

Traffic ends three-year renewals on driving license

Envoy presents credentials

One-year renewals online

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The traffic sector has stopped renewing driving licenses for 3 years, reports Al-Anba daily.

News watch

QUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso

A large number of Islamic extremists launched an attack on Burkina Faso's military in the country's east, killing 33 soldiers and wounding a dozen others, the army said Friday.

TUNIS: Tunisia's coast guard

says it has recovered around 210 bodies of migrants under two weeks that have washed up on the North African country's central coastline amid an ongoing increase in migration.

RABAT: The annual meetings

of the Arab financial institutions kicked off Saturday, with the participation of Arab delegations, including Kuwait, representing the ministries of finance and economy, and governors of central banks as well as some senior officials.

AMMAN: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad

said Saturday the world needs China's political and economic presence in order to ensure global balancing, particularly amid Russian-Sino relations and BRICS alliance.

NEW DELHI: Eleven people

died and four more were hospitalized after a gas leak Sunday in northern India's Punjab state, local media reported.

Goals affirmed

WASHINGTON, April 30, (KUNA): Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah submitted her credentials as the new Ambassador of Kuwait to Washington during a meeting with US President Joe Biden, said a statement on Sunday.

The Kuwaiti Embassy in the Washington, in a statement obtained by KUNA, indicated that Ambassador Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Biden.



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah during a meeting with US President Joe Biden.

KUNA photo

Continued on Page 4

KFH posts net profit of KD 162.1 million for Q1 2023

Details Page 6

Biden told to be tough

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): A dozen senators are making a bipartisan appeal to President Joe Biden to reinvigorate the power of U.S. authorities to seize Iranian oil assets under an enforcement program they say has been allowed to languish.

Despite existing sanctions, Iranian oil exports jumped 35% last year and proceeds are being used to sponsor attacks on U.S. citizens and service members as well as allies, the senators said in a letter to the president.

Brinkmanship at sea was on display Thursday when masked Iranian navy commandos seized a U.S.-bound oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman, one of several vessels it has taken as bargaining chips in negotiations with the West. Without providing evidence, Tehran said the tanker had run into an Iranian vessel.

Specifically, the senators, led by Republican Joni Ernst of Iowa and Democrat Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut — both from the Armed Services Committee — complain that the Homeland Security Department's security investigations office has been constrained in seizure operations by lack of money.

Since the enforcement program started in 2019, the office has seized nearly \$228 million in Iranian crude and fuel oil linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., the senators said in the letter sent this past week.

But they said the office has not recently been given money that is available under the Treasury Forfeiture Fund to conduct seizures of Iranian oil.

"It is unacceptable that a U.S. government program, which makes the United States and its allies safer, provides funds to remediate the victims of terrorism, and generates income for the United States in a cost-effective manner, has been allowed to languish," the letter says.

The push is coming from a diverse group of senators, among them Republicans Ted Cruz of Texas and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, and Democrats Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Ron Wyden of Oregon. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Israelis protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government to overhaul the judicial system, in Tel Aviv, Israel, April 29, 2023. The demonstrations have been ongoing since the beginning of the year, and organizers plan to continue, despite Netanyahu delaying the changes last month. The leaders of the mass protests want the proposals scrapped altogether. (AP)

Sudan fighting sputters on

US conducts evacuation of citizens

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): Hundreds of Americans fleeing two weeks of deadly fighting in Sudan reached the east African nation's port Saturday in the first U.S.-run evacuation, completing a dangerous land journey under escort of armed drones.

American unmanned aircraft, which have been keeping an eye on overland evacuation routes for days, provided armed overwatch for a bus convoy carrying 200 to 300 Americans over 500 miles, or 800 kilometers, to Port Sudan, a place of relative safety, U.S. officials said.

The U.S., which had none of its officials on the ground for the evacuation, has been criticized by families of trapped Americans in Sudan for initially ruling out any U.S.-run evacuation for Americans who wanted out, calling it too dangerous.

U.S. special operations troops briefly flew to the capital, Khartoum, on April 22 to airlift out American staffers at the embassy and other American government personnel. Several thousand U.S. citizens were left behind, many of them dual-nationals.

More than a dozen other nations had already been carrying out evacuations for their citizens, using a mix of military planes, navy vessels and on the ground personnel.

A wide-ranging group of international mediators - including African and Arab nations, the United Nations and the United States - has only managed to achieve a series of fragile temporary cease-fires that failed to stop clashes but created enough of a lull for tens of thousands of Sudanese to flee to safer areas and for foreign nations to evacuate thousands of their citizens by land, air and sea.

have tried to link up Americans with other nations' evacuation efforts. But that changed as U.S. officials exploited a relative lull in the fighting and, from afar, organized their own convoy for Americans, officials said.

Without the evacuation flights near the capital that other countries have been offering their citizens, many U.S. citizens have been left to make the dangerous overland journey from Khartoum to the country's main Red Sea port, Port Sudan. One Sudanese-American family that made the trip earlier described passing through numerous checkpoints manned by armed men and passing bodies lying in the street and vehicles of other fleeing families who had been killed along the way.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the convoy carried U.S. citizens, local people employed by the U.S. and citizens of allied countries. "We reiterate our warning to Americans not to travel to Sudan," he said.

Meanwhile, an aircraft carrying eight tons of emergency medical aid landed Sunday in Sudan to resupply hospitals devastated by more than two weeks of fighting between forces loyal to rival generals.

The supplies are enough to treat hundreds of wounded, as the civilian death toll from the countrywide violence topped 400. The conflict erupted on April 15 between the nation's army and its paramilitary force, and threatens to thrust Sudan into a raging civil war.

More than two-thirds of hospitals in areas with active fighting are out of service, a national doctors' association has said, citing a shortage of medical supplies, health workers, water and electricity.

On Sunday, the aircraft carrying medical aid took off from Jordan and landed in

the city of Port Sudan, said the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The supplies, including anesthetics, dressings, sutures and other surgical material, are enough to treat more than 1,000 people wounded in the conflict, the ICRC said.

"The hope is to get this material to some of the most critically busy hospitals in the capital" of Khartoum and other hot spots, said Patrick Youssef, ICRC's regional director for Africa.

The Sudan Doctors' Syndicate, which monitors casualties, said Sunday that over the past two weeks, 425 civilians were killed and 2,091 wounded. The Sudanese Health Ministry on Saturday put the overall death toll, including fighters, at 528, with 4,500 wounded.

Some of the deadliest battles have raged across Khartoum. The fighting pits the army chief, Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, against Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the head of a paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces.

The generals, both with powerful foreign backers, were allies in an October 2021 military coup that halted Sudan's fitful transition to democracy, but they have since turned on each other.

Ordinary Sudanese have been caught in the crossfire. Tens of thousands have fled to neighboring countries, including Chad and Egypt, while others remain pinned down with dwindling supplies. Thousands of foreigners have been evacuated in airlifts and land convoys.

On Sunday, fighting continued in different parts of the capital where residents hiding in their homes reported hearing artillery fire. There have been lulls in fighting, but never a fully observed cease-fire, despite repeated attempts by international mediators.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:42	Asr .....	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:08	Maghrib ..	18:24
Zohr .....	11:45	Isha .....	19:46

# Local

**Expected weather for the next 24 hours:**  
**By Day:** Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

## Weather

**By Night:** Mild with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind to northerly wind with speeds of 20-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	36	26		
Kuwait Airport	37	25		
Abdaly	37	20		
Jahra	40	26		
Salmiyah	30	25		
Ahmadi	31	25		
Nuwaisib	37	22		
Wafra	39	20		

**CIVIL ID STATUS INQUIRY:** <https://e.gov.kw/sites/kgenglish/Pages/eServices/PACI/CivilIDStatus.aspx>

## Piracy cases, hacking sees increase

# Govt moves to protect state data, pre-empt cybersecurity attacks

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: With the increasing cases of piracy and frequent hacker attacks on government websites and stealing data, and the hacking of bank accounts of many individuals and stealing money, Kuwait has begun practical measures to implement new plans to meet the growing challenges in the field of cybersecurity, protect the country's data from hacking, and fortify automated systems, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The head of the Kuwaiti Information Security Society, Dr. Safa'a Zaman, said Kuwait is about to take a number of measures to protect the financial data of citizens and residents, and to stop what she called bleeding in private bank accounts through electronic fraud methods carried out by gangs inside and outside Kuwait.

Zaman told Al-Qabas that there are circulars and legal amendments that will be issued soon, for citizens, residents, and commercial bank employees, that enable to stop transfers or withdrawals from accounts quickly, when the victim learns of the fraud he/she is subjected to, which is to contact the bank and request to freeze the banking process that has taken place, whether they have been withdrawn from his balance, or are still pending.

She called for pursuing applications, websites and other places of selling



Dr. Zaman

data that violate privacy, stressing that building a secure system requires legislation to help regulate transactions.

In the context, the Civil Service Commission will coordinate with the Central Agency for Public Tenders to complete the tender procedures for the provision of a data protection system against cyber attacks. This comes at a time when the Anti-Corruption Commission (Nazaha) announced the introduction of a practice for the supply of licenses for the monitoring and analysis of security information system, the supply of devices for the system to reduce breaches and the provision of technical support.

An official source in Nazaha told Al-Qabas that the step came based on the authority's commitment to the instructions of the Council of Ministers, to enhance cyber security and immunize electronic internal systems from any possible attacks.

### Platform

In addition, the National Center for Cybersecurity recently launched a platform for data exchange to enhance cyber security among government agencies and to take precautionary measures, before any cyber attack occurs.

Responsible sources also revealed other new tenders that will be launched soon to protect the technical systems in the country's authorities from "hackers" attacks, in addition to preserving the confidentiality

of information. The sources pointed out that the Cabinet directed the state authorities to take strict measures to repel any attempt to hack the state data system, and to coordinate between the concerned authorities to enhance cybersecurity.

The eight goals of the data center include protecting government data from loss and ensuring its availability in the event of disasters; maintaining the continuity of 888 critical systems in government agencies; providing an alternative site for protection for about 53 different government agencies; enhancing confidence among users of electronic services; developing government infrastructure to keep pace with the latest technologies; immediate and effective response to risks and threats of all kinds; ensure speedy recovery from risks in the event of their occurrence and raising the capabilities of workers in 97 government information centers.

A government report issued by CITRA revealed that the completion rate of the national data center project for business continuity and disaster management has reached 39% within the "New Kuwait" plan, and it is scheduled to be completed by 2026.

Meanwhile, the Director General of the General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior, Major General Tawheed Al-Kandari, warned everyone against dealing with phishing and links sent by strangers through social media or any suspicious and unsafe messages, in order not to compromise personal information.

# Session called for Tuesday

Speaker invites govt, legislators

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 30: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim has invited the government and lawmakers to the ordinary session scheduled for Tuesday to discuss the following:**

- Amiri Decree on forming the new government and oath taking of ministers as per Article 91 of the Constitution;

- Approval of the minutes of the previous session;
- 14 incoming letters including that of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanking the lawmakers for their Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr greetings, request of the Youth Affairs Committee chairman to extend the grace period granted to the committee to discuss the proposed allocation of bicycle paths, request of the Public Funds Protection Committee chairman to extend the grace period granted to the committee to investigate information obtained regarding the deposits of the late Chairman of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) Fahd Al-Ragaa in Swiss banks and the resignation of MP Soud Busleeb;

- Report of the Response to the Amiri Speech Committee on replying to the Amiri speech based on the suggested context;

- Government program (2022-2026) as per Article 98 of the Constitution;

- Second deliberation on the bill to amend the procedures and Judicial Trials Law No. 17/1960;
- Report of the Human Resources Committee on the proposal to amend Civil Service Law No. 15/1979;

- Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee on the proposed amendment of Law No. 21/1964 on boycotting Israel and banning any deal with Israel and its affiliates;

- Report of the Business Environment Improvement Committee on the proposal to amend National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Law No. 98/2013;

- Report of the Environment Affairs Committee on the proposed amendment of Law No. 42/2014;

- Report of the Interior and Defense Affairs Committee on the proposal to grant social, health and civil rights to Bedouins and amendment of the Foreigners Residency Law;

- Report of the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee on the final accounts of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports for fiscals 2018/2019 and 2019/2020;

- Report of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee on the proposal to amend Law No. 32/1968 on Kuwaiti currency and banking profession, Law No. 61/1976 on the establishment of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), increase the minimum monthly pension of retirees to KD1,000, issuance of government sukuk and establishment of a fund for compensating the victims of real estate fraud;

- Report of the Social, Health and Labor Affairs Committee on the proposed amendment of Cooperative Societies Law No. 24/1979 and Disabled Affairs Law No. 8/2010;
- Proposals of MPs to form fact-finding committees to investigate the money laundering issue related to the Malaysian Sovereign Fund, fake Kuwaiti citizenship, corruption at Kuwait Investment Authority, and violations committed by the Ministry of Health during the Covid-19 epidemic and Farwaniya Hospital expansion;

- Report of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) on the violations found in the Eurofighters deal.

Meanwhile, MP Badr Al-Humaidi disclosed that he will not run for any election in the future. He believes that dissolving the 2020 Assembly and holding fresh elections will neither lead to change nor stabilize the political situation.

He said, "We participated in the Jeddah Conference, and we met with officials of the Ministry of Hajj, Tawaf institutions and unified agents for guides. We signed several memorandums of understanding in this regard."



Traffic has gradually started to increase after the Eid holidays as people start coming back from their short vacations abroad.

## Seats for Kuwait filled: Al-Muzayen

### 43,000 have registered for Hajj

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Director of the Hajj Department at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Sattam Al-Muzayen affirmed that the number of those registered in the central registration program for Hajj for the next season has reached 43,000. These applicants include 27 thousand citizens who have not performed Hajj previously, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, he indicated that all of the allocated seats for the State of Kuwait have been filled. About 7,800 male and female pilgrims have registered in the Hajj expeditions. The central registration contributed to reducing the prices of the campaigns by 30 to 40 percent.

Al-Muzayen explained that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Hajj Affairs, began preparing early for the Hajj season. It started immediately after the last season with the evaluation of the performance of the work of the Hajj expedition bureaus and obtaining the opinions of the pilgrims in the last season. Workshops were held with the owners of the expeditions.

### Participated

He said, "We participated in the Jeddah Conference, and we met with officials of the Ministry of Hajj, Tawaf institutions and unified agents for guides. We signed several memorandums of understanding in this regard."

This year, we opened registration for Hajj early. For the first time, we opened registration on January 28 for a full month. The entire numbers were nominated for this season, and we started nomination in March. There were priorities in nomination, and the target group was the citizen segment, especially those who had never performed Hajj. It was the first category, and their number was big.

The total number of those registered in the Hajj program was 43,000 for this year's Hajj season. The first category among them is the segment of citizens who have not previously performed Hajj. It amounted to 27,000 male and female citizens. We nominated about 13,000 of them, and those registered with Hajj expedition bureaus are 7,800 pilgrims, and 200 seats remain from Kuwait's share, which are allocated to the administrative and medical staff for the Hajj expeditions.

With regard to Hajj prices, this season we have applied the new central registration and changed the Hajj regulations. This idea has contributed to a significant reduction in Hajj prices. This is part of the ministry's plan to provide a fair price for the Hajj season."

Al-Muzayen indicated that the prices

## 'Rights protected'

### Judiciary supported

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Kuwait National Integrity Society said, "The Kuwaiti judiciary is the impregnable bulwark of the state of institutions and law. It is the safe haven that preserves the rights of all bodies and individuals, citizens and residents", reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, the society affirmed its "rejection of all media discourses that undermine the integrity of the Kuwaiti judiciary, as the whole world witnesses its reputation, integrity and independence."

It explained that, "The Kuwaiti Constitution guarantees the independence and integrity of the judiciary."

Article 162 of the Constitution stipulates that the honor of the judiciary and the integrity and justice of judges are the foundation of rule and the guarantee of rights and liberties.

Article 163 of the Constitution stipulates that no authority may wield any dominion over a judge in his rendering of justice and in no circumstance shall interference be permissible in its performance. The law shall guarantee the autonomy of the judiciary and define the judges' warranties, the provisions concerning them, and the conditions governing their immunity from dismissal.

We reject any attempt by any authority to interfere in the work of the judiciary or prejudice its independence, considering that this is a violation of one of the pillars of the state and a gross violation of the provisions of the constitution and established constitutional principles.

We express solidarity with any position or measures taken by the Supreme Judicial Council to ensure the independence and integrity of the judiciary."

The society called on the concerned officials, public benefit associations, and people of opinion and thought, to "fight for the independence and integrity of the judiciary, and keep the judiciary away from all political disputes and bickering."

for the services that the expedition bureaus provided in the last season have fallen by 30 to 40 percent for some campaigns.

He said, "This is the first step in reducing Hajj prices, as we have another step to study the philosophy of contracts and clusters, and their establishment and arrangement, which in turn will contribute to a significant reduction in prices."



Bukra dawaam: Attendance was scarce in the government sector as offices opened on Sunday, April 30. People had taken extended leave joining it with the Eid holidays. Above: A lone woman is seen proceeding towards her office at one of the public institutions.

## Other Voices

### Ghannouchi, Suwaidan stances

By Ahmad alsarraf

Many have wondered why my daily article stopped for four days, which hasn't happened in decades. To those loved ones, and to those who questioned with beautiful silence, or smiled with gentle malice, I offer my sincere apologies, with a promise not to stop.

For decades, the Brotherhood has enjoyed favor with our government, and the government allowed them to take over the reins of several ministries, and as a result they wreaked havoc in these ministries.

The number of countries with an Islamic majority is approximately fifty, and all of them know their capabilities and respect themselves. Most of them also consider Saudi Arabia the leader of the Sunni Islamic world, and Al-Azhar its beacon, and some consider Iran the defender or leader of the Shiite sect.

As for religious extremism and those who embrace the extremist religious organizations, there were several countries, Arab and Islamic, but almost all of them gave up their support for those organizations. Perhaps Kuwait remained the closest to them, and the most sympathetic to their demands, and there must be a secret.

I do not really want to know, but rather to spend the rest of my life living in my homeland, far from the control of those with extremist and destructive ideas. It is our right to have normal life and coexist with the world through normal relations. We need to catch up and join our sisterly countries after recovery deep slumber we have suffered because of Muslim Brotherhood.

Tunisia imprisoned Rashid Ghannouchi, the head of the Nahda movement, the Muslim Brotherhood branch, along with other leaders, on charges related to state security, closed the party's headquarters, and confiscated its funds.

These developments came after the party's incitement against President Qais Saeed increased.

The government also accused the party, which ruled from 2011-2021, of sending around 6,000 young Tunisians to fight in Iraq and Syria.

I tweeted in support of the decision to imprison Ghannouchi and close the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood. Tariq Suwaidan responded to what I wrote, describing Ghannouchi as one of the greatest leaders of the nation, and cursed everyone who attacked him.

I responded to him with a tweet that was read by 100,000 people, that Rashid Ghannouchi visited Saddam in our darkest days, and supported his invasion of Kuwait, and he said in his speech at the Khartoum conference, which was organized by Hassan Al Turabi in the presence of 500 Muslim Brotherhood members, from 45 countries and organizations, and it is said that among them was Bin Laden and Imad Mughniyeh.

Al Ghannouchi said the interests of any country that attacks Iraq will be devastated and the West will no longer exist in Muslim nation in case Iraq was attacked.

Pointing to Saddam Husain, Al Ghannouchi said he is our friend as long as he confronts the enemies of Islam. Al Ghannouchi added that the Western forces will not leave our land by a resolution of the United Nations or by some speeches.

He said they will leave only when the fire engulfs them from above, below front and behind. Of course, neither Al Ghannouchi or any others could do anything to prevent the liberation of Kuwait.

The Western forces left as per their own decision and not because of the fire from above or under. It is too sad to see a Kuwaiti citizen, or that is how he is supposed to be, crying on the detention of Al Ghannouchi and addressing him as, "O' great leader of the nation, you are not alone." The issue is not about Al-Suwaidan. The issue is about the government which not only kept silent but also supported and empowered him and his colleagues.

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## Workers grievances under study

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: At a time when the Legal Affairs Sector of the Ministry of Social Affairs began receiving grievances regarding the non-disbursement of excellent work rewards for the current fiscal year, through the automated service "Q Barcode", the ministry has received about 70 grievances since the announcement by the Acting Undersecretary Abdulaziz Sari, on April 19, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily learned that the ministry is facing a deficit in the budget allocated for the disbursement of bonuses, especially since the allocated amount of 1.5 million dinars is hardly sufficient to cover specific numbers,

and there are even some employees who were not included despite their entitlement.

According to the sources the ministry is in the process of making a financial transfer to cover grieving employees who have proved that they were entitled for a reward, especially since the grievances are likely to increase in the coming period as many will try to beat the 60 days deadline from the date of disbursement and deposit of amounts in the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

The sources explained the ministry is looking into the grievances and filtering them and excluding those who do not have an annual assessment.

## 'Hope next Arab summit will focus on preserving what's left of Sudan'

"IN THE beginning of 2010, and before the referendum of South Sudan to stay with the North or secede, I visited Khartoum and Meroe as part of a Kuwaiti media delegation, and I spoke with many Sudanese political, media and academic figures, and at that time wrote a letter to the "Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs" proposing to adopt the upcoming Sirte summit for one issue only, which is how keeping southern Sudan within the Sudanese state, the Sirte summit was held and dozens of recurring issues were discussed, and the issue of southern Sudan passed unnoticed," columnist **Sami Abdul Latif Al-Nisf** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

"It is no wonder that Al-Bashir and Gaddafi were among the biggest conspirators and supporters of the secession of the south, which was what was done and the "Arab food basket" was lost along with oil, water and agricultural lands.

"I hope that the next Arab summit will devote one topic to preserve what is left of Sudan before the western, southern, and eastern states separate through bloodshed and become "African Yugoslavia," as we called it previously "a new Arab Somalia."



Sami Al-Nisf

"This is likely, because even the bloody option of Yugoslavia has become distant reachable and closer to it is the option of Somalia, whose land is full of famines, but its militia leaders prefer buying weapons over buying food and medicine, so the people had to choose between death by bullets, death by starvation, or death by diseases and epidemics. Honorable Arab leaders protect the dear Sudan from this fate.

"Lastly, since January 2010, before the secession of the south, I have been writing, warning that the secession of the south will drag Sudan into civil wars that will result in bloodshed and the independence of several states.

"Among those articles on the Internet are "Save Sudan before it is too late", "The dangerous division of the blue sultanate", "Has the dismantling of the blue sultanate begun?" "I wish colonialism would return one day" and "The King of Kings and etc, etc..."

**Also:**

"Will Kuwait be affected by the decline in the dominance of the dollar?," columnist **Mohamed Ramadan** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"There is much talk these days about many countries abandoning dealing in dollars, after freezing or confiscating Russia's funds due to the war with Ukraine.

"This is not the first time that the dollar has been used as a political weapon. Rather, this was done previously by using the Swift system for financial transfers, freezing or confiscating Iran's funds, and others.

"However, this time the amount of frozen funds was large and exceeded \$300 billion, according to what was published.

"Before the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the economy of the United States became the largest in the world, surpassing the economy of Britain, which was the largest economy in the world before that with gold in exchange for commodities or to pay off its debts to the United States, until the dollar officially became the main reserve currency of the world after the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944, so countries began to deal with each other in US dollars because it is floating in gold, and their cash reserves became in dollars also for the same reasons.

"Before the launch of the Euro in 1999, the dominance of the dollar exceeded 70% of the world's monetary reserves, while this percentage has now decreased to less than 59%.

"And with the BRICS countries, which include Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa, announcing their intention to reduce their dependence on the dollar, there are many concerns about the future of the dollar as the main currency in the world for trading and monetary reserves.

"If we look at the oil-exporting countries of the region, and Kuwait in particular, we will find a great dependence on the dollar in oil exports, in cash reserves, and in foreign investments. Will Kuwait's situation be affected by what is happening to the dollar now?

"Although the dominance of the dollar continues to decline, there is no other alternative to it at present. Neither the Euro nor the Chinese yuan nor other currencies can take the place of the dollar.

"The dollar also went through many difficult stages in the past, especially when President Richard Nixon disengaged the dollar from gold.

"Nevertheless, the dollar remains dominant in global reserves and trading. Therefore, it is not

assumed that there will be any change in Kuwait's policies for dealing with the dollar, while continuing to monitor the situation in the future."



"The two-day suspension of classes due to weather conditions during the month of Ramadan was embarrassing, as well as the exaggeration that social media contributed to instilling fear in the hearts of families about the alleged hurricane and torrential rains," columnist **Nafeia'a Al-Zowaied** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"We know that winds change often and suddenly. We are also aware that not every meteorological forecast occurs, in addition to the competition between those who attract public attention and followers.

"Therefore, we had to wait for the Ministry of Education to take the decision — the unjustified suspension of classes for two days. Considering we are in the last stage of the final term for this academic year, such a step will only encourage many students and parents to seize every opportunity to have a school holiday, which will continue every year.

"In case of heavy rains, there should be no objection to students attending their classes, because our school buildings are strong and there is no fear of walls collapsing.

"The intimidation that happened was inappropriate and unjustified. I hope everyone who exaggerated the issue, up to the point of causing panic will be referred for investigation."



"Our educational arena is still suffering from repeated traffic jams and other violations that no one could have imagined," columnist **Mohamad Al-Saqr** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"In a number of schools in Hawally Governorate, specifically the Mishref suburb, one class consists of students in different academic stages and from several areas. Some of them are from Khairan and its surroundings. Therefore, families and the educational sector are suffering daily! This is just one example of such suffering and it has been going on for quite some time now!

"The Mubarak Al-Abdullah suburb (formerly West Mishref) has 10,000 residents yet it has had not even a single school since its establishment in the 1990s. One of the supposed reasons is lack of space for schools. This is not a practical answer, considering the construction of universities and colleges in the area.

"There are several vacant lots behind the exhibition grounds and a building that has not been completed since the 1970s. This building is for the Higher Institute of Musical Education, which could have been utilized for the construction of many regular schools if only the required modification was made in the interest of the residents in the area.

"It has been reported that some residents in this model suburb objected to the construction of schools for fear of facing road congestion daily. Thus, the areas around it are jammed like Mishref, Bayan and Sabah Al-Salem, as the students residing in the area are enrolled in schools located in the already crowded suburbs!

"Is this possible in a country that enjoys divine bounties? The country's image has been distorted over the years due to the inattention of our educational institutions."



"The fiercely combative private work in Kuwait with a popular democracy that is the twin sister of North Korea does not count on certificates, embellishments, and titles. It depends on appointment, permanence, promotion, achievement, creativity and innovation before anything else," columnist **Sami Al-Nisf** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

"The opposite happens in the public sector, where permanence and promotions depend mostly on connections, forged certificates, and parachuting into leadership positions.

"As a result of this wrong situation, the incompetent, dishonest and unintelligent have access to high administrative and technical positions. The one who occupies such positions is supposed to be highly qualified and professional. He signs projects that cost billions of dollars.

"Kuwait is not the only country whose officials are convinced that honest, intelligent and competent people can be replaced by stupid ones who combine my good deeds.

"During the past eras in Kuwait, the approach of the 'interim State' was promoted, in which it is permissible to steal from it, abandon its interests, eliminate its future without accountability, and transform corruption from bad practice to commendable and acceptable general culture."

— Compiled by Ahmed Al-Shazli



KUNA photo Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hashim Al-Rifai, addresses the officers during his participation in the exercise.

### Bid to hone skills of leaders: Al-Rifai

## National Guard launches (Cpx Nasr 18) drill

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): The General Presidency of the National Guard announced today, Sunday, the launch of the activities of the Guard Command Centers exercise (Cpx Nasr 18) in the camp of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, under the auspices and presence of the Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant-General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai, and it will continue until the third of May.

The National Guard said in a press statement that Lieutenant-General Al-Rifai conveyed to the participants in the exercise the greetings of the leadership of the National Guard represented by His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard and Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Lieutenant-General Al-Rifai stressed the importance of the exercise in honing the skills of leaders by planning to face crises by coordinating efforts, developing communication channels, developing capabilities in carrying

out tasks, whether in the security or military aspect, and providing support and backing to all state agencies with high efficiency to maintain the security of the homeland under the wise leadership.

He stated that the exercise seeks to train National Guard commanders from all units to deal with emergency situations, quickly take appropriate decisions, and solve various dilemmas.

It is one of the major exercises that are held annually in the National Guard to raise the level of preparedness and combat readiness.

For his part, Director of the Operations Directorate of the National Guard, Director of the Exercise, Brigadier General Saleh Mufleh, confirmed that the exercise includes workshops and coordination meetings to discuss several topics, including cybersecurity, to raise the capabilities of specialists in the National Guard to confront electronic attacks and take proactive measures to avoid them.

## About 40,000 illegal expats deported in 1 year – report

### Mol carries out intensive raids

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The number of illegal expatriates living in the country – violators of the residence and labor laws (particularly what the sources call loose workers) decreased by about 40,000, from 160,000 to about 120,000 within a year, as a result of the intensive security campaigns carried out by various sectors of the Ministry of Interior, reports **Al-Rai** daily quoting well-informed security sources.

The sources indicated that this comes within the framework of the continuous efforts to implement the plan to amend the demographics and prosecute violators of the residence and labor laws upon instructions from the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, to intensify campaigns in various governorates of the country to preserve security in the best interest of the citizens and residents.

**Confirmed**

The sources confirmed that the instructions from the minister "emphasize the need to continue and intensify the campaigns, and not to be complacent when dealing with the violators," saying "special teams have been formed which work in 4 shifts around the clock comprising members from the PAM investigations sector with support of the security sectors.

The sources stated from (January 1, 2023 to April 28, 2023) about 11,000 violators of the residence law, men and women of different nationalities have been deported.

The sources pointed out the campaigns "during the next few days will include desert areas, farms and chalets," stressing that "violators will be seized and deported according to the legal procedures followed."

The sources concluded that the Ministry of Interior continues to pursue violators and prevent loose workers from working, and collect investigations about those who shelter violators and refer them to the competent authorities.



Various drugs seized.

### Deportation for 13 expats

In two different incidents, personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department detectives arrested 13 expatriates, including 3, for committing immoral acts in Salmiya, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior stated that the CID men were able to arrest 3 people of different nationalities who were carrying out acts contrary to public morals in the Salmiya area.

They were found in possession of 10 grams of narcotic substance and tools for abuse, and they were referred with the seized items to the competent authority to take the necessary legal measures against them.

Meanwhile, the residence affairs investigations department raided two fake offices employing workers on daily wage and arrested 10 violators of the labor law in Fintas and Khaldiya regions.

They have been handed over to the concerned authority to prepare their deportation from the country.

### Private clinics face closure: MoH

## Violations detected in surgery adverts

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Ministry of Health has uncovered violations in 33 plastic surgery advertisements posted on social media platforms, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the ministry, these advertisements violated Professional Practice Law No. 70 of 2020 and the ministerial decisions regulating medical advertisements; such as Resolution 87 of 2023 on respecting public morals, adhering to professional ethics and protecting the patients' privacy.

In addition, the ministry announced that the necessary legal

measures will be taken; including referral of those proven to have committed violations to the responsible medical authority and temporary closure of the concerned clinics until completion of investigations.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff has announced that 400 of those who passed the prescribed medical tests and examinations were admitted for the non-commissioned officers training course on Sunday, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

In a press statement, the Office confirmed that this is in compliance

with the instruction of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to accept all those who applied for the non-commissioned officers and civilian staff training courses in the Army.

It added this is in line with the directive of the political leadership to fully support the Kuwaiti youths and give them the opportunity to serve their country. It also disclosed that the first batch – 227 trainees – was accepted in March, while the second batch consisting of 350 trainees will be accepted in May.

### Asian housemaid commits 'suicide'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: An Asian housemaid committed suicide by hanging in her employer's house in Waha, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Initial investigations revealed the housemaid used a sheet, which she tied to the ceiling of her room and then around her neck, to take her own life. The Operations Unit in the Ministry of Interior received a report from a citizen, stating he found out that his housemaid committed suicide in her room.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to establish the circumstances that prompted the housemaid to take her own life.

Meanwhile, a citizen died after his motorcycle overturned in the Shuwaikh area, reports **Al-Rai** daily. The Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior said immediately after the report was received on the accident, security men and medical personnel rushed to the place and the biker was taken to the hospital but he was declared dead upon arrival.

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Investment in national cadres tops our priorities: CBK

# 1,051 Kuwaitis graduate from 'Kafaa' training programs

## Chinese firms await MPW nod to repair Kuwaiti roads: envoy

Zhang Jianwei holds 'Speak the Chinese language ...' event

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait, Zhang Jianwei, disclosed "between 40 and 50 Kuwaitis speak the Chinese language, some of whom learned it a long time ago in order to get acquainted with the Chinese culture, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He pointed out since his arrival in Kuwait and his communication with the people he found the Kuwaitis love the Chinese language and culture, and this will be one of the promising areas in the future.



Jianwei

He was speaking during an evening he held at his residence under the title "Speak the Chinese language and learn about the beauty of Chinese dishes with the Chinese ambassador" in the presence of a number of Chinese-speaking Kuwaitis and media people.

The evening included a display of photographs of the history of relations between the two countries

### Hike in bonus for KIMS trainers okayed

#### 'Govt offices flexible working hours helpful'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The General Traffic Department said with the employees returning to work and school students returning to their schools after the Eid al-Fitr holiday, vehicular traffic movement on most roads was normal except for some main roads where traffic moved at snail's pace, reports Al-Rai daily.

The GTD sources said "with the start of the first real shift for school students after the vacation and the employees' 100 percent attendance commitment all the country's roads witnessed ease in traffic movement, except for a slight paralysis in some main roads, including the Maghreb Expressway and the King Fahd Road in the direction of the Capital city, Fahaheel Road, and Al-Ghazali Road, otherwise the traffic was normal and smooth.

The GTD said this is due to the flexible working hours in government offices and giving employees in some institutions the freedom to choose the time that suits them, which greatly contributed to the decrease in the number of vehicles on the roads, unlike what happened in the past

where highways bore the brunt of traffic movement.

**Hike in bonus:** The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has issued a decision to approve the disbursement of an increase in bonuses for trainers of training programs at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS), reports Aljarida daily.

The decision specified the value of bonuses, which range between KD 300 and KD 500 per month, according to the job title. It is KD 500 for a consultant, KD 400 for a senior specialist or specialist or its technical equivalent, and KD 300 for a first registrar or its technical equivalent.

The KIMS Board of Trustees headed by Minister Dr. Al-Awadhi had approved this increase by about three times in line with the increase in the number of seats in all disciplines on the board. This is aimed to open wider horizons of development and excellence in the medical field, and to meet the needs of hospitals and health centers for trained and specialized national cadres.

through official meetings between the Kuwaiti and Chinese leaders.

In response to a question about when the Chinese companies will start work in road maintenance in Kuwait, the Chinese ambassador recalled the meeting of Minister of Public Works Amani Bouqmaz about a month ago with 7 ambassadors and charge d'affaires, and asked them to nominate major companies to repair roads.

He added, "We nominated 5 Chi-

nese companies working in Kuwait, which have already completed major projects, and we await the response from the Ministry of Works, and if any Chinese company wins, it will do its work with high quality, as is known about Chinese companies, their adherence and respect for quality.

Zhang welcomed Kuwaitis to visit his country, after lifting the restrictions of the corona pandemic from April 29, indicating, "We have tour-

ist places throughout the year, given the vast area of China," stressing on the other hand, "China's respect for all religions," and pointing out that "Its national policy pursues respect for all religions and nationalities."

He pointed out that there are 56 nationalities in China, including 10 nationalities that embrace Islam, and denied reports about harassment of Muslims during the month of Ramadan, saying: "Everything that was reported on this subject is unfounded."

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait said on Sunday that 1,051 citizens graduated from "Kafaa initiative programs," launched by the central bank 15 years ago.

The programs aimed at supplying the banking and financial sectors with highly qualified personnel according to top international standards.

The CBK said in a statement that investment in national cadres tops its priorities for such an approach secures the

sectors' sustainability.

The "Kafaa" initiative was launched in 2009 in cooperation with Harvard Business School. Since then, it has expanded, encompassing currently eight programs in partnership with foreign and regional entities.

It aimed at qualifying freshly graduated Kuwaitis to become eligible to work in the banking sector, granting scholarships for Master's degree studies abroad and awards for researchers.



Aljarida photo

File photo of printing of the books.

### '2023/2024 academic year'

## MoE to issue 150 tenders for printing of school text books

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Ministry of Education intends to issue about 150 tenders for printing books for the 2023/2024 academic year, of which 80 are for the first semester and 70 for the second semester. The government printing press in the Ministry of Information will print only about four books, and the printing presses and publishing houses will print the rest according to the budgets of students in schools, and based on the decision of the educational research and curricula sector, reports Aljarida daily.

According to an educational source, the Department of Supplies and Warehouses in the Ministry of Education is waiting for the green light from the curricula sector

to start issuing tenders according to the required specifications. However, it may take time in the corridors of the regulatory authorities.

The other solution is to divide these tenders according to practices that take place within the ministry for less than KD 75,000 per practice. However, this is a violation included annually in the reports of the State Audit Bureau.

The lack of expansion by the Ministry of Information in printing books is due to the large quantities of textbooks required for the first and second semesters to cater to about 450,000 male and female students in public and private Arab schools, in addition to religious institutes and special education students.

### Friendly families project 'successful'

## 45 children in family nursery dept, 600 are self-reliant adults: official

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Welfare Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs Hamad Al-Khalidi said, "The number of children currently in the family nursery department is 45. About 600 adults have become independent and self-reliant in their daily lives", reports Al-Rai Daily.

Al-Khalidi revealed about the alternative or friendly families project, explaining that it is considered a successful project and is carried out in coordination with private associations with the aim of protecting children from violence, providing them with a permanent place, and creating a spirit and bond between children and the family.

He said, "This project is vital and humanitarian in the first place, and reduces the number of children we have in the Family Nursery Department, which currently has 45 children, in addition to 600 adults who have become independent and manage their lives on a proper daily basis."

Al-Khalidi highlighted the department's intention to open a number of buildings for the sector, and revealed the existence of a plan to expand services provided to the elderly.

He explained that the new building for juvenile care will be ready soon, and the children will be transported in an integrated manner in coordination with the relevant authorities (the ministries of education, interior, health and justice) to preserve the safety of the inmates. The design and implementation of the building is compatible with the work and objectives of the Ministry of Social Affairs to take care of the juvenile category, and provide all high-level care and services that give them a respectful living environment consist-



Al-Khalidi

### July 9 to Aug 8

## PAM: Benefit from 'summer training'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Public Authority for Manpower has called on students to register and benefit from the summer training project, which will be held from July 9 to August 8, reports Al-Anba daily.

PAM said the daily training hours will be 4 divided in two shifts morning and evening in cooperation with the private sector companies according to the conditions related to the training program and the acquisition of experience and work skills.

The Authority said one of the conditions for joining the program is that the applicant should be a Kuwaiti and must be from one of the following educational stages - Students of the third and fourth stages of university education, students of the second stage in colleges and institutes, students of the eleventh and twelfth grades of the secondary stage and not registered with the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).

The student shall be free to participate in the training program in the morning or evening and should have passed more than half of the required courses (for diploma and university).

ent with all human rights treaties and conventions.

The care sector has an integrated building for mobile service for elderly care in Hawally Governorate, which will see the light soon, with the aim of expanding the services provided to include physiotherapy services, periodic tests, and places of entertainment for the elderly, in coordination and cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

## Envoy presents

Continued from Page 1

The Kuwaiti Ambassador affirmed that she would work on measures to bolster the historic relations linking the two countries, enhancing them in all possible domains.

She revealed that boosting commercial and economic ties were very important, stressing that it was necessary to provide small and medium-size enterprises with a chance to contribute to the rich and diverse relations.

Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah also noted that the two countries were keen on extending

strategic cooperation within the political and military sectors to bolster her country's security and stability in addition to achieving the interest of both parties.

She went on to say that boosting cultural cooperation was also a priority for the embassy, adding that she would also hold regular meetings with Kuwaiti students in the US to look into their needs and encourage them to excel.

Ambassador Sheikha Al-Zain also affirmed that she would coordinate efforts of the Kuwaiti health office in the US to look into the affairs of Kuwaiti patients and their family members seeking treatment to the country.

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Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance during joint annual meetings held in Rabat

KUNA photos

**Kuwait affirms keenness to support Arab financial institutions**

Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi affirmed late Saturday Kuwait's keenness to support the work of the Arab financial institutions to enhance the economic cooperation and integration. In a statement to KUNA, following the conclusion of the joint annual meetings held in Rabat, she stressed on Kuwait's keenness to accomplish the goals of the Arab financial institutions in order to achieve development and economic prosperity for Arabs. Al-Munifi, who headed Kuwait's delegation, said that the financial institutions represents the Arab economic co-

operation, integration and joint Arab action, noting that they succeeded in financing economic and social projects in Arab countries. The Arab financial institutions concluded their annual meetings by selecting a chairman for the upcoming meetings, as well as approving the board of directors reports for the year 2022. Arab ministers of finance and economy and central bank governors participated in the meetings to discuss financing and supporting economic and social development programs in the Arab countries. (KUNA)

**All network components are subjected to periodic maintenance: Eng. Al-Ali**

**Electricity network ready to meet challenges of upcoming season**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Assistant Undersecretary for Electrical Power Stations and Water Distillation Sector Eng. Haitham Al-Ali has affirmed the readiness of the electricity network grids to meet the challenges of the upcoming peak season, reports Al-Anba daily.

had affirmed the readiness to face the summer season after completing most of the periodic maintenance programs to the fullest, adding that the percentage of maintenance of electricity units and water distillation units reached 78 percent.

In a report broadcasted by Kuwait TV, Eng. Al-Ali revealed that all network components, including stations, transformers, overhead and terrestrial lines, and others, are subject to periodic maintenance, the programs of which are nearing completion. He highlighted the presence of all technical and administrative staff 24 hours a day during the peak season to deal with any emergency on the network.

It is expected that electricity production during the summer months will reach approximately 18,000 megawatts, while consumption is expected to reach about 16,880 megawatts.

**Contract**

In a separate context, informed sources in the ministry explained that the coming period, after resumption of work, will witness procedures for signing a contract for the expansion of the Sabiya power and water distillation station at a capacity of 900 megawatts. Necessary approvals have been taken from the regulatory authorities to complete the project, which will contribute to raising the production capacity of the network to meet the demand in the coming seasons.

Eng. Al-Ali stressed the importance of community awareness in overcoming the peak season, which is embodied in rationalizing electricity and water consumption through the use of guidelines and reducing waste, in addition to setting air conditioners at 25 degrees Celsius in unused places, and reducing wastage of water by washing gardens and entrances outside the house.

Work is still continuing with the regulatory authorities to obtain their approval to increase the production capacity through another project in Subiya by 250 megawatts, in addition to work to obtain approvals for maintenance contracts at Shuaiba and Doha stations. Furthermore, the ministry has begun implementing the flexible system of shifts. The Civil Service Commission's circular on the new official working hours will be applied.

He said electricity and water are national wealth that must be preserved from waste, as their production consumes a lot of oil and therefore must be preserved from waste.

In a related context, the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Eng. Mutlaq Al-Otaibi

**MEW accelerates nat'l plans to produce renewable energy**

**Organizational unit eyed to handle tasks, projects**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Mutlaq Burguba stressed on the importance of accelerating the national plans regarding producing no less than 15 percent of the electrical grid consumption from renewable energy sources by 2023.

The ministry noted in a statement that Burguba met with the renewable energy specialists and discussed relevant topics, current and future governmental projects, its implementation with a follow up on them.

The meeting focused on achieving energy conservation to produce 10 percent of the ministry's building's consumption of electric energy to be from renewable energy, stated the ministry, noting that they discussed the establishment of an organizational unit in the ministry to handle the



Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Mutlaq Burguba in the meeting

KUNA photo

tasks and projects related to renewable energy.

The meeting was attended by Acting Undersecretary Maha Al-Asousi,

Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services and Main Concerns Sector Ahmed Al-Rashidi, Assistant Undersecretary for Electric Power

Stations and Water Distillation Sector Haitham Al-Ali, and Assistant Undersecretary for Distribution Networks Engineer Saad Al-Rashidi.

**Ongoing war in Ukraine takes toll**

**Kuwait ranks 5th in MENA region in terms of food security**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: During the last quarter of 2022, Kuwait ranked fifth in terms of food security among the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, according to a recent report by the "Global Data" index, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Zawya website, which published the report, stated that the UAE ranked first, followed by Saudi Arabia third among the countries of the Middle East and North Africa region, while Qatar ranked fourth and Bahrain ninth.

Zawya quoted the report as saying that the countries of the MENA region are affected by the supply chain problems and the consequent increase in the prices of basic raw materials such as food and fuel, which led to increased food risks, in addition to the increase in debt.

The report pointed out that the MENA region depends mainly on Russia and Ukraine for its imports of basic foodstuffs, which explains the high level of risk for the countries of the region from 54 points to 54.3 points out of 100 points in the index for the last quarter of 2022.

**Profitability**

The report quoted the expert in "Global Data", Bindi Patel, as saying that the decision of "OPEC Plus" to reduce its oil production could affect the profitability of the oil-producing countries in the "MENA" region, which depend to a large extent on oil exports to move their economies.

"At the same time, many countries in the region depend on food imports, while the problems of food supply chains continue to create more challenges for their food security, due to factors including the conflict in Ukraine and Syria, and droughts in the countries of the Horn of Africa and Kenya," he added. The report indicated that despite the application of more stringent monetary



CEO of UAE AI Journalism for Research and Forecasting Dr. Mohammad Abdelzaher presents AI Journalism.

KUNA photos

**KUNA holds training program on AI journalism**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): The KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills started Sunday a training program entitled "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Journalism," dealing with metaverse journalism and its modern tech.

The program, which is presented by the CEO of UAE Artificial Intelligence Journalism for Research and Forecasting (AIJRF) Dr. Mohammad Abdelzaher is concerned with discussing metaverse journalism techniques, ways to benefit from AI, answering many questions in connection to it, and providing ideas and solutions to several challenges facing the media and related to the concept of future media.

In the training program, Dr. Abdelzaher discusses the extent to which AI is linked to many complex developments in this sector, and he believes that presenting them through sessions, workshops, and training programs is a vital matter that will benefit all journalists and media workers.

Several employees from KUNA, Kuwait Fund for Arab policies, the level of inflation in the Middle East and North Africa region will remain high at worrisome levels, with a slight decline expected. The report estimated the inflation rate in the region as a whole at 18.7 percent by 2023, with very high rates expected in Egypt at 23.3 percent, Iran at 40.7 percent, Turkey at 43.7

Economic Development (KFAED) and Kuwait Ports Authority (KPAO) will participate in the aforementioned training program, which will last until May four.

In the world of journalism, technology has appeared in the production of press materials such as news, economic analyses, news stories, etc., using AI, programs and technologies that extract huge data from the digital archives, then edit and audit them, and even direct the content automatically to a specific audience.

AI journalism represents a new media revolution that is fully compatible with the modern technologies of the information and industrial revolution, and it is in great growth in the world of journalism and media.

This center is concerned with increasing the skills of professional journalistic work, improving media content, and bringing theory and practice closer in the field of writing media materials.

the economies of the region. In terms of the global ranking, Switzerland, Denmark and Singapore occupied the first three ranks in the index, which takes into account the latest data available in the field of macroeconomics and political, social, technological, environmental and legal considerations.

**9 companies partake in bid**

**Two contracts to modernize 'structure' of oil exploration**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and Kuwait Oil Company have announced tenders for two upcoming projects related to upgrading the country's oil and gas exploration infrastructure, reports Al-Rai daily.

the Indian Larsen & Toubro, the Japanese Toyo, Gulf Speak General Trading and Contracting, and others.

The corporation disclosed plans to bid for a contract of consulting services for preliminary engineering works for the fuel gas desulphurization facility at the Mina Abdullah refinery.

MEED magazine indicated that other companies can request to be qualified for the bid if documents are submitted to the KPC Higher Purchasing Committee within 30 days of issuance of the bid.

The sources added that KPC's Supreme Purchase Committee also announced an upcoming project to modernize the early production facility, known as "EPF-18", for the benefit of the Kuwait Oil Company, and 13 contractors have already been qualified to participate in the project.

According to oil sources nine companies have already been qualified to participate in the bid, including the Indian Trion Energy Company, the British Worley,

**Refining capacity of 615,000 bpd**

**Kuwait's Al-Zour eighth largest refinery in world**

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Kuwaiti Al-Zour refinery ranked eighth on Global Data's list of the 10 largest oil refineries in the world, with a refining capacity of 615,000 barrels of oil per day, noting that the refinery is integrated and managed by the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company, which in turn is owned by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, reports Al-Anba daily.

the highest refining capacity in the world with 18.06 million barrels per day, followed by China with 17.76 million barrels per day, then Russia with a capacity of 6.63 million barrels per day.

The list showed that there are 825 active oil refineries in the world with a total refining capacity of 107 million barrels per day in 2023, and it is expected to increase by 15% to reach 123 million barrels per day by 2027.

The company revealed that the 10 largest active oil refineries in the world, according to refining capacity, are as follows:

As for the distribution of these refineries by region, the company expected that the Asia region would account for about 45.6 million barrels per day in 2027, followed by North America and the Middle East with about 24.5 million barrels per day and 15.2 million barrels per day, respectively.

1. Paraguana Refinery - Venezuela's Falcon, with a refining capacity of 955,000 bpd;
2. Ulsan Refinery - South Korea - with a refining capacity of 840,000 bpd;
3. Al Ruwais Refinery - South Korea, with a refining capacity of 800,000 bpd;
4. Dayoshan Island Refinery - China, with a refining capacity of 800,000 bpd;
5. Jamnagar Refinery 2 - India, with a refining capacity of 707,000 bpd;
6. Jamnagar Refinery 1 - India, with a refining capacity of 660,000 bpd;
7. Port Arthur Refinery - Texas, USA, with a refining capacity of 635,000 bpd;
8. Al-Zour Refinery in Kuwait, with a refining capacity of 615,000 bpd;
9. The third Texas refinery, with a refining capacity of 593,000 bpd and 10. The first Jurong Island Refinery - Singapore, with a refining capacity of 592,000 bpd.

The company said it uses the data and analysis recorded in the ownership documents of oil refineries to provide a complete picture of the oil refining sector at the global level.

In 2022, the United States acquired

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
UAE	- DFM	+0.82	3,544.79	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.32	11,271.19
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+1.40	28,856.44				
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.28	41,580.85				
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+0.63	6,625.08				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1.98	17,796.91				

# Business

## KFH posts 'historic' net profit for shareholders of KD 162.1m for Q1 '23, an increase of 133.2%

Earnings per share reached 11.06 fils

**KUWAIT CITY, April 30:** Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported historic net profit of KD 162.1million for the first quarter of 2023 for KFH shareholders; an increase of 133.2% compared to the same period last year, taking into consideration the benefits of the acquisition.

Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2023 reached 11.06 fils; an increase of 67.6% compared to the same period last year.

Net financing income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 226.0 million; an increase of 42.1% compared to the same period last year.

Net operating income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 251.2 million; an increase of 69.5% compared to the same period last year.

Financing receivables as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 19.2 billion, i.e., an increase of KD 318.8 million or 1.7% compared to the end of last year.

Total assets as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 36.9 billion i.e., at the same level as the end of last year. The same applies to the shareholders' equity, which amounted to KD 5.3 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023.

Depositors' accounts as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 23.4 billion; an increase of KD 962.3 million or 4.3% compared to the end of last year.

In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.50% which is above the minimum limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid financial position of KFH.

**Strong Growth**

Al-Marzouq said that the strong



KFH Chairman Hamad AlMarzouq.



KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood.

growth KFH achieved in all financial indicators during the first quarter of 2023 confirms the successful and efficient strategy of the bank. He added that KFH successfully maintained remarkable ratios in terms of profitability, ROA, ROE, improving asset quality, the coverage ratio of provisions for non-performing debt, cost-to-income ratio as well as all key financial indicators.

Al-Marzouq explained that "KFH enjoys solid capital base and high liquidity ratios that support its business growth and credit strength. With around KD 11 billion market capitalization, KFH topped the largest listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization".

**Clear Strategy**

Al-Marzouq stressed that KFH continues its strategy to improve the role of core banking activity in achieving profitability and sustainable growth, keeping pace with developments in the fields of digitization, applying artificial intelligence, innovation in financing and investment products and solutions,

increasing investment in green Sukuk in the total financing portfolio, expanding linking investments to sustainable development goals, optimal investment in human resources and enriching knowledge, supporting entrepreneurship and youth, and providing corporate banking, supporting SMEs, and developing harmony between the Group's banks to boost KFH's leading position globally.

He added that the growth resulted from the successful acquisition of Ahli United Bank constitutes a driving force for KFH to achieve its ambitions, not to mention moving forward in its regional and international expansion to record significant growth ratios in profits and in customer service level.

**Prominent societal role**

Al-Marzouq explained that KFH plays a prominent societal role characterized by diversity and inclusiveness, in a way that reinforces the implementation of sustainability criteria, indicating that KFH has implemented strategic social initiatives

with added value and a real positive impact on society. The initiatives, for example, include KD 20 million debt settlement of defaulting debtors, KD 8 million reconstruction of Al Mubarakiya, and support for the "Kuwait is by your side" campaign to relief those affected by the earthquake in Turkiye and Syria with an amount of US\$20 million, in addition to signing various agreements with social welfare organizations to support its various social and relief efforts inside and outside Kuwait.

**Profit maximization**

KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood said that "the recent financial results and the double-digit growth maintained by KFH for several years came as a result of the optimal implementation of KFH strategy. This success was reflected in the strong operational performance, the growth in operating income, financing portfolio, and customer deposits, return on equity, optimization, adherence to applying best responsible banking practices, risk management, balanced priori-

ties, and strengthening the bank's financial solvency and creditworthiness".

**Leadership in digitalization**

AlRushood pointed out that KFH continues to lead in digital transformation, achieving a remarkable growth in the customers' use of digital banking services through KFH online on mobile and website, where the rate of increase in usage in Q1 2023 compared to the same period of the previous year reached about 43%. He also stressed that KFH will continue to lead the competition and be unique in offering innovative financial solutions that meet customers' aspirations and add to KFH's leadership locally and globally.

**Talent acquisition**

Al Rushood said that KFH has qualified talents and personnel that are able to implement the strategic goals of the bank. Indeed, the successful talent acquisition and development strategy of KFH resulted in having the largest number of Kuwaiti employees at the level of Kuwaiti banks and all private sector institu-

tions, while the percentage of attracting Kuwaitis for new appointments reached about 100% in recent years.

**Sustainability**

Al Rushood stressed the continued application of transparency, environmental standards, social values, governance, financial inclusion, empowering women and expanding their representation in KFH's workforce, and increasing green and sustainable financing efforts as part of the integrated sustainability strategy adopted by the bank, in which it has made great strides. He also indicated that KFH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to support sustainability efforts, and launched the (Keep it Green) program, which implements several sustainability initiatives under its umbrella, as well as KFH being the first bank in Kuwait to receive the GSAS-Gold Level certificate.

**Global recognition**

Al Rushood pointed out that KFH received global recognition for its outstanding innovative products and services, reliability, broad geographical outreach, digital development, solid financial position, and its strong brand. Accordingly, KFH won various awards, most notably: "Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East", "Best Bank in Kuwait" and the Sustainability award in the Middle East from EMEA Finance magazine, as well as "Best Digital Offering in Kuwait" award from Islamic Finance News (IFN), in addition to many prestigious awards.

In conclusion, Al Rushood expressed his confidence in continuing the strong and positive results, appreciating the trust of shareholders and customers and the support of the Board of Directors. He also thanked the regulatory authorities and praised the efforts of employees and all partners and stakeholders and emphasized that KFH is keen to reinforce its leadership worldwide.

The Highest in KFH's History

Praise be to Allah

### Financial Results for Q1 of 2023

# 162.1

Million

133.2%

بيت التمويل الكويتي  
Kuwait Finance House

## Financial Results for Q1 of 2023

	31/03/2023	31/03/2022	%		31/03/2023	31/12/2022	%
<b>Net Profit for Shareholders</b> "KD Million"	162.1	69.5	133.2	<b>Total Assets</b> "KD Million"	36,855	36,969	(0.3)
<b>Earnings per Share</b> "Fils"	11.06	6.60	67.6	<b>Financing Receivables</b> "KD Million"	19,158	18,840	1.7
<b>Net Financing Income</b> "KD Million"	226.0	159.0	42.1	<b>Depositors' Accounts</b> "KD Million"	23,445	22,483	4.3
<b>Net Operating Income</b> "KD Million"	251.2	148.2	69.5	<b>Shareholders' Equity</b> "KD Million"	5,257	5,358	(1.9)

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@kfhgroup

### MENA region faces unprecedented water scarcity crisis

The World Bank warned Thursday that people across the Middle East and North Africa region are facing "unprecedented water scarcity," warning of "negative consequences" on water quality as a result of this situation.

According to the World Bank report titled "The Economics of Water Scarcity in the Middle East and North Africa - Institutional Solutions," the amount of water available per capita annually in the region will decrease by the

end of the current decade from "the absolute limit of water scarcity, which is 500 cubic meters per person per year."

The World Bank predicted that "by 2050, an additional 25 billion cubic meters of water will be needed annually to meet the needs of the region. This is equivalent to establishing another 65 desalination plants, the size of the Ras Al-Khair plant in Saudi Arabia, which is the largest in the world in present time."

The report proposes a series of resource management reforms, as well as institutional reforms to mitigate water pressures in the region.

"Water shortages pose a serious challenge to life and livelihoods, as the agricultural sector and urban centers compete for this precious natural resource and its distribution systems," said Ferid Belhaj, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa. (KUNA)

### Iran's Parliament sacks minister over mismanagement

Iran's Parliament voted Sunday to fire the country's industries minister over alleged mismanagement amid widespread dissatisfaction with the government.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said 162 of 272 lawmakers present voted in favor of dismissing Reza Fatemi Amin. The chamber has 290 seats. Fatemi Amin survived a previous impeachment in 2022.

The decision came following discussion among lawmakers and

government officials who questioned the minister.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi defended Fatemi Amin saying all the fields related to the minister's portfolio showed growth. He urged lawmakers to reinstate the minister.

"The point is that stability in the ministry is important," he said.

Opponents said the minister failed to manage his field of activities in industry, mines and trade citing skyrocketing prices of products. The impeachment marks the

sixth change in Raisi's Cabinet in the less than two years since he came to power.

In March, Raisi replaced the minister of agriculture and the head of planning and budget. Raisi dismissed the education minister after a delay in payments to teachers in April. In December, Raisi replaced the minister of roads after he became terminally ill. Last year, Raisi replaced the labor minister after protests by workers and retirees over payments. (AP)

### Award a testament to the hard work of team

## Kamco Invest named 'Best Debt Bank in the Middle East'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced that it was named "Best Debt Bank in the Middle East" by Global Finance in recognition of its active involvement, innovation, and track record in the regional debt capital markets.

Kamco Invest was selected following a multi-criteria approach that includes reviewing market share, number and size of deals, service and advice, structuring capabilities, distribution network, efforts to address market conditions, innovation, pricing, after-market performance of underwritings and market reputation.

The Debt Capital Markets team took on the role of Joint Lead Manager as well as Joint Bookrunner on three bonds and sukuk issuances in Kuwait and the UAE in 2022 worth USD1.2bn, in addition to one debt advisory transaction. The transactions included USD650mn International Debt Issuances and a KWD165mn debt issuance, the largest KWD denominated corporate bond ever issued.

In 2021, the team closed ten debt transactions worth USD3.7bn, managing nine bond and sukuk issuances in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain, in addition to one debt advisory transaction worth USD330mn. The issuances included six USD international debt issuances and three KWD denominated debt issuances worth USD3.4bn. A notable transaction in 2021 was the pioneering role structuring an innovative debt capital instrument for the local capital market, the first bond issuance by an insurance company and first per-



Abdallah Al Sharekh, Managing Director of Markets and Investment Banking.

petual bond issuance denominated in Kuwaiti Dinar, representing an important milestone in Kuwait's capital market.

Commenting on the award, Abdallah M. AlSharekh, Managing Director of Markets and Investment Banking, said, "We are honored to be named the "Best Debt Bank in the Middle East" by Global Finance, which serves as a testament to the hard work and effort our team has placed forth to solidify our role in the market, on a regional level. 2022 marked another record year for Kamco Invest's Investment Banking business in terms of the total value of completed transactions. Through our multi-sector expertise and technical capabilities, strong regional footprint, and placement power, we managed to provide strategic advisory services and successfully struc-

turing and executing key transactions that added value to both clients and the overall market."

Omar Zaineddine, Executive Director of Debt Capital Markets at Kamco Invest, commented, "We are proud to be recognized for our active involvement, innovation, and track record in the regional debt capital markets. This award reflects the dedication of our team in providing exceptional services and solutions to our clients, while also contributing to the growth and development of the overall debt market. We are honored to have taken on the role of Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner on several landmark transactions in 2022, including the largest KWD denominated corporate bond ever issued, and the pioneering role structuring an innovative debt capital instrument for the local capital mar-



Omar A. Zaineddine, Executive Director of Debt Capital Markets at Kamco Invest.

ket. These transactions highlight our technical capabilities, regional expertise, and placement power, which enable us to successfully structure and execute complex transactions that add value to both our clients and the market as a whole."

Looking ahead, Zaineddine stated, "The debt capital market in Kuwait and the region continues to evolve and mature, presenting exciting opportunities for innovation within the financial services industry. We are confident that with our strong regional footprint and technical capabilities, Kamco Invest is well-positioned to continue driving growth and development in the region's debt capital markets."

It is worth noting that the Investment Banking team successfully completed 13 investment banking transactions in 2022 worth

USD5.6bn in all three sectors of the business that include Equity Capital Markets, Debt Capital Markets and Mergers & Acquisitions. The transactions included seven Mergers & Acquisitions transactions, two equity capital market transactions, and four debt transactions. Amongst the highlights of the Equity Capital Markets transactions was the initial public offering of Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive on Boursa Kuwait, where Kamco Invest took on the role of Joint Bookrunner and Subscription Agent. The team was also the Acquisition Manager for the Partial Acquisition of Advanced Technology Company by Qurain Petrochemical Company.

The M&A team successfully concluded several landmark transactions during the year, including three sell-side, two buy-side and two merger

transactions. The team acted as the exclusive buy-side advisor for the full acquisition of e-Portal Holdings by stc Kuwait and the exclusive sell-side advisor for the sale of a 95% stake in Global Corp (Egypt) to EBRD, SPE Capital and Amethis. The team also advised on one of the largest non-bank mergers, Kuwait Projects Company's merger by amalgamation with Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company. Another key transaction facilitated by the team included the merger of United Real Estate Company with United Towers Holding Company and Al Diyafa Holding Company.

AlSharekh concluded, "The investment banking market in Kuwait demonstrated exceptional growth, proving its resilience and fortitude in the face of economic challenges. With a robust pipeline of financial transactions and innovative solutions, the sector continues to drive growth and development in the region. Kuwait and the Middle East are both brimming with opportunities for innovation within the financial services industry as the region's economies continue to evolve and mature. With a focus on creating strong and sustainable financial structures, the future looks bright for this dynamic market."

With 13 transactions completed in 2022, Kamco Invest has acted as investment banker on deals totaling USD34.7bn since inception; across equity capital markets, debt capital markets and mergers & acquisitions. Furthermore, the Company widened its regional footprint to cover new markets, strengthening its position as one of the key regional investment banks.

### World economy doesn't look strong

## Oil price drifting below eighty dollars a barrel

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

WITH the downward trend of the oil price, will OPEC+ take any action or is it still early? Is it that the oil producing countries have generated enough cash surplus? Is there hope that the drop in price to below \$80 a barrel is temporary, and it will bounce back during the third and fourth quarter of this year, giving time for OPEC and its partners to adjust and monitor the oil markets?



Al-Harami

The concerns of re-inflation coupled with the threat of recession could delay any actions, especially with the weakening of the US dollar, which may lead to higher demand. The world economy on the other hand does not look strong.

The main concern seems to be the low stocks of oil in the USA, and the continuing withdrawal from the oil reserve, with any fresh replacement happening in May. As the oil price weakens, it may be an opportunity to buy oil now instead of waiting to do so later, which may push the oil prices up, and thereby losing the golden opportunity, like what happened three months ago with the US administration. It had necessitated OPEC+ to reduce production, forcing the USA to delay its buying decision. This had pushed the oil price beyond \$85 a barrel.

The current balance with oil producing countries is almost in charge like never before in managing the supply chain, even though it can't manage the world economy

the way it is, or the oil demand, or the inflation and recession. It is however closely monitoring supply, knowing well that oil companies are not investing much in oil exploration and production, which is causing a dilemma for the world consumers.

Despite the regular reminders by governments to move away from fossil fuels, it is a well known fact that oil will continue to have the biggest portion of energy well into 2045, with its current rate of 31% to 29% in the future. This leaves us to do what we as oil producers know to do and what OPEC is best at, by investing more, and gradually adding additional premium, as cost for current and future investments.

Certainly, the energy outlook will be substantially different in the years to come, allowing OPEC to be more free in command.

Do we envisage a new mutual relationship between oil consumers and producers, or will the world surrender to oil producers? We hope not, as OPEC is not the enemy. The two must live with mutual benefits under the same roof. However, its right to produce new oils must always be recognized.

On the other hand, OPEC+ must state its good intention of moving forward with an additional supply of fossil fuels, but it must not ignore the future trend towards green alternatives, which we all have to face for the future. Solar, wind and new clean energy must prevail and the world must make room for it.

The role of OPEC+ is to monitor the oil prices and ensure it covers all its investment costs for the production of one barrel of oil.

Perhaps oil will not drift for long.



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## Kuwaiti economists: Operational stocks are investors' focus in 'shares' trading

Local market an exception

By Mohammad Kamal

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti economists unanimously agreed that the shares of the operating companies' sectors (banking, telecommunications and logistics) listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) are still the focus of attention of Kuwaiti and foreign investors, whether they are individuals, funds or institutions, out of the 13 market sectors.

In separate interviews with KUNA Sunday, these economists said that despite the external factors affecting global, Gulf and Arab financial markets, such as the repercussions of raising interest rates and the results of the Russian-Ukrainian war, "the Kuwaiti market is separated due to the strength of its operational companies."

Vice Chairman of NCM Investment Nasser Al-Marri stated that this segment of shares achieves profits that can be measured and the investment can be built on them like others. It is also possible to benefit from its distributions and the growth of shareholders' equity due to it achieving annual distributions ranging from 8-10 percent.

Most of the shares of banks achieve profits at the level of their share prices listed on the stock exchange due to being operational as their investments are medium and long-term and are usually targeted by professional investors, however other investors direct their investments towards shares of companies below 100 fils, Al-Marri added.

From his side, economist Nayef Al-Enezi said that the investors in the stock exchange are different types, including large funds and small traders.

## S. Arabia's vast roads 'network', ports make global logistics hub

Kingdom has 73,000 km of roads

RIYADH, April 30, (KUNA): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's strategic location at the confluence of three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe, confers great influence to it and made it a global logistics hub. This strategic location contributed to the Kingdom becoming a leading country in the transport and logistics sector.

The Kingdom has 73,000 kilometers of roads, including 3,690 bridges and 76 tunnels that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services. Moreover, the total number of flights in 2022 exceeded 700,000.

Given the fact that the transport and logistics sector in the Kingdom is the main engine of development, many effective plans had to be adopted to support the sector, to shorten distances and connect regions, as well as to facilitate the procedures

accompanying the arrival and movement of visitors, tourists and pilgrims to the Two Holy Mosques, and to enable several other vital sectors to carry out their businesses and achieve their goals and aspirations, by providing all means, and preparing and developing the infrastructure.

Towards achieving the goals of Vision 2030, the Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Transport General Authority (TGA), and of the Center for Transportation Safety. It also approved the transfer of the task of supervising, regulating and controlling the postal services from the communications and information technology sector to the transportation and logistics services sector, in order to restructure and develop these services, in line with the comprehensive cultural renaissance that the Kingdom is witnessing in various fields.

The transport sector offers land, sea, air, rail, roads, and logistics services. These services are integrated and interrelated in order to help this and various other sectors in the country, leading to a renaissance in all fields and achieving the objectives of the national strategy for transport and logistics.

In 2022, 56 roads totaling 6,101 km were built, the terms of contracts pertaining to the field have been clearly spelled out, and 608 bridges and 37 tunnels were inspected and evaluated, in order to ensure that roads are in very good working conditions. During a campaign launched to check the situation of the road network, more than 14,000 issues were found and dealt with. At the same time, an initiative was also launched to improve the durability and quality of roads, as well as the maintenance operations.

Al-Enezi attributed the access of large investors in operational shares to achieving the required liquidity for them, in addition to facilitating the exit process for them without risk, and because it is better than deposits from their point of view, if the returns are measured it achieves on their capital.

The speculators in the market are of two types, the first is trained and professional while knowing the methods of speculation, and the other is ignorant of the principles of speculation in the stock exchange, and they are the majority of the stock market, he explained.

Traders who lost their identity inside the stock exchange, the ones

that cannot be classified as a speculator or an investor, are a good percentage, and he classifies them as owners of unstable positions and often do not find any growth in their financial positions, which are almost losing, however limited, he mentioned.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Dealers Association Chairman Mohammad Al-Tarrah said that the operating sectors listed on KSE enjoy a variety of advantages over others, based on several reasons, including the actual performance in purchase or sale orders, which makes them the focus of investors' attention.

Al-Tarrah mentioned that despite the pressure factors on the global,

Arab and Gulf financial markets, such as the repercussions of raising interest rates and the results of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the banking sector contributed about 55.7 percent of the stock market's profits during 2022, followed by the telecommunications sector with around 12.4 percent of the profits.

He expected the continuation of the pace of entry into the shares of the operating sectors during the remainder of the first half of the year 2023 until the announcement of the profits for that period, which would increase its movement directly on those companies, associates and affiliates, which is in the interest of the market.

### KPC announces liquefied gas prices

KUWAIT, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Sunday the liquefied gas prices, namely Propane and Butane for May.

In a statement to KUNA, KPC added that Propane metric ton will be sold at the value of US 555 during May, and the Butane metric ton at the same price.

Both gases are used in production of petrochemicals as well as cooking and heating purposes, it added.

The liquefied gas prices are affect-

ed by the increase and decrease of oil prices, market supply and demand and other factors.

Meanwhile, Kuwait oil price rose by USD 1.51 to USD 80.94 pb on Friday vis a vis USD 79.43 pb on Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said on Saturday.

In international markets, forward Brent crude contracts moved up by USD 1.17 to settle at USD 79.54 pb, while the rate of identical transactions of the West Texas Intermediate crude climbed by USD 2.02, settling at USD 76.78 a barrel.

## Intra-Arab trade, investment insurance hit USD 3 bln in '22

RABAT, April 30, (KUNA): Intra-Arab trade, finance and investment insurance services amounted to roughly three billion US dollars in 2022, up 44 percent over 2021's figure, said an Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) board member Saturday.

This figure has brought the insur-

ance total since the corporation was created in 1974 up to around USD 26 billion, Dhaman Board Member Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghanim told KUNA on the sidelines of the annual meetings of Arab financial institutions, which kicked off in Rabat, Morocco, earlier in the day.

He added that Kuwait-based Dha-

man plays a significant role in promoting investment, providing guarantee services against commercial and non-commercial risks and guaranteeing finance, trade and investment in Arab countries.

He noted that many exporters, investors and financial institutions in Arab and foreign countries benefit from the

corporation's financing operations and guarantee and reinsurance contracts.

The annual meetings of Arab financial institutions attracted the participation of Arab delegations, including Kuwait, representing the ministries of finance and economy, and governors of central banks as well as senior officials.

**China's manufacturing contracts**

China's factory activity declined in April, an official survey showed Sunday, signaling policymakers' challenges in sustaining momentum in the country's economic recovery. According to the government statistics bureau and an official industry group, a monthly purchasing managers' index declined to 49.2 from March's 51.9 on a 100-point scale where numbers below 50 indicate activity contracting. Measures of production, new

orders and employment dropped from the previous month, the National Bureau of Statistics and the China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing said. But they said the index for production remained above 50, meaning that there was still an expansion. China's economic growth accelerated in the first quarter of this year after the abrupt end of anti-virus controls. But authorities cautioned that the country will likely face import and export pressures

in the coming months amid an uncertain global economic outlook, and warned of inadequate domestic market demand in the world's No. 2 economy. The bureau's senior statistician, Zhao Qinghe, said Sunday the decline in the manufacturing purchasing managers' index was partly caused by inadequate market demand and the relatively high base figure recorded in the first quarter when recovery was fast. (AP)

**WDF calls for data governance**

The United Nations (UN) World Data Forum (WDF) that concluded on Thursday in Hangzhou City, east China's Zhejiang Province, called for better data governance and more cooperation between governments to help create a sustainable future. "Today, in the twenty-first century, data represents what oil represented in the twentieth century - a driver of development and progress," said UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "Data - when used responsibly - is the bedrock of a sustainable future." China shared its experience with data governance at the forum and promised to contribute more to global data governance by organizing more international trainings and promoting the development of the UN Global Platform for Big Data China Hub. In his congratulatory message

to the forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping said the country is willing to work with other countries to help implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through data governance. China is also willing to deepen international data cooperation within the framework of the Global Development Initiative, Xi said. Digital transformation that works (AP)

**The Conversation**

**Tech companies' problem with 'ethical debt'**

**AI has social consequences, but who pays the price?**

By Casey Fiesler

University of Colorado Boulder

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



As public concern about the ethical and social implications of artificial intelligence keeps growing, it might seem like it's time to slow down. But inside tech companies themselves, the sentiment is quite the opposite. As Big Tech's AI race heats up, it would be an "absolutely fatal error in this moment to worry about things that can be fixed later," a Microsoft executive wrote in an internal email about generative AI, as The New York Times reported.

In other words, it's time to "move fast and break things," to quote Mark Zuckerberg's old motto. Of course, when you break things, you might have to fix them later - at a cost.

In software development, the term "technical debt" refers to the implied cost of making future fixes as a consequence of choosing faster, less careful solutions now. Rushing to market can mean releasing software that isn't ready, knowing that once it does hit the market, you'll find out what the bugs are and can hopefully fix them then.

However, negative news stories about generative AI tend not to be about these

kinds of bugs. Instead, much of the concern is about AI systems amplifying harmful biases and stereotypes and students using AI deceptively. We hear about privacy concerns, people being fooled by misinformation, labor exploitation and fears about how quickly human jobs may be replaced, to name a few. These problems are not software glitches. Realizing that a technology reinforces oppression or bias is very different from learning that a button on a website doesn't work.

As a technology ethics educator and researcher, I have thought a lot about these kinds of "bugs." What's accruing here is not just technical debt, but ethical debt. Just as technical debt can result from limited testing during the development process, ethical debt results from not considering possible negative consequences or societal harms. And with ethical debt in particular, the people who incur it are rarely the people who pay for it in the end.

**Released**

As soon as OpenAI's ChatGPT was released in November 2022, the starter pitfall for today's AI race, I imagined the debt ledger starting to fill.

Within months, Google and Microsoft released their own generative AI programs, which seemed rushed to market in an effort to keep up. Google's stock prices fell when its chatbot Bard confidently supplied a wrong answer during the company's own demo. One might expect Microsoft to be particularly cautious when it comes to chatbots, considering Tay, its Twitter-based bot that was almost immediately shut down in 2016 after spouting misogynist and white supremacist

talking points. Yet early conversations with the AI-powered Bing left some users unsettled, and it has repeated known misinformation.

When the social debt of these rushed releases comes due, I expect that we will hear mention of unintended or unanticipated consequences. After all, even with ethical guidelines in place, it's not as if OpenAI, Microsoft or Google can see the future. How can someone know what societal problems might emerge before the technology is even fully developed?

The root of this dilemma is uncertainty, which is a common side effect of many technological revolutions, but magnified in the case of artificial intelligence. After all, part of the point of AI is that its actions are not known in advance. AI may not be designed to produce negative consequences, but it is designed to produce the unforeseen.

However, it is disingenuous to suggest that technologists cannot accurately speculate about what many of these consequences might be. By now, there have been countless examples of how AI can reproduce bias and exacerbate social inequities, but these problems are rarely publicly identified by tech companies themselves. It was external researchers who found racial bias in widely used commercial facial analysis systems, for example, and in a medical risk prediction algorithm that was being applied to around 200 million Americans. Academics and advocacy or research organizations like the Algorithmic Justice League and the Distributed AI Research Institute are doing much of this work: identifying harms after the fact. And this pattern doesn't seem likely to change if companies keep firing ethicists. (AP)

**US mortgage delinquency rate hovers near record low in Feb**

CoreLogic: Data indicates a fairly stable economy

IRVINE, Calif., April 30, (AP): CoreLogic®, a leading global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider, today released its monthly Loan Performance Insights Report for February 2023.

For the month of February, 3% of all mortgages in the U.S. were in some stage of delinquency (30 days or more past due, including those in foreclosure), representing a 0.4 percentage point decrease compared with 3.4% in February 2022 and a 0.2 percentage point increase compared with January 2023.

To gain a complete view of the mortgage market and loan performance health, CoreLogic examines all stages of delinquency. In February 2023, the U.S. delinquency and transition rates and their year-over-year changes, were as follows:

The national mortgage delinquency rate has barely changed year over year since the spring of 2022, indicating a fairly stable economy in which most borrowers are able to pay their mortgages on time. Similarly, the U.S. foreclosure rate has held steady at 0.3% for a year. And while the unemployment rate remained near a pre-pandemic low in March, it is possible that mortgage delinquency rates could begin to creep up later this year, as the impact of recent job losses begin to affect the numbers several months later.

"Despite a small monthly increase in the share of mortgage payments that were one month late in February, early-stage delinquencies remained unchanged year over year," said Molly Boesel, principal economist at CoreLogic. "February's early-stage delinquency rate was historically low and primarily driven by a strong job market. However, the possibility of a recession that would raise the U.S. unemployment rate could slightly erode the current strong mortgage performance situation in the coming months."

The next CoreLogic Loan Performance Insights Report will be released on May 25, 2023, featuring data for March 2023. For ongoing housing trends and data, visit the CoreLogic Intelligence Blog: [www.corelogic.com/intelligence](http://www.corelogic.com/intelligence).

The data in The CoreLogic LPI report represents foreclosure and delinquency activity reported through February 2023. The data in this report accounts for only first liens against a property and does not include secondary liens. The delinquency, transition and foreclosure rates are measured only against homes that have an outstanding mortgage. Homes without mortgage liens are not subject to foreclosure and are, therefore, excluded from the analysis. CoreLogic has approximately 75% coverage of U.S. foreclosure data.

CoreLogic is a leading global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider. The company's combined data from public, contributory and proprietary sources includes over 4.5 billion re-



A subway approaches an above ground station in the Brooklyn borough of New York with the New York City skyline in the background. (AP)

'We should not be paying to communicate service alerts to our customers'

**NYC transit agency pulls the brake on Twitter service alerts**

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): Shortly after midnight Thursday, several New York City subway trains slowed to a crawl as emergency crews tended to a person discovered on the tracks in Manhattan.

The delays were flagged for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's rail control center, where a customer service agent typed up a straightforward warning for early-morning riders to consider alternate routes.

But while the message was quickly posted to the MTA's website and app, the alert never made it to the subway system's Twitter account, with its 1 million followers. The agency's access to the platform's back-end, officials soon learned, had been suspended by Twitter without warning.

It was the second such breakdown in two weeks and the reaction inside the MTA was swift. By Thursday afternoon, senior executives agreed to cease publishing service alerts to the platform altogether.

The decision put the country's largest transportation network among a growing number of accounts, from National Public Radio to Elton John, who have reduced their Twitter presence or left the platform since its takeover by Elon Musk.

It also caught riders, and some in the MTA, off guard, even as at least one other transit agency considered following suit.

"The train schedule is always messed up. It's convenient to have the answers all in one place," lamented Brandon Gubitosa, a Queens resident,

estate and mortgage finance, insurance, capital markets, and the public sector. CoreLogic delivers value to clients through unique data, analytics, workflow technology, advisory and managed services. Clients rely on CoreLogic to help identify and

who said he checked for service alerts on the MTA's Twitter feed before leaving for his commute each morning. "There should be some responsibility for Twitter to make sure this service doesn't disappear."

For its part, Twitter has signaled that the days of private accounts disseminating troves of information at no cost may be ending. Last month, the company announced a new pricing system that would charge for access to its application programming interface, or API, which is used by accounts that post frequent alerts, such as transit and weather agencies.

MTA officials estimated the cost could run as high as \$50,000 a month. For a transit agency that faces a multi-billion dollar deficit, paying that much raised concerns.

"The amount that is being posed is astronomical," said Shanifah Rieara, the MTA's acting chief customer officer. "We are all about bringing ridership back. We should not be paying to communicate service alerts to our customers."

Those that don't agree to pay, Twitter warned, will begin to see their service "deprecate," a process that some agencies say is already underway.

A spokesperson for Chicago Transit Authority confirmed they were considering ending alerts, citing what they described as Twitter's "diminished" effectiveness for real-time transit information.

On Friday, the Bay Area Rapid Transit System announced its alerts were temporarily unavailable due to

technological issues, though a spokesperson said they hoped to have the issue fixed soon.

Beyond the pricing, MTA officials offered other reasons for leaving Twitter, including the added vitriol and the move away from a chronological timeline.

They also pointed to a desire to push customers toward existing in-house products that provide the same information about service disruptions, such as a pair of apps known as MYmta and TrainTime. They provide times for the subway and commuter rail system, respectively.

A request for comment was sent to Twitter's communications office. Twitter responded only with an automated reply.

The MTA's decision to scale back its use of Twitter comes as many institutional users of the platform wrestle with changes Musk has made in an effort to make the service profitable, including asking users to pay for checkmarks on their accounts that formerly served as a form of identity verification. Service alerts are valuable tools on New York City's massive rail and bus system, where mechanical problems, track fires, repair work and other issues can cause subway trains to get delayed or diverted to lines where they don't ordinarily run.

Only a few years ago, riders were often left in the dark about those changes until they were already on subway platforms, where transit workers would bark announcements through

manage growth opportunities, improve performance and mitigate risk. Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., CoreLogic operates in North America, Western Europe and Asia Pacific. For more information, please visit [www.corelogic.com](http://www.corelogic.com).

scratchy speakers or hang paper signs about changes.

Now, information about service, including the real-time position of subway cars, are available through a variety of electronic sources, both on people's smartphones and in stations. Consumer research has suggested that subway riders seeking information on Twitter account for a relatively narrow slice of riders.

Last month, more than 3 million people visited the MTA's homepage, which also has the updates on service disruptions that once appeared on Twitter, and nearly 2 million others used the two apps, according to an authority spokesperson.

In addition to service alerts, the MTA's customer service agents use Twitter to provide real-time responses to questions and concerns - a back-and-forth that often serves to calm riders' frayed nerves.

Last month, the agency sent out 21,000 replies on Twitter - responses that offered a valuable public window into the MTA's customer service policy, according to Rachael Fauss, a senior policy advisor at the watchdog group Reinvent Albany.

"There was a personalization to it that was interesting," Fauss said. "There's an opportunity to see how the MTA responds to riders that you don't get without Twitter."

For now, the agency said it would continue responding to customers on Twitter. But officials acknowledged there were no guarantees about whether that would remain the case long term. "The MTA gets blamed for a host of things, so we need a resilient way to communicate," said Rieara. "In (Twitter's) current stage, we can't put our customers in a position to be guessing whether or not they have the most updated information."

**NerdWallet**

**Thinking of starting a business? Consider 'buying' one instead**

Starting a business can be an enticing dream. It's also notoriously difficult to come up with an original idea, find the right team and fund its growth. If you want to work for yourself,

there may be an easier way - buying an existing business. Think of it like renovating a house instead of building one from the ground up, says Mark Zweig, professor and entrepreneur-in-residence at the University of Arkansas Walton College of Business.

"I like the constraints of an existing business versus a clean sheet of paper," Zweig says.

Here are four reasons to consider this path to entrepreneurship.

**You don't have to start from scratch**

Founders need to find customers, develop relationships with vendors and hire employees. They may need to rent space and buy equipment. They also need to create processes, set up software tools, hire lawyers and accountants, and complete other relevant tasks.

Building that structure takes time and money. When you buy a business, at least some of those things are already in place.

"There's a lot of intellectual capital when you buy a business," says Randy Katz, founder of Synesis Advisors and past president of the California Association of Business Brokers. "The employees have seen pretty much any kind of problem that you might run into, which means that they probably are better at foreseeing problems and better (at) planning for problems."

And perhaps most valuable of all: There may already be money coming in.

"I could invest \$200,000 and have to grind it out and build the business from scratch with absolutely no infrastructure and no guarantees of success," Katz says. With the same amount of money, he says, you could purchase a business that generates cash flow "right out of the gate."

Buying a business doesn't guarantee success either, Katz cautions.

Still, "the financial economics just make a lot of sense - if you buy the right business, do the right diligence and are successful in the continuity of the operation."

**Financing may be available**

It can be very difficult to find startup funding for a new venture. Many business owners rely on their own savings or friends and family to get their business up and running.

"The main advantage of buying a business over starting a business is that there's capital and loans available from banks for buying businesses," says Tim Stolz, a certified financial planner and certified public accountant at Bestgate Wealth Advisors in Maryland.

You may be able to use an SBA loan or business bank loan to buy a business. Startups are typically excluded from these types of financing because they lack revenue history - but when you're buying an existing business, lenders can evaluate its financials and make predictions about the business's future performance.

Business sellers may also be willing to finance the business purchase, Zweig says, especially if they're eager to retire and don't have a successor.

**You can do due diligence**

You can look through an existing business's books to make sure everything is above board, from classifying workers correctly to complying with sales tax laws.

Zweig cautions against businesses that face pending litigation, businesses with reputations that feel impossible to improve and family businesses that employ several relatives.

He also watches out for "single-person management" - situations in which "if the owner leaves, all of the institutional knowledge leaves with them." And any unethical or illegal activity is a no-go. (AP)

TCS unveils customizable private jet itineraries

TCS World Travel, operator of private jet expeditions, unveiled eight new customizable itineraries for travelers seeking a personalized getaway with private jet, plane or first class commercial travel options. From a deep dive into some of the most remote destinations in southern Africa, to an island-hopping journey around the Mediterranean, travelers can choose from a diverse menu of all-encompassing

trips that combine exclusive access and one-of-a-kind experiences with luxury accommodations in desirable destinations around the world.

TCS World Travel's Private Custom Travel arm offers guests an exclusive, private and stress-free way to travel, leveraging TCS' wealth of knowledge, global network of connections, and on-the-ground expertise from the company's 30 years of ex-

perience creating unforgettable Group Jet Expeditions. Guests will enjoy TCS World Travel's exceptional service, dedication and attention to detail, and benefit from their exclusive access and insights, as their knowledgeable travel consultants plan every step of the journey. TCS can also include an experienced trip leader to travel with the group and sort out all the on-the-ground details throughout the journey. (AP)

Japan ocean policy vows tougher security

Japan adopted a new five-year ocean policy on Friday that calls for stronger maritime security, including bolstering its coast guard's capability and cooperation with the military as China grows increasingly assertive in regional seas.

The new Basic Plan on Ocean Policy adopted by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's Cabinet also says Japan must accelerate the development of au-

tonomous underwater vehicles and remotely operated robots to strengthen its surveillance capability.

It cited a list of threats: Chinese coast guard ships' repeated intrusions into Japanese territorial waters, growing unauthorized maritime activity by "foreign survey boats" inside Japan's exclusive economic zone, increasing joint military exercises by China and Russia,

and North Korea's repeated missile launches.

"The situation in the ocean around Japan is increasingly tense," Kishida said at a policy meeting Friday. "It's time for us to unite our wisdom among the industry, academia and government for ocean policy reform - or ocean transformation."

He also noted the need to better use maritime resources to achieve carbon neutrality. (AP)

AMF remains closest partner to the Arab countries

Fund granted \$478.5m loans to Arab countries in 2022

ABU DHABI, Dubai, April 30: The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) launched its 2022 annual activity report, which was approved by the Board of Governors of the Arab Monetary Fund after reviewing the Fund's efforts in providing financial and technical support to enhance economic and financial stability and achieve inclusive and sustainable growth in its member countries.

The report details the activities and financial position of the Fund for the fiscal year that ended on December 31, 2022, as well as the financial and technical assistance it gave to its member countries through lending activities, direct and indirect technical assistance, advice, and contributions to studies, reports, bulletins, books, and booklets. It also outlines the seminars, workshops, and training courses delivered by the Fund Training Institute to strengthen and expand the capacities of official Arab cadres in central banks, ministries of finance, economy, trade, and national statistical organizations.

The report also emphasized the AMF's 2022 initiatives to assist its member countries as they deal with the unfavorable effects on the global stage, the detrimental impacts on supply chains, and the increase in the prices of essential commodities on global markets, particularly energy and food items.

The report also highlighted the AMF's agenda, which considers helping Arab countries' economic officials at the top of the list and focusing on policies that directly support comprehensive and sustainable economic development.

The report also detailed the Fund's initiatives to broaden financial inclusion, assist relevant Arab su-

perisory bodies in developing the financial sector, and take full advantage of opportunities provided by contemporary financial technologies to improve the efficiency of financial services and access to finance.

In this regard, the Board of Governors of the Fund evaluated the efforts made in lending activity to member countries in 2022. In 2022 the Fund approved three loans amounting to 120 million Arab Accounting Dinar (AAD), or roughly 478.5 million dollars, to support the balance of payments and economic reform initiatives in various countries. It also approved the disbursement of amounts for already existing reform programs.

Activities

The Board also reviewed the Fund's ongoing efforts to support and aid economic policymakers in Arab countries during 2022 through its publications activities (69 publications), including reports, working papers, research and studies, statistical bulletins, books, booklets, and guides, including 17 introductory booklets, aimed at raising economic and financial awareness among Arab youth.

The Board was also briefed on the Fund's work in the area of training programs and activities aimed at building capacities in official institutions in the member countries, where 62 training courses were delivered in 2022, benefiting 1,850 participants from Arab.

The report reflected the Fund's activities related to its efforts to develop the financial and banking sectors in Arab countries. These efforts centered on boosting the region's financial stability and supporting the sharing of

knowledge and expertise to meet the sector's challenges posed by regional and global developments.

The Board was briefed on the Fund's efforts during 2022 to strengthen its crucial role as a platform for dialogue and consultation among policymakers in member countries on the economic and financial challenges and exchange experiences on sound policies. This was done at the level of the Council of Governors of Arab Central Banks and Monetary Authorities and the Council of Arab Ministers of Finance. In this regard, the Fund organized in 2022 the meetings of the two councils, committees, and task forces that arose from them, in addition to several workshops and dialogue forums organized with the involvement of several regional and international financial institutions. The Fund, on the other hand, organized a number of high-level meetings for the governors, deputy governors, and undersecretaries of the finance ministries in the Arab Countries.

Investment

The Fund continued in 2022 to follow its conservative investment policy and strategy in managing the funds and investment portfolio risks, which helped to protect the invested capital and to generate positive returns. The Fund uses its resources and accepts deposits from member countries as part of its investment activities. The Fund continued to use Basel III Accord to assess the risks associated with this activity. It also continued to manage part of the Arab Trade Finance Program's funds and those of the Arab specialized institutions and to monitor these institutions' assets

managed by external parties to ensure that investment policies are in line with their investment plans and strategies.

The report also detailed the Fund's efforts to support opportunities for Arab economic integration, facilitate Arab payments, and maintain connections with the major Arab trading partners, whether through the Trade Finance Program's initiatives to promote Arab trade flows or the maintenance of the Regional Clearing and Settlement Corporation for Arab Payments "Buna" framework.

Through the Arab Trade Financing Program, the Fund continued to provide information, promote Arab goods and commodities, and provide part of the funding required for this trade as part of its contributions to support the growth of Arab trade and boost the competitiveness of Arab exporters. The program funded 19.9 billion US dollars' worth of commercial transactions in 2022, whereas 19.2 billion US dollars' worth of withdrawals were made during that same year.

The year 2022 saw the completion of all operations and management-related steps for the "BUNA" platform for Arab payments, as well as the establishment of the Regional Corporation for Clearing and Settlement of Arab Payments' Supervisory Committee, made up of the central banks of eligible currencies and the Corporation's Board of Directors. The platform's operation continued to increase in 2022. According to thereport, around 73.3 percent of the transactions made in 2022 were in UAE dirhams, 24.9 percent were in Egyptian pounds, 1.4 percent were in Saudi riyals, and 0.3 percent were in US dollars.



Johair Marafi awarding winner of GMC Yukon Salary Transfer.

'All Yours Upon Salary Transfer'

ABK announces quarterly winner of its GMC Yukon

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced Abdullah Jaber Abdulhadi Jamal as the winner of the GMC Yukon vehicle in its second quarterly draw in 2023 pertaining to the Bank's 'All Yours Upon Salary Transfer' campaign, held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, Acting General Manager of ABK's Retail Banking Division, said: "I would like to begin by congratulating our winner. I am very pleased to witness the great success of our campaign, reaffirmed by the noteworthy customer turnout seeking to benefit from the numerous features offered."

Upon salary transfer, ABK awards its new customers an array of benefits including a KD 1,000 cash gift, a free-of-charge ABK Emirates Visa Signature credit card for life, as well as a chance to enter the next quarterly draw to win yet another GMC Yukon vehicle.

Marafi continued, "Our salary transfer offering represents one of the Bank's most significant campaigns designed to reward customers with worthwhile benefits. It encompasses an all-inclusive tailored package catered to suit customer needs and desires."

Attract

She expressed the Bank's commitment to ensuring existing customer satisfaction as well as its eagerness to attract new customers to open ABK accounts in an effort to further enhance the Bank's position. She continued, "All our initiatives are in line with the Bank's goal to sustain our position as one of the most prominent players in the market."

As such, Marafi affirmed "ABK is constantly studying the best possible ways to enhance our product and service offering to thank and reward our customers for their loyalty and trust. As such, the Bank will continue to develop more sought-after promotional campaigns throughout the year."

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that is today known for offer-

ing a simpler banking experience. The Bank offers personal, corporate, and private banking of which includes a wide array of products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Enjoying equal stability and strength, the Bank also offers the convenience of banking across the region, servicing other markets in Egypt and the UAE.

For more information about ABK's products and services, follow the Bank's Instagram social media account @abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com or contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899.

Since its foundation in 1967, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has progressed to be one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region, providing a wide range of financial and banking services and products across all its markets in Kuwait, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

In its home market of Kuwait, ABK has 29 centrally located branches, while in the UAE it has two full service branches located in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and one wholesale banking branch in the DIFC. ABK - Egypt has a total of 44 branches.

ABK's long-term regional aspirations have also led to strategic alliances with world-class financial partners. The Bank's highly successful and popular co-branding with Emirates Airline on ABK credit cards has given cardholders the opportunity to earn and redeem Skywards Miles for Emirates flights, by simply using their cards.

In addition to its retail operations, the Bank also has a highly successful commercial side. Its Corporate Division focuses on financing for the construction, real estate and trade sectors, providing loans, letters of credit and guarantees, and financing services, while the Treasury and Investments Division provides effective foreign exchange and interest rate services and advice for the Kuwait, Gulf and International markets.

Through its subsidiary, Ahli Capital Investment Company, the Bank provides a wide range of financial services such as asset management, portfolio management, wealth management, investment banking, custody and consultative services. Ahli Capital manages high performance funds including Ahli Kuwaiti Fund and Gulf Kuwaiti Fund. These two funds have achieved high yields through securities investment in Kuwait and GCC countries.

UAE led the region raising a total of \$3.2b

GCC IPOs raise \$3.5b in Q1 2023: Markaz

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its research report titled "Initial Public Offerings (IPO) in the GCC markets", which raised total proceeds of USD 3.5 billion through 12 offerings during the first three months of 2023, marking a year-on-year decline in value by 25% compared to the first quarter of 2022, where issuers raised USD 4.6 billion through 13 offerings.

Geographical Allocation:

Markaz's report stated that the UAE led the region in terms of IPO proceeds in Q1-2023, raising a total of USD 3.2 billion from 3 offerings and recording an increase of 192% in value compared to Q1-2022. UAE offerings constituted 91% of total GCC IPO proceeds in Q1-2023. Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) witnessed the highest proceeds with USD 3.0 billion through the offerings of ADNOC Gas and Presight AI. UAE offerings that were listed on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) raised a total of USD 0.2 billion from one IPO, which is Al Ansari Financial Services. Muscat Securities Market (MSM) witnessed 1 IPO with total proceeds of 244 million, constituting 7% of total GCC IPO proceeds raised during the first three months of 2023. The Saudi Exchange (Tadawul) witnessed 8 initial public offerings in Q1-2023 that generated total proceeds of USD 72 million, constituting 2% of total GCC IPO proceeds. This represents a drop of 98% year-on-year in value when compared to proceeds raised by Saudi IPOs in Q1-2022.

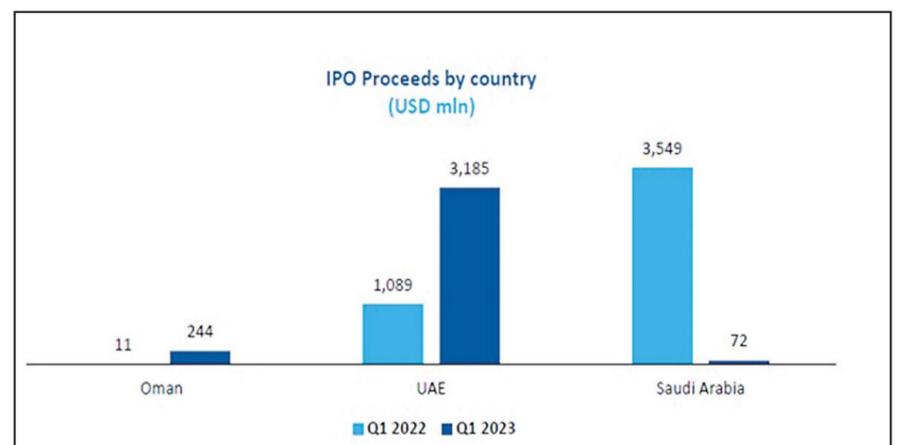
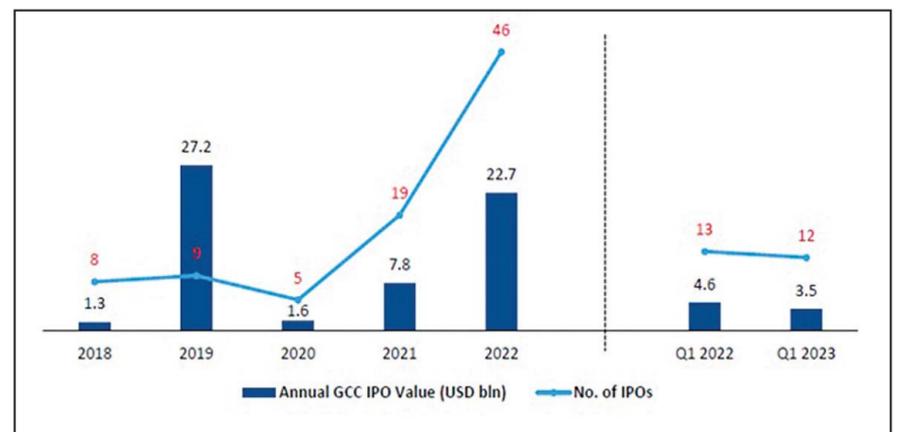
Top 5 GCC IPOs by Proceeds during Q1-2023:

Markaz's report highlights the top 5 GCC IPOs by proceeds during Q1-2023. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company gas business, ADNOC Gas, has raised USD 2.5 billion in proceeds marking the largest IPO on ADX and surpassing Borouge, which raised USD 2.0 billion in June 2022. ADNOC Gas offered 3.84 billion shares, or 5% stake, which was covered more than 50 times. ADNOC Gas IPO proceeds constituted 71% of total GCC IPO proceeds in Q1-2023.

Presight AI IPO raised a total of USD 496 million in proceeds through the sale of 1.35 billion shares, or 32% stake, with total demand of investors which reached 136 times. Presight IPO constituted 14% of total GCC IPO proceeds during Q1-2023.

Oman's state energy company OQ raised a total of USD 244 million from the IPO of its oil-drilling unit, Abraj Energy Services, pulling off Muscat's largest listing in more than a decade. The company floated 377.4 million shares, or 49% stake, with a coverage ratio of 8.7 times. Abraj Energy Services IPO proceeds constituted 7% of total GCC IPO proceeds in Q1-2023.

UAE-based exchange house Al Ansari Financial Services raised a total of USD 210 million in its IPO which offered 750 million shares, or 10% stake, with a coverage ratio of 44 times. Al Ansari Financial Ser-



List of GCC IPOs - Q1 2023:

Name	Country	Float %	Offering Amount USD Mn.	Market Segment	Exchange	Closing Date
1. Waja Company	KSA	13%	10.9	Nomu	Tadawul	19-Feb-23
2. Adnoc Gas	UAE	5%	2,478.1	Main	ADX	2-Mar-23
3. Abraj Energy Services	Oman	49%	244.4	Parallel	MSM	2-Mar-23
4. Bena Steel Industries Company	KSA	12%	8.3	Nomu	Tadawul	2-Mar-23
5. Knowledge Net Company	KSA	20%	7.5	Nomu	Tadawul	2-Mar-23
6. Horizon Food Company	KSA	20%	11.8	Nomu	Tadawul	9-Mar-23
7. Food Gate Trading Company	KSA	20%	6.3	Nomu	Tadawul	16-Mar-23
8. Presight AI	UAE	32%	496.1	Main	ADX	17-Mar-23
9. Ghida AlSultan for Fast Food Company	KSA	20%	14.3	Nomu	Tadawul	19-Mar-23
10. Meyar Company	KSA	20%	4.2	Nomu	Tadawul	23-Mar-23
11. Saudi Lime Industries Company	KSA	9%	9.1	Nomu	Tadawul	23-Mar-23
12. Al Ansari Financial Services	UAE	10%	210.3	-	DFM	24-Mar-23

vices IPO proceeds constituted 6% of total GCC IPO proceeds in Q1-2023.

Ghida Al-Sultan for Fast Food Company raised a total of USD 14.3 million through offering 640 thousand shares, or 20% of its capital, on Nomu with demand that covered the offering 1.1 times. Ghida Al-Sultan IPO proceeds constituted 0.4% of total GCC IPO proceeds in Q1-2023.

GCC IPO Pipeline:

Tadawul received 100 listing applications until mid-February 2023 and 23 firms obtained final approval for listing. Saudi Arabia's First Mills Company is planning to float 16.65 million shares, or 30% of its share capital, in an IPO that could value the company at as much as USD 1 billion. Al Mawarid Manpower Company intends to offer 4.5 million shares, or 30% of its capital, on Tadawul in May. Lumi Rental

Company obtained CMA approval to offer and list 16.5 million shares, or 30% of its share capital, on Tadawul. The UAE is also expecting 11 IPOs in 2023 with ADNOC planning to float its marine and logistics subsidiary in the coming months. Oman's OQ Gas Network is preparing for a public share sale that could take place as early as June. OQ could raise more than USD 500 million.



Eyeganics Organic Tears

**Eyeganics Organic Tears available thru Avenova.com**

NovaBay® Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NYSE American: NBY) announces a partnership with Eyeganics to sell OTC Organic Tears (0.2% organic glycerin) on Avenova.com and through Avenova's physician-dispensed channel. Organic Tears has no additives or artificial chemicals and is the only lubricant eye drop certified by the USDA as 100% organic and preservative-free.

Organic Tears are formulated using only three ingredients – organic glycerin (oil from organic vegetables), salt and water – and are extremely refreshing to dry eyes. A new technology allows for each bottle to dispense more than 250 drops

of Organic Tears, providing a cost and convenience advantage over other preservative-free artificial tears found in single-use vials. The product is offered in the 10 ml size for \$29.00.

"Dry eye is a multifaceted and complex condition that's becoming increasingly common. We've now added another high-quality, scientifically formulated product to Avenova.com that further reinforces our website as a one-stop destination for customers seeking relief from the symptoms of dry eye," said Justin Hall, NovaBay CEO. "This product fills a need in our product assortment by offering a preservative free dry eye drop. Our

partnership with Eyeganics is the first of what we hope will be other highly effective ophthalmic products added to our distribution channels."

"As a practicing eye doctor, I talk to a lot of patients about what eye drops they use," said Eyeganics founder and CEO Dan Friederich, OD, FAO. "I developed this product with all natural ingredients to address the needs of patients affected by some chemicals that may be found in other artificial tears. I'm delighted to partner on this opportunity and to associate Organic Tears with the high-quality products available on Avenova.com."

**First once-every-two-months long-acting treatment**

**FDA approves Abilify for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder**

PRINCETON, NJ and DEERFIELD, IL, April 30: Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc. (Otsuka) and Lundbeck announce the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the New Drug Application (NDA) for Abilify Asimtufii® (aripiprazole) extended-release injectable suspension for intramuscular use, a once-every-two-months injection for the treatment of schizophrenia in adults or for maintenance monotherapy treatment of bipolar I disorder in adults.

Estimated to be approximately 0.3% and did not vary widely across countries or regions. The worldwide lifetime prevalence of the disease has been estimated to be approximately 0.9% across diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic categories. The course of schizophrenia is typically characterized by acute episodes of psychotic behaviors occurring at varying intervals between periods of relative symptomatic stability.

**Recurrence**

Bipolar I disorder is a recurrent, lifelong mood disorder with a variable course that results in functional and cognitive impairment and a reduction in quality of life that affects 0.6% of the population. The course of bipolar I disorder is characterized by recurrent manic and depressive episodes that may last weeks or months. Over 90% of people with bipolar disorder experience recurrences during their lifetimes.

Bipolar I disorder often requires long-term pharmacologic treatment to delay time to recurrence. Long-acting injectables have the potential to provide continuous delivery of antipsychotic medication and can maintain therapeutic plasma concentrations, which may help address the variable nature of bipolar disorder.

Elderly patients with dementia-related psychosis treated with antipsychotic drugs are at increased risk of death. Abilify Asimtufii is not approved for the treatment of patients with dementia-related psychosis. Abilify Asimtufii is contraindicated with a known hypersensitivity reaction to aripiprazole.

Abilify Asimtufii offers two months of sustained therapeutic concentrations with one dose. Each dose is provided in a single-chamber, prefilled syringe, and is administered by a healthcare professional to appropriate patients via intramuscular injection in the gluteal muscle. Abilify Asimtufii, a long-acting injectable, provides continuous delivery of medication and can maintain therapeutic plasma concentrations, which may help those living with schizophrenia and bipolar I disorder.

"We are pleased to offer this new treatment option for people living with schizophrenia or bipolar I disorder," said John Kraus, M.D., Ph.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer at Otsuka. "This approval underscores Otsuka's commitment to innovate and continuously evolve to meet the needs of the communities we serve."

The efficacy of Abilify Asimtufii is based on the adequate and well-controlled studies of Abilify Maintena® (aripiprazole) in the treatment of schizophrenia or maintenance treatment of bipolar I disorder in adults. The aripiprazole concentrations of Abilify Asimtufii were explored in a pharmacokinetic bridging study which was a 32-week, open-label, multiple-dose, randomized, parallel-arm, multicenter study (N=266) in patients living with schizophrenia and bipolar I disorder.

**Injectable**

The once-every-two-months, long-acting injectable formulation in 960 mg and 720 mg prefilled syringes delivers sustained plasma concentrations comparable that demonstrated in studies with Abilify Maintena, a long-acting injectable, resulting in comparable safety and efficacy.

"This approval is important news for patients, families, and healthcare providers. We hope that the use of Abilify Asimtufii in treatment plans will have a positive impact on those living with schizophrenia or bipolar I disorder," said Johan Luthman, executive vice president, R&D, Lundbeck. "We are grateful to the patients and researchers who made this major milestone possible."

Schizophrenia is a severely debilitating mental illness characterized by delusions, hallucinations, and disordered cognition. Based on a systematic review of global data, the prevalence of schizophrenia in 2019 was estimated to be approximately 0.3% and did not vary widely across countries or regions.

Results from the pivotal trial 031-201-00181, that enrolled 266 patients, demonstrated that Abilify Asimtufii 960 mg met the primary endpoint criteria establishing similarity of aripiprazole plasma concentrations and thus comparable effectiveness to Abilify Maintena 400 mg over a two-month dosing interval.

Multiple-dose administrations of Abilify Asimtufii once-every-two-months, LAI 960 mg were generally safe and well tolerated in subjects with schizophrenia or bipolar I disorder and showed comparable safety to aripiprazole once-monthly 400 mg.

Abilify Asimtufii is a prescription medicine given by injection by a healthcare professional: for the treatment of schizophrenia in adults alone as maintenance treatment of bipolar I disorder in adults.

Abilify Maintena is a prescription medicine given by injection by a healthcare professional: for the treatment of schizophrenia in adults alone as maintenance treatment of bipolar I disorder in adults.

It is not known if Abilify Asimtufii or Abilify Maintena is safe and effective in children under 18 years of age. Increased risk of death in elderly people with dementia-related psychosis. Abilify Asimtufii and Abilify Maintena increase the risk of death in elderly people who have lost touch with reality (psychosis) due to confusion and memory loss (dementia). Abilify Asimtufii and Abilify Maintena are not for the treatment of people with dementia-related psychosis.

SUWON, South Korea, April 30: OliX Pharmaceuticals, Inc (KOSDAQ: 226950), a leading developer of RNAi therapeutics, has announced positive headline results of a phase 2a trial in the treatment of hypertrophic scars which met the primary observer-based endpoint at week 24 as evaluated by the Patient and Observer Scar Assessment Scale (POSAS). The trial ascertained the effects of intradermal OLX10010, initiated 2 weeks after surgery and administered biweekly over 12 weeks versus placebo in adult patients with hypertrophic scars. This trial uses a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multi-center, intrasubject trial design and continues until week 48 after surgery.

The data shows that 24 weeks after scar excision surgery relative to baseline, the biweekly intradermal administration of OLX10010, but not placebo, leads to significant improvement of hypertrophic scar appearance on both, the POSAS observer global score (p=.0017, 2-sided) and the POSAS observer total score (p=.029, 2-sided). There was no clear evidence for dose-dependent (2mg and 5mg) effects. Follow-up of participating patients up to 48 weeks post-surgery is ongoing.

The trial confirms the safety and tolerability of OLX10010 at both dose levels, with no safety issues identified. Also, no negative effects on wound-healing after surgery were observed. The absence of any safety concerns stimulates development of OLX10010 as monotherapy or in combination with other treatments for hypertrophic scars, a condition for which currently available treatments are deemed insufficient.

**Challenging**

Dr Waibel, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Subsection Chief of Dermatology, Baptist Hospital of Miami, and Miami Dermatology & Laser Institute, who participated in this trial stated: "The treatment of hypertrophic scars remains elusive to date with no targeted treatments available for this large patient population. Connective tissue growth factor (CTGF) plays an important role in fibrosis. CTGF inhibitors, like OLX10010, have inherent advantages with providing an evidence-based treatment approach and practical advantages of allowing new mechanisms of action and less frequent administration. The safety data observed in this trial are particularly encouraging positioning OLX10010 as potential first-in-line treatment for this indication."

Dong Ki Lee, Ph.D., Founder and

**Phase 2 trial shows positive result**

**OliX's OLX10010 leads to significant improvement of hypertrophic scar**

**Improves nasal obstruction symptoms**

**Aerin's VivAer is effective, durable option for repair of nasal valve repair**

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., April 30: Aerin Medical Inc., a company dedicated to providing Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) physicians with non-invasive solutions for the treatment of chronic nasal conditions, supports the recent American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) position statement. The statement recognizes nasal valve repair as "a distinct surgical procedure that can improve nasal obstruction symptoms for appropriately selected patients." The Academy notes that office-based techniques, including radiofrequency treatment, can stabilize the nasal valve, optimize nasal valve collapse (NVC) patient outcomes, and be performed either as a standalone procedure or in combination with other procedures to potentially avoid multiple surgeries.

The AAO-HNS statement recognizes that NVC can be a significant contributing factor to nasal airway obstruction (NAO) and failure to treat NVC when indicated often results in incomplete symptom resolution. Appropriate patients who can benefit from NVC repair can be identified by using the Cottle or modified Cottle maneuver with subjective improvement in nasal breathing. Furthermore, AAO-HNS notes that NVC is a structural is-

sue that cannot effectively be handled with medical treatment (i.e., intranasal steroids) nor by certain complementary surgical procedures for NAO (i.e., septoplasty, turbinate reduction).

"We thank the AAO-HNS leadership for its advocacy on behalf of otolaryngologists in identifying and treating nasal valve collapse to optimize patient outcomes," said Matt Brokaw, CEO of Aerin Medical. "Nasal airway obstruction is one of the primary reasons a patient visits an ENT physician, and we hope that this enables ENTs to treat nasal valve collapse with minimally invasive solutions when it contributes to nasal obstruction."

Aerin Medical's VivAer, a non-invasive, temperature-controlled radiofrequency technology, is an effective and durable option for repair of NVC, which often lowers quality of life due to symptoms including nasal congestion, sleep disturbance, daytime sleepiness, and snoring. VivAer has been used in more than 60,000 patients in the United States and treatment is covered by Medicare and other insurance plans when considered medically necessary. Earlier this year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) assigned physician and facility payment for a new Category I Cur-

rent Procedural Terminology (CPT®) code that includes the use of VivAer to repair NVC when performed in the office and outpatient surgical settings.

VivAer features a thin, wand-like stylus that attaches to a console. The stylus is inserted via the nostril to gently remodel the nasal tissue and improve airflow. VivAer does not involve any cutting, freezing, or removal of nasal tissue or bone. Treatment with VivAer may be performed during an office visit under local anesthesia. Patients typically experience little discomfort with minimal downtime and are often able to return to normal activities following treatment.

Aerin Medical is a privately held, venture-backed company, with US offices in California and Texas. Aerin's mission is to provide ENT physicians with non-invasive solutions for the treatment of chronic nasal conditions. The company's products, VivAer® for nasal airway obstruction and RhinAer® for chronic rhinitis, leverage Aerin's proprietary temperature-controlled technology, which allows ENT physicians to reliably improve patients' symptoms with in-office procedures performed under local anesthesia. More than 75,000 patients have been treated with Aerin Medical products to date.

Chief Executive Officer of OliX Pharmaceuticals, said: "Hypertrophic scarring is a significant concern for patients and a challenging problem for clinicians. With at present no treatment modalities allowing sufficient treatment of hypertrophic scars, this condition presents a major unmet medical need with a significant compound annual growth rate. We are excited about the initial results from this trial, supporting the development of OLX10010 as backbone treatment for patients with hypertrophic scars, when used alone and in combination with standard of care and future novel treatments."

OLX10010 is an asymmetric siRNA duplex with a cell-penetrating moiety attached to the 3' of sense strand (cell-penetrating asymmetric

siRNA, i.e. cp-asiRNA), targeting human connective tissue growth factor (CTGF), which is a key factor in the development of hypertrophic scars. OLX10010 can be delivered into cells without any delivery systems, and interferes with the expression of CTGF with complementary nucleotide sequences by degrading mRNA after transcription. Drug candidates targeting CTGF support CTGF as a promising therapeutic target for the treatment of fibrotic diseases, i.e., hypertrophic scars. The use of OLX10010 is currently under clinical investigation and the safety and efficacy have not yet been fully evaluated by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or any other regulatory agency.

OliX Pharmaceuticals is a clinical-stage pharmaceutical company devel-

oping therapeutics against a variety of disorders by down-regulating the expression of disease-causing genes based on its own proprietary RNAi technology. The Company's core RNAi platform, asymmetric siRNA (asiRNA), is a unique gene silencing technology based on RNA interference (RNAi), which is considered the most efficient gene silencing technology. Utilizing this proprietary asiRNA technology, OliX has developed cell penetrating asiRNA (cp-asiRNA), a therapeutic RNAi platform to effectively target diseases including hypertrophic scarring, dry and wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and subretinal fibrosis. OliX has also developed another therapeutic RNAi platform, GalNAC-asiRNA, to target a variety of liver diseases.

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# Battle for late Johnny Winter's music to play out in court

HARTFORD, Conn., April 30, (AP) — Nearly nine years after Johnny Winter's death, a battle for control of the legendary blues guitarist's music is being fought in court with allegations of theft and greed flying back and forth.

The legal fight pits Winter's former personal manager and bandmate, Paul Nelson, against the family of the bluesman's late wife, Susan, who died in 2019.

Winter's in-laws say Nelson and his wife improperly took more than \$1.5 million from Winter's music business, including auctioning off some of the late musician's guitars.

Nelson and his wife have countersued, saying Susan Winter's siblings swooped in when she was medicated and dying of cancer and tricked her into giving them control of Winter's music, stripping away Nelson's rights as the beneficiary of Susan's Winter's estate.

The case was scheduled to go to trial in a Connecticut court in April, but was rescheduled for September.

At stake is ownership of Winter's music catalogue, proceeds from record and merchandise sales and authority to approve any commercial use of his songs, the value of which is uncertain.

"The case is about preserving Johnny Winter's legacy and vindicating and making sure the Nelsons haven't improperly taken the moneys rightfully owed to the plaintiffs," said Timothy Diemand, a lawyer for the Susan Winter's siblings, Bonnie and Christopher Warford.

Nelson wants to be reinstated as the beneficiary of Susan Winter's estate.

"The Plaintiffs orchestrated the wrongful termination of Paul Nelson during a difficult time in Susan Winter's last year of life," the Nelsons said in a statement released by their lawyer, Matthew Mason. They said it was clear that both Johnny and Susan Winter wanted Nelson to be responsible for Johnny Winter's music and legacy.

John Dawson Winter III was born and raised in Beaumont, Texas. He burst onto the world blues scene in the 1960s, dazzling crowds with his fast licks while his trademark long, white hair flew about from under his cowboy hat. He and his brother Edgar - both born with albinism - were both reknowned musicians.

Winter played at Woodstock in 1969 and went on to produce albums for Blues icon Muddy Waters in addition to his own music. In 1988 he was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame.

### Credits

Rolling Stone magazine listed him as the No. 63 best guitar player of all time in 2015. He released more than two dozen albums and was nominated for several Grammy awards, winning his first one posthumously in 2015 for Best Blues Album for "Step Back." Nelson produced the album and also took home a Grammy for it.

Winter, who spent two decades living in Easton, Connecticut, before his death, battled heroin addiction for years and credited Nelson, whom he met in 1999, with helping him get off methadone, according to the 2014 documentary "Johnny Winter: Down & Dirty."

Before he got clean, bandmates and friends said they were concerned

because of his frail appearance and trouble talking. Nelson also credits himself with reviving Winter's music career.

The Winters and Nelsons became good friends. Paul Nelson played guitar in Johnny Winter's band and started running his music company beginning in 2005. Nelson's wife, Marion Nelson, did bookkeeping for the Winters and the music business, according to legal filings in the lawsuit.

Winter died at the age of 70 on July 16, 2014, in a hotel room just outside Zurich, Switzerland, while on tour. Susan Winter and Paul Nelson have said the cause of death was likely emphysema.

Susan Winter was the sole beneficiary of her husband's estate, which she put in a trust in late 2016. She named herself as the trust's sole trustee and Nelson as the successor trustee, meaning he would inherit the rights to Johnny Winter's music after she died.

But in June 2019, four months before her death from lung cancer, Susan Winter removed Nelson as the successor and replaced him with her sister and brother.

The Nelsons allege in their lawsuit that Bonnie and Christopher Warford got control by lying to their sister, wrongly telling her the Nelsons were mismanaging the music business and her affairs.

The Warfords' lawsuit accuses the Nelsons of improperly taking more than \$1.5 million out of Winter's business "under the guise of royalty income, commissions, reimbursements, fees, social media expenses and other mechanisms, while obfuscating and misrepresenting these dealings to Susan Winter."

Music

### Variety



This image released by Sideshow and Janus Films shows Alessandro Borghi, (left), and Luca Marinelli in 'The Eight Mountains.' (AP)

### Film

A gorgeous tale of two friends

## 'Eight Mountains,' a luminous stunner

By Jake Coyle

Seasons and years blow through the high Alpine peaks of the decades-spanning "The Eight Mountains." But a warm, abiding glow persists throughout this tender, even restorative epic of male friendship.

The film, by Belgian filmmakers Charlotte Vandermeersch and Felix van Groeningen, is a stunning, often profound and frequently jaw-droppingly gorgeous tale of two friends from childhood through adulthood set against the Italian Alps. Vast and intimate at once, their luminously languid adaptation of Paolo Cognetti's bestseller reaches sublime heights.

"The Eight Mountains," which last year won the jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival, isn't hurried. The ebbs of its two-and-a-half hours are sometimes a little too placid. But the passage of time - what changes, what endures - is much the subject of the movie. Just as the film's near-sea-level setting - a remote mountain cabin beneath the peaks of northwestern Italy - beckons Pietro (Luca Marinelli) and Bruno (Alessandro Borghi) throughout their lives, the intoxicating atmosphere of "The Eight Mountains" is a cherished retreat I'm already eager to revisit.

When we first encounter Pietro and Bruno, they're 11-year-olds. They come from different backgrounds. Pietro's family is middle-class, lives in Turin and only vacations in the Alps. Bruno's family is hardscrabble and working class, and live year-round in the mountains. They become fast friends immediately, though, and it would hard to imagine a more idyllic rendering of childhood than Pietro and Bruno's mountain playground. (One honorable mention: Pixar's "Luca," just a little further south from here.)

As wide-screen as the surroundings are, the Belgian filmmakers Vandermeersch and van Groeningen

gen, with cinematographer Ruben Impens, shot "The Eight Mountains" in boxy Academy ratio. Somehow, this only enhances the high-mountain splendor of the film, while at the same time drawing its characters closer together. The hills, you might say, are alive.

And the music is a big part of that. "The Eight Mountains" is scored by the Swedish songwriter Daniel Norgren, whose dreamy, organ-inflected folk songs radiate throughout the film. It might seem too much to compare the effect to Leonard Cohen soundtracking "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." But in a similarly rural film where much goes unsaid, Norgren's serene music voices something ethereal, compassionate and timeless. The songs combined with such magnificent images produced a soulful, magical alchemy.

### Relationship

Most of the film takes place when Pietro and Bruno are in their 30s. By young adulthood, they've grown apart. They live in different economic realities. The mountains mean different things to them. It's not a vacation or a refuge for Bruno; it's his life. Pietro's father (Filippo Timi), a pivotal figure in the early childhood scenes, dies having spent his life a workaholic. We get the impression his fleeting few weeks at the mountain cabin were the only ones that mattered to him.

But Pietro's strained relationship with his father - and Bruno's closeness to him - continues to shadow the movie. "The Eight Mountains" is richest in its first half, when it's foremost a father-son tale. After years away, Pietro, a writer, returns to help Bruno (now a bearded mountain man) rebuild the cabin. It's a project of rehabilitation, inside and out, and of reconciliation with his father's unrealized Alpine dreams.

But in tracking the book, Vandermeersch and van Groeningen go for something more novel-

istic. Some pains melt away. New ones emerge. Pietro travels the world. Bruno stays, stubbornly. He falls in love, starts a family, but struggles to make ends meet. Pietro resolves to return every summer. Different as they are, the bond they share is immense.

Their lives remain irrevocably intertwined - Marinelli, the talented "Martin Eden" actor, and Borghi, have a stirring rapport - even if their inherent differences are never resolved, and never could be. I'm tempted not to say too much about how "The Eight Mountains" evolves, though, at the same time, the few plot points matter little. Life moves along, with fluctuations of fortune, shifting definitions of home and cyclical drifts from summer to winter, and back. The Alpine idyll that Pietro's father pined for and that Bruno devotes himself to, ultimately, remains tragically out of reach. Only the mountains endure.

"The Eight Mountains," a Janus Films and Sideshow release is not rated by the Motion Picture Association. In Italian. Running time: 147 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Filmmaker David Lowery ("The Green Knight," "Ain't Them Bodies Saints") brought a lyrical magic and a quiet sweetness to his remake of "Pete's Dragon" and now is trying his hand at a live action take on the **Peter Pan** story. He follows in footsteps of people like Steven Spielberg ("Hook," 1991), **Joe Wright** ("Pan," 2015) and **Benh Zeitlin** ("Wendy," 2020), some of whom struggled more than others in their attempt to capture the high flying adventure of the **J.M. Barrie** tale that we can't seem to quit. The cast includes **Jude Law** as Captain Hook, **Yara Shahidi** as Tinker Bell, **Jim Gaffigan** as Mr. Smee and **Alan Tudyk** as George Darling. "Peter Pan & Wendy" arrived on Disney+ on Friday. (AP)

# Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2023

**NEW YORK:** The star-studded Prince's Trust Global Gala raised more than \$1.7 million at Casa Cipriani in New York City, as a wide range of grantees - past and present - explained how King Charles III's charity has improved their lives.

"Luther" star Idris Elba revealed that without a grant from The Prince's Trust when he was 17, he would not have been able to join the National Youth Music Theatre, which launched his career.

"One thing The Prince's Trust gave me was confidence," said Elba, who mingled among celebrities including actress Sienna Miller, supermodels Kate Moss and Winnie Harlow and fashion designers Tommy Hilfeger and Michael Kors among others. "It gave me the confidence to believe in what I do, who I am and what I can be."

The Prince's Trust hopes to offer that kind of support in the United States, where it plans to further expand this year.

"His majesty couldn't be with us this evening - I know he wanted to be," said Charlotte Mensah, owner of the Hairlounge salon in London and a past grantee of The Prince's Trust.

"He has something next week," joked Mensah, referring to King Charles III's coronation on May 6.

In a letter to the gala's attendees, read by Mensah, King Charles III said he could not have dreamed The Prince's Trust would have expanded to 23 countries when he launched it in 1976 with his severance pay from the Royal Navy.

"I am thrilled to say that it has now worked with over 1 million young people, helping them to start careers, launch businesses and reengage with education," King Charles III wrote. "I am enormously inspired by the determination and commitment of young people."

Will Straw, CEO of The Prince's Trust International, told The Associated Press that the charity's mission is as essential as ever.

"This year, we'll support around 100,000 young people directly around the world, helping them gain the skills for meaningful work," Straw said. "And this is so important because young people

have been hit so hard economically by the pandemic." (AP)

**ATLANTA:** A new monument and garden celebrating and honoring the legacy of civil rights activist Coretta Scott King was dedicated last Thursday, which would have been her 96th birthday.



Moss



Elba

The Coretta Scott King Peace and Meditation Garden and monument sits on the grounds of The King Center in Atlanta, which she founded in 1968 to memorialize the life, work, legacy and commitment to nonviolence of her husband, slain civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "The magnitude of her contribu-

tions to humanity are yet to be known," the Rev. Bernice King, CEO of The King Center, said of her mother. "Today's dedication of this monument is but a beginning. There's much more to come, and when her legacy is fully revealed, we will know that because of her, because of Mom, because of Coretta Scott King, the dream

lives and the legacy continues." After a program featuring speeches, a poem and musical performances, Bernice King and her niece Yolanda Renee King - the 14-year-old daughter of Martin Luther King III - together untied a ribbon on the gate of the garden and cut another ribbon on the monument. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Music

## Prioritizes 'health'

## 6lack explores his healing &amp; self-love

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP): 6lack was on a hot streak, dishing out Grammy-worthy work and being featured on songs with music's elite including Elton John, Calvin Harris and J Cole. But while the singer-rapper was riding high, he neglected one important element: His mental health.

As a result, 6lack's reluctance to resolve past issues and his ongoing depression - which was heightened during the pandemic - eventually rocked his mental state so hard that he struggled to create even one song. After much-needed constructive criticism from his partner, 6lack decided to step away from music and seek therapy following his critically acclaimed 2018 release "East Atlanta Love Letter."

With his first project in five years, 6lack (which is pronounced as Black) explores self-love, his healing and the journey to finding true happiness in life. His third studio album "Since I Have a Lover" was released late March. This week, the three-time Grammy nominated artist announced a North American and Europe concert tour starting in October.



6lack

In a recent interview, 6lack spoke with The Associated Press about why his mental health made him take a step back, the meaning behind his stage name and the reason he prefers to work with women.

Remarks have been edited for brevity and clarity. AP: Your stage name has been mispronounced so many times. How do you feel about it?

**6lack:** I think the name pronunciation thing will always be a thing. It's never been an issue. It makes for a really good conversation. It makes for great jokes. It makes for good merch that I sell. Before anybody ever mispronounced my name, I came up with my name and I mispronounced my name. I have already been at the end of every joke of it... But if I spelled it Black, you wouldn't be able to find me on the Internet at all.

AP: Why is the number six so important to you?

**6lack:** The six has been a reoccurring number in my life. I was born in the sixth month. I grew up in zone six. My daughter's name is Syx (pronounced "six.") Black has been a favorite color of mine. It was kind of where I felt my comfort when I was coming up, and I didn't necessarily talk to everybody as much. It was just like my comfort color. I would put it on, and I would feel like I'm in my super suit or my uniform, and I can just duck off in the corner and do my own thing.

AP: What contributed to you mentally hitting a wall?

**6lack:** I had dedicated much of my time and my energy to mastering my craft and focusing on solely making music and making better music to the point where I just wasn't taking care of anything else. Maybe that works for a couple of months, maybe that works for a couple of years, maybe for a whole album or two run. But eventually, everything that I didn't take care of started to feel like it was hovering over me. It was on my back, on my shoulders. I couldn't even breathe the way I would want to breathe or think the way I would want to think in my regular day because I have too many things cluttering my space. I was focused on music and that made me feel like I was on task, but there were other tasks I needed to take care of.

AP: Like what?

**6lack:** I needed to make sure I was taking care of my relationships. I needed to make sure that I was having conversations with my mom, my dad, my brother and my sister as far as why we might feel disconnected at this point in my life... Eventually, I guess God was like, 'Well, if you aren't exercising all the gifts that I gave you, then I'm just going to take this one thing and you can't get out any more ideas until you prioritize what's really important.' The music is important for sure, but it's one part of who I am.

AP: How did you feel the need to pull back from music?

**6lack:** Things just kept reoccurring to the point where my partner, the person who's next to me every day says "You might look cool like you got everything covered to everybody else, but it's not looking that way to me. And if this is going to continue to look this way, then you should just do that on your own, by yourself."

It's a hard thing to hear and not let your ego get in the way. But for me, it just took that repetitive lesson of hearing moments like her putting me in my place. Moments of making music, and it's not coming out the way that I want. Moments of being frustrated and reactive in moments in situations when I'm not a reactive person. All these personality traits started to pop up and they don't align with who I've known myself to be. If I feel more reactive than I felt in the past, then something's wrong, and I need to speak to somebody.

AP: Through your healing, what you want people to take away from your album?

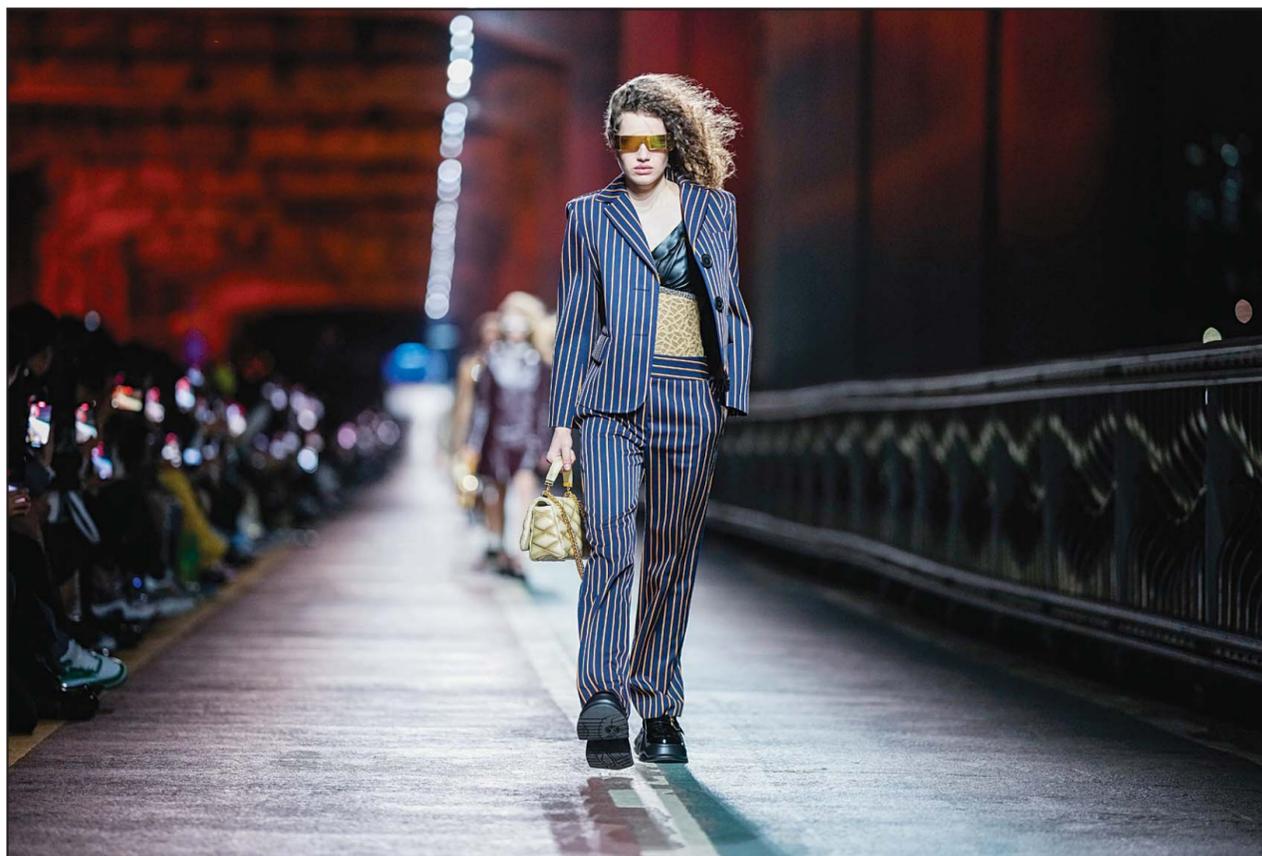
**6lack:** I want people to be a bigger, better version of yourself every single day and every single way that you can manage to do it. Giving yourself grace whenever you fall short... Whatever that you love, find your thing and really pour into it and really feel good about it and hype yourself up. Take breaks when you need to.

AP: You prefer to work with women. Why?

**6lack:** Working with women just feels like you're stepping into a hug. I can be more vulnerable. Obviously, I want to be able to get to the same place with my brothers. But it's just automatic when I hop on a song with a woman.

AP: Which do you enjoy more: Singing or rapping?

**6lack:** As of right now, I enjoy singing more. I've been able to get out more of how I feel and what I think through singing... It's basically what got me to where I am today. I think the next thing to explore will be figuring out a rap project or rap album or rap moment - even if it's an EP. Just getting back into how I actually started because there's more to me that I haven't tapped into yet.



A model wears a creation for the Louis Vuitton Pre-Fall 2023 show in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, April 29. (AP)

## Louis Vuitton turns Seoul bridge into massive runway

Louis Vuitton transformed a bridge spanning the Han River into a massive runway for its latest collection Saturday.

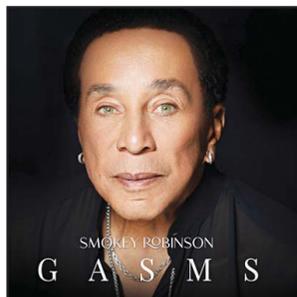
Models strutted down the Jamsilgyo Bridge to music to showcase the luxury fashion house's pre-fall collection that included sunglasses, chunky black-and-white loafers and sandals as well as an

assortment of large, colorful bags and smaller ones adorned with the label's logo.

The audience for Louis Vuitton's first South Korea show included a mix of K-pop stars including Taeyeon from Girls' Generation, members of Le Sserafim and Yeji from ITZY and celebrities like Chloë Grace Moretz, Jaden Smith and "Squid

Game" director Hwang Dong-hyuk.

The show opened with a burst of traditional Korean music before the lighting changed and cast the bridge in an eerie blue. Global luxury brands have been keen recently to expand into South Korea with the rise of K-pop music and global interest in the country's film and television projects. (AP)



This cover image released by TLR Music Group/ADA Worldwide shows 'Gasms' by Smokey Robinson. (AP)



Mercury



Simpson

## Variety

**LONDON:** He was the king of Queen and his crown could be yours - for the right price.

**Freddie Mercury's** extensive collection of costumes, fine art, and even handwritten working lyrics for "We Are the Champions" and "Killer Queen" will be auctioned in September.

Queen's frontman had said he wanted to live a Victorian life surrounded by "exquisite clutter," and he left it all to his close friend, **Mary Austin**, when he died, at 45, of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1991.

Austin, who has kept most of it the way Mercury left it in his home in the upscale Kensington neighborhood of London, said she had reached the "difficult decision" that it was time to sell it all, Sotheby's said.

Artwork includes prints or works on paper by Picasso and Matisse. "Type of Beauty," a painting by 19th century French artist **James Tissot** of his Irish muse and lover **Kathleen Newton**, is estimated to sell for 400,000 to 600,000 pounds (\$500,000-750,000) - the highest of any item listed in press materials.

Lyrics for the band's show-closing anthem number "We are the Champions" that Mercury wrote on nine pages, including stationery from British Midland Airways, are estimated to fetch 200,000 to 300,000 pounds (\$250,000-375,000).

Mercury donned the rhinestone-studded crown and cloaked his bare back in the red fake fur cloak after singing "Champions" at Knebworth House north of London during Queen's final concert together in 1986.

The crown is said to be based on St. Edward's Crown, which will be featured in **King Charles III's** coronation next month. Unlike the authentic centerpiece of Britain's Crown Jewels, the headpiece worn by Mercury is only estimated to sell for 60,000 to 80,000 pounds (\$75,000-100,000).

A Mercury fan with a smaller budget might consider his silver moustache comb from Tiffany & Co. It's expected to set you back 400 to 600 pounds (\$500-750).

Some of the roughly 1,500 items going up for sale will be exhibited in **New York, Los Angeles and Hong Kong** during a tour in June.

They will be auctioned over three days in September. A portion of the proceeds

## Music

## Motown icon's latest packed with old, new tunes

## Robinson turns seductive on album

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): When Smokey Robinson started dating his now wife more than 20 years ago, she didn't want people to know about it.

Robinson and Frances Glandney, who married in 2002, were part of a group of longtime pals and she knew they'd start gossiping about her and the legendary singer-songwriter.

"When we first started seeing each other, she wanted to keep it on the down-low. She didn't want anybody to know because we were friends. And then all our friends were going to be talking about us," Robinson said.

Naturally, that became fodder for a song - "I Keep Calling." Robinson has been holding onto it for years - complete with the lyrics "Simple things like touching in public/Private touches goin' unseen" - until this month when it appears on his "Gasms" album, his first collection in almost a decade.

"Gasms" finds the 83-year-old in a frisky mood, with the Motown icon writing a collection for the bedroom, with yearning across its nine tracks. Just a few titles alone hint at that: "Beside You," "I Wanna Know Your Body" and "How You Make Me Feel."

"My thoughts on it is that you can put it on and be with the person that you want to be with and just kick back and enjoy each other," he says.

"It's more of the idea of love."

The album has a bit of old and new, with songs like "I Keep Calling You" and "Roll Around" written years ago melded with newer tunes. "They were all songs that fit that particular mood that I wanted to set," he says.

He admits it's his most blatantly sexy collection, and that jumps out with the title track, in which he tells his lover "You give me gasms" - eyegasms and eargasm. Another song, "I Fit in There," has the lyrics, "If you've got an inner vacancy/Baby then make it a place for me."

## Perfectionist

"I consider all the songs to be food for thought. You can take them wherever you want to take them," he says. "Whatever your thought pattern is for any of those titles that's really what I want them to be. I want them to be food for thought."

Producer, engineer and mixer J.J. Blair, who has worked with June Carter Cash, Rod Stewart and P. Diddy, mixed half of Robinson's new album and says a perfectionist streak came through.

"I'd make a mix for him and he'd drive around listening to it for two weeks, and he'd call me up and want to come to change two words," says Blair. "It's just so encouraging to see somebody of that stature and in that pantheon of greats really care still."

Blair says the new material isn't

that far from what Robinson is known for, maybe just a little more R-rated. "I think we're just not used to octogenarians throwing that at us, but Nicki Minaj can come out and say whatever she's going to say - we don't think twice about it? I don't know."

Robinson, whose catalogue of hits includes "My Girl," "The Tracks of My Tears" and "I Second That Emotion," says he doesn't write hoping for chart success.

"There's no formula. There's no process, man. It's just you write what you feel. You have given it your best," he says. "You do it until you feel as though you've given it your best shot."

The former vice president of Motown Records released his last collaborative album nine years ago, "Smokey & Friends," which featured musicians like Elton John, John Legend, Steven Tyler and Mary J. Blige.

Robinson is seemingly always writing. He has a bunch of song fragments waiting to record and laughs that he might be the only person in the world who keeps a cassette recorder by his bed in case he dreams a song lyric or melody.

"If I'm out and about and an idea comes to me, a melody or some words or something, I call my voicemail. That's a good idea," he says. "Call your voicemail. Put them down. You don't want to lose them."

will be donated to charity. (AP)

NEW YORK: It was 1977, and Andy Warhol was at work on his "Athletes" series, portraits of top sports personalities who, he felt, were gaining cultural prominence just like "the movie stars of yesterday." One of them was then the

star running back of the Buffalo Bills: **O.J. Simpson**.

Simpson, then 30, showed up without a football or a jersey, and Warhol had to scramble to find a ball. That Polaroid shoot led to 11 silkscreen portraits; one of them is now going on auction for the first time.

Signed by both men, the portrait is billed



A replica of St. Edward's Crown, worn by Freddie Mercury in his final concert with Queen in 1986, is displayed at the Sotheby's exhibition in London, Wednesday, April 26. The crown is said to be based on St. Edward's Crown, which will be featured in King Charles III's coronation next month. Unlike the authentic centerpiece of Britain's Crown Jewels, the headpiece worn by Mercury is only estimated to sell for 60,000 to 80,000 pounds (\$75,000-100,000). (AP)

by the auction house as a work that brings together two of the most recognizable names of the 20th century and captures "a trajectory of celebrity and tragedy."

"Warhol certainly could never have imagined how differently the image would come to be viewed, nor the controversy that still lingers around its subject today," said **Robert Manley**, co-head of 20th century and contemporary art at the Phillips auction house, which is auctioning the work May 16.

It was almost two decades after Warhol's photo shoot, in 1995, that Simpson - who had retired from the NFL in 1979 and pursued an acting career - was acquitted of the double slayings of his ex-wife, **Nicole Brown Simpson**, and her friend **Ronald Goldman**. He was later found liable for the deaths by a California civil court jury that ordered him to pay \$33.5 million to victims' families.

In a separate case more than a decade later, Simpson was convicted by a jury in Las Vegas for leading five men, including two with guns, in a 2007 confrontation with two sports collectibles dealers in a cramped room at an off-strip Las Vegas casino hotel. Simpson served nine years in a Nevada prison for armed robbery. He was discharged from parole in December 2021.

Manley noted that five decades after Warhol made it, the portrait still evokes a strong reaction.

"Those who view the image of Simpson staring directly down the camera are likely to recall the other notorious picture of the celebrity - his mugshot," Manley said. (AP)

Ecosystem

Pricey prawns blamed

Trouble looms for grain that combats warming

KOCHI, India, April 30, (AP): On a tiny sliver of land in southern India, the future of an ancient grain that helps combat climate change is in doubt.

An ongoing tussle in Chellanam village, a suburb of the bustling city of Kochi, which has the Arabian Sea on one side and estuaries on the other, could decide the fate of the cultivation of pokkali rice.

In many wetlands in the area, farmers have traditionally dedicated half the year to pokkali rice and the other six months to prawns. In 2022, the Fisheries Department of Kerala issued an order that farmers no longer needed to dedicate part of the year to pokkali, exacerbating a trend away from pokkali already under way. While prawns fetch more money than pokkali, a focus on them is upending a delicate ecosystem, making it difficult for farmers who want to continue with pokkali, environmental experts say.



Sreelatha

M.M. Chandu, a 78-year-old farmer with about 0.8 hectares (a little over 2 acres), said that increasing salinity in the land from year-round prawn cultivation was degrading soil and making it more difficult for him to grow pokkali.

"Everything was ruined" when farmers were pushed away from pokkali and toward aquaculture, he said.

When pokkali is grown, salt water is pushed out and farmers use rain water to irrigate their crops. Stalks from the pokkali later become food for prawns. That arrangement produces two kinds of crops and maintains natural barriers to rising seas and sequesters carbon in the soil.

"Pokkali is the oldest variety of rice in Kerala, which is at least 3,000 years old. It is also among the oldest known crops cultivated by organic farming methodologies in the world," said Francis Kalathunkal, from the Pokkali Samrakshana Samithi, a group formed in 2011 to encourage farmers to cultivate pokkali.

Cultivated

Kalathunkal said in the 1990s, pokkali was grown on 485 hectares (1,200 acres) in Chellanam compared to just 2 to 4 hectares (5 to 10 acres) today. Across Kerala, it's a similar story: two decades ago, pokkali was cultivated on more than 25,000 hectares (about 61,800 acres) in Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Thirissur districts compared to about 1,000 hectares (about 2,500 acres) today, according to Shan AC, president of Paliyakkal Service Cooperative Bank, which works with pokkali farmers in the production, procurement and distribution of the grains.

Pokkali is also being cultivated on experimental basis in the Sundarbans region of West Bengal, after vast tracts of paddy lands were filled with brackish water during a large cyclone in May 2021. A long grain version of pokkali is cultivated along the southwestern coastal belt of Sri Lanka.

Rice is the staple of southern and eastern parts of India, and is highly water intensive. About 3.35 cubic meters (118 cubic feet) of water are needed to grow 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rice, according to India's Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. Pokkali, by contrast, doesn't require groundwater for irrigation, as it is cultivated in low lying wetlands that are inundated with rain water.

Compared to white rice, pokkali, rich in antioxidants, requires a longer time to cook. It has a more pronounced flavor and texture, making it an acquired taste for many. Some varieties have thick or long grains, and colors range from dark brown to white.

To make pokkali enticing - both for consumers and farmers - the Rice Research Station at Kerala Agricultural University is working to develop new kinds. So far, they have come up with 11 high-yielding varieties.

Just developing more pokkali options alone will not solve the larger issues, said Dr. A.K. Sreelatha, head of the Rice Research Station.

"The biggest problem is the unavailability of skilled laborers," Sreelatha said. "The soil is so soft that the various prototypes of machines developed (to harvest it) failed."

Mahesh S, joint director at the Fisheries Department of Kerala, said a 2010 law allows the department to issue licenses for aqua farming on land that has been left fallow. If a farmer claims the land is not being used for paddy cultivation, "we will make a field visit and if we find the claim to be true, we issue a license," he said.

Because the crop floats in water, mechanized paddy cutters cannot be used. Instead, pokkali requires laborers, today mostly women, that stand in the water and cut the matured stalks manually, bundle them and bring them to the bund.

Chathamma, another suburb of Kochi, is surrounded by a salt water lake, making it perfect for pokkali-prawn farming. Yet, Nandakumar VM is forced to leave 20 hectares (50 acres) of his 28-hectare (70-acre) holding fallow during paddy season, as he could not find enough people to help harvest.

"It is really difficult to get people to come and work these days," he said. "They don't want to stand in knee deep water - sometimes even chest deep - to harvest the stalks."

Benefits

The lack of a market is yet another barrier to making money with pokkali. "This rice is known only in this region. If you go to the north of Kerala or to its hills, people do not know the benefits of pokkali," said Sreelatha.

A father-son duo, Joseph and Tom PV, who own seven acres in Chathamma, manage better, thanks to Tom's marketing efforts.

When he could not convince his father to get into year-round prawn cultivation, Tom reached a deal with him: "Grow pokkali, but leave marketing to me."

The hacks that the software engineer has come up with - add value by selling the finished rice and not just the paddy, branding and selling online - are bringing in more money.

Three years ago, the family made 60 to 80 rupees (75 cents to \$1) per kilogram. Today, thanks to processing the rice and branding, they are making between 120 and 150 rupees (\$1.46 and \$1.83).

Impressed, other farmers in Chathamma have started trying to follow the pair's footsteps, but Tom is skeptical.

Environmental experts say that if the Chellanam model - a focus just on prawns - wins out, it would prove unsustainable to Kerala, which comprises 13% coastal wetlands.

Usha S, founder of Thanal Agroecology Center, which does research and training on sustainable agriculture, said managing land that way in Chellanam is already having an impact. Soil has become more acidic, making it more difficult to cultivate pokkali, while sources of drinking water have become saltier.

"This has led to the fields being left fallow," she said, adding that on fallowed lands farmers don't bother fortifying tidal embankments, which leads to yet more salt.

In post graduate work at Kerala Agricultural University, Anju Sajjan studied three kinds of land use: the pokkali-prawn combo, just pokkali and just prawns. She concluded that the pokkali-prawn combination produced soil most apt to store carbon, which combats climate change.

For 99-year-old matriarch, Baby Joseph Kalathungal, who has been growing pokkali since she was 17 years old, the science behind the decline in pokkali doesn't make much sense.

All she knows is that her stately home in Chellanam, which withstood the test of time for nearly a century, is corroding and her granary is empty. While her family's 1 hectare (2.5 acres) no longer produces viable yields, they still grow pokkali because they are part of a farmers' collective holding out against all-year fish farming.

"I have seen it all, but even for me what is happening now is a bit too much to digest," she said.



Alicia Celaya and her son, Adrian Cardenas, 3, are shown at their home, Thursday, April 27, in Phoenix. Celaya and her family will lose their medicaid coverage later this year, a result of a year-long nationwide review of the 84 million Medicaid enrollees that will require states to remove people whose incomes are now too high for the program. Advocacy groups say beneficiaries are finding the process confusing and at times riddled with errors, leaving some of the country's poorest people suddenly without health insurance and unable to pay for necessary medical care. (AP)

Health

Error and confusion as states trim rolls

Kicked off Medicaid: Millions at risk

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): Days out from a surgery and with a young son undergoing chemotherapy, Kyle McHenry was scrambling to figure out if his Florida family will still be covered by Medicaid come Monday.

One form on the state's website said coverage for their sick 5-year-old son, Ryder, had been denied. But another said the family would remain on Medicaid through next year. Still, a letter from the state said McHenry now makes too much money for him, his wife and their older son to qualify after the end of the month.

Three phone calls and a total of six frustrating hours on hold with Florida's Department of Children and Families later, the McHenrys finally got the answer they were dreading on Thursday: Most of the family is losing Medicaid coverage, although Ryder remains eligible because of his illness.

"I'm trying not to go into panic," McHenry's wife, Allie McHenry, told The Associated Press earlier in the week. The state agency did not respond to AP's request for comment.

The McHenrys are among the first casualties in an unprecedented nationwide review of the 84 million Medicaid enrollees over the next year that will require states to remove people whose incomes are now too high for the federal-state program offered to the poorest Americans.

Millions are expected to be left without insurance after getting a reprieve for the past three years during the coronavirus pandemic, when the federal government barred states from removing anyone who was deemed ineligible.

Advocacy groups have warned for months that confusion and errors will abound throughout the undertaking, wrongly leaving some of the country's poorest people suddenly without health insurance and unable to pay for necessary medical care.

Medicaid enrollees are already reporting they've been erroneously kicked off in a handful of states that have begun removing people, including Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire and South Dakota, according to data gathered by the AP.

Trevor Hawkins is seeing the problems play out firsthand in Arkansas, where officials told the AP that the state is moving "as fast as possible" to wrap up a review before year's end.

Hawkins spends his days driving winding roads across the state providing free legal services to people who

have lost coverage or need help filling out pages of forms the state has mailed to them. In between his drives, he fields about a half-dozen phone calls daily from people seeking guidance on their Medicaid applications.

"The notices are so confusing," said Hawkins, who works for Legal Aid of Arkansas. "No two people have had the same experience with losing their coverage. It's hard to identify what's really the issue."

Some people have been mailed pre-populated application forms that include inaccurate income or household information but leave Medicaid enrollees no space to fix the state's errors. Others have received documents that say Medicaid recipients will lose their coverage before they've even had an opportunity to re-apply, Hawkins said. A spokesman for Arkansas' Department of Human Services said the forms instruct enrollees to fill in their information.

Tonya Moore, 49, went for weeks without Medicaid coverage because the state used her 21-year-old daughter's wages, including incomes from two part-time jobs that she no longer worked, to determine she was ineligible for the program. County officials told Moore she had to obtain statements from the businesses - about an hour's drive from Moore's rural home in Highland, Arkansas - to prove her daughter no longer worked there. Moore says she wasn't able to get the documents before being kicked off Medicaid on April 1.

Disability

By last week, Moore had run out of blood pressure medication and insulin used to control her diabetes and was staring down a nearly empty box of blood sugar test strips.

"I got a little panicky," she said at the time. "I don't know how long it's going to take to get my insurance."

Moore was reinstated on Medicaid as of Monday with Legal Aid's help.

The McHenry family, in Winter Park, Florida, also worries the state has mixed up their income while checking their eligibility for Medicaid.

After their son Ryder was diagnosed with cancer in September 2021, Allie McHenry quit her job to take care of him, leaving the family with a single income from Kyle McHenry's job as a heavy diesel mechanic. She signed the family up for Medicaid then but says they were initially denied because the state wrongly counted disability payments for Ryder's cancer as income.

She's concerned the state included those payments in its latest assessment but has been unable to get a clear answer, after calling the state three times and being disconnected twice after staying on hold for hours.

"It is always a nightmare trying to call them," Allie McHenry said of her efforts to reach the state's helpline. "I haven't had the heart or strength to try and call again."

Notices sent to the McHenrys and reviewed by the AP show they were given less than two weeks' warning that they'd lose coverage at the end of April. The federal government requires states to tell people just 10 days in advance that they'll be kicked off Medicaid.

The family's experience isn't surprising. Last year, Congress, so worried that some states were ill-equipped to properly handle the number of calls that would flood lines during the Medicaid process, required states to submit data about their call volume, wait times and abandonment rate. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will try to work with states where call wait times are especially high, a spokesperson for the agency said.

Some doctors and their staffs are taking it upon themselves to let patients know about the complicated process they'll have to navigate over the next year.

Most of the little patients pediatrician Lisa Costello sees in Morgantown, West Virginia are covered by Medicaid, and she's made a point to have conversations with parents about how the process will play out. She's also encouraging her colleagues to do the same. West Virginia officials have sent letters to nearly 20,000 people telling them that they'll lose coverage on Monday.

Some people might not realize they no longer have Medicaid until they go to fill a prescription or visit the doctor in the coming weeks, Costello said.

"A lot of it is educating people on, 'You're going to get this information; don't throw it away,'" she said. "How many of us get pieces of mail and toss it in the garbage because we think it's not important?"

Every weekday, about a dozen staffers at Adelante Healthcare, a small chain of community clinics in Phoenix, call families they believe are at risk of losing Medicaid. Colorful posters on the walls remind families in both English and Spanish to ensure their Medicaid insurance doesn't lapse.



View of the Sau reservoir about 100 km (62 miles) north of Barcelona, Spain, on March 20, 2023. Spain's Agriculture Minister Luis Planas said Tuesday, April 25, 2023, he had requested emergency funds from the European Union to support farmers and ranchers amid extreme drought conditions in the country's agricultural heartlands. (AP)



Planas



Wojciechowski

Discovery

Spain pleads for funds: Spain is requesting emergency funds from the European Union to support farmers and ranchers amid extreme drought conditions in its agricultural heartlands, Agriculture Minister Luis Planas said Tuesday.

Planas wrote to the European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, on Monday to plead for aid for Spain's 890,000 farm workers, including from the bloc's agricultural crisis reserve and unused rural development funds, he said.

"There is drought, there are high temperatures, but they are much more accentuated in the case of the Iberian Peninsula," Planas added following a cabinet meeting, describing the release urgent financial assistance as of "the utmost importance."

Spain already received 64.5 million euros (\$70 million) last year from the EU Common Agricultural Policy's crisis reserve to cope with the increased cost of raw materials linked to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but five consecutive years of drought in some regions have worsened an already difficult situation.

Currently, 27% of Spanish territory is classified as in drought "emergency" or "alert," according to the Ecological Transition ministry, and water reserves are at 50% of capacity nationally. In Spain's most important agricultural region, Andalusia, the situation is far worse. (AP)

Walrus sculpture unveiled: A walrus that became a global celebrity last year after it was seen frolicking and basking in a Oslo fjord before it was euthanized by the authorities has been honored with a bronze sculpture in Norway.

The life-size sculpture by Norwegian artist Astri Tonoian was unveiled Saturday at the Oslo marina not far from the place where the actual 600-kilogram (1,300-pound) mammal was seen resting and relaxing during the summer of 2022.

The walrus, named Freya, quickly became a popular attraction among Oslo residents but Norwegian authorities later made a decision to euthanize it - causing public outrage - because they said people hadn't followed recommendations to keep a safe distance away from the massive animal.

Norwegian news agency NTB said a crowdfunding campaign was kicked off last fall to finance the sculpture. The private initiative managed to gather about 270,000 Norwegian kroner (\$25,000) by October, NTB said. (AP)

Group transferring animals: Time to

say goodbye. Seven lions, a bear, a camel and even a porcupine left Puerto Rico's lone zoo Friday to head to a new home in Colorado.

A US-based animal rescue group started transferring the animals under a plan

to find better places for the animals than the zoo, where various species have died. Zoo employees and workers with the Wild Animal Sanctuary organization prepared the big cats and the other animals for the long journey.

Activists have long held the US territory's government responsible for the deaths and ill health of animals reported for more than a decade at the zoo in the western town of Mayaguez.

Wild Animal Sanctuary is overseeing the removal of the animals and other creatures at the zoo. They will be transferred initially to a refuge in Colorado until a permanent home is found for them.

Some of the smaller specimens like reptiles and some monkeys were already transferred, but the bigger mammals like the lions, the bear and the camel required special measures for traveling.

A government-appointed committee said that in the past decade two pumas died at the zoo. It also raised concerns about an underweight chimpanzee as well as a rhinoceros named Felipe that was limping and said there was a lack of shelter for animals.

In January, an American black bear named Nina who had stopped eating died from a heart attack at more than 20 years old. Black bears can live up to 35 years in captivity. (AP)



Pokkali rice, (right), and Pokkali paddy, from previous harvest, sit at the house of Joseph in Chathamma, Kochi, Kerala state, India, April 22. Compared to white rice, pokkali, rich in antioxidants, requires a longer time to cook. It has a more pronounced flavor and texture, making it an acquired taste for many. (AP)

# Machado, Padres outslug Giants in Mexico City

Kershaw continues dominant start to the season

MEXICO CITY, April 30, (AP): Manny Machado put San Diego ahead in the seventh inning with his second homer of the night, and the San Diego Padres outslugged the San Francisco Giants 16-11 on Saturday in Major League Baseball's first game in Mexico City.

Nelson Cruz, Juan Soto, Fernando Tatis and Xander Bogaerts also went deep for the Padres, who outthrew the Giants 6-5 and outthrew them 17-13 in the thin air of Estadio Alfredo Harp Helú, which opened in 2019. At 7,349 feet above sea level, this two-game series is the highest elevation for big league games. MLB's previous regular-season trips to Mexico were for games in Monterrey.

San Francisco's Brandon Crawford, Lamonte Wade Jr. and Mitch Haniger homered off Joe Musgrove. Blake Sabol hit a two-run homer in the seventh against Steven Wilson that tied the score 10-10, and David Villar homered five pitches later.

## BASEBALL

Tom Cogrove (1-0), a 26-year-old left-hander who played at Manhattan College, won in his major league debut for the Padres. Tyler Rogers (0-1) got the loss.

### Brewers 7, Angels 5

In Milwaukee, Corbin Burnes pitched six sparkling innings, and Milwaukee earned its third straight win.

Burnes (3-1) allowed one run and five hits. Devin Williams got one out for his fifth save.

Milwaukee shortstop Willy Adams and manager Craig Counsell were ejected in the sixth.

Adams asked for a timeout from plate umpire Adam Beck, who refused to grant the request and called a strike. Adams had gotten two previous allowances. Counsell came out to argue and got tossed.

Adams struck out swinging on the next pitch, had words with Beck and was ejected. He had to be restrained by his teammates.

Mike Trout homered twice and drove in five runs for Los Angeles. Shohei Ohtani finished with three hits. Reid Detmers (0-2) got the loss.

### Dodgers 1, Cardinals 0

In Los Angeles, Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw continued his dominant start to the season with seven sharp innings.

Kershaw didn't allow a baserunner until Dylan Carlson's one-out single in the fifth. The three-time NL Cy Young Award winner gave up two hits, struck out nine and walked none, throwing 88 pitches.

Back for his 16th season on a one-year deal, the 35-year-old Kershaw (5-1) won his fourth consecutive start.

Austin Barnes hit an RBI single in the second inning for Los Angeles, which will try for its first three-game series sweep Sunday. Brusdar Graterol pitched the ninth to earn his second save.

Cardinals left-hander Jordan Montgomery (2-4) allowed five hits over 6 2/3 innings but lost his fourth consecutive decision.

### Rays 12, White Sox 3

In Chicago, Wander Franco hit a leadoff homer in the seventh for Tampa Bay's first hit off Lance Lynn, sparking a 10-run inning for the Rays.

Randy Arozarena added two homers, one in the seventh and another in the ninth, for Tampa Bay, which improved to a major league-best 23-5. Yonny Chirinos (1-0) allowed a run in 4 2/3 innings.

The White Sox have lost 10 straight to match their longest skid since 2013. They fell to 0-6 against the Rays this season.

Lynn (0-4) struck out 10 in 6 1/3 innings. He was charged with four runs and three hits.

Elvis Andrus hit a two-run single in the second for Chicago. Eloy Jiménez added an RBI double in the sixth.

### Pirates 6, Nationals 3, game 1

### Pirates 16, Nationals 1, game 2

In Washington, Drew Maggi got



Los Angeles Dodgers center fielder James Outman makes a catch on a ball hit by St. Louis Cardinals' Lars Nootbaar during the third inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

his first two major league hits, three days after making his big league debut with the Pittsburgh following 13 years in the minor leagues, and the Pirates completed a day-night doubleheader sweep.

The 34-year-old Maggi lined a 2-2 splitter from Hobbie Harris into center field for an RBI single as a pinch hitter in the seventh inning, boosting the Pirates' lead to 13-0 in the second game. Maggi stayed in the game at third base and added a ninth-inning double off Lane Thomas, an outfielder.

Miguel Andujar homered in his season debut in the opener, and then hit a three-run homer in the ninth inning of the second game. Rich Hill (3-2) got the win in the first game, and Vince Velasquez (4-2) pitched six scoreless innings in the nightcap.

The Pirates have won four straight and 11 of 12. They are 20-8 for the time since 1992, when they won their last division title.

Dominic Smith homered in the second game for Washington, which is last in the NL East at 9-17, including an NL-worst 2-11 at home. Patrick Corbin (1-4) allowed three runs in 5 1/3 innings in the first game, and Chad Kuhl (0-2) got the loss in the nightcap.

### Diamondbacks 11, Rockies 4

In Denver, Geraldo Perdomo and Christian Walker homered, and the Diamondbacks handed the Rockies their seventh consecutive home loss.

Perdomo had three hits and four RBIs. Walker had three hits and drove in two runs.

Arizona rookie Corbin Carroll hit an RBI single in the first to extend his career-best hitting streak to eight games, but he departed in the bottom of the sixth with a left knee contusion. He hit the left-field wall and fell awkwardly while trying to catch Ryan McMahon's RBI double. He walked off the field gingerly under his own power.

Arizona's Tommy Henry (1-0) went 5 1/3 innings and allowed four runs and seven hits.

The Diamondbacks sent 10 men to the plate in their six-run second against rookie Noah Davis (0-1).

### Rangers 2, Yankees 0

In Arlington, Nathan Eovaldi pitched a three-hitter for his first big



San Diego Padres Trent Grisham singles on a ground ball in the second inning during a MLB baseball game against the San Francisco Giants, at the Alfredo Harp Helu Stadium in Mexico City. (AP)

league nine-inning shutout, and the Rangers beat the listless Yankees for New York's fifth loss in seven games.

Ezequiel Duran hit a two-run homer for Texas in the fifth.

Yankees captain Aaron Judge missed his second straight game with a mild hip strain, joining Giancarlo Stanton, Josh Donaldson and Harrison Bader on the sideline. New York was shut out for the first time this season and has scored two runs or fewer in five of its last seven games.

Eovaldi (3-2) struck out a season-high eight and walked none against one of his former teams.

New York's Jhonny Brito (2-3) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings.

### Phillies 6, Astros 1

In Houston, Zack Wheeler threw six shutout innings and Kody Clemens hit a two-run homer, leading Philadelphia to its fourth straight win.

Wheeler (3-1) allowed three hits, struck out seven and walked one in his third straight victory.

Nick Castellanos also connected for Philadelphia, and J.T. Realmuto had a sacrifice fly. Jake Cave had three hits, including an RBI single in the eighth.

Jeremy Peña homered for the As-

tro (1-0) earned his first major-league victory.

The Guardians notched four runs in the seventh and tied it on José Ramírez's RBI single off closer Kenley Jansen in the ninth - it was Jansen's first blown save and first run allowed of the season.

Josh Naylor had a three-run double, and Josh Bell and Andrés Giménez both hit a solo homer for the Guardians. Emmanuel Clase (1-2) was given the loss.

### Blue Jays 1, Mariners 0, 10 innings

In Toronto, Daulton Varsho singled with the bases loaded in the 10th and Toronto beat Seattle for its sixth straight victory after Mariners pitcher Easton McGee took a no-hitter into the seventh inning of his first major league start.

Matt Chapman doubled off the center-field wall with two outs in the seventh for the only hit against McGee, who was called up from the minors before the game.

Blue Jays starter Kevin Gausman matched the impressive rookie with a career-high 13 strikeouts in seven shutout innings.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. singled off Trevor Gott (0-2) to begin the bottom of the 10th, advancing automatic runner Bo Bichette to third. Seattle intentionally walked Chapman to load the bases for Varsho, who broke an 0-for-18 slump by lining the first pitch over Teoscar Hernández in right field.

Toronto reliever Erik Swanson (1-0) struck out three in a hitless inning against his former team.

### Royals 3, Twins 2

In Minneapolis, Jhoan Duran's wild pitch allowed Edward Olivares to score the tiebreaking run in the ninth inning, and Kansas City ended a nine-game losing streak at Target Field.

Olivares doubled twice and walked on four pitches from Duran (0-1) leading off the ninth. Olivares stole second, and Michael Massey walked for the first time in 81 plate appearances this season when Duran committed a pitch-clock violation with a full count.

Nicky Lopez sacrificed and Olivares bounced a 1-0 curveball off the mitt of catcher Ryan Jeffers, the ball bouncing to the warning track in front

## MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Saturday.

Detroit	7	Baltimore 1st game	4
Kansas City	3	Minnesota	2
Toronto	1	Seattle 10 inn	0
Cincinnati	3	Oakland	2
Boston	8	Cleveland 10 inn	7
Baltimore	6	Detroit 2nd game	4
Philadelphia	6	Houston	1
Texas	2	NY Yankees	0
Milwaukee	7	LA Angels	5
Tampa Bay	12	Chicago W. Sox	3
Pittsburgh	6	Washington 1st game	3
Miami	7	Chicago Cubs	6
Pittsburgh	16	Washington 2nd game	1
San Diego	16	San Francisco	11
Arizona	11	Colorado	4
LA Dodgers	1	St Louis	0

### American League

East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	23	5	.821	—
Baltimore	18	9	.667	4-1/2
Toronto	18	9	.667	4-1/2
New York	15	13	.536	8
Boston	14	14	.500	9

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	16	12	.571	—
Cleveland	13	14	.481	2-1/2
Detroit	10	16	.385	5
Chicago	7	21	.250	9
Kansas City	7	21	.250	9

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	16	11	.593	—
Houston	14	13	.519	2
Los Angeles	14	14	.500	2-1/2
Seattle	11	16	.407	5
Oakland	5	23	.179	11-1/2

### National League

East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	18	9	.667	—
New York	15	12	.556	3
Miami	15	13	.536	3-1/2
Philadelphia	15	13	.536	3-1/2
Washington	9	17	.346	8-1/2

Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Pittsburgh	20	8	.714	—
Milwaukee	18	9	.667	1-1/2
Chicago	14	12	.538	5
Cincinnati	12	15	.444	7-1/2
St Louis	10	18	.357	10

West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Arizona	16	12	.571	—
Los Angeles	15	13	.536	1
San Diego	14	14	.500	2
San Francisco	11	15	.423	4
Colorado	8	20	.286	8

of the first-base dugout.

Kansas City won for just the third time in 15 games. Scott Barlow hung on for his fourth save.

José Caus, Taylor Clarke, Aroldis Chapman (1-1) and Barlow allowed one run over the final 3 2/3 innings. Chapman got his first win with the Royals.

### Marlins 7, Cubs 6

In Miami, Jesús Sánchez hit a two-run double in the Marlins' five-run first inning, and the team held on for a 7-6 win over Chicago.

Sánchez also singled home Luis Arraez in the fourth. Arraez and Jazz Chisholm Jr. each had three hits. Marlins right-hander Edward Cabrera (2-2) struck out a career-high 12 in five innings. He was charged with two runs and three hits.

Patrick Wisdom and Cody Bellinger homered for Chicago, while Trey Mancini had two hits and scored two runs. Caleb Kilian (0-1) struggled in his fourth career start for the Cubs. The right-hander was promoted from Triple-A Iowa before the game and tagged for seven runs and 10 hits in 3 1/3 innings.

### Tigers 7, Orioles 4, game 1

### Orioles 6, Tigers 4, game 2

In Detroit, Grayson Rodriguez struck out nine in five shutout innings in his first major league win, and the Orioles earned a split in their doubleheader against the Tigers.

Ryan McKenna homered and drove in three runs for the Orioles, who have won 10 of their last 12 games. Detroit fell to 2-13 against AL East opponents.

Matt Vierling had three hits and four RBIs for the Tigers in the opener. Zack Short homered and Eduardo Rodríguez (2-2) pitched effectively into the sixth inning.

Baltimore took control of the nightcap by scoring four second-inning runs off Matthew Boyd (1-2) on five singles and a wild pitch.

A top-rated prospect, Rodríguez (1-0) allowed two hits and set a career high for strikeouts in his fifth big league start. Felix Bautista pitched the ninth for his seventh save.

Jorge Mateo hit a three-run homer for Baltimore in the opener. Dean Kremer (2-1) got the loss.

In the first game, Alex Lange pitched the ninth for his third save.

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## Fakhar 180 powers Pakistan past Kiwis

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, April 30, (AP): Fakhar Zaman's second successive century anchored Pakistan to another comfortable seven-wicket victory over New Zealand in the second one-day international.

Fakhar followed his 117 in the first ODI with another entertaining unbeaten 180 off 144 balls as Pakistan pulled off its second highest successful run chase in ODIs.

Pakistan romped to 337-3 in 48.2 overs after New Zealand posted an imposing 336-5 on the back of Daryl Mitchell's own second straight hundred - a career-best 129 off 119 balls.

## CRICKET

Fakhar made New Zealand pay a heavy price for dropping him twice soon after his half-century. He smacked 17 boundaries and six sixes in Pakistan's chase to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

"It was my lucky day to score again against New Zealand," Fakhar said after he was dropped in James Neesham's successive overs after his half-century off 44 balls with 10 boundaries.

"I get a lot of liberty while playing with (Mohammad) Rizwan and he made things easier for me. I was told to stay at the crease till the end."

## Rams draft Georgia QB Stetson Bennett in 4th round

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP): Stetson Bennett will get the chance to deliver for the Los Angeles Rams.

Los Angeles grabbed Georgia's two-time national championship-winning quarterback in the fourth round Saturday, higher than many draft observers predicted.

With no quarterbacks on their roster behind fellow ex-Bulldog Matthew Stafford, the Rams decided they wouldn't take the risk of waiting to land a prospect greatly admired by coach Sean McVay.

"People take for granted that this guy is just a really good football player because of the background and the way he became the starter at Georgia was a little bit unconventional, and it wasn't the five-star route," McVay said. "But I think it minimized the athleticism, the ability to create off-schedule. He's a natural thrower of the football. ... He's around great players, but he elevated those guys."

Bennett was the biggest name among a whopping 14 players added to the Rams this weekend as they restocked their badly depleted roster



New England Patriots first-round pick, cornerback Christian Gonzalez answers reporters' questions as he is introduced to the media during an NFL football news conference at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass. (AP)

through the draft.

After adding TCU guard Steve Avila with their second-round pick Friday, Los Angeles' Day 3 group included Warren McClendon, Bennett's right tackle

at Georgia; three more players from the 2020 and 2021 Horned Frogs, including impressive cornerback Tre'Vius Hodges-Tomlinson; and Ethan Evans, a punter from Division II Wingate.

## FOOTBALL

The biggest name by far was the 25-year-old Bennett, whose unlikely route from junior college to the pinnacle of collegiate success has been well documented, but the NFL worthiness of the quirky, 5-foot-11 quarterback sometimes known as "The Mailman" has been hotly debated for years.

The Rams clearly love Bennett's skill set and pedigree, even if his measurable talents don't match other prospects.

McVay said he admires Bennett's tough-nosed, resourceful style of play: "I think there's an edge to him that's a positive. You want some competitors that have some stuff to them that (when) things don't always go well, they're unfazed and they can kind of move on and be able to reset themselves."



Final Match Winners – J.J. Diaz Alberdi, Habtoor Polo – Mohammed Al Habtoor, Khalaf Al Habtoor, Raja Abuljebain



Subsidiary Match Winners – Hani Jabshe, Tarik Al Habtoor, Habtoor Al Habtoor, Justo Cuitina



Subsidiary Match Runner Ups – Tomas Iriarte, Mohammed Khalid, Petra Spanko, Lukas Tremmel

## Habtoor Polo sweeps last tournament of season, Dubai Cup 2023

ABU DHABI, April 30: The fifth and final tournament of the Dubai Polo Gold Cup Series concluded with two exciting matches on the grounds of Al Habtoor Polo Club, consisting of four teams this year.

The afternoon opened with El Basha Polo and PBS Polo at the Subsidiary Final of the Dubai Cup. PBS Polo began the match with a 0.5 goal advantage, but it was Habtoor Al Habtoor who opened the match and scored three back to back goals, along with a goal by Tariq Al Habtoor, ending the score in the first chukker with 4 goals to 0.5. Mohammed Khalid Abdulghaffar from El Basha Polo scored two goals in the penultimate and final chukker, ending the first match in favor of El Basha with the score of 6 goals to 2.5.

Match Progression:  
4 – 0.5 | 1.5 – 0.5 | 1.6 – 1.5 | 1.6 – 2.5

The Final featured a match between Ankor-Lamar Polo and Habtoor Polo who had an advantage of 1.5 goal. Khalid Alomran of Ankor-Lamar Polo opened the score in the first chukker. The second chukker opened with a brilliant goal by Mohammed Al Habtoor, but ended with two goals from Haider Bangash and Khalid Alomran, with Ankor's lead of 0.5 goal towards the end. In the final moments of the Dubai Cup tournament, both the teams displayed tremendous polo skills but ultimately it was Habtoor Polo who clinched the title of the Dubai Cup 2023, by the score of 5.5 to 4 goals.

Match Progression:  
1.5 – 1 | 2.5 – 3 | 1.5 – 3 | 1.5 – 4  
Lukas Tremmel, General Manager of Al Habtoor Polo Resort, awarded the teams of the Dubai Cup 2023. The Most Valuable Player was awarded to Khalaf Al Habtoor, and the

Best Playing Pony was awarded to Billy, ridden by & owned by Khalid Alomran.

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Dubai Polo Gold Cup Series (DPGC) was founded in 2009 by Mohammed Al Habtoor, patron of the Habtoor Polo team and Chairman of the UAE Polo Federation DPGC Series started out with one tournament - the Gold Cup (Dubai Open) - and has grown into a series five premier Polo Tournaments in the Middle East - the Silver Cup, Gold Cup, Polo Masters Cup, Dubai Challenge Cup and the Dubai Cup. The tournaments under the DPGC are recognized by World Polo Tour (WPT), ranking it among the best polo tournaments worldwide. The Gold Cup is one out of the four tournaments in the world that is played in the WPT Championship Cup category, on a par with world-class events held in Argentina, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States.

## Oilers advance to second round with win over Kings

Leafs beat Lightning to advance

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP): The shortest player on the Edmonton Oilers roster had their biggest goal Saturday night.

Kailer Yamamoto scored with 3:02 remaining for his first point of the series as the Oilers beat the Los Angeles Kings 5-4 in Game 6 to advance to the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

In a series dominated by superstars Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, it was the Oilers' fourth line that played a pivotal role. Besides Yamamoto, Klim Kostin had two goals and an assist.

"It didn't go in the net early in the series but he stuck with it. He stuck with it and eventually ended up scoring the series winner," Oilers coach Jay Woodcroft said.

Yamamoto - who lived in Los Angeles for three years and played youth hockey for the Jr. Kings - got possession of the puck deep in the offensive zone, skated around and then sent a wrist shot through traffic and past the right shoulder and stick of Kings goaltender Joonas Korpisalo.

"Being in this position it's pretty crazy. Playing against them last year you get your hopes up," Yamamoto said about scoring a pivotal goal against the Kings. "To be able to beat them is an amazing feeling."

McDavid and Draisaitl also scored while Stuart Skinner stopped 40 shots as the Oilers knocked the Kings out of the postseason for the second straight season.

Next up for Edmonton is the Vegas Golden Knights in the second round. The Oilers won three of the four regular-season meetings, but Vegas won the Pacific Division by two points on the way to the top seed in the Western Conference.

The series will start in Las Vegas but the NHL has not announced when Game 1 will be played.

Yamamoto got the game-winner after the Kings tied it 7:46 into the third period on a fluke goal. Phillip Danault took advantage of Skinner breaking his stick and scored short-handed.

### ICE HOCKEY

Kevin Fiala had a goal and two assists for Los Angeles, and Adrian Kempe and Sean Durzi also scored. The Kings have been eliminated in their last four first-round series.

Viktor Arvidsson, who was moved up to the top line for this game, had two assists. Korpisalo made 21 saves.

Los Angeles hasn't won a playoff series since it defeated the New York Rangers in six games in 2014 to capture its second Stanley Cup title in three seasons.

The Kings trailed 3-1 in the second period before tying it on a pair of power-play goals 100 seconds apart.

Kempe went top shelf from the right faceoff circle at 6:36 for his team-leading fifth goal of the playoffs. Fiala evened it at 8:16 when his shot from the back of the left faceoff circle found its way through traffic.

### Maple Leafs 2, Lightning 1

In Tampa, Fla., John Tavares scored 4:35 into overtime, and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 2-1 on Saturday night for their first NHL playoff series win in nearly two decades.

The Maple Leafs won the best-of-seven matchup in six games, winning three times in overtime on the road and ending an 11-game losing streak in elimination games. They advanced in a series for the first time since 2004, a frustrating drought that included first-round exits each of the past six seasons.

The loss, meanwhile, ends Tampa Bay's run of three consecutive appearances in the Stanley Cup Final. The Lightning won back-to-back championships in 2020 and 2021, but they lost to Colorado in six games last year.

### Rangers 5, Devils 2

In New York, Chris Kreider had a power-play goal and two assists as the Rangers beat the Devils to force a Game 7 in their first-round series.

Mika Zibanejad and Vladimir Tarasenko each had a goal and an assist for New York, which had totaled just two goals while losing the previous three games. Barclay Goodrow and Braden Schneider also scored, and Adam Fox added two assists. Igor Shesterkin stopped 34 shots.

Curtis Lazar and Dawson Mercer scored for New Jersey. Akira Schmid, who had stopped 80 of 82 shots over the previous three games, was pulled after giving up five goals on 29 shots.



Toronto Maple Leafs center Noel Acciari (52) gets around a stick check by Tampa Bay Lightning left wing Pierre-Edouard Bellemare (41) during the third period in Game 6 of an NHL hockey Stanley Cup first-round playoff series in Tampa, Fla. (AP)

Titans move atop IPL

## Shankar fireworks beat Knight Riders

KOLKATA, India, April 30, (AP): Gujarat Titans moved atop the Indian Premier League after Vijay Shankar's quickfire half-century helped them beat Kolkata Knight Riders by seven wickets.

Meanwhile, Delhi Capitals remained on the bottom of the table after losing to fellow strugglers Sunrisers Hyderabad by nine runs.

Shankar scored an unbeaten 51 off 24 balls, including five sixes, for Gujarat to reach a winning 180-3 with 13 balls to spare. That was after Gujarat pacers Mohammed Shami and Joshua Little shared five wickets to restrict Kolkata to 179-7.

Play was delayed by nearly 45 minutes because of a wet outfield but no overs were lost.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz drove Kolkata with 81 off 39 balls that included seven sixes and five fours. But Shardul Thakur, promoted to No. 3, was out for a four-ball duck.

### CRICKET

Little struck a double blow in the 11th over by dismissing Venkatesh Iyer and Nitish Rana to reduce Kolkata to 88-4. But Gurbaz staged a recovery with Rinku Singh as they shared 47 off 28 balls.

Then 18-year-old wrist spinner Noor Ahmed got rid of his Afghan compatriot Gurbaz and Singh in successive overs.

Andre Russell struck three sixes in 34 off 19 balls to celebrate his birthday but Kolkata managed

only a par score in good batting conditions.

In reply, impact player Shubman Gill gave Gujarat a solid start by combining for 41 runs with Wriddhiman Saha (10) and 50 runs with skipper Hardik Pandya (26).

Gill put on a timing masterclass as he struck eight boundaries in his 35-ball, 49-run knock.

Gujarat was down to 93-3 in the 12th over when Gill fell to Sunil Narine but they never looked in trouble after that.

Shankar's and David Miller's unbeaten 87-run partnership off 39 balls led them to a dominant victory.

Miller hit two fours and two sixes, and Shankar blitzed his way



Gujarat Titan's Vijay Shankar celebrates after scoring his fifty runs as David Miller watches during Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Gujarat Titans, in Kolkata, India. (AP)

to a half-century, finishing the game with a six.

In the day's second game, Mitchell Marsh's all-round show went in vain as Delhi lost to Hyderabad.

Marsh took 4-27 in four overs as Hyderabad made 197-6, and he top-scored with 63 off 39 balls but Delhi's middle order collapsed and they finished short on 188-6.

Hyderabad demoted Harry Brook in the batting order after a string of failures and opener Abhishek Sharma compensated with 67 off 36. Sharma hit 12 fours and a six.

Marsh ran through the middle order, dismissing Aiden Markram (8) and Brook for a two-ball duck in the space of three balls in the 10th over.

Hyderabad was 109-5 and rescued by Heinrich Klaasen, who posted his maiden IPL half-century. Klaasen hit four sixes in an unbeaten 53 off 27 balls.

Delhi's Marsh and opener Philip Salt put on 112 runs off 66 balls for the second wicket. Salt achieved his first IPL half-century by contributing 59 off 35 balls.

But it was Marsh who set Arun Jaitley Stadium alight, hitting six sixes. He brought up 50 off only 28 balls.

However, Delhi crashed from 112-1 to 125-4 in the space of 12 deliveries. Marsh fell to Akeal Hosen and Salt offered a return catch to Mayank Markande.

Delhi's Axar Patel made a late unbeaten 29 off 14 balls but it was too little, and Hyderabad kept alive its slim qualification hopes.



Habtoor Polo vs. Ankor-Lamar Polo action shot



El Basha Polo vs. PBS Polo action shot.

## Truex earns 1st career NASCAR victory

DOVER, Del., April 30, (AP): Ryan Truex won for the first time in 188 career NASCAR starts across all three national series in the Xfinity Series race Saturday at Dover Motor Speedway.

The 31-year-old younger brother of former NASCAR champion Martin Truex Jr. dominated on the concrete-mile track and swept all three stages, leading 124 of the 200 laps.

"This is for everyone that doubted me," Truex said. "I belong here. I just proved that."

Truex is winless in 26 Cup starts (none since 2014), is 0 for 73 in the Truck Series and hadn't won in 88 previous races in the second-tier Xfinity Series. He did have a second and a third among his four previous starts this season in the No. 19 Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing.

A native of Mayetta, New Jersey, Truex couldn't even get words out over the radio as he crossed the finish line.

"Most people didn't believe in me and I still did," Truex said. "Just so thankful to be here. Just amazing. I was just waiting for

something to happen. I was praying, please God, let me get to the end of this."

Once he did, big brother was waiting for him. Martin Truex Jr. stuck his head in Ryan's window and offered congratulations before he parked it in victory lane.

"I was a wreck coming across the line," Ryan Truex said. "It's been a long road. Honestly, I'm on cloud 9. The weight off my shoulders is unexplainable. To dominate in a car that good, oh my God, it's just amazing."

### CAR RACING

Truex, who finished a season-worst 17th last Saturday at Talladega Superspeedway, shares the No. 19 and has only one more scheduled Xfinity start this season.

Josh Berry, who starts Sunday in the Cup series for the injured Alex Bowman, finished second. Justin Allgaier, Austin Hill and John Hunter Nemecek complete the top five.

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Napoli's Victor Osimhen (top right), heads the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Salernitana, at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

# Sports

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Second-place Lazio lose at Inter

## Napoli title celebration on hold after draw

ROME, April 30, (AP) — Napoli will have to wait at least a few more days to seal the Serie A title after drawing 1-1 with regional rival Salernitana on Sunday - disappointing legions of fans of the southern club who had already started celebrating in anticipation of the championship.

The Partenopei could have clinched with a record six rounds to spare if they beat Salernitana but Boulaye Dia equalized for the visitors six minutes from time after Mathias Olivera had given Napoli the lead.

The result left runaway leader Napoli 18 points ahead of second-place Lazio, which lost 3-1 at Inter Milan earlier.

### SOCCER

Third-place Juventus could leapfrog Lazio and move into second if it wins at Bologna later.

Napoli is attempting to win the Italian league for the first time since Diego Maradona led the club to its only two

Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990.

Olivera scored just after the hour mark with a header, redirecting in a free kick inside the far post. Dia then dribbled by Napoli center forward Victor Osimhen and unleashed an angled shot to equalize.

Napoli visits Udinese in its next match on Thursday, a day after Lazio hosts Sassuolo and Juventus hosts Lecce.

Napoli fans had been celebrating inside and outside the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona for hours before

the match - raising their voices even louder after Lazio lost, which set up the chance for Napoli to clinch.

The game had been moved back a day from Saturday on a request from local authorities to maintain public order. But Salernitana, which hasn't lost in more than two months, wouldn't let the celebration happen.

Osimhen had a couple of early chances for Napoli - one of them stopped by Salernitana's standout goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, who recently went to his fifth World Cup with

Mexico.

Ochoa also negated an opportunity from Napoli midfielder Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa in the first half.

There was also a long, curling effort from Napoli's dribbling wizard Khvicha Kvaratskhelia that sailed high shortly after the break.

The match finally enlivened with a deadball opportunity, as Olivera beat several defenders to meet a corner from substitute Giacomo Raspadori and send it beyond Ochoa's reach.



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray drives against Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul during the first half of Game 1 of an NBA second-round basketball series in Denver. (AP)

## Haaland scores 50th goal of 'season' as Man City go top



Manchester United's Marcel Sabitzer (right), kicks the ball as Aston Villa's Tyrone Mings defends during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Aston Villa at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

### Fernandes fires Man United toward CL

**LONDON, April 30, (AP): Erling Haaland scored his 50th goal of the season as Manchester City moved to the top of the Premier League on Sunday.**

The prolific striker fired the defending champions ahead from the penalty spot after only three minutes at Fulham. City went on to win 2-1 at Craven Cottage and moved one point ahead of long-time league leader Arsenal, with a game in hand.

Haaland's goal saw him tie Alan Shearer and Andy Cole's joint record of 34 goals in a Premier League campaign.

Both of those players reached their totals in 42-game seasons, while Haaland's haul has come in a still unfinished 38-game campaign.

Haaland had already overtaken Mohamed Salah's record of 32 goals in a 38-game season with his strike in the 4-1 win against Arsenal on Wednesday.

With City still having six more games to play in the league this season, the Norway international looks likely to set a new outright record.

### SOCCER

Haaland fired past Fulham goalkeeper Bernd Leno from the spot after Julian Alvarez had been brought down by Tim Ream, who later injured his arm and was replaced by Issa Diop.

Fulham evened the score after 15 minutes through Carlos Vinicius, but City was back in front in the 36th from Alvarez's strike.

Protests at the start but celebrations at the end as Manchester United edged toward a return to the Champions League.

A 1-0 win against Aston Villa strengthened United's hold on a top-four place in the Premier League, which was the primary target for manager Erik ten Hag in his first season in charge.

Bruno Fernandes struck in the 39th minute after Marcus Rashford's shot was pushed away by Villa goalkeeper

Emiliano Martinez. Both teams had more chances to score, with United surviving a late push by the visitors, but Fernandes' goal proved the difference.

With third-place Newcastle also winning, United remains two points behind in fourth, with a game in hand.

Victory came after supporters staged a latest protest against United's American owners, the Glazer family, which came two days after a third round of bidding for the club.

On Friday, Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe submitted latest offers, but fans are concerned the Glazers will retain a majority or minority stake in the 20-time English champion.

Supporters held up a huge banner outside Old Trafford which read "Full Sale Only," while there were chants of "We want Glazers out" inside the stadium.

On the field, Ten Hag's encouraging first year at the club continued with a potentially vital win against a Villa

team that had sparked hopes of a top-four push itself after a run of 10 games unbeaten before Sunday.

And Emery's team threatened to extend that run by mounting a late push, which saw Victor Lindelof clear off the line from Douglas Luis in the last 10 minutes.

Loud cheers rang around Old Trafford as the final whistle blew.

Fernandes' goal was his 11th of the season and came after United saw earlier chances go by, with Rashford denied by Martinez and Casemiro hitting the bar.

Ten Hag has already led United to a first trophy in six years - winning the League Cup in February - and looks set to secure qualification to the Champions League after the club missed out on a place in European soccer's elite competition last season.

Bournemouth moved further clear of the relegation zone to boost its Premier League survival bid with a one-sided 4-1 victory over Leeds.

Jefferson Lerma scored twice in

the opening 24 minutes before Patrick Bamford cut the deficit in the 32nd.

But the home side struck twice more in the second half - through Dominic Solanke and Antoine Semenyo - to put the game out of reach and give the Cherries a cushion of 10 points over Leicester in 18th having played a game more.

Leeds, meanwhile, remains perilously close to the drop - just a point ahead of the Foxes, who have a game in hand.

Callum Wilson came off the bench to score twice as Newcastle fought back to strengthen its Champions League pursuit and edge last-place Southampton toward the second tier with a 3-1 win in the Premier League on Sunday.

Left out of Eddie Howe's starting lineup despite scoring twice at Everton on Thursday, the England striker produced the perfect response after his halftime introduction, canceling out Stuart Armstrong's first-half opener and then helping himself to a second in the 81st after Theo Walcott's own-goal had given the Magpies the lead.

## Pérez beats Verstappen to win Azerbaijan GP

BAKU, Azerbaijan, April 30, (AP) — After a dominant win, with a dose of luck, Sergio Pérez seems increasingly like a Formula One title contender.

Red Bull's status as the leading team

isn't in doubt but now it's 2-2 on wins between Pérez and his teammate Max Verstappen and the Dutchman's lead is down to six points.

"Well done guys, we dominated this



Red Bull driver Sergio Perez of Mexico celebrates after winning the Formula One Grand Prix at the Baku circuit, in Baku, Azerbaijan. (AP)

weekend," Pérez told his team over the radio. "We are in the fight, guys."

Pérez took advantage of a fortunately timed safety car to beat Verstappen to the victory in the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Sunday, adding it to the sprint he secured the day before, as Red Bull kept up its winning start to 2023.

### MOTOR RACING

Pérez took the lead when he managed to save time pitting during a safety car period after Verstappen had come in a lap earlier. The two didn't fight for position after that, but Pérez said they "pushed to the maximum" as he fought to keep the lead. Both Pérez and Verstappen clipped the track wall at different times.

Verstappen started second behind Ferrari's Charles Leclerc but swept past him on the long start-finish straight at the end of lap 3, the first lap on which drivers were allowed to use the DRS overtake assist system on the rear wing.

We've got to regroup: Williams

## Murray scores 34, Nuggets 'dominate' Suns in Game 1

DENVER, April 30, (AP) — Jamal Murray kept imploring the crowd to get louder and louder with each trip down the floor.

As if the Nuggets point guard even needed to. His play was already rocking the arena.

Murray scored 34 points, hitting six of Denver's 16 3-pointers, and the Nuggets sprinted past the Phoenix Suns 125-107 on Saturday night in Game 1 of their second-round series.

"He's a bad man," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said.

Any response to that adulation? "Thanks?" Murray said. "Appreciate it. ... I'm just playing my game. ... I'm doing whatever it takes to win."

And maybe show a nation that doesn't always get to watch the Nuggets - you know, because they're usually on so late - what the players have known all season: They're talented and worthy of their top seed in the Western Conference. They don't mind if the Suns, as the fourth seed, are the trendy pick to beat them, either.

"We're going to keep doing what we're doing, keep proving everybody wrong," Murray said.

### BASKETBALL

Reigning back-to-back NBA MVP Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 19 rebounds, while Aaron Gordon finished with 23 points. But this was the Murray Show, where he went 6 of 10 from 3-point land and frequently exhorted for more noise from the already raucous crowd.

"Let's be honest, some of the shots he hit tonight I don't think anybody could have stopped him," Suns coach Monty Williams said.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points and grabbed 14 boards for the Suns, with Devin Booker adding 27 points and Chris Paul 11. Booker averaged 37.2 points in a first-round series win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

"I thought that they were just more physical, played with more force," Williams said. "We've got to regroup and do a much better job of playing with pace on offense."

Game 2 is Monday night in Denver.

This is a different sort of playoff series than two years ago, when the Suns swept the Nuggets in the second round. Back then, Denver was without Murray after he tore his ACL.

Now healthy, Murray is flashing his 2020 form inside the NBA bubble that helped Denver advance to the Western Conference finals.

"Jamal just continues to add to the

## Bavarians back on top

BERLIN, April 30, (AP) — Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman scored to send Bayern Munich back to the top of the Bundesliga with a 2-0 win over last-place Hertha Berlin on Sunday.

Gnabry made the breakthrough with a diving header to Joshua Kimmich's cross in the 69th minute and Coman sealed the win 10 minutes later, again thanks to a fine pass from Kimmich.

It was enough to send Bayern one point clear of Borussia Dortmund with four rounds left. Dortmund, held to a 1-1 draw in Bochum on Friday, must now hope for a favor from Bayern's remaining opponents - Werder Bremen, Schalke, Leipzig and Cologne - if it is to end the Bavarian powerhouse's 10-year reign as German champion.

Hertha had goalkeeper Oliver Christensen to thank for avoiding a heavier loss. The visitors were not expected to cause too many problems for Thomas Tuchel's side after conceding 10 goals in their previous three games - all defeats.

legend of playoff Jamal," Malone said.

Murray had the play of the night when he stole a pass, split defenders Paul and Durant at top speed and knocked in a layup high off the glass. It brought the capacity crowd to its feet.

The dynamic point guard was far from done energizing the fans, hitting a 3-pointer with just under 7 minutes remaining. He implored them for more noise, even holding a hand to his ear.

Leading 106-95 with 7:40 remaining, the Nuggets went on a 14-0 run to put away the game. Denver led by as much as 25 and improved to 38-7 at home through the regular season and playoffs.

Durant cut off a question about whether he was surprised by the Nuggets.

"Because he's not. They're the No. 1 seed for a reason. They got a two-time MVP. They've got a deep team. I'm not surprised," Durant said. "We've got our work cut out for us."

The difference was the 3-point line, where the Nuggets outscored the Suns by a 48-21 margin. That and turnovers, where the Suns had 16, including seven by Durant.

"I've got to be way more careful with the ball," Durant said. "I've to look to either shoot the ball or make the correct pass. ... I dang got near half our turnovers. We'll be fine. I think we've just got to play with confidence, shoot with confidence and see what happens next game."



Bayern's Serge Gnabry celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Hertha BSC Berlin at the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Hertha remains the prime candidate for relegation. It's bottom and six points from the relegation playoff spot. Bayern dominated the first half as expected but found it hard to break through the visitors' hard-working defense.

Gnabry had the best chance saved by Christensen and Sadio Mané was unable to reach a couple of promising crosses from the lively Coman.

### SOCCER

Bayern had 14 attempts compared to Hertha's one, but there were whistles at halftime from many of the home fans, who expected a better return.

Highly rated teenager Ibrahim Maza made his Hertha debut in the 65th, but it was another forward who scored at the other end four minutes later and Bayern had its breakthrough.

"German champion will only be FCB (FC Bayern)," the home fans sang with the players afterward.