back into the Champions League places following a 1-0 loss at Parma in a rescheduled Serie A match.

Parma forward Mateo Pellegrino scored with a header in first-half stop-

page time.

Juventus remained fifth, one point behind Bologna, with five rounds remaining.

Making matters worse for Juventus was that center forward Dusan Vlahovic came off at halftime with an apparent thigh issue.

Juventus was also in fifth place when it fired Thiago Motta last month and hired Igor Tudor as its new coach for the remainder of the season.

It was Juventus' first loss under Tudor, following two wins and a draw.

Cristian Chivu took over as Parma coach in February and the team is on a six-game unbeaten run that also includes a 2-2 draw with Serie A leader Inter Milan this month.

Parma-Juventus was one of four matches postponed from Monday due to the death of Pope Francis. Each game was preceded by a moment of silence to mourn the pope, who died Monday at 88.

Lazio leapfrogged city rival Roma and moved back into sixth place - level on points with Juventus - with a 2-0 win at 10-man Genoa.

Valentin Castellanos and Boulaye Dia scored for Lazio after Genoa defender Sebastian Otoa was shown a direct red card in his Serie A debut for pushing down Mattia Zaccagni.

The match was suspended briefly during the first half when flares lit by Genoa's hard-core "ultra" fans covered the field in smoke.

Attorneys warn of chaos

Judge delays \$2.8 bln NCAA settlement deal

WASHINGTON, April 24, (AP): The judge overseeing the rewriting of the college sports rulebook threw a potentially deal-wrecking roadblock into the mix Wednesday, insisting parties in the \$2.8 billion antitrust lawsuit redo the part of the proposed settlement involving roster limits that many schools are already putting in motion.

"Any disruption that may occur is a problem of Defendants' and NCAA members schools' own making," U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken wrote in a pointed five-page order in which she gave no weight to the argument that a reworking of the proposal could throw college sports into chaos.

She gave the sides 14 days to contact their mediator and return to the bargaining table.

The settlement in the landmark class-action lawsuit called for schools to no longer be bound by scholarship limits for their teams, but rather by roster limits in which everyone would be eligible for aid.

It figured to ultimately weed out walk-ons, athletes on partial scholarships and, in extreme cases, entire teams. In preparing for the settlement to be approved, schools across the country have been busy cutting players who, in turn, were finding spots on new teams.

Attorneys argued that undoing all those moves would add even more turbulence to an already tumultuous landscape.

Not her problem, Wilken said, in insisting both sides jumped the gun in making the moves.

"The fact that the Court granted preliminary approval of the settlement agreement should not have been interpreted as an indication that it was certain that the Court would grant final approval," Wilken said of the preliminary nod she gave back in October that set these transactions in motion.

While the attorneys look for a Plan B, the clock is ticking. Terms of the settlement were supposed to go into effect July 1. Football practice starts soon after. Whether rosters will come in at around the old average (128) or the newly prescribed limit (105) is an open question.

One of the plaintiff attorneys, working virtually in lockstep with the NCAA and conferences since this settlement was (all but) locked in, released a daunting statement.

"We will work hard to convince the NCAA and the conferences to address the court's concerns," Steve Berman said. "If we are unable to do so, then we are off to trial and we will return to fighting the NCAA in court with next steps."

The NCAA and five defendant conferences released a joint statement saying they were closely reviewing the order.

"Our focus continues to be on securing approval of this significant agreement, which aims to create more opportunities than ever before for student-athletes while fostering

much-needed stability and fairness in college sports," it said.

Steven Molo, an attorney who represented more than 190 athletes at Wilken's hearing earlier this month, viewed the order as a victory of sorts.

"We're grateful the court understood the pain the proposed settlement has been inflicting on many student-athletes who've dedicated themselves to their sports," Molo said. "The tremendous unfairness of the arbitrary roster limits must be addressed."

As for the rest of the settlement - including the \$2.8 billion in back damages and the \$20.5 million many schools can dole out to their athletes - Wilken said she's ready to go.

But this has been portrayed all along as an all-or-nothing deal, and though it was a mere matter of routine, Wilken's release of a pre-trial schedule - with some hearings scheduled out through September - underscored the idea that, indeed, there's at least a chance this lawsuit could be resolved with a trial.

Not that any of this should have surprised the attorneys.

Wilken made clear toward the end of the daylong settlement hearing April 7 that she would like the parties to find a way to gradually implement the roster-limit rules. She suggested "grandfathering in" athletes who already had roster spots. In her order Wednesday, she insisted that wasn't as impossible as the attorneys made it sound.

"One way of achieving that could be to modify the settlement agreement to ensure that no (athletes) who have or had a roster spot will lose it as a result of the immediate implementation of the settlement agreement," she wrote. "Limits could be accomplished gradually by attrition."

Wilken also rejected attorneys' arguments that, essentially, the good being done for thousands of athletes who can now get paid (and who might have a previously unavailable shot at a scholarship) offsets whatever damage takes place to the players who find themselves at new schools - or no school at all.

"The Court can approve the settlement agreement only if it is fair, reasonable, and adequate after considering, in relevant part, whether it 'treats class members equitably relative to each other,'" Wilken wrote, in quoting a previous ruling.

It is not clear how many roster spots across hundreds of schools will vanish under the settlement, though some estimates have pegged the number in the thousands.

What is sure is that this ruling shoves the schools' attempts at getting ready for 2025-26 a step deeper into a black hole of uncertainty. Also clear: the judge is every bit as concerned about the hundreds of athletes losing roster spots as she is with the multibillion-dollar industry they inhabit.

Dembélé's goals drying up for PSG at wrong moment with Arsenal looming

PARIS, April 24, (AP): Ousmane Dembélé's goals are drying up for Paris Saint-Germain at just the wrong moment.

PSG has a Champions League semifinal coming up against an Arsenal team brimming with confidence after eliminating 15-time champion Real Madrid in fine style.

Dembélé hasn't scored in the past three Ligue 1 games for French champion PSG and has netted only once in the past five Champions League matches. His last goal in either competition was in mid-March.

Although Dembélé did score twice in the French Cup semifinal, that was against second-tier Dunkerque and he hasn't looked at his sharpest in recent weeks.

It's a far cry from earlier in the season, when he netted two straight Ligue 1 hat tricks and scored in 10 straight games to establish himself as the team's leading player following Kylian Mbappé's off-season departure to Real Madrid.

France's soccer media has been

speculating about Dembélé's mood since the return leg of the quarterfinal against Aston Villa.

PSG lost 3-2 after succumbing to a second-half onslaught from the English team but advanced 5-4 on aggregate. Dembélé appeared to reproach some of his teammates for easing up after leading 2-0 in the return leg to move 5-1 up overall, and there was reportedly little celebrating in the dressing room after the game.

PSG coach Luis Enrique must decide whether to start Dembélé in Friday's home game against Nice, in the hope he rediscovers his scoring touch, or keep him rested for Tuesday's encounter with Arsenal.

He may need the lightning-fast Dembélé at his skillful best against a side that limited Madrid's star-studded attack to one goal in a two-game quarterfinal series and kept Mbappé quiet.

While PSG is aiming to win the Champions League for the first time, Nice is bidding to qualify for next sea-

son's competition.

Coach Franck Haise's fifth-place team is inconsistent but remains a candidate to finish in the top three and secure an automatic place. The team in fourth place enters Champions League qualifying.

Heading into this weekend's games, Nice was two points behind Lille in fourth; three behind Monaco in third spot, and four adrift of second-place Marseille.

Nice has extra incentive to beat PSG because Lyon and Strasbourg are just behind on goal difference.

Dembélé's mini-slump allowed Marseille forward Mason Greenwood to close the gap in the race to finish as Ligue 1's top scorer.

Dembélé leads with 21, while Greenwood has 18.

Jonathan David follows on 16 in what is expected to be his last season with Lille before joining a leading European team in the summer. The Canada striker has scored 109 goals in 228 games since joining Lille five years ago.



PSG's Ousmane Dembele, left, makes an attempt to score during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Aston Villa and Paris Saint-Germain at Villa Park stadium, Birmingham, England. (AP)

SPORTS

Zain sponsors Fakhar Al-Arab Arabian horse show for 2nd consecutive year at The Arena



Al-Marzouq honors Al-Musaibeh for Zain's support, joined by Al-Mujhim.



The show celebrated the beauty of purebred Arabian horses.

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: For the second year in a row, Zain sponsored the Fakhar Al-Arab (Pride of Arabia) show for purebred Arabian horses, held at The Arena Kuwait in 360 Mall. This unique event celebrated the beauty of purebred Arabian horses, their owners, and breeders in Kuwait. The event was held under the supervision of the European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations (ECAHO) and featured the participation of 160 horses.

During the closing ceremony, Zain took part in honoring the owners of the winning horses in the major categories, in the presence of Mohammad Jassim Al-



Al-Musaibeh participating in honoring the winners.

Marzouq, Chairman of Tamdeen Group, Dhari Al-Mujhim, Head of the Show's Organizing Committee, and Hamad Al-Musaibeh, Corporate Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait.

Zain is proud to continue supporting this distinguished event for the second consecutive year, especially as it celebrates the beauty of purebred Arabian horses – one of the most iconic cultural symbols of Kuwaiti, Arab, and Islamic heritage. These horses are among the oldest, finest, most intelligent, and beautiful breeds, with a history that spans thousands of years.

Zain's participation in this championship reflects the private sector's growing role in supporting high-level cultural and sports events hosted in Kuwait. It aims to contribute to the advancement of local sports, elevate Kuwait's presence on the global stage, and support athletes across various disciplines.

The championship featured 160 horses from top studs in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt. It was judged by an international panel accredited by ECAHO, evaluating the horses based on rigorous and specialized criteria, including Arabian identity, head, neck, body, legs, and movement.

Liverpool on brink of title, Palace frustrates Arsenal

Reds need just a point against Spurs



Arsenal's Declan Rice takes a shot during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Crystal Palace at Emirates stadium in London. (AP)

LONDON, April 24, (AP): Liverpool's Premier League coronation was delayed when second-place Arsenal drew 2-2 with Crystal Palace to keep the title race alive for a few more days at least.

Chasing a record-tying 20th English top-flight championship, Liverpool can take care of business on Sunday by avoiding defeat to Tottenham at Anfield. That would ensure the Reds cannot be caught by Arsenal with four more rounds remaining.

Arsenal twice squandered the lead at Emirates Stadium, with Jean-Philippe Mateta taking advantage of defensive sloppiness to score Crystal Palace's second equalizer in the 83rd and leave Mikel Arteta's team 12 points behind Liverpool.

One more point is needed by

Liverpool to clinch a second title in five years and draw level with fierce rival Manchester United on No. 20. Becoming the champion in 2020 ended the storied club's 30-year title drought but Liverpool's players

couldn't celebrate in front of their fans because of restrictions during the pandemic.

Arsenal, which started with star forward Bukayo Saka on the bench, looked vulnerable



Crystal Palace's goalkeeper Dean Henderson, 2nd right, goes for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Crystal Palace at Emirates stadium in London. (AP)

throughout against Palace, with its players perhaps having an eye on the Champions League semifinals against Paris Saint-Germain starting next week.

They went ahead through Jakub Kiwior's header in the third minute, with Palace replying when playmaker Eberechi Eze met a corner with a brilliantly taken volley that flew in off the post in the 27th minute.

Leandro Trossard wriggled free in the area and scored with a deflected shot in the 42nd minute to restore Arsenal's lead, but Mateta had the final say after capitalizing on William Saliba's mistake and floating a shot over stranded goalkeeper David Raya from around 40 meters.

Arsenal has been runner-up to Manchester City in the Premier League the previous two seasons and is facing a third straight second-place finish.

However, an improving City, a 2-1 winner over Aston Villa, is only six points behind Arsenal in third place.

Kuwait Club and Kazma claim thrilling victories in semifinals

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: Kuwait Club edged past Al-Qurain with a 102-95 victory in the semifinals of the Basketball League Playoffs. The high-octane clash took place at the Basketball Association Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Despite a strong showing from Al-Qurain – who pushed the defending champion and Merger League leaders to the limit – Kuwait Club's experience ultimately proved decisive. The "Sons of Kaifan" held their nerve to take a crucial step toward the finals.

In another nail-biting semifinal, Kazma emerged victorious over Al-Qadsia with a narrow 103-101 win. The tightly contested encounter saw momentum swing between both sides, with the "Orange" squad only clinching the win in the final moments.

The semifinal series continues tomorrow, Saturday, with Kuwait Club facing Al-Qurain and Kazma going up against Al-Qadsia once again. A second win for both Kuwait and Kazma would secure their spots in the league finals. However, victories for



Kazma player dunks against Al-Qadsia.

Al-Qurain and Al-Qadsia would force a third and decisive matchup.

The Basketball League champion will be determined through a best-of-five playoff format.

Best of the Rest

Tigres salvages draw against Cruz Azul: Juan Jose Purata scored a late equalizer as UANL Tigres salvaged a 1-1 draw against Cruz Azul in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup semifinals series.

Rodolfo Rotondi put the visitors ahead in the 68th minute and Purata leveled things up with a header in the 84th, on a cross from Juan Brunetta.

"It was a tough semifinal match against a great opponent," Rotondi said. "The series is wide open, and we are going home to define it in front of our fans."

Cruz Azul beat Club America in the previous round to progress to the semifinals for the first time since 2022 and now is aiming to equal its crosstown rival as the winning club in the region with seven titles.

La Maquina is seeking its first regional crown since 2013-14 when they beat Tijuana.

Tigres, meanwhile, advanced over MLS LA Galaxy and is trying to capture their first CONCACAF title since 2020.

The second leg will be played next Thursday at the Olympic stadium in Mexico City. (AP)

Vardy leaving Leicester to end 13-year stay

LONDON, April 24, (AP): Jamie Vardy is leaving Leicester following its relegation from the Premier League, ending the striker's 13-year stay at a club he famously helped to win the English title in 2016. The 38-year-old former England international will depart at the end of the season, Leicester said on Thursday.

The announcement came two days after Vardy took to social media to express his "anger and sadness" at a season he described as a "total embarrassment," with Leicester having been consigned to relegation with five matches to spare.

Vardy will go down as a Premier League great,

having scored 143 goals – placing him No. 15 on the competition's all-time list – and once netted in a record 11 straight games in Leicester's improbable title-winning campaign. The team won the league at preseason odds of 5,000-1.

"Nine years ago, we did the impossible – we won the Premier League," Vardy said in a video message on Instagram in which he also recounted winning the FA Cup in 2021 and reaching the Champions League quarterfinals in 2017. "Those memories will last a lifetime."

Leicester chairman Aiyawatt Srivadhnanaprabha described Vardy, who joined from

lower-league team Fleetwood Town for 1 million pounds (now \$1.33 million) in 2012, as a "unique" and "special" player.

"He holds a place in the hearts of everyone connected to Leicester City, and he certainly has my deepest respect and affection," Aiyawatt said. "I am endlessly grateful for everything he has given to this football club."

Vardy has five games left for Leicester. His final home match will be on May 18 against Ipswich.

Leicester has just 18 points from 33 games and is in next-to-last place.

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The new Aron Kristjansson leads the team's training session ahead of the Arab Cup in Kuwait.

Sports

Major test ahead of Asian Cup challenge

Kuwait handball team eyes Arab Cup glory under new coach Kristjansson

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 24: The Kuwaiti national handball team began its training sessions in preparation for the 10th Arab Cup for Men's National Teams with 22 out of 23 players reporting to the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex the day before yesterday. The tournament, hosted by Kuwait, will be held from May 4 to 12 and coincides with the International Handball Federation Week.

Notably absent from the session was national team star Saif Al-Adwani, who has joined Qatar's Al-Arabi Club for the remainder of their league season from May 23 to 28. He is joined in Qatar by Kazma's Tunisian professional, Mohammed Farad.

The training session was overseen by newly appointed Icelandic head coach Aron Kristjansson. Before the workout, Kristjansson addressed the players in the

presence of Handball Federation Treasurer Khaled Taleb, National Teams Director Faisal Saywan, and Team Administrator Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi.

Coach Kristjansson's preliminary squad features:

Goalkeepers: Hassan Safar, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri

Wings and Backs: Mohammed Bou Yabes, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Haidar Dashti, Fawaz Al-Mishari, Fawaz Mubarak

Playmakers and Pivots: 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, Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Absent: Saif Al-Adwani (temporarily with Al-Arabi, Qatar)

Khaled Taleb, Treasurer of the Handball Federation, expressed optimism about the national team's campaign in the Arab Cup, highlighting strong ambition from both

players and coaching staff. "The coach was fully briefed on the local league and player performance even before his arrival," Taleb said. "This tournament is not just a chance to win the title, but also key preparation for upcoming major competitions."

Taleb emphasized that Kuwait aims to deliver a well-organized tournament worthy of its handball legacy, made possible through the backing of the Public Authority for Sports and the tireless efforts of the Handball Federation's board and committees.

He added that the Arab Cup will serve as a vital test event ahead of Kuwait's hosting of the Asian Cup in January.

Coach Aron Kristjansson voiced his enthusiasm for leading Kuwait's "Blue Handball Team," praising the country's history of excellence in Arab, Gulf, and Asian competitions. "It's an honor to work with such a talented group of players from the local league," he said. "With support from the federation and our dedicated staff, we are determined to make a strong impression in the Arab Championship."

Cavs hold off Heat to take 2-0 lead, Rockets even series with Warriors



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry, center, fights for a loose ball with Houston Rockets guard Fred VanVleet, left, and Rockets center Steven Adams during the second half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the Houston Rockets in Houston. (AP)

Arab Shooting Championship a key step toward '28 Olympics: Al-Otaibi

CAIRO, April 24: Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi, President of both the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, highlighted the vital role of the ongoing Arab Shooting Championship in Cairo - set to continue until May 1 - in preparing Arab marksmen for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Al-Otaibi expressed his pride in attending the prestigious event, stating, "It is a great honor to be here in Egypt, the heartbeat of the Arab world, to participate in this significant sporting gathering that symbolizes unity, brotherhood, and noble competition."

He emphasized that the championship transcends sport, saying, "This event is a powerful message of unity. Sports bring people together, and when Arabs come together on one land, we unite in love, peace, and ambition."

Al-Otaibi also acknowledged the unwavering support for sports in Kuwait, generously provided by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He noted the Federation's commitment to hosting key tournaments, including the successful event held in Kuwait last November under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. "This current champion-



KUNA photo
Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi speaks at the opening ceremony.

ship in Egypt reflects our continued dedication to excellence," he added.

Al-Otaibi also announced that another major shooting event will be hosted by the Moroccan Shooting Federation this coming September in the city of Tangier.

Concluding his remarks, Al-Otaibi wished all teams success and progress, stating, "May this championship mark another step forward in the growth and global recognition of Arab shooting."

NBA going back to Abu Dhabi for pair of preseason games

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, April 24, (AP): The NBA is returning to the Arabian Gulf next season.

New York and Philadelphia will play preseason games on Oct. 2 and 4 in Abu Dhabi, the league announced Thursday. It will be the fourth consecutive year that the NBA - which signed a deal with tourism officials in Abu Dhabi in 2021 - has played preseason games there.

Milwaukee and Atlanta went in 2022, Dallas and Minnesota went in 2023, and Boston and Denver opened the 2024 preseason there. USA Basketball also visited Abu Dhabi for games preceding the 2023 Basketball World Cup in the Philippines and the 2024 Paris Olympics.

It's the third overseas preseason destination announced by the NBA for next season, joining China - which the league is planning to visit for the first time in six years - and Australia.

New Orleans will travel to Melbourne for games against a pair of Australian teams, Melbourne United on Oct. 3 and South East Melbourne Phoenix on Oct. 5. Those games will mark the first time an NBA team plays in Australia.

And in China, it'll be Brooklyn and Phoenix facing off in the gambling hub of Macao on Oct. 10 and Oct. 12.

Best of the Rest

Kipyegon eyes history in Paris: Three-time Olympic middle-distance champion Faith Kipyegon will try to become the first woman to run the mile in under four minutes this summer.

Her sponsor Nike said that Kipyegon will attempt the history-making feat on June 26 at the Stade Charléty in Paris.

She won her third straight Olympic 1,500-meter title in Paris last year.

Kipyegon is the current women's mile record holder, clocking four minutes, 7.64 seconds at a Monaco track meet in 2023 to best the mark of 4:12.33 set by Dutchwoman Sifan Hassan in 2019, also at Monaco.

Now she plans to make history.

"I'm a three-time Olympic champion. I've achieved World Championship titles," the 30-year-old Kipyegon said in a statement released by Nike. "I thought, What else? Why not dream outside the box?" (AP)

Brown scores 36 as Celtics beat Magic without Tatum

CLEVELAND, April 24, (AP): Donovan Mitchell delivered when the Cleveland Cavaliers needed him most.

After the Miami Heat seized momentum and appeared on the verge of possibly tying the series, Mitchell took over. He scored Cleveland's next eight points and the Cavaliers held on for a 121-112 victory on Wednesday night for a 2-0 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

"I love the fact the game happened like this. We had to really find a way as a group and then we responded," said Mitchell, who led Cleveland with 30 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter. "I kept trying to find the mismatch and make a play." It was the 27th career playoff game with at least 30 points for Mitchell, who also had six rebounds and six assists.

The Cavaliers had a 19-point lead with under 3 minutes remaining in the third quarter before the Heat made their run to get within 105-103 lead with 3:11 left.

Mitchell responded on the ensuing trip by driving and making a step-back



Boston Celtics center Luke Kornet (40) blocks a pass by Orlando Magic guard Cole Anthony (50) during the first half in game 2 of a first-round NBA playoff basketball series in Boston. (AP)

floater to put the Cavs up by four.

Rockets 109, Warriors 94

In Houston, Jalen Green made eight 3-pointers and scored 38 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a win over the Golden State Warriors in a testy matchup to even the first-round Western Conference series at one game apiece.

The seventh-seeded Warriors never led and played short-handed for most of the night after Jimmy Butler left with a pelvic contusion after a hard fall on a foul late in the first quarter.

Green, the No. 2 pick in the 2021 draft, rebounded from a flop in his playoff debut, when he scored just seven points on 3-of-15 shooting, with a dominant Game 2.

His eight 3-pointers were two more than the No. 2-seeded Rockets made on 6-of-29 shooting in a 95-85 Game 1 loss.

Alperen Sengun had 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Rockets. Tari Eason had 14 points off the bench.

Game 2 is Saturday night at Golden State. Stephen Curry had 20 points and nine assists for the Warriors and became the 11th player in NBA history to reach 4,000 career playoff points with 4,017.

Houston led by 20 with about 10 minutes left before the Warriors used a 9-0 run, with two 3s from Quinten Post, run to get within 11. Jalen Green was called for a flagrant foul on Draymond Green at the end of that run after he flailed an arm into his face.

Celtics 109, Magic 100

In Boston, as it became evident that All-Star Jayson Tatum would have to sit out Game 2 of the Celtics' first-

round playoff series against the Orlando Magic, Jaylen Brown wanted Boston coach Joe Mazzulla to know something.

"He came in saying he was going to do everything it takes to win," Mazzulla said.

Brown came through on that promise. And his teammates followed his lead.

Brown had 36 points, 10 rebounds and five assists, Kristaps Porzingis returned to the game after getting a bloody gash to the forehead and finished with 20 points, and the Celtics beat the Magic. Boston took a 2-0 series lead while playing without Tatum, who has a bone bruise in his right wrist and missed a playoff game for the first time in his career.

Boston led by 15 points in the second half, then held off a late push by Orlando. The Celtics hit 12 3-pointers and went 25 of 33 from the free-throw line. Derrick White and Brown had 17 of Boston's 28 points in the final period; White finished with 17.

Game 3 is Friday night at Orlando.

Tatum had not missed a playoff game in his eight seasons with Boston. He injured his wrist in Game 1 after landing awkwardly following a flagrant foul by Kentavious Caldwell-Pope.

Bilbao opens 8-point gap above Villarreal

Madrid keeps pace with Barca ahead of Copa final

MADRID, April 24, (AP): Real Madrid kept pace with Spanish league leader Barcelona with a 1-0 win at Getafe ahead of the rivals' meeting in the Copa del Rey final.

Arda Güler scored a first-half goal for Madrid, which moved back within four points of Barcelona. The Catalan club edged Mallorca 1-0.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti used many reserves before Saturday's Copa final in Seville. Brazil forward Endrick made his first Spanish league start with the club, and Vinícius Júnior was substituted in the second half. Jude Bellingham came off the bench in the second half.

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga had to be replaced with an apparent muscle injury in the final minutes and is doubtful to be available for Saturday's final.

Madrid suffered demoralizing losses in both "clásicos" against Barcelona this season - 5-2

in the Spanish Super Cup final and 4-0 in their first league encounter at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Güler scored the winner with a well-placed right-footed shot in the 21st minute at the Coliseum in Getafe.

Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois needed to make a couple of difficult saves late to secure Madrid's victory.

It was the third league win in a row for Madrid, which endured a Champions League elimination against Arsenal in the competition's quarterfinals.

Getafe has lost three in a row and four of its last five league games. The club from southern Madrid sits in 12th place.

The match was briefly stopped in the second half as fans from Getafe chanted "Die (Dani) Ceballos, die Ceballos."

Celta Vigo moved to seventh place by routing fifth-place Villarreal 3-0 at home with goals by Fer López, Borja Iglesias, and Iago Aspas.

The victory ended a two-match losing streak for the Vigo team.

Villarreal, winless in two matches, played a man down from the 37th after Eric Bailly was sent off with a straight red card.

Iñaki Williams scored five minutes into the match to give fourth-place Athletic Bilbao a 1-0 win over Las Palmas, helping the Basque Country club to open an eight-point gap above Villarreal, which remains with a game in hand.

Las Palmas, sitting in 18th place, was coming off two wins in a row after a 12-match winless streak in the league.

Alaves moved out of the relegation zone by beating ninth-place Real Sociedad 1-0 at home with a goal by Nahuel Tenaglia in the 65th minute.



Getafe's Juan Iglesias, left, and Real Madrid's Fran Garcia challenge for the ball during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Getafe and Real Madrid at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez stadium in Getafe, Spain. (AP)