



SHAPE FUTURE THROUGH ELECTION PARTICIPATION, SAYS CABINET

Kuwait voters head to polls, ready to make voices heard



PM Diwan photo His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah delivers a speech during a ceremony to honor the winners of the sixth edition of Kuwait Award for Youth Excellence and Creativity. - See Page 2

Ministries, agencies, banks to close Thursday

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) declared on Wednesday the suspension of operations across all ministries, government agencies, public bodies, and institutions on Thursday, April 4th, deeming it a day of rest.

national Assembly elections. This decision aims to allow employees the opportunity to participate in the electoral process. Normal operations will resume on Sunday, April 7th.

200 candidates vie for 50 seats

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Kuwaiti citizens will vote for their representatives at the National Assembly from 12:00 pm to 12:00 midnight on Thursday.

According to statistics issued by the Election Affairs General Department in the Ministry of Interior, the number of citizens who are eligible to vote totaled 834,733 - 405,948 men and 428,785 women.

Opinion

Last ten days speech ... A sign is enough for the wise

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

KUWAITIS today are facing a test through which they must demonstrate their capability to handle the national responsibility, and work on helping the head of state in safeguarding the country, in accordance with the clear vision set by His Highness the Amir.



Al-Jarallah majority regarding the future of their country.

In the past days, weeks and months, we have been seeing a leader who follows up on everything that is happening in the local arena. He is firm in his decision.

In fact we now know what good governance looks like, and we must admit that we, for the first time in nearly 50 years, have a completely different leadership whose national ambitions are beyond interpretation.

Therefore, today's bet is on the people's choices. It hinges on those who prioritize the welfare of their nation over tribal or sectarian allegiances, and temporary personal gains. They are urged to head to the ballot box with a mindset of preservation in order to elect representatives who prioritize Kuwait's interests above personal desires and ambitions.

In his speech of the last ten days, His Highness said, Do not choose someone whose goal is to achieve personal interests, create crises, or undermine constitutional constants. Your correct choice is your path to building the future of your country and your generations".

Voters also should not rely on the campaigns launched by the candidates for personal goals, far away from the interests of Kuwait, which has led to the spread of corruption and have even extended to changing the Kuwaiti social culture.

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84,975 permits issued

Kuwait reports decline in Residency Law violators

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Immigration statistics from the Central Statistics Bureau revealed that the number of Residency Law violators continues to decline significantly -- 121,019 expatriates by the end of 2023; while the number of residency permits issued for the first time reached 84,975 and the number of cancelled residency permits reached 57,060 within the same year, reports Al-Anba daily.

The data showed that the number of existing visa holders reached 2.93 million distributed as follows: 47,530 Article 14 (temporary residency); 96,500 Article 17 (government employees); 1.5 million Article 18 (private sector employees); 972 Article 19 (investor or foreign partner in a business); 786,000 Article 20 (domestic workers); 504,170 Article 22 (family visa); 735 Article 23 (students) and

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An image shows ballot boxes prepared for the upcoming 2024 National Assembly elections. On Thursday, eligible voters will participate in the electoral process to elect 50 members to the country's parliament.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Wednesday Iraq's Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Munhil Al-Safi, where they touched on bilateral ties. (KUNA)

NEW YORK: A senior UN official urged the Security Council to work to avert further escalation in the Middle East following the deadly airstrike on the Iranian consulate in Syria's capital, Damascus.

Assistant Secretary General Khaled Khiri stressed late Tuesday the need for restraint, saying "We appeal to the Council today, as we do every month, to continue to actively engage all concerned parties to prevent further escalation and the worsening of tensions that undermine regional peace and security." (KUNA)

DOHA: Al-Jazeera Media Network (AJMN) denounced, Tuesday, the Israeli occupation Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statements on terminating the news channel, accusing it of harming the Israeli occupation's security.

Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported, Tuesday, Al-Jazeera stating, "Netanyahu could not find any justifications to offer the world for his ongoing attacks on Al-Jazeera and press freedom except to present new lies and inflammatory slanders." (KUNA)

With famine looming, aid group halts food delivery

Kuwait condemns Israeli attack on Gaza aid workers

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Tuesday Kuwait's condemnation of the raid launched by the Israeli occupation forces on Gaza Strip, which led to a number of casualties among them international relief aid workers from the World Central Kitchen relief organization.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said that the State of Kuwait deplores the Israeli occupation forces' continued attacks on relief institutions and humanitarian organizations and their disregard for the demands of the international community to stop these massacres.

The ministry stressed the need for the Security Council to assume the responsibilities entrusted to it towards maintaining and protecting international peace and security, and ensuring that relief aid reaches the Gaza Strip without obstacles or restrictions.

Meanwhile, some of Israel's closest allies, including the United States, on Tuesday condemned the deaths of seven aid workers who were killed by airstrikes in Gaza - a loss that prompted multiple charities to suspend food deliveries to Palestinians on the brink of starvation.

The deaths of the World Central Kitchen workers threatened to set back efforts by the U.S. and other

countries to open a maritime corridor for aid from Cyprus to help ease the desperate conditions in northern Gaza.

US President Joe Biden issued an unusually blunt criticism of Israel by its closest ally, suggesting that the incident demonstrated that Israel was not doing enough to protect civilians.

"Israel has not done enough to protect aid workers trying to deliver desperately needed help to civilians," he said, adding he was "outraged and heartbroken" by their killings.

"Incidents like yesterday's simply should not happen," he added. "The United States has repeatedly urged Israel to deconflict their military operations against Hamas with humanitarian operations, in order to avoid civilian casualties."

Ships still laden with some 240 tons of aid from the charitable group turned back from Gaza just a day after arriving, according to Cyprus. Other humanitarian aid organizations also suspended operations in Gaza, saying it was too dangerous to offer help. Israel has allowed only a trickle of food and supplies into Gaza's devastated north, where experts say famine is imminent.

Taiwan rattles as strongest quake in 25 yrs claims nine

HUALIEN, Taiwan, April 3, (AP): The strongest earthquake in a quarter-century rocked Taiwan during the morning rush hour Wednesday, killing nine people, sending others scrambling out the windows of damaged buildings and halting train service throughout the island. A tsunami warning was triggered but later lifted.

The quake, which also injured hundreds, was centered off the coast of rural, mountainous Hualien County, where some buildings leaned at severe angles, their ground floors crushed. Just over 150 kilometers (93 miles) away in the capital of Taipei, tiles fell from older buildings, and schools evacuated their students to sports fields, equipping them with yellow safety helmets. Some children covered themselves with textbooks to guard against falling objects as aftershocks continued.

Television images showed neighbors and rescue workers lifting residents, including a toddler, through windows and onto the street, after doors fused shut in the shaking. All appeared mobile, in shock but without serious injuries.

Taiwan is regularly jolted by quakes and its population is among the best prepared for them, but authorities said they had expected a relatively mild earthquake and accordingly did not send out alerts. The eventual tremor was strong enough to scare even people who are used to such shaking.

"I've grown accustomed to (earthquakes). But today was the first time I was scared to tears by an earthquake," said Hsien-hsuen Keng, a resident who lives in a fifth-floor apartment in



In this photo released by the Hualien City Government, a leaning building is cordoned off in the aftermath of an earthquake in Hualien, eastern Taiwan on April 3, 2024. (AP)

Taipei. "I was awakened by the earthquake. I had never felt such intense shaking before."

Nine people died in the quake, which struck just before 8 a.m., according to Taiwan's national fire agency. The local United Daily News reported that three were hikers killed in rockslides in Taroko National Park, which is in Hualien, and that a van driver died in the same area when boulders hit the vehicle.

Another 934 people were injured. Meanwhile, authorities said they had lost contact with 50 people in minibuses in the national park after the quake downed phone networks. Another six people were trapped in a coal mine, where a rescue was underway.

Day by Day

THOSE acquainted with life often liken politicians to monkeys, because if they quarrel, they spoil the crops, and if they reconcile, they eat the crop.

Indeed, diplomacy, a cornerstone of politics, is often perceived as the art of deceit, where self-interest frequently trumps the welfare of the nation.

Seated in positions of power, politicians are often consumed by the fear of losing influence and authority. This fear drives them to hastily enact policies and make decisions that may serve their immediate interests but neglect the long-term well-being of the populace.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Kuwaiti medical professionals perform surgical procedures for injured individuals in Gaza, Palestine. - See Page 4



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:16	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:36	Maghrib ..	18:07
Zohr .....	11:51	Isha .....	19:25

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.  
**By Night:** Mild with light vari-

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Kuwait Airport	33	17
Kuwait City	35	23	Abdaly	35	17
			Jahra	35	20
			Salmiyah	32	22
			Nuwaisib	33	19
			Wafra	34	18

**BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT:** <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## 'First gov't had 14 ministers, 11 from royal family'

# The Constituent Assembly ... A turning point in Kuwait's political history

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA): January 20, 1962 marked the inauguration of Kuwait's Constituent Assembly, a turning point in the Gulf state's history and first step towards a democratic state, the first-of-a-kind in the Gulf region.

The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Sabah issued a decree in August 1961 forming a higher council tasked with working on a law organizing constituent assembly elections.

The law divided the country into 10 electoral areas from which two representatives would be elected via secret ballot. Members of assembly would amount to 20 elected representatives as well as appointed ministers.

The law also specified that an elected representative must not be younger than 30 years of age, and that he masters the Arabic language in reading and writing.

On December 30 of the same year, elections were held and 20 members were elected. They were joined by appointed members of government, dubbed transitional government, formed on January 17 by decree of Amir.

The government included 14 ministers, 11 of which were members of the royal family, and three were elected members.

In the morning of January 20, 1962, Sheikh

Abdullah Al-Sabah inaugurated the Assembly in a speech declaring principles of democracy, and describing it as a pillar of the modern state and he affirmed that it was the duty of the assembly to propose modes of governance qualified for a democratic future.

During that session, Abdulateef Thunayan Al-Ghanim was chosen as Assembly Speaker and Dr. Ahmad Al-Khateeb as deputy.

The Assembly formed a committee of five personnel to draft the constitution, including all of Yaqoub Al-Humaidhi, Humoud Al-Khaled, Abdulateef Al-Ghanim, Saud Al-Abdulrazzaq as well as late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

The committee accomplished its task in 23 meetings between March of 1962 and October of the same year, and handed in its report to the Assembly, which discussed and voted on it. The Amir rectified and published the constitution on November 11, 1962.

Assembly Speaker at the time, Abdulatif Al-Ghanim, stated while handing in constitution draft to the late Amir, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, that it was a great honor for the committee to work on a constitution built on the principles of democracy and inspired by the reality of Kuwait, in an effort to achieve the hopes of the Amir for

his people.

On his part, the late Amir replied thanking the Assembly for the significant efforts in achieving the hopes and aspirations of the people for a democratic future that goes hand in hand with Kuwaiti culture and traditions.

On January 15, 1963, the Constituent Assembly held its final meeting with then Acting Prime Minister and later Amir of Kuwait the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered a speech commending the work of the Constituent Assembly on the constitution, which would be the bedrock of democracy in the country.

On January 23 of following year, and after concluding the works of the Constituent Assembly, the first National Assembly elections were held, in accordance to the newly instated constitution, which remains to be the governing doctrine to this day.

The first election saw the participation of 250 candidates for the 50 seats in parliament, while eligible voters reached 16,889 in ten constituencies.

The constitution of Kuwait consists of 183 articles focusing on the state and the system of government, fundamental constituents of the Kuwaiti Society, public rights and duties, as well as the separation of powers.



KUNA photo  
The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Sabah arrives to a session of the Constituent Assembly.



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem awards a youth.



Ministers present at the ceremony.

PM Diwan photos

## PM sponsors youth awards ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA): Under the auspices, and in the presence, of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) held a ceremony on Tuesday to honor the winners of the sixth edition of Kuwait Award for Youth Excellence and Creativity.

Addressing the ceremony, His Highness the Prime Minister praised the creative youth as "real contributors to the formulating and the building of the future of Kuwait."

He expressed joy for joining the youth in this celebration which coincided with

the last ten nights of the holy month of Ramadan.

The ceremony gathered also Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr. Imad Mohammad Al-Atiqi and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Dawood Suleiman Ma'arafi, as well as several cabinet members, senior government officials and heads of diplomatic missions based in Kuwait.

In a similar speech, Ma'arafi explained the strategy and future projects of the Youth Public Authority for fostering the talents of creative youth.

## Call for increased participation in national donation campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Sheikh Firas Al-Malik, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, will meet with heads and representatives of prominent charitable societies in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The objective of the meeting is to address the lack of effective participation from some societies in the national campaign aimed at collecting donations to settle the debts of debtors under the initiative 'You Are Astonished by Their Joy 2'. This initiative was launched by the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice, Awwaq, and Islamic Affairs, as well as the Federation of Consumer Co-operative Societies, charity societies, and foundations.

Despite the campaign's launch about 10 days ago, with only five days remaining until its conclusion, the total collection through the designated electronic link has not surpassed two million dinars. This shortfall has raised concerns as it hampers the primary goal of the campaign, which is to accumulate funds to assist debtors subject to

enforceable civil rulings.

To address this shortfall and ensure the campaign's success, Minister Al-Malik and ministry leaders are committed to rallying broader participation from charitable associations.

This initiative aligns with the ministry's objective of promoting domestic charitable efforts and directing a significant portion of funds toward local causes.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs released its third report on field inspection activities targeting fundraising violations during Ramadan. The report highlighted 19 new instances of unauthorized fundraising through social media platforms, prompting legal action against offenders. Since the start of Ramadan, a total of 55 cases have been referred to the Public Prosecution for further investigation.

The report also detailed the efforts of inspection teams, which conducted 452 field visits to mosques and 79 visits to charitable organization headquarters. Violations included unauthorized clothing collection kiosks and improper fundraising activities at restaurants and via social media platforms.

The Ministry emphasized its zero-tolerance policy toward violations and urged donors to verify the legitimacy of fundraising activities before contributing.



Sheikh Firas

# Youth eager for positive outcome from '24 parliamentary elections

'Ramadan effect'... Poll held in month of socializing, spirituality

By Abdullah Al-Mesri/ Abdullah Al-Khatib

KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA): The youth in Kuwait are looking forward to the upcoming 2024 National Assembly election on Thursday, April 4, in hopes that the democratic process will result in a positive outcome addressing their aspirations and meeting the goals of overall development.

Youth in Kuwait represent around 70 percent of the population; therefore, it is very important to meet their concerns and dreams for a better Kuwait.

In this regard, a number of academics and specialists told KUNA that it was important to have election results that reflected and utilized the youths' energy and determination, saying that this was the key to boosting progress and development.

Dr. Mohammad Al-Faili, professor of law at Kuwait University (KU) and constitutional expert, said that the huge percentage of the youth population made it imperative to meet their desires for a better Kuwait.

Candidates must include youth matters in their campaigns because they are as important as improving political discourse and democratic process, stated the academic, adding that bringing issues like solving economic problems and making youths connect with it was a real challenge.

He hoped that the youth, on their part, were keen on casting their vote for the sake of their future.

On his part, professor of constitutional law at the Kuwait International Law School Dr. Mohamad Al-Fahad affirmed that the youth population around the globe was key for creating real change, indicating that his observation saw that youth in Kuwait were very much involved in the political scene.

Dr. Al-Fahad also pointed out that the last election results saw a huge percentage of younger MPs winning a seat in the National Assembly, attributing that to the fact that youth represented a huge portion of the population.

He predicted that the upcoming election would continue this trend, stressing that the goal was not to include youth per se as representatives of the people, the aim was to allow skillful and development-conscious candidates to reach parliament.

He affirmed that the youth were willing to put their hands and skills in service of Kuwait to resolve many issues chiefly amongst them was housing, which is a major concern to them.

Improving living standards, employment, education, sports, and many other matters were also on the radar of youths in Kuwait, Dr. Al-Fahad said, calling for boosting education on political and election matters in school curriculums to encourage more youth participation.

### 'Ramadan'

Kuwaitis, on April 4, will be heading to polls to cast their votes in the 2024 National Assembly elections, which coincided with the month of Ramadan this year amid an atmosphere of socializing and heightened spirituality.

Candidates in this election decided to utilize their campaigns to boost their media presence especially after breaking fast at a time when people become super active after a long day of fasting.

While that is the case, pundits and experts have wondered if the holy month of Ramadan had an adverse effect on the voting process, pondering questions about turnout as voting begins at noon and concludes at midnight.

The month of Ramadan is a chance for candidates and voters to meet during the holy occasion, exchanging views on how to better handle problems and face national challenges, assistant civil engineer professors at the American International University (AIU) Dr. Manal Al-Adwani told KUNA.

She stressed the importance of the upcoming period in the political scene of Kuwait, saying that voters must choose wisely when casting their ballot card to ensure that whoever reached the National Assembly represented the true will and aspirations of the people.

Some voters might be hesitant to cast their vote, argued Dr. Al-Adwani, attributing that to political fatigue and disappointment of some in previous parliaments. She said that voting counts, urging eligible voters to put those with clear intellect and political vision in the upcoming parliament formation.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Harbi -- assistant professor at the Arab Open University (AOU) -- predicted that the advent of Ramadan would not affect voters' turnout due to what seemed to him, a heavy involvement and interaction on part of voters with the political scene.

The socializing aspect of the month of Ramadan is bound



Dr. Mohammad Al-Faili



Dr. Mohamad Al-Fahad

### Embassy of Mexico press release

## 'Kuwait's philanthropic moves made vital changes in Mexico'

The Embassy of Mexico to the State of Kuwait has the honour to extend sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the advent of "Eid-al-Fitr", wishing the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity and stability.

Kuwait stands as a beacon of compassion and philanthropy in the global community, extending its hands in generosity to approximately 150 countries around the world without seeking anything in return. This noble nation's humanitarian and charitable endeavors which has its noble origin in the code of honor of the inhabitants of the desert have spanned decades, embodying the spirit of selflessness and mutual support. Kuwait's contributions are diverse and impactful, ranging from disaster relief and health care projects to educational programs and infrastructure development, benefiting millions of lives across continents. This unparalleled commitment to aiding those in need, regardless of geographical borders or cultural differences, reflects Kuwait's profound dedication to fostering global solidarity and peace. As the world faces ever-increasing challenges, Kuwait's philanthropic efforts shine as a testament to what can be achieved when nations prioritize compassion and cooperation over reciprocity. Kuwaiti solidarity has its origin in the code of the desert practiced by the Arab people since ancient times.

Kuwait's international humanitarian efforts, marked by an unwavering commitment to charity and assistance, serve as a cornerstone of its foreign relations, reflecting a profound dedication to fostering global welfare. This commitment is vividly illustrated in its engagement with nations like Mexico, where Kuwait's philanthropic initiatives have made significant impacts. Beyond bilateral support, Kuwait's broad



Eduardo Peña Haller

spectrum of humanitarian endeavors extends across so many countries, addressing diverse challenges from disaster relief to sustainable development projects. Kuwait's approach is characterized by a deep-seated belief in the principles of humanity and generosity, prioritizing the provision of aid without expectations of reciprocation. Its contributions, ranging from health care and education to emergency response and infrastructure development, not only alleviate immediate distress but also lay the groundwork for long-term resilience and prosperity. In doing so, Kuwait not only reinforces its stature as a leading humanitarian benefactor on the global stage but also inspires a vision of a world where solidarity and compassion transcend boundaries.

Eid Mubarak!  
 "Wa Kullu Aam Wa Antum Bekhair"  
**Eduardo Peña Haller**  
 Ambassador-designate of Mexico to Kuwait

10 main strategies devised

## MEW takes proactive measures to avert summer power failure

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy disclosed that from January 1 to August 30, 2023, there were 1,071 power outages that the Ministry swiftly managed until peak loads subsided.

Ministry sources informed Al-Jarida that restoring power to affected areas undergoes a rapid process, prioritizing time efficiency. The Ministry is devising a comprehensive plan comprising 10 main strategies to prevent recurrence of such outages.

Upon receiving outage complaints through the unified call center 152, the Ministry swiftly dispatches them to emergency centers across governorates. Technical teams, working round the clock, coordinate with contractor teams to restore power promptly. Temporary backup

diesel generators are deployed if necessary until faults are rectified.

Identifying outage causes, whether natural disruptions or network infringements, prompts tailored responses. Natural outages, stemming from weather elements or cable issues, are swiftly addressed, with replacements or reinforcements made to strengthen the medium and low voltage networks.

Excessive loads are redistributed, and networks fortified to mitigate future overload risks. Aging equipment prone to frequent malfunctions is being replaced with advanced counterparts. In cases of tampering or network trespassing, judicial police intervention is sought, while technical reports guide preventive measures to forestall future occurrences.

to have an effect on elections, argued Dr. Al-Harbi, saying that this very aspect would be key in driving people to vote for their candidates of choice.

He went on to say that, the urgent challenges facing the country would also bring people to voting stations to cast their ballot regardless of them observing fast during Ramadan.

Ramadan would have a "positive" impact on the elections, said political analyst Dr. Saleh Al-Saeedi on his part.

Most of the eligible voters are in the country and not on vacation or abroad, he added, noting that this very fact would help voters flock to polling stations across the country prior to breaking fast and beyond during the election eve.

The spirituality of the month of Ramadan might also have an impact on candidates' behavior since fasting involved not only abstaining from drinking water or eating food, but the spiritual practice also heightens good manners, he said.



## 'Fake citizens pose big threat to internal security of Kuwait'

"SINCE His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah assumed the reins of power, he has set priorities for correcting many mistakes and amending some issues that were not at the required level for many reasons," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"In most of his lofty speeches, His Highness the Amir has not lost sight of the issue of national identity, which has been tampered with in various ways, but what they have in common is that they all agree on one intention: the ruin of the country."



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"Why this interest and focus from His Highness the Amir on national identity? Do you know why? It is because it threatens Kuwaiti national security and that is the greatest danger."

"It is also an internal invasion. The external invasion comes from an enemy that the world knows and we face as an external aggressor, but the one who enters your home and claims that it is his home is the worst type of evil, and is the real danger."

"The internal danger that we have been talking about, and hearing about for many years, in our offices, councils, seminars, lectures, and conversations, but we did not sense any serious steps to cut off its roots and re-evaluate the situation through the law, until the government and leadership put their hands on it, based on their serious awareness of the depth of the wound, its pain, and its danger to the world and the future of the country."

"When you are robbed from within, deceived from within, and robbed of your rights from within, and help and assistance for them is from within you, know that you are on the path to destruction."

"His Highness's speech during the last ten days of Ramadan was a strong and consistent response, confirming the stability of the position and policy and an insightful and profound view of His Highness, regarding the chaos and turmoil currently taking place in some electoral circles, through speeches and words in which the worst adjectives are insulted, called and slandered, and persistence and infringement on the people and the Constitution, more than talking about healthy electoral awareness programs of the future and what is coming in this country."

"Minds were scattered, deceptions were erased, and threatening expressions are voiced increasingly by some of the candidates, whose fuel was the shouts and applause of their audience, who felt with them that the knife was approaching the necks of many during the era of assertiveness."

"Today, forging nationality has become a priority in people's concerns and conversations, while a few years ago it was hidden behind a feeling of hesitation and fear of reaction, but today, thanks to God Almighty, and the insistence of the current government with all its pillars, it is poking the hornets' nest, taking into account the consequences of this poking the necks of many during the era of assertiveness."

"You know what the real danger is in this issue. What threatens national security today is not the presence of multiple nationalities living with us, nor is the issue today an imbalance in the demographic structure. Rather, the issue today has become between Kuwaitis and other counterfeiter Kuwaitis, who lived among us and plundered and took from the rights of the real people of the country, deliberately."

"They intended, and they have succeeded in doing so for many years, unfortunately, due to the concealment of those who defend them today... because he may be one of the parties that helped and assisted in word, deed, or voice, but is it impossible for the situation to continue? In the end the truth must prevail. God willing, we will continue in this approach and we will succeed with the law as our weapon."

### Also:

"It has become the norm in successive ministries in Kuwait that whoever takes over the ministry either stays forever, or is quickly replaced by an alternative that will destroy all of his achievements and starts not from where he left off, but rather starts from scratch in a feverish race to achieve quick, gelatinous successes that quickly fade away, and the goal is to win over others, remain in office and enjoy its privileges," columnist **Dr Saud Mohammad Al-Asfour** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The ministerial formation in our beloved country often adheres to established quotas, considering various

societal components such as tribal, sectarian, partisan, and familial affiliations. This practice sometimes leads to frequent rotations within ministries, driven by courtesy, reciprocity, or considerations of favoritism rather than solely focusing on achieving sustainable development goals.

"The rapid succession of ministers within ministries can have drawbacks. Just as a minister begins to comprehend the requirements of their position, they may be replaced, disrupting the continuity needed to monitor progress and achieve desired outcomes. This instability often hampers the realization of development plans and their associated objectives."

"While it is customary for ministers to hail from a background relevant to their ministry, true success in leadership requires more than just specialized knowledge."

"Effective management necessitates a deep understanding of administrative principles specific to the ministry, ensuring that goals are met and successes are achieved."

"Ministerial rotation can have both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it allows competent ministers to apply their administrative skills across different ministries, replicating successes achieved in previous roles."

"However, when rotations lack a clear purpose, they may result in transferring ineffective ministers to new positions or assigning individuals to ministries outside their expertise, hindering progress and development."

"Ideally, ministers should possess both specialized knowledge of their ministry's domain and strong administrative abilities. This dual qualification ensures that appointed ministers can effectively lead and innovate, driving progress toward development goals."

"It's imperative to move away from appointing ministers based solely on quotas or rotation. Instead, appointments should prioritize individuals who possess the necessary expertise and administrative acumen to lead effectively. By embracing this approach, we can accelerate progress and achieve our aspirations, leveraging the financial resources and intellectual capital available to us for the benefit of our nation and its people."

"During the Ramadan atmosphere that brings peace and stability, comes the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect and protect him, loaded with lessons and lessons that culminated in short, direct messages that started from heart to heart, as His Highness is customized to," columnist **Dr Nada Suleiman Al-Mutawa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The highlights of his speech this year emphasized on national identity, by calling on all institutions to strengthen it in various ways, including the call to open a new page characterized by both the Ramadan and electoral spirit, and a commitment to staying away from sins, guarding the tongue, staying away from fanaticism and personal interests, and committing to preserving national identity."

"As the 2024 National Assembly elections approached, and coincided with the entry of new male and female voters who have reached electoral age and have recently registered, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent a message to all voters to commit to making the right choice, staying away from those who create crises, prejudice the constitutional constants, and commit to the fidelity of the vote."

"The call to uphold rights records His Highness the Amir's message with many important historical stages that culminated in the rights contained in the Kuwaiti Constitution."

"It began with men's rights and extended to women's rights in political practice, so he asks his children, in order to preserve that legacy, not to neglect rights. Make sure to vote so that everyone participates in shaping the outcomes of the National Assembly."

"Through his speech to the candidates, His Highness the Amir sent a message to learn from previous lessons and the changes that the Parliament has gone through, by promoting vocal parliamentary behavior, and to take upon himself the responsibility of renaissance."

"Finally, His Highness the Amir concluded his speech, as he began it, with concern for national unity, adding his dissatisfaction with the manipulation of Kuwaiti nationality. Here, the role of the government is highlighted by including the nationality file as a priority and drawing the correct method to exclude those who climbed the ladder of connections and obtained it unjustly. The responsibility extends to the people and their representatives in cooperation with government efforts to protect national unity."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Fishermen back with the catch of the day.

## 'New licenses to further shrink scant fish stocks'

Infrastructure lacking: Al-Suwayyan

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3: In response to the recent call for the immediate issuance of fishing licenses by the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to alleviate monopolistic practices, boost supply, and curb prices, it has been underscored by specialized scientific and field assessments that Kuwait's fish stock is ill-equipped to withstand the introduction of new licenses.**



Al-Suwayyan

This comes after a hiatus of approximately four decades in license issuance. Experts in marine biology and fishing operations have voiced unanimous concerns regarding the precarious state of the fish population, cautioning against further exploitation which could exacerbate the existing shortage rather than alleviate it, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Field experts have outlined various reasons why expanding license issuance would be futile, citing diminishing seafood stocks, limited fishing areas, and prohibitive costs, alongside a scarcity of fishermen. Meanwhile, scientific and environmental assessments have sounded alarms regarding the future repercussions on food security and biodiversity if licenses are haphazardly dis-

tributed. They advocate for holistic fisheries management strategies such as implementing fishing quotas, seasonal bans, and safeguarding critical environmental habitats, drawing insights from successful international practices.

Dhaher Al-Suwayyan, head of the Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union, vehemently opposes the idea of issuing new licenses, emphasizing the need to address existing license holders' grievances first. He highlights the fragility of fish stocks and the inadequate fishing zones, with less than half of the marine area designated for fishing activities. Al-Suwayyan also points out the exodus of fishermen to neighboring countries with more favorable fishing conditions, exacerbating the labor shortage among existing license holders.

Moreover, Al-Suwayyan raises concerns about the lack of infrastructure to accommodate additional boats and ships, with only two overcrowded docking points currently available. He explains that fishing licenses were halted by government decree in 1984 due to an oversaturation of licenses and limited marine territory, with reductions made following the Iran-Iraq war.

Contrary to allegations of monopolistic practices, Al-Suwayyan asserts that fish auctions are transparent and subject to market dynamics like any other industry. He attributes price fluctuations to factors such as supply and demand, with participation from various entities including restaurants, hotels, and cooperative societies.

In conclusion, the consensus among experts and industry stakeholders is clear: Kuwait's fish stocks are already under strain, and opening the floodgates to new licenses would only compound the problem. Instead, a comprehensive approach to fisheries management, coupled with addressing existing challenges, is imperative to ensure the sustainability of Kuwait's marine resources.

### 211 revoked: report

## 231 'nationality' forgery cases under microscope

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** As the Supreme Committee for Nationality Investigation intensifies its efforts to address the issues of counterfeiting and dual citizenship files, a government source has disclosed that 231 cases are currently under the microscope, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

These cases, once thoroughly reviewed, will be presented to the Council of Ministers for necessary action.

Family inheritance disputes have brought to light instances of nationality forgery, where individuals unrelated to the deceased have falsely claimed inheritance rights by illicitly acquiring Kuwaiti citizenship.

Reports from concerned citizens have unveiled a pattern of manipulation, forgery, and submission of false documents aimed at fraudulently obtaining citizenship. Such cases have been referred to the Public Prosecution for legal action.

The source emphasized the meticulous scrutiny being applied by the Supreme Committee for Nationality and the Ministry of Interior, under strict regulations, to verify all citizenship files.

Adherence to the law and adherence to established procedures are paramount, ensuring that decisions are made only upon irrefutable evidence, say the sources.

With directives from higher authorities, zero tolerance towards any form of tampering within citizenship files is emphasized. Targeted measures are being implemented to rectify any damage to national identity, reflecting the government's commitment to upholding integrity in citizenship matters.

In recent weeks, over 211 nationalities have been revoked by the Supreme Committee for Nationality, signaling ongoing efforts to uncover fraudulent practices and maintain the sanctity of Kuwaiti citizenship.



Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef during a visit to one of the polling stations.

### Tour conducted

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, conducted an inspection tour encompassing several polling stations on Tuesday, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The purpose was to assess the security preparations aimed at ensuring the smooth conduct of the upcoming 2024 National Assembly elections scheduled for the fourth of April.

### Night-prowler takes all

## Masked mega-thief held after hunt for two years

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** The criminal security sector of the Ministry of Interior has put an end to the activities of a prolific thief who operated for approximately two years, specializing in thefts from residential apartments, vehicle tires from vehicles parked in open areas, power generators, and appliances from camps, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

It has been noted that a comprehensive inventory of the crimes committed by the suspect will take some time, and the number of cases officially registered against him has already reached 40 across the six governorates of Kuwait.

The culprit was arrested by detectives in Hawalli. The man born in 1989 was staying in the country illegally and has confessed to committing numerous crimes previously recorded against an unidentified person, particularly in the Hawalli and Salwa areas. Two vehicles used in his thefts have been confiscated.

Following a surge in theft cases involving vehicle tires and gas cylinders in the Hawalli Governorate, a specialized task force was formed to track the thief's movements and vehicles.

Investigations revealed that the perpetrator operated under the cover of darkness, wearing a mask. Surveillance footage aided in identifying the vehicles used by the thief, leading to the arrest of the suspect, who called himself EM. He disclosed the locations he targeted and admitted to selling stolen goods in the scrap market.

Although the accused confessed to approximately 15 thefts in Hawalli Governorate, only three cases were officially registered -- theft of vehicle tires (case no. 2024/38), theft of gas cylinders (case nos. 2024/145 and 2024/148), all classified as misdemeanors.

Furthermore, the accused confessed to a broader range of thefts, including power generators and various devices stolen from camps over the years.

It is anticipated that the total number of his thefts may exceed 100 cases, including those officially recorded and others that went unreported due to victims' reluctance or the perceived insignificance of the stolen items.

The suspect will be subjected to further investigation to ascertain the full extent of his criminal activities.

## 62 illegal 'Poll '24' adverts pulled down in Farwaniya

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** The Public Relations Department in Kuwait Municipality revealed that the supervisory team in charge of the audit and follow-up of municipal services in Farwaniya Governorate recently carried out an intensive inspection campaign, which resulted in the issuance of 22 citations and 11 warnings for various violations, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, the department revealed that the violations include non-renewal of advertisements, placing an advertisement introducing the activity without a license, adding an advertisement introducing the activity without a license, utilizing spaces and squares without a license and failure to maintain an advertisement. This campaign also led to the removal of 62 violating election advertisements.

According to the department, the team inspected the licenses of shops and advertisements, took the necessary measures against violators, and ensured strict compliance with the rules and regulations. It affirmed that the team is keen on uncovering violations and taking action against those proven to have committed violations.

### 3 minor girls 'molested'

## Jail, deportation for faith healer

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** The Court of Cassation has upheld the ruling of a lower court that previously sentenced an Egyptian Quranic therapist (faith healer) to five years in prison, followed by deportation, for assaulting three Egyptian underage girls in his apartment in Mahboula, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Case files indicate that the accused deluded the three underage girls into believing they needed legal 'ruqyah' and that he would treat their injuries.

The father of the three girls visited the accused in his apartment in order to read the legal 'ruqyah' on his daughters to rid them of envy, evil eye and touch. However, the father was surprised when his daughters got out of the treatment rooms crying and informed him that the therapist carried out immoral deeds and harassed

them.

**Liquor in water bottle:** Three persons have been arrested for consuming alcohol, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the daily the suspects had filled alcohol in mineral water bottles to evade suspicion that they were consuming booze.

According to a security source, a police patrol in Hawalli area suspected the man behind the wheel because he seemed to be in a hurry to move away from the patrol car.

The suspect was asked to pull over and when the police checked the vehicle, they found a bottle of mineral water bottle in which water had been replaced by locally-made booze.

The suspects have been referred to the concerned authorities.



# South African envoy 'commends' Kuwait's support for Palestinians

Kuwaitis urged to explore S. Africa's renowned tourist attractions

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** The South Africa's Ambassador to Kuwait HE Manelisi Genge, has commended Kuwait's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, affirming his country's commitment to stand by the Palestinian people and work towards ending apartheid and genocide practiced against them.

During a meeting with Kuwaiti media representatives, Ambassador Genge hailed the recent decision by the International Court of Justice as a significant victory for international law and justice for Palestinians.

He underscored South Africa's historical support for the Palestinian cause, a shared commitment with Kuwait, while at the same time praising the Kuwaiti media for their supportive role in strengthening bilateral relations between South Africa and Kuwait, particularly in covering South Africa's case against Israel in international forums.

He also highlighted the mutual support between the two countries in various multilateral platforms. Emphasizing Kuwait's importance as a trade and investment partner in the Middle East, the South African noted the growing market for South African food products in Kuwait, including fresh produce, meats, juices, and dairy items. He highlighted co-operation with Kuwaiti Livestock Company in supplying meat products via Dubai.

The ambassador expressed South Africa's eagerness to deepen ties with Kuwait into a solid strategic partnership, aiming to advance shared national interests for the mutual benefit of both nations.

Ambassador Genge extended an invitation for Kuwaitis to explore South Africa's renowned tourist attractions, citing its diverse wildlife, scenic beaches, adventure activities, and cultural heritage sites. He noted an increase in tourist arrivals from Kuwait in 2023 and highlighted the exemption of Kuwaitis and certain residents from visa fees, making South Africa an accessible and affordable destination.

Highlighting South Africa's unique blend of weather, infrastructure, culture, and hospitality, Ambassador Genge described it as an unparalleled tourist destination offering exceptional experiences at minimal cost.



South African Ambassador Genge poses for a photo with media personnel.

## New notification service for vacant land regulation law

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3:** Minister of Justice, Endowments and Islamic Affairs Faisal Al-Gharib said the Ministry of Justice has activated a notification service – 'subject to the Vacant Land Regulation Law' – through the Sahl application, reports Al-Anba daily.

This service sends a notification

to those covered by Law No. 8/2008, which regulates the use of vacant land; advising them to visit the Real Estate Registration Department - Monitoring Automated Information to complete the procedures, or in the event of any change in the description of the property.

The notice states that it is not permissible to complete ownership transfer procedures or issue a power of attorney to dispose any of the plots subject to the law, except with a written approval from the Ministry of Finance upon payment of the fees due to the State.

## PM congratulates Faye

### HH Amir sends congratulation cable to Senegalese president

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulation to President of the Republic of the Senegal Bassirou Diomaye Faye on the occasion of electing him as a president and taking constitutional oath.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Faye good health and

wellbeing, and further development of the people of Senegal.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulation to President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on the occasion of electing him as a president and taking constitutional oath.



KUNA photo

Kuwait doctors conducting surgeries on wounded Palestinians.

'Medical supplies being distributed'

## Kuwait doctors conduct surgeries for wounded Palestinians in Gaza

**GAZA, April 3, (KUNA):** Kuwaiti doctors on Tuesday conducted surgeries for several wounded Palestinians at hospitals in Gaza only a day after they arrived in the enclave via Egypt's Rafah Crossing Point.

"We have started carrying out surgeries at the European Hospital and Kuwait Specialized Hospital in the Gaza Strip, and medical supplies have been distributed," head of the delegation and deputy general manager of Kuwait Society for Relief Omar Al-Thuwaini said to KUNA.

The Kuwaiti medical team is ex-

pected to keep conducting surgeries for wounded Palestinians for a week, he said, adding that Palestinians injured in Israeli occupation attacks are in dire need of surgeries.

The second Kuwaiti medical delegation entered Gaza on Monday through Rafah Crossing Point to support the healthcare in Gaza by conducting surgical operations for injured Palestinians.

The first Kuwaiti medical delegation entered Gaza last month and was the first of its kind, sent by Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

## Other Voices

### Evolution of e-commerce legislation in UAE

By **Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainan**  
Lawyer

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has witnessed a remarkable economic transformation over the past two decades, driven by a burgeoning market and substantial investments. This growth has necessitated a proactive legislative approach to keep pace with the dynamic trajectory of economic advancement. In this context, the introduction of the new e-commerce law signifies a pivotal step towards aligning the legal framework with the evolving landscape of electronic transactions and trust services.

The e-commerce sector in the UAE has experienced significant progress, fueled by investments, strategic acquisitions, and collaborations with global entities. Central to this evolution is the modernization of payment methodologies, which has stimulated and facilitated purchasing and trading activities in the country's burgeoning e-commerce market. The enactment of Federal Decree-Law No. (46) of 2021 regarding Electronic Transactions and Trust Services (ETTS) and its subsequent Executive Regulations (Cabinet Resolution No. 28 of 2023) represent concerted efforts to enhance confidence, encourage, and simplify electronic transactions while safeguarding consumer rights.

The new e-commerce law introduces several key changes aimed at regulating electronic transactions and ensuring the security and legality of online commerce. The establishment of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) as the regulatory authority for e-commerce activities signifies a significant shift. Trust Service Providers are required to obtain a license from TDRA, which maintains a publicly disclosed "Trust List" of approved licensees and their authorized services. Additionally, the Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship issues controls in specific cases, emphasizing the importance of governmental oversight in maintaining trust and security in electronic transactions.

One of the significant provisions of the new e-commerce law is the validation of electronic transactions and signatures, emphasizing their equivalence to handwritten signatures. The law categorizes electronic signatures into three types—electronic signatures, qualified electronic signatures, and approved electronic signatures—each with varying levels of validity.

Moreover, individuals with valid digital IDs can use any electronic signature to conclude transactions with government entities, streamlining administrative processes and enhancing accessibility.

Furthermore, the new law extends the privileges of Qualified Trust Service Providers to facilitate cross-border electronic transactions, provided that the quality of services meets UAE standards.

This provision aims to promote international trade while maintaining the integrity and security of electronic transactions. However, it also imposes heightened responsibilities on E-signatories and Digital ID Holders to prevent unauthorized use of electronic signatures and seals, reflecting a shift towards more stringent compliance measures.

In terms of enforcement, the new e-commerce law stipulates penalties for violations, including fines and imprisonment for forgery and misuse of trust services.

The legislation aims to deter fraudulent activities and ensure the integrity of electronic transactions, underscoring the UAE's commitment to fostering a secure and trustworthy e-commerce environment.

Before engaging in e-commerce activities, businesses must familiarize themselves with the legal requirements outlined in the new e-commerce law and its Executive Regulations. Compliance entails obtaining licenses from TDRA, adhering to prescribed standards, and providing accurate information to users.

Moreover, retailers must implement measures to protect consumer privacy and safeguard against unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.

In addition to the e-commerce law, businesses operating in the UAE must comply with other relevant legislation, including consumer protection laws, data protection regulations, and laws combating cybercrime and copyright infringement.

These regulations aim to uphold consumer rights, protect personal data, and maintain the integrity of electronic transactions.

In conclusion, the enactment of the new e-commerce law represents a significant milestone in the UAE's journey towards fostering a secure and transparent digital economy. By aligning with international standards and embracing technological advancements, the UAE aims to sustain its leadership position in the global e-commerce landscape. Moving forward, continued vigilance and adaptability will be essential to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving realm of electronic commerce.

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## LOCAL

## Kuwait voters

Continued from Page 1

were disqualified by the Ministry of Interior for failure to meet all requirements.

These 200 candidates are distributed per constituency as follows:

**First Constituency:** 41 including one woman

**Second Constituency:** 39 including one woman

**Third Constituency:** 32 including seven women

**Fourth Constituency:** 48 including two women

**Fifth Constituency:** 40 including one woman

Meanwhile, the polling stations will be open even during the breaking of fast (Maghreb prayer). Voters must present their nationality certificates.

On the other hand, Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has affirmed the commitment of his ministry to fully support media practitioners in covering the election either by using the media center it has established for this purpose or providing the necessary information.

On inaugurating the media center, Al-Mutairi said the ministry invited media practitioners from different countries to cover the major democratic event in Kuwait.

He conducted a field tour to check the preparations of Kuwait TV studios allocated for broadcasting and monitoring the election.

Assistant Undersecretary for External Information Affairs at the Ministry of Information Bader Al-Tarawa disclosed that the media center will receive 57 media practitioners from various countries. He affirmed that they will be provided with all the necessary facilities, including familiarization pamphlets and news in different languages.

The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Tuesday called on eligible voters to join the forthcoming parliamentary election due Thursday to ensure a bright future for people and generations to come under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Cabinet made the call during its weekly meeting held at Bayan Palace and presided over by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

In this context, the Cabinet decided to suspend work at all ministries and state institutions and bodies on Thursday, April 4, the day of the country's parliamentary vote.

During the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah elaborated on preparations for the electoral race.

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani expounded election arrangements at 124 schools nationwide, saying that classes on the election day would be online.

Meanwhile, the cabinet reviewed the address given by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday marking the last 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan.

In his speech, His Highness the Amir called on voters to select candidates who would be their best representatives and hoped future MPs would benefit from past experiences and live up to their national responsibilities.

His Highness the Amir hoped the next parliament would be "distinguished with faces with enlightened thinking ... National Assembly members who benefit from previous parliamentary lessons and experiences, and live up to their national responsibilities."

He said: "We are looking forward to the participation of citizens of our beloved nation in the election, and who boycott it will relinquish his constitutional right, does not perform his duty to select, and has no right after that to blame anyone for the poor outcome nor poor performance and achievement."

"Everyone should neglect those inciting division and sedition, be united, protect Kuwait and its people," he said.

His Highness the Amir, meanwhile, said that there was evident severe damage to the national identity due to tampering with Kuwait's nationality, calling for supporting all efforts and measures aimed at preserving the national identity.

The cabinet voiced gratitude to His Highness the Amir for the judicious directives mentioned in his speech, wishing Kuwait everlasting security, stability, progress and prosperity under His Highness the Amir's wise leadership.

## Last ten

Continued from Page 1

The practices of the past years, both parliamentary and ministerial, have created a defect that cannot be corrected except through two cooperating authorities in line with a clear path and program. They must also avoid the cut-and-paste programs that were followed in the past decades, which produced weak Cabinets, the first characteristic of which was to submit and cower in the face of any parliamentary threat to grill any Cabinet member.

Likewise, we should not have parliamentarians who work according to their personal or partisan agendas, and thus permit all prohibitions and commit misdeeds in public administration, with a hope for a vote from here or there.

Nonetheless, His Highness was frank when he said, "Stay away from betraying the trust of the vote".

Everyone has noticed in the past parliaments the extent of the damage caused by choices based on electoral and personal bribery.

Hence, hope is pinned on the outcome

of today's elections. Will it produce "a distinguished parliament of faces glowing with enlightened thought, and members who benefit from previous parliamentary lessons and experiences, and fulfill their national responsibilities?"

This question is posed not only by His Highness the Amir, but also by the majority of rational people in Kuwait who suffer daily due to the decline the country has reached at all levels in terms of tampering with public affairs, and the decline in administration, the economy, and society, as a result of one authority encroaching on other powers, or even confiscating them.

Enough of what the country has suffered through decades of failed experiments, and from the two authorities! Everyone must work on achieving the clear Amiri vision in fulfilling the people's aspirations.

This is due to the fact that those who have struggled with Kuwaiti political life for six decades until today have realized that, if the outcome of the elections are not up to the level of seriousness, sophistication and national responsibility, and based on what the observers read between the lines of the speech of the last ten days, there will be a painful procedure. A sign is enough for the wise person.

## Kuwait reports

Continued from Page 1

1,980 Article 24 (self-sponsor).

Meanwhile, the number of Residency Law violators decreased from 133,440 in 2022 to 121,190 by the end of 2023 - a clear manifestation of the tremendous efforts exerted by the State to address the issue.

According to data seen by the daily, half of the Residency Law violators are domestic workers (Article 20) whose number reached 60,700 by the end of 2023; followed by 28,080 Article 18 visa holders; 25,270 Article 14 visa holders; 6,146 Article 22 visa holders; 701 Article 17 visa holders; 196 Article 24 visa holders; 23 Article 19 visa holders and six Article 23 visa holders.

In terms of the nationalities of residency violators, non-Arab Asian nationalities accounted for 71 percent of the total number of violators (86,200), while the number of Arab violators reached 18,030; non-Arab African nationalities - 15,490; Europeans - 516; North Americans - 771; Central and South Americans - 124 and 37 from Australia and the Pacific Group.

In addition, the number of residency permits granted for the first time totaled 84,975 in 2023 distributed as follows: Article 14 - 18,600; Article 17 - 1,083; Article 18 - 15,489; Article 19 - nine; Article 20 - 30,490; Article 22 - 18,800; Article 23 - 18 and Article 24 - 434.

The number of canceled residency permits reached 57,060 in 2023 as follows: Article 18 - 23,500; Article 22 - 17,000; Article 14 - 6,345; Article 17 - 5,248; Article 20 - 4,597; Article 23 - 159 and Article 24 - 179.

## Infrastructure connectivity urged for Abdali Economic Zone project

'Bidding documents have been prepared'

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3: According to informed sources, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation recently received a request from the Direct Investment Promotion Authority (DIPA) to begin work on connecting infrastructure networks to the land borders of the Abdali Economic Zone project, so that it would be tender-able and implementable.**

They explained that the infrastructure networks to be implemented within the land borders include roads, sewage facilities, main and secondary power stations, underground cables with different voltages, drinking water facilities, and other infrastructure works.

The authority's failure to begin implementing the project was due to changes in the tender documents for implementation to an auction in accordance with Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 1010/2021 issued during its meeting on August 25, 2021, which mandates the authority to put the project up for public bidding.

The bidding documents have been prepared, and accordingly, the feasibility study of the area must be updated so that the outputs are up to date and in line with the bidding requirements.

The practice of updating the feasibility study for the Abdali Economic Zone and its financial and economic parts has been proposed. The practice contract was signed on March 22, 2023. The contract is in its third and final phase, and work is underway to include the outcomes of the study in the bidding documents.

Accordingly, the authority requested the concerned authorities to connect the infrastructure networks to the land borders so that they are capable of being offered and valid for implementation. The authority, in turn, is awaiting the action of these parties.

It is worth highlighting that the to-

'Section Editor' at US' Helion

## Dr Yassin makes Kuwait proud

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The United

States Embassy in Kuwait extends its congratulations to Dr. Hamad Yassin, Associate Professor at the Medical Sciences Center at the Kuwait University and the Dasman Diabetes Institute, on his appointment as "Section Editor" in the prestigious American scientific journal Helion, published by Cell Press, reports Al-Qabas daily.



Dr Yassin

In an Instagram post, the embassy announced that Dr. Yassin will serve as a visiting scientist at the Mayo Clinic Center for Polycystic Kidney Disease over the next year.

Highlighting the valuable contributions of Kuwaiti doctors and researchers like Dr. Yassin, the embassy emphasized their role in fostering academic and scientific cooperation between Kuwait and the United States of America.

Responding to the embassy's post, Dr. Hamad Yassin expressed his gratitude for the congratulatory message, underscoring the significance of this gesture in showcasing the depth of relations and collaborative spirit in the medical and scientific domains.

SAB observations cited

## TV workers 'allegedly' to receive remuneration based on job titles

By Mohammad Al-Misleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 3: According to an informed source in the Ministry of Information, remuneration for those working for television programs will be paid only in proportion to their job titles in the ministry as of this month.**

The source explained that some sectors of the ministry instructed the directors of channel departments to inform those in charge of implementing television programs to adhere to job titles and the appropriate programs.

This step was taken based on the observations of the State Audit Bureau regarding the names of some workers

in the television sector.

The regulatory agencies had previously directed the necessity of tightening internal control in implementing the ministry's work regarding the rewards system for those dealing with radio and television programs.

Tightening oversight will contribute to controlling and rationalizing public spending. The State Audit Bureau requested to be informed about the commitment of every public employee in carrying out his job duties listed in the job specializations card and the approved organizational units, and fulfilling the number of hours approved by the Civil Service Council.

tal area of the Abdali Economic Zone is five square kilometers in the north of the country, aimed for building an integrated commercial and economic center for the country on the aforementioned area to establish various economic activities and purposes, thus becoming a new northern gateway to international trade within Kuwait.

It will also support Kuwait's national vision to expand its northern region and become a logistical center for the planned GCC railway project and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port. It will provide great opportunities in various sectors such as trade, investment, industry, hospitality, housing, storage and other fields.

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## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Ukraine lowers its conscription age to 25:** Ukraine on Wednesday lowered the military conscription age from 27 to 25 in an effort to replenish its depleted ranks after more than two years of war following Russia's full-scale invasion.

The new mobilization law came into force a day after Ukraine President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** signed it. Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, passed it last year.

It was not immediately clear why Zelenskyy took so long to sign the measure into law. He didn't make any public comment about it, and officials did not say how many new soldiers the country expected to gain or for which units.

Conscription has been a sensitive matter in Ukraine for many months amid a growing shortage of infantry on top of a severe ammunition shortfall that has handed Russia the battlefield initiative. Russia's own problems with manpower and planning have so far prevented it from taking full advantage of its edge.

The average age of Ukrainian soldiers, like those on the Russian side, is around 40, military analysts say. Some Ukrainians worry that taking young adults out of the workforce will backfire by further harming the war-ravaged economy, but the problem reportedly has become acute as Kyiv girds for an expected summer offensive by the Kremlin's forces. (AP)



Zelenskyy

**Putin vows to find hall attack masterminds:** Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed Tuesday to track down the masterminds of the Moscow concert hall attack that left 144 people dead in the worst assault on Russian soil in two decades, and urged its law enforcement agencies to tighten security at mass gatherings.

Putin has repeatedly sought to link the March 22 killings to Ukraine and the West despite the Islamic State group's claim of responsibility and Kyiv's vehement denial, as well as a U.S. government warning to Moscow days earlier of an imminent attack.

Speaking at a meeting with top officials of the Interior Ministry that oversees the nation's police force, Putin said it is important to determine "not only the perpetrators of this outrage but all links in the chain and its beneficiaries."

He added, in an apparent threat of retaliation: "Those who use this weapon against Russia should realize it's a double-edged weapon." (AP)

**Mourners gather outside Finnish school:** Mourners gathered outside a southern Finland school Wednesday, a day after a shooter killed a 12-year-old boy and seriously wounded two girls the same age. The suspect, a sixth-grader who attended the school, was apprehended less than an hour later.

The attack shocked the Nordic nation, where Finnish blue-and-white flags were hoisted at half-mast and scores of people including parents, teachers and fellow students laid flowers and lit candles in the snowy landscape.

Police said one of the wounded girls has a dual Finland-Kosovo citizenship. The shooter and the victims were all classmates.

On Tuesday, heavily armed police cordoned off the Viertola school, an 800-student secondary school in the city of Vantaa, just outside Helsinki. (AP)

**Portugal aims to outmaneuver its rivals:** Portugal's new center-right minority government took office Tuesday, days after its first test in parliament exposed both the pitfalls and the opportunities it faces following a radical right populist party's sudden surge in support in a recent general election.

Only one of the 17 ministers sworn in at a ceremony in Lisbon's 19th-century Ajuda National Palace has previous top-level government experience. Even Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, who promised a Cabinet made up of specialists from outside the usual political circles, has never sat in government before.

Some key members of the Cabinet have spent time in Brussels and are familiar with the European Union's corridors of power. They include Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel and Defense Minister Nuno Melo, who were European lawmakers from 2009. Portugal, a country of 10.3 million people, is receiving more than 22 billion euros (\$23.6 billion) through 2026 from the EU to fuel growth and enable economic reforms. (AP)

**'Suspects in stabbing of presenter fled UK':** British counterterrorism police investigating the stabbing of a journalist who works for a TV channel critical of the Iranian government said that three suspects had fled the country within hours of the attack.

Pouria Zeraati, a presenter at London-based Iran International, was stabbed in the leg Friday afternoon outside his home in London. Police said Zeraati, who has been released from a hospital, was attacked by two men who fled in a car driven by a third man.

"We have established that after abandoning the vehicle, the suspects traveled to Heathrow Airport and have left the UK," Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command, said in a statement late Thursday. "We are now working with international partners to establish further details." (AP)

**Belarus arrests well-known activist:** Authorities in Belarus have arrested a well-known activist on charges punishable by up to four years in prison, the country's oldest rights group said Tuesday in what appears to be the latest in the years-long crackdown on dissent.

Dzmitry Kuchuk, whose Green Party was shut down last year, has been charged with "organizing activities that grossly violate public order," according to the Viasna human rights center.

The center said Kuchuk, 50, was arrested on Feb. 16 in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, near the Russian Embassy, where he went to lay flowers and light a candle in memory of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, whose sudden death in a remote Arctic prison was announced that day.

The authorities ordered Kuchuk jailed for successive 15-day stints and then filed criminal charges against him, Viasna said. (AP)

**'Stop migrants from leaving its shores':** The president of Cyprus said on Tuesday that he has personally asked the head of the European Union's executive arm to intercede with Lebanese authorities to stop boatloads of Syrian refugees from heading to the east Mediterranean island nation.

President Nikos Christodoulides told reporters that Lebanon is the beneficiary of significant EU financial aid for both its own citizens and for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees it continues to host, but that doesn't come without strings attached.

"This aid can't be given while we have to deal with this issue," Christodoulides said, adding that he personally spoke with EU Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen.

In the last 48 hours, more than 350 migrants and asylum seekers, almost exclusively Syrian nationals, arrived in Cyprus by boat, according to Cypriot government spokesman Constantinos Letymbiotis. (AP)

**Car crash kills 8 migrants in Albania:** A car crashed into a river on Tuesday in southeastern Albania, killing all eight people on board, including seven suspected migrants and a local driver, Albanian police said.

The driver of the vehicle lost control and veered into the Vjosa River about 240 kilometers (150 miles) southeast of the capital, Tirana, around 4 a.m., according to a police statement. Seven of the victims were suspected to be "from third countries," it said, using a description police often use to refer to migrants.

Regional police chief Ardiar Cipa said the car failed to stop at a police checkpoint and sped away. A police vehicle then followed the car and saw it had crashed into the river.

"It is suspected the driver is from Shkodra and the others are suspected to be migrants who frequently pass this road," Cipa said, declining to give more details until the investigation is finished. Shkodra is a northwestern city around 300 kilometers (186 miles) from the accident site. (AP)



US President Joe Biden waves to supporters after speaking at a campaign event on March 9 in Atlanta. Voters in four states weighed in on April 2 on their parties' presidential nominees, a largely symbolic vote now that both Biden and Donald Trump have locked up the Democratic and Republican nominations. (AP)

## Politics

## Ex-prez escalates his immigration rhetoric

## Trump, Biden sweep primaries in 4 states

KENOSHA, Wis., April 3, (AP) — Voters in four states weighed in Tuesday on their parties' presidential nominees, a largely symbolic vote now that both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump have locked up the Democratic and Republican nominations.

Biden and Trump easily won primaries in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and Wisconsin, adding to their delegate hauls for their party conventions this summer.

Their victories, while hardly surprising, nevertheless offer clues about enthusiasm among base voters for the upcoming 2020 rematch that has left a majority of Americans underwhelmed. Biden has faced opposition from activists encouraging Democrats to vote against him to send a message of disapproval for his handling of the war between Israel and Hamas, and some Republican Trump critics are still voting for rivals who have dropped out.

"Uncommitted" in Rhode Island and Connecticut was getting a similar share of the Democratic vote as protest campaigns in Minnesota and Michigan, which got 19% and 13% respectively. In Wisconsin, "uninstructed delegation" was getting a smaller share.

## Hints

In particular, the tallies in Wisconsin, a pivotal November battleground, will give hints about the share of Republicans who still aren't on board with Trump and how many Democrats are disillusioned with Biden. Trump campaigned Tuesday in Wisconsin and Michigan, two Midwest battlegrounds.

"Donald Trump is the first person I can remember who actually tried to keep all of the promises that he made during the campaign," said Scott Lindemann, a 62-year-old contractor in Kenosha, Wisconsin, who voted for the former president in the GOP primary. "I was very impressed with that."

In New York, 70-year-old Steve Wheatley, a registered Republican, said he wishes there were more candidates to choose from. He said he voted

for Nikki Haley even though "she has no shot" because of the lack of options.

"We need younger candidates with fresh ideas to run for president," said Wheatley, a resident of Athens, a small town in the Hudson Valley. "I prefer a Democrat but our choices are thin. Look at what Biden has done so far with the economy."

Theresa Laabs, a 55-year-old cashier in Kenosha, said her family is feeling the squeeze from higher food and gasoline prices, but she voted for Biden in the Democratic primary because she feels like he's working to alleviate inflation.

## Easier

"I understand it's the economy now, and I'm hoping that Joe will keep working even harder in the next four years to try and bring these things down and make it easier for the working family," Laabs said.

Trump and Biden turned their attention to the general election weeks ago after Haley dropped out of the GOP contest. Biden visited all the top battlegrounds last month after his State of the Union speech.

Biden and the Democratic National Committee have outpaced Trump and the Republicans in fundraising. Biden claimed the largest single-event fundraising record last week when he took in \$26 million at a star-studded New York event last week with big names from the entertainment world teamed up with the president and his Democratic predecessors, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

Trump is looking to one-up his rival with a fundraiser in Palm Beach, Florida, this weekend that he hopes will bring in \$33 million.

While the presidential candidates locking up their parties' nominations, turnout was slow in Rhode Island, where only 4% of eligible voters had cast ballots by 5 p.m., a figure that included Tuesday's in-person votes as well as mail-in and early votes.

It was slow across the border in Connecticut as well, where early vot-

ing was held for the first time in state history. Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas said turnout was only 1% to 2% in some communities by 11 a.m., while it was 4% in Stamford, one of the state's larger cities. "What we have been hearing on the ground from people over the last few weeks is that this isn't a competitive primary," she said about the low numbers.

## Also:

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.:** Donald Trump accused President Joe Biden of unleashing a "bloodbath" at the US-Mexico border Tuesday, escalating his inflammatory rhetoric as he campaigned in two Midwestern swing states likely to be critical to the outcome of the 2024 election.

Trump, who has accused migrants of "poisoning the blood of the country" and vowed to launch the largest domestic deportation operation in the nation's history if he wins a second term, said Biden was allowing a "bloodbath" that was "destroying the country." In Michigan, he referred to people in the US illegally who are suspected of committing crimes as "animals," using dehumanizing language that those who study extremism have warned increases the risk of violence.

"Under Crooked Joe Biden, every state is now a border state. Every town is now a border town because Joe Biden has brought the carnage and chaos and killing from all over world and dumped it straight into our backyards," Trump said in Grand Rapids, where he stood flanked by law enforcement officers in uniform before a line of flags.

While violent crime is down, Trump and other Republicans have attacked Biden by seizing on several high-profile crimes alleged to have been committed by immigrants in the US illegally as border crossings have hit record highs. Polls suggest Trump has an advantage over Biden on the issue as many prospective voters say they're concerned about the impact of the crossings.

Alvin Bragg's office confirmed in an email. The 64-year-old former NYPD deputy inspector agreed to the sentence when he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor conspiracy charge in February. Montgomery was among six people charged with conspiracy, attempted grand larceny and making false statements in relation to the campaign donations plot.

The indictment, announced by Bragg's office last July, did not implicate Adams, but instead spelled out a straw donor plot by people who hoped to maximize their donations in exchange for political favors at City Hall. (AP)

**Lee accepts judge resignation:** Tennessee Gov Bill Lee on Tuesday accepted the resignation of a Memphis judge who has been charged with coercion of a witness and harassment, and then jailed after she violated her bond agreement by testing positive for cocaine.

Erin Merrick, Lee's chief counsel, wrote in a brief letter that the governor has accepted the resignation of Shelby County Criminal Court Judge Melissa Boyd.

Boyd sent a letter Tuesday to the state Administrative Office of the Courts saying she was resigning immediately. That came a day after she sent a letter saying she would step down at the end of May.

A hearing about her removal from the bench had been previously scheduled in the Tennessee General Assembly for Thursday. Under state law, judges can be referred to the Legislature after receiving two public reprimands. (AP)



California Gov Gavin Newsom announces an updated California Water Plan with Department of Water Resources director Karla Nemeth during the April snow survey at Phillips Station in El Dorado County on April 2. California has entered spring with an above-average mountain snowpack and major reservoirs in good shape for a second consecutive year, staving off immediate water supply concerns but not allaying drought worries in a warming world. (AP)



Adams



Lee

## America

**Severe weather roars thru states:** Thousands of homes and businesses were without power Tuesday as severe weather roared through several states, causing at least one death and spawning possible tornadoes.

Parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia and Georgia were under tornado watches into Tuesday night, while Wisconsin was experiencing a spring snowstorm. Storms in Northeastern Oklahoma unleashed three suspected tornadoes and dumped heavy rain that was blamed for the death of a 46-year-old homeless woman in Tulsa who was sheltering inside a drainage pipe.

The woman's boyfriend told authorities the two had gone to sleep at the entrance of the drainage pipe and were awakened by floodwaters, Tulsa Fire Department spokesperson Andy Little said. Up to 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) of rain fell in Tulsa in about an hour, National Weather Service meteorologist Robert Darby said.

"It wasn't a whole lot. But when it came down, it was pretty rapid," Darby said. (AP)

**'Workers had little warning':** In the moments before the cargo ship Dali rammed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge and sent it crumbling into the water, a flurry of urgent warnings crackled over radios and enabled police to block traffic from getting on the span, likely saving lives.

But those warnings seemingly didn't reach the six construction workers who were killed in last week's collapse of the Baltimore bridge. Their deaths have raised questions about whether the construction company took proper precautions, including keeping a safety boat nearby that might have been able to warn them at least a few seconds before impact.

Federal regulations require construction companies to keep such boats, commonly known as skiffs, on hand whenever crews are working over waterways, safety experts

told The Associated Press. There is no indication that the construction company. (AP)

**Ex-police officer sentenced:** A former police officer who prosecutors say was the ringleader of a campaign donations scheme to help New York City Mayor Eric Adams

during his winning 2021 run was sentenced Tuesday, authorities said.

Dwyane Montgomery was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service and was prohibited from hosting political fundraisers or soliciting contributions on behalf of any campaign for a year during his sentencing, Manhattan District Attorney



Newly recruited soldiers who mark the end of their training at a military base close to Kyiv, Ukraine, on Sept 25, 2023. Ukraine on April 3, lowered the military conscription age from 27 to 25 in an effort to replenish its depleted ranks after more than two years of war following Russia's full-scale invasion. (AP)



## Africa

## Ex-rebels disarm

## Senegal swears in Faye as new leader

DAKAR, Senegal, April 3, (AP): Senegal inaugurated Africa's youngest elected leader as president on Tuesday, as the 44-year-old and previously little-known Bassirou Diomaye Faye completed a dramatic ascent from prison to palace within weeks.

Hours later, **Ousmane Sonko**, the popular opposition figure who helped catapult him to victory, was named as the country's new prime minister.

Last month's election tested Senegal's reputation as a stable democracy in West Africa, a region rocked in recent years by coups and attempted coups. Both Faye and Sonko were released from prison less than two weeks before the vote following a political amnesty announced by outgoing President Macky Sall.

Their arrests had sparked months of protests and concerns that Sall would seek a third term in office despite term limits. Rights groups said dozens were killed and about 1,000 were jailed. In his first speech as president, Faye remembered those killed and promised to deliver greater sovereignty for Senegal while working to build prosperity.

"I am aware that the results of the elections express a profound desire for systemic change," he said. "Through my election, the Senegalese people have committed to building a sovereign, just and prosperous Senegal in a progressing Africa."



Sonko

## Rise

This is the first elected office for Faye, a former tax inspector. His rise has reflected widespread frustration among Senegal's youth with the country's direction - a common sentiment across Africa, which has the world's youngest population and a number of leaders widely accused of clinging to power for decades.

"It's the culmination of a long struggle for democracy and the rule of law," said Aissata Sagna, a 39-year-old factory worker who worked on Faye's campaign. "This is a day of celebration for us, even if we have lost young people killed during the demonstrations."

Unemployment rates are high. The war in Ukraine has helped drive up the price of food and energy. Like residents of other former French colonies, Senegalese are increasingly disaffected with France, often accused of exploiting its longstanding ties with West Africa.

Faye campaigned on promises to clean up corruption. Ahead of the election, he released a declaration of his assets and called on other candidates to do the same. It listed a home in Dakar and land outside the capital and in his small hometown. His bank accounts totaled roughly \$6,600. A practicing Muslim, Faye has two wives, both of whom were present on Tuesday.

"I think the first challenge is the formation of his (Faye's) government," said Alioune Tine, founder of the Senegalese think tank Afrikajom Center. "This will be the first concrete message he sends to the Senegalese people. The size, diversity and profiles will be analyzed with a fine-tooth comb to see if they meet the demand for a break with the past."

## Improve

Allies are closely watching Faye's economic policies following his promise to improve the management of natural resources. Senegal has made new oil and gas discoveries in recent years, but the population has yet to see any real benefit. Analysts warn, however, that renegotiating deals could turn investors off.

Faye on Tuesday offered reassurance that change would not come at the expense of Senegal's reputation as a stable democracy in a troubled region.

"In this work of building a new Senegal, I shall work tirelessly to preserve peace and national cohesion," he said. "I bear in mind that our most precious resource remains our country's political stability."

The new president was little known until Sonko, who came third in the previous election in 2019, named him to run in his place after being barred from the election for a prior conviction.

Sonko, a former tax inspector, like the president, has promised to deliver greater transparency and sovereignty for Senegal. In his first speech as prime minister, he promised to deliver change. "We'll give it everything we've got. We will spare no effort to achieve what we have promised the Senegalese: a break with the past, progress and definitive change in the country," Sonko said in a speech from the presidential palace broadcast live on local television late at night.

Faye was arrested for alleged defamation last year, while Sonko faced a number of charges, including a prolonged legal battle that started when he was accused of rape in 2021. He was acquitted of the rape charges but was convicted of corrupting youth and sentenced to two years in prison last year. Sonko's supporters say his legal troubles were part of a government effort to derail his candidacy.

## Also:

**BOUAR, Central African Republic:** The bodies of children killed in the crossfire lay on the ground. It was too much for the rebel. After a year of fighting rivals across Central African Republic, the abuses were mounting and he wanted out.

The 42-year-old took advantage of a nationwide program meant to help people like him lay down their guns. He trained in entrepreneurship, received a bi-weekly stipend of about \$35 and was told to return to civilian life.

But there's little normal life for veteran fighters in one of the world's most volatile countries. He couldn't find work, was shunned by his family for his violent past and was threatened by enemies. Two years later he became a fighter again, this time helping Russian mercenaries combat the armed groups he had left.

Nearly 5,000 fighters have put down their arms in Central African Republic since the program launched nearly a decade ago. Yet former rebels, communities and conflict experts say it's hard to stop fighting in a country where little other paid work exists.

Central African Republic has been in conflict since 2013, when predominantly Muslim rebels seized power and forced the president from office. Mostly Christian militias fought back. A 2019 peace deal only lessened the fighting, and six of the 14 armed groups that signed later left the agreement.

Another armed presence is Wagner, the Russian mercenary group tasked with protecting the presidency and securing the country. Its fighters have been accused by rights groups and civilians of recruiting a local militia to help it fight rebels while committing abuses and exploiting Central African Republic's rich mines and forests.

Some of those militia members went through the national program to disarm.



Bassirou Diomaye Faye, (right), greets Guinea's interim president Mamadi Doumbouya during his swearing in ceremony as Senegal's president in Dakar, Senegal, on April 2. Senegal has sworn in Faye as its new president, completing the previously little-known opposition figure's dramatic ascent from prison to the palace in recent weeks. (AP)



Migrants walk across the Darien Gap from Colombia to Panama on their long and difficult journey to reach the United States, May 9, 2023. Colombia and Panama are failing to protect hundreds of thousands of migrants who are crossing the Darien jungle on their way to the US and have become increasingly vulnerable to robberies and sexual violence, Human Rights Watch said in a report published on April 3. (AP)



Dujarric



Obrador

## Lat/Am

**More than 53K flee Haiti capital:** More than 53,000 people have fled Haiti's capital in less than three weeks, the vast majority to escape unrelenting gang violence, according to a United Nations report released Tuesday.

More than 60% are headed to Haiti's rural southern region, which worries UN officials.

"Our humanitarian colleagues emphasized that these departments do not have sufficient infrastructure, and host communities do not have sufficient resources, to cope with the large number of people fleeing Port-au-Prince," said UN spokesman **Stephane Dujarric**.

The southern region already hosts more than 116,000 Haitians who previously left Port-au-Prince, according to the report by the UN's International Organization for Migration.

The exodus from the capital of some 3 million people began shortly after powerful gangs launched a series of attacks on government institutions at the end of February. Gunmen have burned police stations, opened fire on the main international airport that remains closed and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates. (AP)

**Nations fail to protect migrants:** Colombia and Panama are failing to protect hundreds of thousands of migrants who cross the Darien jungle on their way to the US and have become increasingly vulnerable to robberies and sexual violence, Human Rights Watch said in a report published on Wednesday.

The watchdog called on both countries to appoint high-level officials to coordinate the response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Darien and recommended that their governments work jointly to improve security and ensure more assistance from international groups.

"Whatever the reason for their journey, migrants and asylum-seekers crossing the Darien Gap are entitled to basic safety and respect for their human rights along the way," Juanita Goebertus, Americas director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement issued before the report's publication.

Human Rights Watch's recommendations come as record numbers of migrants cross the Darien jungle on their way to the US. (AP)

## Asia

## Violent storms kill 7 in eastern China

## Subianto vows to strengthen ties with Japan

TOKYO, April 3, (AP): Indonesian President-elect Prabowo Subianto said he wants to "further strengthen" relations with Japan as he met with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday on the heels of a visit to China.

Subianto, who's currently defense minister, told Kishida that the two countries are longtime friends who have built a cooperative relationship, and that he hoped to further strengthen the relationship.

Japan has been seeking closer ties with Southeast Asian countries, especially in maritime security and defense, in the face of China's increasingly assertive military presence.

Subianto, who will succeed Joko Widodo in October, chose Beijing for his first official overseas trip after his February election victory in a bid to emphasize steady ties with China amid rising tensions in the South China Sea, where China and the Philippines have had repeated high-seas confrontations. In his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Subianto pledged a continued friendly policy toward China.

China is Indonesia's largest trading partner, with Beijing investing in major infrastructure projects, and Indonesia has maintained a relatively neutral stance amid rising tensions between China and the Philippines over rival territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Kishida welcomed Subianto's early visit to Tokyo, telling his future counterpart that the two countries are long-time friends that share basic values and principles, and that Japan hoped to further strengthen cooperation in regional and global issues as "comprehensive and strategic partners."

## Also:

**BEIJING:** Violent rain and hailstorms have killed seven people in eastern China's Jiangxi province this week, including three people who fell from their apartments in a high-rise building.

Dozens of homes were severely damaged by the storms, which started Sunday, and more than 800 people have been resettled, state broadcaster CCTV said Wednesday, citing a Jiangxi government emergency agency.

Four people died on Sunday in Nanchang, the provincial capital. It wasn't clear from the report when or where the other three died, but another violent storm on Tuesday left people trapped

## North Korea tests new hypersonic missile that uses solid propellants

SEOUL, South Korea, April 3, (AP): North Korea said Wednesday it had tested a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile powered with solid propellants, extending a run of weapons tests that's deepening a nuclear standoff with neighbors and the United States.

With the supposed success of the demonstration, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared his country had acquired the ability to build solid-fuel, nuclear-capable missiles of all ranges as he pursues an arsenal that can credibly threaten rivals in Asia and the United States.

But the South Korean military said the North is exaggerating the success of the test and its overall missile prowess.

The report by North Korean state media came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries detected a missile launched from near the North's capital toward its eastern sea.

State media said the test was supervised by Kim, who described the Hwasong-16B missile as a key piece of his nuclear deterrent he vowed to further build up to counter his "enemies," a reference to the United States, South Korea and Japan.

In recent years, North Korea has been developing more missiles with built-in solid propellants. Such weapons are easier to move and hide, and can be launched quicker than liquid-propellant missiles, which need to be fueled before launch and cannot stay fueled for long periods of time.

North Korea tested a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time last year, adding to its arsenal of long-range weapons targeting the US mainland. The country also has an extensive lineup of short-range and mid-range solid-fuel missiles that can be fired from land vehicles, ships and submarines and are potentially capable of hitting targets throughout South Korea and Japan. In recent months, the North demonstrated some of these missiles in drills it described as simulated nuclear strikes.

in a collapsed house in the same city. Eleven people were hospitalized, according to an earlier CCTV report.

The first storm blew out floor-to-ceiling windows in a Nanchang apartment building, killing three in the middle of the night. A grandmother and her 11-year-old grandson fell to their deaths from the 20th floor, as did a 60-year-old woman from the 11th floor, according to Chinese media reports.

Authorities are investigating how the three people fell. Media reports suggested they may have been blown out by extremely strong winds. A resident on the 20th floor of the building told online outlet Jimu News that her family had to hold on to avoid being blown away, and that they were so frightened that they stayed up all night.

The storms also damaged 5,700 hectares (14,000 acres) of crops in Jiangxi province, CCTV said.

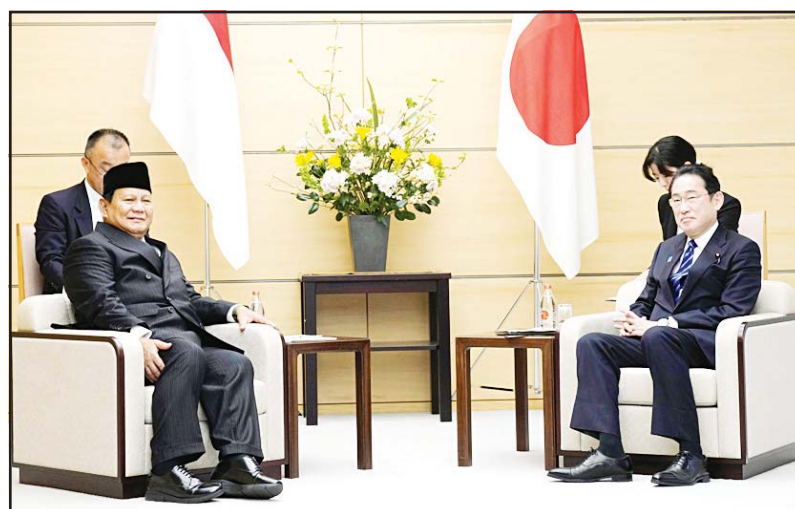
**BANGKOK:** A deputy chief of Thailand's national police force involved in many high-profile cases turned himself in to fellow officers on Tuesday after a court issued a warrant for his arrest on money laundering charges.

Police Gen **Surachate Hakparn** had recently been suspended from his duties due to his involvement in fighting among the department's top ranks.

Thai media reported that the Bangkok Criminal Court approved an arrest warrant for Surachate on money laundering charges earlier Tuesday. Public broadcaster Thai PBS and Thai Rath, the country's largest circulation newspaper, reported that the court issued the warrant because Surachate failed to report for questioning after three summonses had been issued for him.

Surachate went to Bangkok's **Taopoon** neighborhood police station Tuesday evening to hear the charges against him, and after several hours emerged to tell reporters he had come to comply with the warrant and would let due process take its course.

"I'm not worried," he commented as he jostled his way through a scrum of reporters before getting into a waiting car. He said he had been released on bail but did not specify the amount.



Indonesian President-elect and current Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, (left), and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, (right), meet at the prime minister's office on April 3 in Tokyo. Subianto said he wants to 'further strengthen' relations with Japan as he met with Kishida on Wednesday on the heels of a visit to China. (AP)

to the Boluarte's bank accounts. His testimony came hours after the president's attorneys said prosecutors will interview her Friday over the alleged illicit enrichment accusations, which are threatening her presidency.

Prosecutors have also instructed Boluarte to show them on Friday the three Rolex watches that led to the ongoing preliminary investigation and prompted lawmakers to seek her removal from office Monday. (AP)

**Obrador mourns local candidate:** Mexico's president said Tuesday he was saddened by the killing of a mayoral candidate just hours after she requested protection and started campaigning. A city council candidate also went missing in the same attack on Monday, but later turned up, authorities said.

President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** said the killing of his own party's candidate "hurts a lot," but he did not announce any increase in security for politicians.

Candidate Bertha Gaytán was gunned down on a street in a town just outside the city of Celaya, in the north-central state of Guanajuato. She had just launched her campaign for Celaya mayor on Monday and acknowledged she had asked for protection.

Federal Security Secretary Rosa Icela Rodríguez said Tuesday morning that Celaya city council candidate Adrián Guerrero died of wounds suffered in the same attack, but later her office said he was missing. (AP)



	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+145.63	12,622.22	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+954.12	67,873.25	
UAE	-	DFM	-29.35	4,240.05	
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-387.06	39,451.85	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-96.61	6,863.82	

# Business

## Trading activity soars in Brent futures and options in Q1

# Oil prices soar in March amid OPEC+ supply cuts extension

By National Bank of Kuwait

## Nation anticipates 5.8 bln dinar deficit

# Government strategies to mitigate fiscal deficit amid rising oil prices

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Contrary to conservative projections set by the government for the fiscal year 2024-2025, Kuwaiti oil prices surged to \$88.2 per barrel, nearing the budgetary break-even point of \$90.7 per barrel, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This unexpected increase presents an opportunity to mitigate the anticipated deficit of 5.8 billion dinars outlined in the new budget. With oil prices on an upward trajectory since the year's onset, the government's focus on expenditure rationalization, accelerating profitable development projects, and income diversification further supports the potential for deficit reduction.

Key highlights of the new fiscal year include expected revenues of 18.7 billion dinars, projected expenses of 24.5 billion dinars, and an estimated deficit of 5.8 bil-

lion dinars, against the backdrop of an anticipated \$70 per barrel oil price, now outpaced by market realities.

Factors contributing to the oil price surge include production cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, offsetting increased supplies elsewhere. Expectations of ongoing production policies by the OPEC+ alliance and geopolitical tensions impacting Russia's energy infrastructure have also bolstered prices. Additionally, recovering US refinery activity and declining drilling rig numbers indicate potential future supply constraints.

However, challenges such as the strengthening US dollar, unexpected rises in US crude inventories and gasoline stocks, and hopes for de-escalation of Middle East tensions may temper further price increases.

# Foreign purchases surge on Boursa in first quarter

## Investors witness net sales amid institutional pressure

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Foreign purchases on the Boursa Kuwait experienced a significant uptick during the first quarter of 2024, with a notable increase of 111.8 million dinars.

This surge was primarily fueled by active buying operations conducted by institutions and companies, resulting in net purchases amounting to approximately 113.9 million dinars. These substantial purchases helped offset individual sales, which amounted to about 2.3 million dinars during the same period.

Additionally, foreign investment funds contributed to the bullish trend, recording net purchases of approximately 230.7 thousand dinars. However, Kuwaiti investors witnessed a different trend, with net sales reaching around 102.9 million dinars. This was attributed to selling pressures emanating from institutions and companies, which led to net sales of about 85.3 million dinars. Similarly, individual investors also contributed to the net sales, amounting to approximately 19.1 million dinars. Despite these sales, investment funds saw net sales of about 2.7 million dinars.

Meanwhile, Gulf investors also saw net sales on the Boursa Kuwait during the first quarter, totaling around 8.9 million dinars. This was primarily driven by an increase in the value of sales by institutions and companies, which amounted to 17.1 million dinars. However, Kuwaiti stock purchases by Gulf investors remained positive, amounting to 6.1 million dinars.

In terms of market performance, the Boursa Kuwait closed trading on a positive note, with the general index

## Boursa Kuwait witnesses historic jump in Q1 2024 trading activity

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The Kuwait stock market witnessed an unprecedented surge in liquidity during the first quarter of the current year, marking a historic and exceptional milestone. The value of purchases skyrocketed to 3.5 billion dinars, a staggering increase from 898.3 million dinars recorded during the same period last year, translating to a remarkable growth rate of 294.4 percent, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This surge in liquidity levels was predominantly fueled by the re-entry of individual investors into the market, underscoring their historical significance as the primary drivers of market activity. Individual transactions saw a substantial increase, totaling 1.231 billion dinars compared to 275 million dinars in the first quarter of 2023 – an impressive growth rate of 347.5 percent.

Recognizing the pivotal role of individual investors, efforts to enhance services and streamline information flow to the market are crucial. The

rising by 13.8 points to reach 7,368 points. Trading activity remained robust, with a total of 143.2 million shares exchanged through 11,030 cash transactions, valued at 40.6 million dinars (approximately 9.131 million dollars).

The session witnessed gains across multiple sectors, particularly in consumer goods, which saw an increase of about 2.68%. However, four sectors experienced declines, with insurance being the most notable, dropping by 0.66%. The technology sector remained stable throughout the session.

Regarding individual stocks, 55 stocks recorded gains. Conversely, 51 stocks experienced declines of approx-

importance of catering to this segment without imposing additional fees or creating barriers cannot be overstated, as any setbacks or damage to this segment could significantly impact the overall market.

Foreign individual transactions also experienced a notable uptick, surging by 249 percent to reach 520.5 million dinars within three months. The decision by the Markets Authority to halt projects aimed at increasing fees and selling data to traders reflects a commitment to incentivize and support individual investors rather than impede them with financial burdens.

Furthermore, all financial indicators for entities trading in the market witnessed marked improvement, with transactions by institutions and companies soaring to 1.578 billion dinars – a growth rate of 280.5 percent compared to the previous year. Portfolio transactions and fund purchases also saw substantial increases, underlining the overall positive sentiment in the market.

imely 6.25%. Meanwhile, the prices of 13 stocks remained stable.

Volume activity was dominated by "National Real Estate" stock, which rose by 0.96%, with a volume of 29.69 million shares traded. Liquidity was primarily driven by "KFH" shares, with a value of 8.29 million dinars.

Despite fluctuations in individual sectors and stocks, the Boursa Kuwait continued to maintain its leading position among GCC countries, boasting gains of 7.5% during the first quarter of 2024. This performance outpaced gains seen in other regional markets, with Dubai and Saudi Arabia recording gains of 4.6% and 3.6%, respectively.

Oil prices rallied for a third consecutive month in March, helped by ongoing OPEC+ voluntary cuts and their extension to end-Q2, which have noticeably tightened the oil market. The IEA in March again raised its 2024 oil demand growth, to 1.3 mb/d, to reflect better-than-expected oil consumption amid solid US and non-OECD economic activity. The price outlook has materially firmed on the opening up of a supply deficit this year, with the balance of risks tilted to the upside.

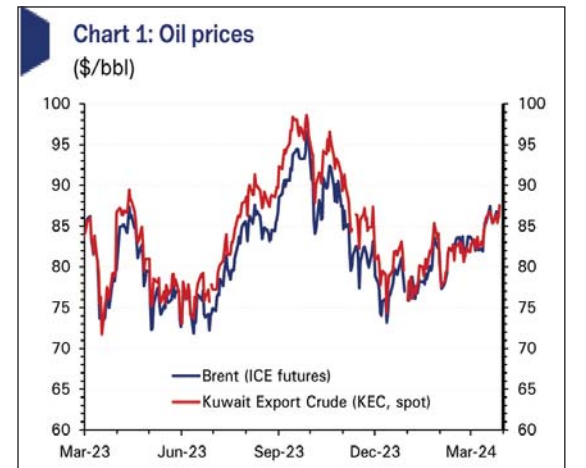
Oil prices rallied for a third straight month in March, supported by tighter supplies, a resilient global economy and continued geopolitical uncertainty. Brent futures closed up 4.6% in March to \$87.5/bbl (+13.6% ytd). (Chart 1.) Backwardation in the forward curve (where near-term prices exceed those for later deliveries) began widening again mid-month, a sign that markets perceived increased near-term supply tightness. Meanwhile, local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) gained 5.5% in March to \$86.3/bbl (+8.5% ytd).

Trading in Brent futures and options increased substantially in Q1, with 'open interest' rising to 2.3 million contracts as of 19 March, its highest level in two and a half years. (Chart 2.) Sparked by OPEC's extension and deepening of 2023's production cuts, bullish positions have increased markedly, propelling net length—the difference between the number of 'long' contracts (speculating on oil prices rising) and the number of 'short' contracts (prices falling)—to its highest in almost a year (289k).

Oil demand growth forecasts for 2024 remain solid, albeit slowing from 2023. The International Energy Agency (IEA) in March again revised up its projection for oil demand growth, by 110 kb/d to 1.3 mb/d. The IEA cited an improved US economic outlook including a resilient labor market as the basis for its revision. Its forecast is still some way below OPEC's bullish estimate of 2.25 mb/d, which the latter has maintained since mid-2023. OPEC has stood by its belief that oil demand will be robust on the back of growth momentum in non-OECD economies, while potential interest rate cuts by central banks later in the year should also support an improved global macroeconomic outlook.

On the supply side, combined data from OPEC secondary sources and S&P Global show aggregate OPEC+ crude production (quota members) largely unchanged in February at 34.42 mb/d (+10 kb/d m/m). Among OPEC-9 members, Nigeria recorded the largest monthly increase (+47 kb/d to 1.48 mb/d), followed by Saudi Arabia (+18 kb/d to 8.98 mb/d). OPEC-9 output gains were largely offset by declines among non-OPEC-9 countries, primarily South Sudan, which experienced an almost 50% reduction in output (-70 kb/d) due to a pipeline blockage. Compliance with the latest round of OPEC+ cuts was weakest in Kazakhstan, which has yet to effect any cuts at all, and Iraq, whose crude output of 4.20 mb/d remained more than 200 kb/d above its quota. Among quota-exempt members, both Libya and Venezuela notched up output gains in February, of 144 kb/d to 1.17 mb/d and 16 kb/d to 0.82 mb/d, respectively. For Libya, this large increase came after production at the Sharara field was restarted, and for Venezuela, February's gain was the fifth consecutive. Production in Iran, however, fell for the second month in a row (-15 kb/d to 3.15 mb/d).

In terms of the impact of OPEC's production cuts on oil market balances, the effect has been to flip the market from a surplus in Q4 2023 to a deficit in Q1 2024. Aggregate OPEC-12 output in Q1 has so far averaged 26.47 mb/d, well below the 26.92 mb/d the IEA estimates the group needs to supply to balance the market. Using the IEA's oil demand and non-OPEC supply estimates, a supply deficit of 0.45 mb/d opened up in Q1. For the rest of the year, the IEA has extrapolated the impact on market balances of a base case scenario in which OPEC+ cuts are extended beyond Q2 to end-2024. It sees deficits in every quarter of the year and by as much as 0.72 mb/d in Q3. OPEC+ will decide on any extension or unwinding of its 2.1 mb/d of cuts in June.



Source: Refinitiv, KPC



Source: Bloomberg, \*Futures contracts only

In Kuwait, a record volume of refined petroleum products was produced in January. According to official data released through the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI), this reached 1.20 mb/d, helped by the ramping up of operations at the Al-Zour refinery. Product exports, the largest of which by volume consist of gasoil/diesel, kerosene and naphtha, surged to their highest level, 1.02 mb/d, since 2009. At this rate, average product export volumes in 2024 should surpass last year's high of 0.96 mb/d and translate into export revenues in excess of the record \$25 billion generated in 2023. That said, these refined product gains have come at the expense of crude exports, which according to January's figure of 1.24 mb/d, look to have fallen to their lowest level in more than twenty years. With Kuwait's crude production capped by OPEC+ policy, to tap into the higher value product exports, such as distillates, KPC has had to divert crude volumes destined for exports to the local refinery for processing into products. The trade-off has been worth it in terms of export revenues.

In the US, crude oil output fell slightly to 13.1 mb/d in March from the record 13.3 mb/d seen in Jan/Feb—but in line with the US Energy Information Administration's (EIA) average output projection for 2024. Crude stocks in the US Strategic Petroleum Reserves continued to increase in March: by the 21st of the month, they were up more than 8.6 mb in 2024 to 363.05 mb, reflecting the Department of Energy's aggressive crude repurchase program, which has been helped by its decision to raise its target price to +\$79/bbl from \$65-72/bbl last year.

The outlook for oil prices has improved compared to the start of the year. While the global economy has demonstrated resilience, carrying with it better-than-expected oil consumption, it is largely due to OPEC+ supply cuts that the market has tightened—and looks likely to remain tight throughout 2024. Speculator interest has turned more bullish, with the balance of price risks shifting to the upside while OPEC+ restrains output. Downside risks, from robust non-OPEC/US supply and a de-escalation in global geopolitical tensions to a potentially underperforming global economy or an aggressive unwinding of the OPEC+ cuts in July, remain present, however. We see Brent averaging around \$85/bbl in 2024.

## S&P GCC composite index declines by 2.6% in March

# Geopolitical uncertainty impacts GCC markets' performance, reports Markaz

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of March 2024. Kuwait equity markets ended negative during the month as major blue-chip stocks witnessed selling pressure owing to potential profit-taking by investors. Geopolitical uncertainty influenced market sentiment during this period, thus reducing the volume of purchases. Key economic data releases such as sticky inflation and fiscal deficit in 9M FY 2023/24 added to the negative sentiment. Kuwait's inflation (CPI) rose by 3.4% y/y in February compared to 3.3% in the previous month, reversing a three-month trend of slowing inflation. The inflation was primarily driven by the food and beverages prices, which rose 5.0% y/y during the month. Kuwait All Share index fell 1.5% in March, affected by the performance of the banking sector. The Banking index declined 2.1% during the month with Boubyan Bank and NBK losing the most, at 3.9% and 3.1% respectively. KFH shares fell 1.7% during the month. Among Premier Market stocks, Mezzan Holding Company gained the most at 9.7% during the month following the positive momentum on the back of strong 2023 earnings. Mezzan Holding Company has recorded net profits of KD 11.5 million in FY 2023 compared to a net loss of KD 2 million in FY 2022.

Fitch affirmed Kuwait's ratings at 'AA-' with a stable outlook reflecting Kuwait's strong ability to meet financial obligations. Kuwait recorded a fiscal deficit of KD 1.7 billion or 4.5% of pro-rated estimated GDP in the first nine months (April-December) of FY 2023/24, from a surplus of KD 10.1 billion in the same period of FY 2022/23. The drop in revenues linked to lower oil prices and OPEC+ production cuts, and surge in spending above historic trends caused the fiscal deficit. The value of projects awarded in February recorded KD43 million (-54% y/y), bringing the cumulative year-to-date total to KD81 million (-72% y/y), according to MEED Projects. However, projects activity is expected to remain strong in 2024, with MEED Projects projecting KD5 billion in awards (excluding Al-Zour).

GCC stock markets were mostly negative during the month despite a rise in oil prices. The S&P GCC composite index registered a decline of 2.6% for the month. The extension of OPEC+ oil supply cuts till the end of Q2 2024 and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East mainly contributed to the decline in GCC equity market indices.

Saudi equity index fell by 1.8% during the month. However, S&P's affirmation of its "A" sovereign rating with a stable outlook, indicating that the economic and social reforms will continue to improve the country's economic



resilience supported investor confidence and curtailed equity market losses. Saudi Aramco fell 2.7% during the month after recording a net income of USD 121.3 billion in 2023, lower than USD 161.1 billion in 2022. Al Rajhi Bank and SNB fell 7.5% and 5.1% during the month. The Dubai equity index witnessed a dip of 1.5% during the month despite a rally in real estate stocks. Emaar Development and Emaar Properties surged 5.4% and 0.6% respectively boosted by the removal of UAE from the FATF grey list. The return to conventional status is expected to strengthen investor confidence in the UAE as a trade and financial center, leading to an increase in capital, FDI, transfer of technology and portfolio flows. The Abu Dhabi equity index registered a marginal fall of 0.3% during the month. FAB's shares fell 3.1% during the month. ADNOC drilling rose 7.3% during the month as its parent company announced that it had generated USD 500 million in value through implementation of AI to remotely monitor operations, reduce downtime, map oil and gas fields and support drilling. Qatar equity index fell 6.0% driven by the sharp drop in natural gas prices and a decline in the banking sector index.

Moody's has maintained a positive outlook for Saudi's banking sector owing to stable operating environment driven by the strong non-oil activity and economic diversification programs. According to UAE's Finance Ministry, the economy is anticipated to grow by 5% in 2024, up from the 3.4% achieved last year.

Global and U.S. markets ended positive despite sticky U.S. inflation as the U.S. Federal Reserve stayed on track for three interest rate cuts this year and affirmed that solid economic growth will continue. U.S. CPI rose 3.2% y/y compared to 3.1% y/y in the previous month, slightly ahead of the 3.1% fore-

cast from the Dow Jones consensus. MSCI World index and S&P 500 indices rose 3.0% and 3.1% respectively in March. Technology stocks rallied during the month, as evidenced by the Nasdaq index rising by 1.2% for the month. Reports that Apple might partner with Google parent Alphabet in offering generative artificial intelligence tools were behind the gains in technology stocks. MSCI EM index rose 2.2% during the month. China edged up mildly by 0.9% during the month as the government's recent market stabilization measures lifted investor confidence despite an uncertain economic outlook.

Fitch Ratings has raised its 2024 global GDP forecast by 0.3% to 2.4% driven by the U.S. growth forecast to 2.1% from 1.2% in the December 2023 report. The revision to the U.S. outweighs a marginal cut to China 2024 growth forecast to 4.5% from 4.6%.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note remained volatile during the month and closed at 4.20%. Yields rose earlier during the month and peaked at 4.34% as investors assessed the sticky inflation data and anticipated fewer rate cuts by the U.S. Fed. However, yields fell after the U.S. Fed policy makers projected three rate cuts for the year.

Oil price settled at USD 87.48 per barrel, recording a monthly gain of 4.6%. OPEC+ has planned to extend the voluntary cuts pledged last November until the end of Q2 2024. Iraq pledged to reduce crude exports to 3.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in coming months to compensate for exceeding its OPEC+ quota since January, a decision to cut shipments by 130,000 bpd from last month. Attacks on Russian energy facilities and Ukrainian energy infrastructure and ships traversing through the Red Sea have stoked supply concerns, rising oil prices. Gold prices recorded a sharp increase of 9.3% closing at USD 2,232.4/oz, supported by escalation in geopolitical conflicts and interest rate cut expectations in 2024. Natural gas prices shed 5.2% from USD 1.86/mmbtu to USD 1.76/mmbtu during the month owing to robust production and a seasonally warm winter, resulting in weak demand. Bitcoin prices surged 16.6% to US\$71,285 during the month owing to the expected rate cuts by the U.S. Fed, the increasing popularity of Bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and anticipation of the reward for Bitcoin mining halving in April.

Market participants are expected to track U.S. key economic data releases and assess its impact on the magnitude and the timing of the projected interest rate cuts in the following month. Additionally, escalation in geopolitical tensions is anticipated to keep oil prices up and impact the GCC equity markets performance.



**Trump sues two Trump Media co-founders**

Donald Trump is suing two co-founders of Trump Media & Technology Group, the newly public parent company of his Truth Social platform, arguing that they should forfeit their stock in the company because they set it up improperly.

The former U.S. president's lawsuit, which was filed on March 24 in Florida state court, follows a complaint filed in February by those co-founders, Andy Litinsky

and Wes Moss. Their lawsuit sought to prevent Trump from taking steps the two said would sharply reduce their combined 8.6% stake in Trump Media. The pair filed their lawsuit in the Delaware Court of Chancery.

Trump's lawsuit claims that Litinsky and Moss, who were both contestants on Trump's reality-TV show "The Apprentice," mishandled an attempt to take Trump Media public several

years ago, allegedly putting the whole project "on ice" for more than a year and a half.

But it also targets the pair over their Delaware suit against Trump, saying that it was one of several attempts they made to block Trump Media's ultimately successful plan to go public. Trump Media accomplished that goal by merging with a publicly traded shell company called Digital World Acquisition in March. (AP)

**IRS claws back money given to businesses**

The IRS says it's making progress with initiatives to claw back money improperly distributed under the Employee Retention Credit.

The ERC was designed to help businesses retain employees during pandemic-era shutdowns, but it quickly became a magnet for fraud. Its complex eligibility rules allowed scammers to target small businesses, offering help applying for the ERC for a fee - even if they didn't qualify.

The IRS said it received \$225 million from a voluntary disclosure program, which ended on March 22, that let small businesses that thought they received the credit in error give back the money and keep 20%. That money came from over 500 taxpayers with another 800 submissions still being processed.

An ongoing program that lets small businesses withdraw un-

processed claims has led to 1,800 businesses withdrawing \$251 million worth of claims. And finally, the IRS has assessed \$572 million in audits of more than 12,000 businesses that filed over 22,000 improper claims.

"We remain deeply concerned about widespread abuse involving these claims that have harmed small businesses," said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. (AP)

**The Conversation**

**US green manufacturing boom, from 'EV batteries' to solar panel production, isn't powered by renewable energy - yet**

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

By James Morton Turner  
Wellesley College

Panasonic's new US\$4 billion battery factory in De Soto, Kansas, is designed to be a model of sustainability - it's an all-electric factory with no need for a smokestack. When finished, it will cover the size of 48 football fields, employ 4,000 people and produce enough advanced batteries to supply half a million electric cars per year.

But there's a catch, and it's a big one. While the factory will run on wind and solar power much of the time, renewables supplied only 34% of the local utility Evergy's electricity in 2023.

In much of the U.S., fossil fuels still play a key role in meeting power demand. In fact, Evergy has asked permission to extend the life of an old coal-fired power plant to meet growing demand, including from the battery factory.

With my students at Wellesley College, I've been tracking the boom in investments in clean energy manufacturing and how those projects - including battery, solar panel and wind turbine manufacturing and their supply chains - map onto the nation's electricity grid.

The Kansas battery plant highlights the challenges ahead as the U.S. scales up production of clean energy technologies and weans itself off fossil fuels. It also illustrates the potential for this industry to accelerate the transition to renewable energy nationwide.

Let's start with some good news. In the battery sector alone, companies have announced plans to build 44 major factories with the potential to produce enough battery cells to supply more

than 10 million electric vehicles per year in 2030.

That is the scale of commitment needed if the U.S. is going to tackle climate change and meet its new auto emissions standards announced in March 2024.

The challenge: These battery factories, and the electric vehicles they equip, are going to require a lot of electricity.

Producing enough battery cells to store 1 kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity - enough for 2 to 4 miles of range in an EV - requires about 30 kWh of manufacturing energy, according to a recent study.

Combining that estimate and our tracking, we project that in 2030, battery manufacturing in the U.S. would require about 30 billion kWh of electricity per year, assuming the factories run on electricity, like the one in Kansas. That equates to about 2% of all U.S. industrial electricity used in 2022.

A large number of these plants are planned in a region of the U.S. South dubbed the "battery belt." Solar energy potential is high in much of the region, but the power grid makes little use of it.

Our tracking found that three-fourths of the battery manufacturing capacity is located in states with lower-than-average renewable electricity generation today. And in almost all of those places, more demand will drive higher marginal emissions, because that extra power almost always comes from fossil fuels.

However, we have also been tracking which battery companies are committing to powering their manufacturing operations with renewable electricity, and the data points to a cleaner future.

By our count, half of the batteries will be manufactured at factories that have committed to sourcing at least 50% of their electricity demand from renewables by 2030. Even better, these commitments are concentrated in regions of the U.S. where investments have lagged.

Some companies are already taking action. Tesla is building the world's largest solar array on the roof of its Texas factory. LG has committed to sourcing 100% renewable solar and hydroelectricity for its new cathode factory in Ten-

nessee. And Panasonic is taking steps to reach net-zero emissions for all of its factories, including the new one in Kansas, by 2030.

More corporate commitments can help strengthen demand for the deployment of wind and solar across the emerging battery belt.

Manufacturing all of these batteries and charging all of these electric vehicles is going to put a lot more demand on the power grid. But that isn't an argument against EVs. Anything that plugs into the grid, whether it is an EV or the factory that manufactures its batteries, gets cleaner as more renewable energy sources come online.

This transition is already happening. Although natural gas dominates electricity generation, in 2023 renewables supplied more electricity than coal for the first time in U.S. history. The government forecasts that in 2024, 96% of new electricity generating capacity added to the grid would be fossil fuel-free, including batteries. These trends are accelerating, thanks to the incentives for clean energy deployment included in the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

The big lesson here is that the challenge in Kansas is not the battery factory - it is the increasingly antiquated electricity grid.

As investments in a clean energy future accelerate, America will need to reengineer much of its power grid to run on more and more renewables and, simultaneously, electrify everything from cars to factories to homes.

That means investing in modernizing, expanding and decarbonizing the electric grid as important as building new factories or shifting to electric cars.

Investments in clean energy manufacturing will play a key role in enabling that transition: Some of the new advanced batteries will be used on the grid, providing backup energy storage for times when renewable energy generation slows or electricity demand is especially high.

In January, Hawaii replaced its last coal-fired power plant with an advanced battery system. It won't be long before that starts to happen in Tennessee, Texas and Kansas, too. (AP)

**Int'l travel up**

**US use of tech at its 'airports'**

WASHINGTON, April 3, (AP): The Belgian family of four was on their fourth trip to the United States. They had been dreading the long line at passport control when they entered the country but had heard about a new app they could use to ease their way and decided to give it a shot. Within minutes, they had bypassed the long line at Washington Dulles International Airport and were waiting for their luggage.

"It was always a long row," said Piet De Staercke of the line to go through passport screening. He, his wife and two sons were visiting Washington and Chicago. "We were a bit scared. But now with the app, it's amazing."

As travel continues to boom following pandemic-related slumps, U.S. Customs and Border Protection is expanding the use of technology like the Mobile Passport Control app the De Staercke family used in an effort to process the ever-growing number of passengers traveling internationally. And with events like a rare solar eclipse, the Olympics in Paris, and summer holidays still driving international travel, those numbers don't look set to drop any time soon.

Customs and Border Protection officials gave The Associated Press a behind-the-scenes look at some of the technologies they've been using and what to expect in the months and years ahead.

During fiscal year 2023, the agency processed over 394 million travelers at the ports of entry. That's a 24% increase over the previous year. When looking at the country's top 20 airports by passenger volume, officers processed 31% more travelers while average wait times increased 11%. And at some of the busiest airports, the wait times have had negligible increases or even decreased. At JFK Airport in New York, for example, wait times went down - by 0.4 of a second on average - while CBP officers processed 33% more travelers.

Increasingly, people are traveling internationally with their families rather than going abroad alone for business.

Officials are moving more toward app-based technologies to speed passengers' movement through the airport. The Mobile Passport Control app used by the Belgian family is one example. It's available to U.S. citizens, but also to lawful permanent residents, certain Canadians and travelers from countries who are part of the Visa Waiver Program who've already been to the U.S. at least once.

**US job openings rise modestly to 8.8m in Feb in a strong labor mkt**

JOLTS shows that layoffs ticked up to 1.7m

WASHINGTON, April 3, (AP): U.S. job openings barely changed in February, staying at historically high levels in a sign that the American job market remains strong.

The Labor Department reported Tuesday that employers posted 8.76 million job vacancies in February, up modestly from 8.75 million in January and about what economists had forecast.

But the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS, showed that layoffs ticked up to 1.7 million in February from 1.6 million in January, highest since March 2023. The number of Americans quitting their jobs - a sign of confidence they can find better pay or working conditions elsewhere - rose modestly to 3.5 million.

Monthly job openings are down from a peak of 12.2 million in March 2022 but are still at a high level. Before 2021, they'd never topped 8 million.

The high level of vacancies is a sign of the job market's strength and endurance. When the Federal Reserve began raising its benchmark interest rates two years ago to combat inflation, most economists expected the higher borrowing costs to send the United States into recession.

Instead, the economy has continued to grow and employers have been seeking new workers and holding on to the ones they already have. Although the unemployment rate rose to 3.9% in February, it's come in below 4% for 25 straight months, longest such streak since the 1960s.

At the same time, the higher rates have brought inflation down. In February, consumer prices were up

**EV growth slows further**

**US first-quarter auto sales grew nearly five percent despite high interest rates**

DETROIT, April 3, (AP): New vehicle sales in the U.S. rose nearly 5% from January through March, as buyers stayed in the market despite high interest rates. But electric vehicle sales growth slowed during the first three months of the year, with mainstream buyers wary of limited range and a lack of charging stations.

Automakers, most of which reported U.S. sales numbers Tuesday, sold nearly 3.8 million vehicles in the first quarter versus a year ago, for an annual rate of 15.4 million in sales.

With inventory on dealer lots growing toward pre-pandemic levels, auto companies were forced to reduce prices. J.D. Power said the average sales price in March was \$44,186, down 3.6% from a year ago and the largest recorded decline for the month of March.

The company said automaker discounts in March were two-thirds higher than a year ago, around \$2,800. That includes increased availability of lease deals. J.D. Power expected lease-

sales to account for almost a quarter of retail sales last month, up from 19.6% in March of last year.

Sales of electric vehicles grew only 2.7% to just over 268,000 during the quarter, far below the 47% growth that fueled record sales and a 7.6% market share last year. The slowdown, led by Tesla, confirms automakers' fears that they moved too quickly to pursue EV buyers. The EV share of total U.S. sales fell to 7.1% in the first quarter.

Nearly all of the early adopters and people concerned about internal-combustion engines' impact on the planet have bought electric vehicles, and now automakers are facing more skeptical mainstream buyers, Edmunds Director of Insights Ivan Drury said.

"That's where all of those headwinds come in that we've seen in survey data," Drury said. "Those real-world concerns about charging infrastructure, battery life, insurance costs."

Cox Automotive Chief Economist Jonathan Smoke cautioned it appears the industry has already hit its spring

sales peak as buyers expect the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates later in the year.

"Interest rates are still near 24-year highs, and consumers just don't have the urgency to buy, with the expectation that rates will be lower later this year," he wrote in a market report. Automobile interest rates still are averaging around 7% per year.

Drury said vehicles that are more affordable are selling faster than more expensive ones. Sales of many large and expensive SUVs fell during the quarter as companies faced more frugal buyers.

"Small sells, whether it be size or the sales price," Drury said.

For example, General Motors' Chevrolet brand sold 37,588 Trax small SUVs in the quarter, more than a fivefold increase from a year ago. By itself, the Trax, which starts around \$21,500, outsold the entire Cadillac brand.

Most automakers reported strong year-over-year sales increases from

January through March, but General Motors, Stellantis, Kia and Tesla all reported declines.

GM, the top-selling automaker in the U.S., reported that sales were down 1.5% for the quarter, while Stellantis sales were off nearly 10%. Kia sales were down 2.5%. All three companies reported strong first-quarter sales a year ago.

Toyota reported a large sales increase, 20%, for the quarter, and said combined sales of its hybrids and lone electric vehicle rose 36%. Honda said its sales increased 17%, while Nissan and Subaru both posted 7% increases. Hyundai reported an increase of just 0.2%.

Tesla global sales were off nearly 9%, which the company blamed on factory changes to build an updated Model 3, shipping delays in the Red Sea and an attack that knocked out power to its factory in Germany. Motorintelligence.com estimated that Tesla's U.S. sales were down more than 13% in the first quarter.

**Scathing federal report rips Microsoft for shoddy security, insincerity**

BOSTON, April 3, (AP): In a scathing indictment of Microsoft corporate security and transparency, a Biden administration-appointed review board issued a report Tuesday saying "a cascade of errors" by the tech giant let state-backed Chinese cyber operators break into email accounts of senior U.S. officials including Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

The Cyber Safety Review Board, created in 2021 by executive order, describes shoddy cybersecurity practices, a lax corporate culture and a lack of sincerity about the company's knowledge of the targeted breach, which affected multiple U.S. agencies that deal with China.

It concluded that "Microsoft's security culture was inadequate and

requires an overhaul" given the company's ubiquity and critical role in the global technology ecosystem. Microsoft products "underpin essential services that support national security, the foundations of our economy, and public health and safety."

The panel said the intrusion, discovered in June by the State Department and dating to May "was preventable and should never have occurred," blaming its success on "a cascade of avoidable errors." What's more, the board said, Microsoft still doesn't know how the hackers got in.

The panel made sweeping recommendations, including urging Microsoft to put on hold adding features to its cloud computing environment until "substantial security improvements

have been made."

It said Microsoft's CEO and board should institute "rapid cultural change" including publicly sharing "a plan with specific timelines to make fundamental, security-focused reforms across the company and its full suite of products."

In a statement, Microsoft said it appreciated the board's investigation and would "continue to harden all our systems against attack and implement even more robust sensors and logs to help us detect and repel the cyber-armies of our adversaries."

In all, the state-backed Chinese hackers broke into the Microsoft Exchange Online email of 22 organizations and more than 500 individuals around the world including the U.S. ambassador

to China, Nicholas Burns - accessing some cloud-based email boxes for at least six weeks and downloading some 60,000 emails from the State Department alone, the 34-page report said. Three think tanks and four foreign government entities, including Britain's National Cyber Security Center, were among those compromised, it said.

The board, convened by Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas in August, accused Microsoft of making inaccurate public statements about the incident - including issuing a statement saying it believed it had determined the likely root cause of the intrusion "when, in fact, it still has not." Microsoft did not update that misleading blog post, published in September, until mid-March after the board repeat-

edly asked if it planned to issue a correction, it said.

Separately, the board expressed concern about a separate hack disclosed by the Redmond, Washington, company in January - this one of email accounts including those of an undisclosed number of senior Microsoft executives and an undisclosed number of Microsoft customers and attributed to state-backed Russian hackers.

The board lamented "a corporate culture that deprioritized both enterprise security investments and rigorous risk management."

The Chinese hack was initially disclosed in July by Microsoft in a blog post and carried out by a group the company calls Storm-0558. That same group, the panel noted, has been

engaged in similar intrusions - compromising cloud providers or stealing authentication keys so it can break into accounts - since at least 2009, targeting companies including Google, Yahoo, Adobe, Dow Chemical and Morgan Stanley.

Microsoft noted in its statement that the hackers involved are "well-resourced nation state threat actors who operate continuously and without meaningful deterrence."

The company said it recognizes that recent events "have demonstrated a need to adopt a new culture of engineering security in our own networks," adding it has "mobilized our engineering teams to identify and mitigate legacy infrastructure, improve processes, and enforce security benchmarks."



## KFH hosted events at Avenues, Winter Wonderland and Sadu Street

## KFH shares the joy of Gergean with children

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: In line with its commitment to social responsibility, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized several Gergean activities for children in various locations. This initiative is part of its wider Ramadan program, "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan".

Gergean festivities took place in various locations, including Sadu Street, The Avenues, Winter Wonderland, and several schools. These events aimed to bring joy and happiness to as many children as possible, all while emphasizing the importance of preserving Kuwaiti heritage and traditional customs.

At the Avenues, the KFH pavilion welcomed children and handed out Gergean throughout the day. This helped bring joy and happiness to the children and their families. The event reflects the bank's commitment to interacting with all segments of society and participating in various community events.

KFH also held another event at KFH Zone in Winter Wonderland for children and families attending the entertainment city during Gergean Days. In addition, the strategic partner, Sadu House, participated in the event by offering children's training courses and workshops.

For those who couldn't attend the KFH Gergean activities, the KFH team brought the celebration to them. The team visited primary schools in various regions, partnering with educational and administrative bodies. Together, they shared the joy of Gergean with the students and distributed Gergean treats.

In line with its continuing commitment to social responsibility and community service, KFH launched the "Increase



Baytak Team for distributing Gergean treats to children.



Distribution of Gergean in Winter Wonderland.



The joy of children with Gergean treats.

Good Deeds in Ramadan" 2024 program. This program is packed with community initiatives, diverse volunteer campaigns, and regular communication with the public. Also, it champions a diverse range of community initiatives that inte-

grate all segments of society, solidifying KFH's leadership in volunteer work, CSR, and sustainable development.

KFH kicked off its "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan" program by distributing Iftar meals. The KFH Volunteer

Team delivered the meals to various locations across several Kuwaiti governorates, expanding the program's reach. KFH volunteer team also distributed Iftar snacks to drivers during Maghrib prayers. This initiative, conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, aimed to ensure drivers reached home safely by encouraging them to avoid speeding. KFH also partnered with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to provide Ramadan baskets to families in need. This collaboration not only strengthened the volunteer spirit but also helped instill the concept of giving within the community."

Beyond food distribution, the program embraces a variety of community initiatives. These include sports and youth activities, Quran competitions, daily interaction with the public, Gergean events, and awareness videos. The videos are produced in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force, nutritionists, and doctors. The program also offers hospitality services for prayers in mosques and shares iftar meals with various entities working during iftar time.

KFH Ramadan program offers a variety of sports and health activities during Ramadan. These include the V-Fit Virtual Walking Challenge, held in collaboration with the V-Thru App. This challenge encourages participants to walk in Al Shaheed Park and the Avenues Mall before iftar.

For KFH staff, the program included the Employees Indoor Football Championship and the first-ever US penalty shootout tournament.

In collaboration with Kuwaiti Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi, KFH offered a cooking workshop for female customers and employees.

Organized in collaboration with the Imam of Grand Mosque Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi

## stc hosts Holy Quran memorization contest during Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, hosted a Holy Quran memorization contest during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The contest aimed to encourage children to memorize the Holy Quran and organized in collaboration with the Imam of Grand Mosque Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi. The initiatives come as part of stc's month long campaign during Ramadan called "With good, we go further", which was launched under the Company's extensive corporate social responsibility.

The Holy Quran memorizing contest was held at the Al-Rashid Mosque in Adaliya and will welcome more than 80 contestants between the ages of 7-9 years old in the first category and 10-13 years old in the second category. As the hosts of the competition, stc encouraged its employees to enroll their children in the contest in commemoration of the Holy Month of Ramadan, which represents a spiritual time of the year.

A total of 4 winners were announced at the end of the contest where they received valuable prizes from stc and recognized for their outstanding capabilities in memorizing versus from the Holy Quran. stc staff participating children were also honored by the CEO Eng. Muataz

Abdullah Aldharrab in a ceremony that took place at stc Head Office to recognize their efforts.

stc highlighted in a statement that the contest reflects the Company's deep-rooted belief in the importance of cultural and spiritual education as fundamental components of community development. By hosting initiatives that encourage the memorization of the Holy Quran, stc aims to contribute to the nurturing of a generation that is deeply connected to its cultural and religious heritage. The contest, held during the Holy Month of Ramadan, serves as an ideal platform for young individuals to engage in a meaningful and enriching experience that promotes discipline and concentration.

Through initiatives like the Holy Quran memorization contest, part of the "With good, we go further" Ramadan campaign, stc is committed to leveraging its resources and platforms to support the digital and spiritual growth of the community.

By encouraging the participation of employees' children in the contest, stc also aims to emphasize the importance of family and community engagement in achieving personal and collective goals. This approach aligns with stc's extensive CSR framework, which seeks to create a positive impact on society through a range of activities and programs designed to enrich the lives of individuals and communities alike.

## Ideal companion in travel and holiday seasons

## NBK Mobile Banking App ... Your mobile branch during travel

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The App allows managing accounts and cards, making local and international transfers, and quick payments

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to provide a rich digital experience to its customers through the NBK Mobile Banking App, enabling them to manage their accounts and make their banking transactions easily and securely 24/7, anytime, anywhere, without the hassle of visiting branches.

With the wide range of services, useful features, and regular enhancements, NBK Mobile Banking App is considered the ideal companion for customers during the travel and holiday seasons.

**Managing accounts and cards**  
The NBK Mobile Banking App allows customers to view their accounts and manage their debit, credit, and prepaid cards while traveling. They can also inform the bank by selecting the cards they would like to use while being abroad.

Users can report/lost stolen cards with a click of a button via the App. Once the card has been reported, a replacement card will be issued automatically. In addition, they can easily block or unblock their credit cards using the App with just a few simple

steps.

**Local and international transfers**

Transfers, whether local or international, are made easier with the NBK Mobile Banking App, as customers do not need an OTP.

Instead, they can authenticate with their password or biometrics (Face ID). Once the transfer is done, users will get a transfer receipt, and can also refer to account statement and go to the transfer transaction.

Customers can also use the App to increase their monthly transfer limit up to KD 30,000 without the hassle of calling the call center or going to the branch.

**Quick and easy payments**

The NBK Mobile Banking App enables users to make easy payments to credit cards, Ministry of Communications, and e-Payments that includes local and international telecoms, TV channels, in addition to buying online shopping cards, digital games, and

much more. FlexiPay is also available on the App providing eligible NBK Credit Cardholders with the flexibility to make payments for their in-store or online purchases, whether made locally or internationally.

The App also offers customers the enhanced service of Quick Pay to send links and receive money, anytime, even during the weekends and official holidays, and choose the preferred method of sharing the link. Additionally, they can view exchange rates and use the currency calculator for currency conversion.

**Push Notifications**

The NBK Mobile Banking App allows customers to use the Push Notifications instead of SMS to receive the alerts in the app conveniently instead of changing the SIM Card to receive the SMS on the Kuwait line. This gives you faster updates on your account activities.

Commenting on this, Mohammed Al Dakheel, Head of Mobile Banking, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "NBK provides regular updates and enhancements to its Mobile Banking App to provide customers with new and innovative banking methods, as part of its endeavors to deliver a top-notch banking

experience by enabling them to make their different banking transactions anytime, anywhere."

"During the official holidays and travel seasons, we seek to facilitate our customers' transactions while being abroad so that they can conduct them digitally in a very easy and secure way. NBK is committed to introduce more innovative digital services tailored to customers' needs via the NBK Mobile Banking App, which helps enhance their banking experience and give them more luxury," he added.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to offer customers a secure platform to conveniently manage their finances at any given moment. This service facilitates a wide range of banking activities, including opening new accounts, monitoring transactions on accounts and credit cards, accessing accumulated NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Program points, settling credit card dues, making payments for electronic bills, updating personal information, and much more services.

Customers can easily download the NBK Mobile Banking App, which is currently available on various platforms including the App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery.



CEO Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab and Sheikh Omar Al Damkhi honor the children of the company's employees participating in the competition.



A group photo of Sheikh Omar Al-Damkhi, middle school competition participants and the stc work team.

## Al Muzaini Exchange Co expands presence with the latest branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, the premier money exchange company in Kuwait, proudly announces the grand opening of its latest branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh. This strategic expansion marks a significant milestone for the company, bringing the total number of Al Muzaini branches across Kuwait to over 137.

The inauguration ceremony, held on April 2nd, was attended by Mr. Hugh Fernandes, the General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, alongside department managers and senior personnel. Mr. Fernandes expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are delighted to strengthen our leading position in the market and reaffirm our commitment to delivering unparalleled financial services to our valued customers. Our mission is to always be within reach of our customers and enhance their convenience."

With a relentless focus on customer satisfaction, Al Muzaini Exchange Company offers a comprehensive range of financial services, including money transfers, foreign currency exchange, and bill payments. The new branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh underscores the company's dedication to providing convenient, comfortable, and secure services at competitive prices, seven days a week.

In addition to its extensive network of branches, Al Muzaini offers a user-friendly mobile application that empowers customers with simple and secure financial solutions. Furthermore, customers can avail themselves of self-service kiosks strategically located for seamless transactions.

For over 80 years, Al Muzaini Exchange Company has remained committed to its mission of being "always near you," ensuring that customers receive exceptional financial services whenever and wherever they need them.



Photo during the Al Muzaini Exchange Company grand opening of its new branch in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh.

## Free cash vouchers on diamond jewellery purchases and more offers in store

## Malabar Gold &amp; Diamonds unveils exciting offers ahead of Eid Holidays

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with an expansive presence of over 350 showrooms across 13 countries, have just unveiled their Celebration offers to usher in the upcoming holidays. With a special array of Diamond & Precious gem jewellery that is designed to be the perfect complement to one's celebratory outfits, the renowned jewellery has also announced some exciting offers to brighten up the celebrations of their customers.

As part of the offers, customers purchasing Diamond & Precious Gem jewellery from Malabar Gold & Diamonds will be eligible for free cash vouchers. For purchase of Diamonds & Precious gem jewellery worth KWD420, customers will get a Free cash voucher worth KWD 25 and for Diamonds & Precious Gem jewellery

purchase worth KWD250, they will get a free cash voucher worth KWD 12.5. In addition to this spectacular offer, customers can also exchange their old 916 gold jewellery purchased anywhere for the latest designs without any loss. The offers will be available across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets until 13th April.

"The special place that jewellery holds in people's minds is something that we at Malabar Gold & Diamonds recognize, and that is why we introduce some exciting offers preceding every celebration and special occasion to add more value to our customers' purchases. Mirroring the festive joys & traditions of the season, the special offer, and the exclusive jewellery collection will be a beautiful complement to our customers' celebrations. With our time-tested commitment to providing an exceptional jewellery shopping experience to our customers, Mala-

bar Gold & Diamonds is once again reinforcing its position as the most preferred destination for jewellery connoisseurs", commented Mr Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

With special consideration given to the various tastes & preferences of its multi-ethnic customer base, the exclusive collection of diamonds & precious gem jewellery that the brand has unveiled comprises some unique designs across Malabar Gold & Diamonds exclusive brands such as Mine, Era, Precia, Viraa etc. Considering the increasing gold rates, customers shopping at Malabar Gold & Diamonds also have the option to avail gold rate protection by paying just 10% of the total purchase value as an advance. The advance facility guarantees customers the best rate, regardless of how the gold rate fluctuates.



# Lambert, Eilish, Minaj push for AI respect of artists' rights

Technology

LOS ANGELES, April 3, (AP): Stevie Wonder, Miranda Lambert, Billie Eilish, Nicki Minaj, Peter Dinklage, Katy Perry, Smokey Robinson and J Balvin are just some of the over 200 names featured on a new open letter submitted by the Artist Rights Alliance non-profit, calling on artificial intelligence tech companies, developers, platforms, digital music services and platforms to stop using AI "to infringe upon and devalue the rights of human artists," according to the letter.

The Artist Rights Alliance is an artist-led non-profit organization that advocates for musicians in a precarious digital economy.

The letter, while acknowledging the creative possibilities of new AI technology, addresses some of its threats to human artistry. Those include using preexisting work to train AI models - without permissions - in an attempt to replace artists and therefore "substantially dilute the royalty pools that are paid out to artists."

"This assault on human creativity must be stopped," the letter reads. "We must protect against the predatory use of AI to steal professional artists' voices and likenesses, violate creators' rights, and destroy the music ecosystem."

The full letter is available here.

Last month, Tennessee became the first state to pass legislation designed to protect songwriters, performers and other music industry professionals against the potential dangers of artificial intelligence.

Supporters say the goal is to ensure that generative AI tools cannot replicate an artist's voice without their consent.

The bill - dubbed the Ensuring Likeness, Voice, and Image Security Act or "ELVIS Act" - goes into effect July 1.

"We employ more people in Tennessee in the music industry than any other state," Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee told reporters shortly after signing the bill into law. "Artists have intellectual property. They have gifts. They have a uniqueness that is theirs and theirs alone, certainly not artificial intelligence."

The estate of **George Carlin** has agreed to a settlement with the media company it sued over a fake hourlong comedy special that purportedly used artificial intelligence to recreate the late standup comic's style and material.

In the settlement agreement filed with a federal court Monday, and a proposed order from both sides that awaits approval from a judge, the podcast outlet Dudesy agrees to permanently take down the special and to refrain from using Carlin's image voice or likeness in the future without the express written approval of the estate.

The settlement meets the central demands laid out by the Carlin estate in the lawsuit filed on Jan. 25.

"I am grateful that the defendants acted responsibly by swiftly re-

moving the video they made," Carlin's daughter **Kelly Carlin** said in a statement. "While it is a shame that this happened at all, I hope this case serves as a warning about the dangers posed by AI technologies and the need for appropriate safeguards not just for artists and creatives, but every human on earth."

George Carlin, among the most influential standup comedians of the 20th century, died in 2008.

In the audio special, titled "George Carlin: I'm Glad I'm Dead," a synthesis of the comic delivers commentary on current events. A companion Dudesy podcast episode with hosts Will Sasso and Chad Kultgen -- the company and the two men are the defendants in the lawsuit - was released with the men playing clips and commenting on them.

Messages seeking comment from Kultgen and Sasso were not immediately returned.

At the beginning of the special posted on YouTube on Jan. 9, a voiceover identifying itself as the AI engine used by Dudesy says it listened to the comic's 50 years of material and "did my best to imitate his voice, cadence and attitude as well as the subject matter I think would have interested him today."

The plaintiffs say if that was in fact how it was created - and some listeners have doubted its stated origins - it meant Carlin's copyright was violated.

## Variety



This image released by DKC/O&M shows Jon Jon Briones, (center), and his daughter Isa Briones, (left), and Jordan Fisher, (right), and the cast during a performance of 'Hadestown' in New York. (AP)

## Stage

Father-daughter pair's Broadway dream comes true

# Briones duo touches hearts in 'Hadestown'

NEW YORK, April 3, (AP): Jon Jon Briones had the best vantage point to watch his daughter, Isa, make her Broadway debut. He wasn't sitting in the front row or hovering backstage. He was beside her.

Father and daughter stepped into the musical "Hadestown" last month, he playing Hermes and she Eurydice. It was the first time they've shared a stage, and the tears came easily at curtain call.

"There's just this pinch-me moment. I can't believe I get to do this with a musical theater legend but also that legend is my father and also telling a beautiful, beautiful story," says Isa Briones.

Her dad, as expected, has also found it emotional.

"When we were rehearsing, I was crying watching Isa, and I would miss my cues because I was watching her," he says with a laugh. "I've also learned to look relaxed for the cast because if one of their leads is nervous, that's not good. But I lost it at curtain call. I lost it."

The elder Briones made his own Broadway debut as the Engineer in the 2017 revival of "Miss Saigon," a role he played in a 2014 West End production, earning an Olivier Award nomination. He was in the ensemble of the original 1989 London production.

Isa Briones, whose TV credits include "Star Trek: Picard" and "Goosebumps," appeared in the dual stage roles of Peggy Schuyler and Maria Reynolds in the musical "Hamilton" on tour.

"In the last few days, especially right before we went on, I took a step back and I was like, 'Oh, right, it's your Broadway debut. This is the thing you've dreamed about since you were a kid,'" Isa says. "The thing that I grew up watching my dad do, now I get to do it with him and that's really special."

The pair were tantalizingly close to working together when Jon Jon appeared in "Star Trek: Picard," but his daughter wasn't in that episode. They finally did it when dad had a recurring role in "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story" and Isa played his daughter for a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment.

Now they're front and center in hell together in "Hadestown," the 2019 Tony Award-winning musical about the underworld, which intertwines the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice and Hades and Persephone. Hermes serves as the narrator.

"I'm just so happy to be doing theater again," says Isa, 25. "I think we've both been away from theater

for a good amount of time, and it's been great doing other things - doing TV and film - but we've both talked about how theater is really the thing that replenishes our soul."

Their father-daughter bond has only deepened their connection to the "Hadestown" musical, in which Hermes tells the doomed love story of Eurydice. "It actually has raised the stakes for me," says Jon Jon. "The person that I love is involved in this."

All of the Briones family are actors, including mom, Megan Johnson Briones, and younger brother, Teo. Megan and Jon Jon actually met while performing in "Miss Saigon."

Jon Jon warned his wife to bring plenty of tissues when she came to see he and Isa make their Broadway bows. That turned out to be a good call.

"She was sobbing. Like convulsive sobbing," says Isa. "The show just leaves you in shambles already. But then you have your husband and your daughter, and that's just cruel."

### Proud

Teo Briones was also proud. "He saw me from across the street and ran up to me and tackled me with a hug and was crying into my shoulder. You don't always get that from your 19-year-old brother," Isa says.

The life of a young actor can be hard, but both Isa and Teo have chosen the path of their parents.

"I think my wife and I are relying on the way we raised them," says Jon Jon. "We guided them. We showed them what we do and how to handle ourselves in front of people with grace and humility and gratitude. They've seen how to value the work. Not the glamor of it all, but the work itself."

The Briones aren't the first parent-child pairing who have appeared in the same Broadway show together. Laurie Metcalf co-starred with her daughter Zoe Perry in "The Other Place" in 2013, and Debbie Reynolds starred in the 1973 revival of "Irene" with her daughter, Carrie Fisher.

Both Isa and Jon Jon dedicated their Broadway milestone to Megan, who has made a lot of sacrifices to her own career. "She keeps our family going," says Isa. Adds dad: "We owe her."

In one way, Isa says she's made her Broadway debut with her mother.

"I feel very lucky that multiple people have come

up to me and said, 'You have your mom's voice' and 'I think you sound exactly like your mom,' and I'm very grateful for that because she has a beautiful voice," Isa says. "To know that I have both of them in me is really, really affecting."

### Also:

**NEW YORK:** It's a new location but the same host for the Tony Awards:

**Ariana DeBose** will make it three in a row as MC of theater's most watched event, which this year moves uptown to Lincoln Center.

The Academy Award winner and Tony Award nominee, who hosted both the 2023 and 2022 ceremonies, will be back this year for the show on June 16, and will produce and choreograph the opening number.

"I couldn't pass up the chance to host the Tonys one more time, at Lincoln Center. I'm excited to collaborate with the team to create an incredible celebration of this season's achievements on Broadway for our community and for everyone at home," said DeBose in a statement.

DeBose was widely cheered for the way she hosted last year amid the Hollywood writers' strike, leading a show that had no script and opening the telecast by dancing and leaping her way through the lobby of the United Palace Theatre. She earned an Emmy nomination for her work.

DeBose is a theater veteran, with roles in "Summer: The Donna Summer Musical," "Hamilton," "A Bronx Tale," "Pippin," "Motown the Musical," "Bring It On: The Musical" and "Company." She won an Oscar for her role in Steven Spielberg's remake of "West Side Story" and was in "Schmigadoon!" on Apple TV+.

This year's location - the David H. Koch Theater - is the home of New York City Ballet and in the same sprawling building complex as Lincoln Square Theatre, which houses the Broadway venue Beaumont Theatre.

Like last year, the three-hour main telecast will air on CBS and stream on Paramount+ from 8 p.m.-11 p.m. EDT/5 p.m.-8 p.m. PDT with a pre-show on Pluto TV, with some Tony Awards handed out there.

The Tony eligibility cut-off date for the 2023-2024 season is April 25, and nominations for the 2024 Tony Awards will be announced April 30. The awards are presented by The Broadway League and the American Theatre Wing.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

**NEW YORK:** Taylor Swift and her Super Bowl-winning boyfriend **Travis Kelce**, along with **Sydney Sweeney**, **Ryan Gosling** and **Timothee Chalamet**, are among the nominees for this year's Webby Awards, recognizing the best internet content and creators.

The International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences announced the nominees on Tuesday, the result of 13,000 entries from over 70 countries. The Associated Press got an early look.

Swift's Instagram message encouraging her 283 million followers to register to vote was nominated in the best creator or influencer category. The website she directed her fans to - the nonpartisan Vote.org - recorded more than 35,000 registrations, according to the organization.

Kelce, got a nomination in the best sports podcast category for teaming up with his brother Jason for their "New Heights" show. Speaking of couples, **Michelle Obama** got a nod for her "The Light Podcast," while her husband, former President **Barack Obama**, was nominated for his work with LinkedIn.

The awards are selected by the Academy, while The Webby People's Voice Award is voted on by fans around the world. Voting for that award is open now until April 18. Winners for all awards will be announced May 13 at a ceremony hosted by "Late Night with **Seth Meyers**" writer and comedian **Amber Ruffin**.

Sweeney got a nod for collaborating with Ford Motor Company for a contest with the winner getting a 2024 custom Mustang GT designed by the actor. **Paris Hilton** was nominated for her 10-minute TikTok post about her family's hotel brand.

"Ted Lasso" star **Brett Goldstein** got a nod for his podcast "Films to Be Buried With," in which he brings on guests to discuss the movies that have most impacted their lives. He faces competition in the TV and film podcast category from podcasts about "The Crown," "The Last of Us," "Endeavor" and "And Just Like That..."

Chalamet was nominated in the media and entertainment branded content category for his ad for Apple TV+, a follow-up to last year's campaign with **Jon Hamm**. The ad shows the "Dune" star enjoying the programming on Apple's streaming service and wondering if he could do the projects. "Severance" is weird. I could do weird,"

Chalamet says.

Chalamet will face off against **Ryan Gosling**, who admitted his Barbie character, Ken, may have "stolen" one of BTS member **Jimin's** signature looks. Gosling gave Ken's prized guitar to **Jimin** to apologize. (AP)



Jiménez



Swift

**NEW YORK:** **Claire Jiménez's** "What Happened to Ruth Ramirez," a hard-hitting and comic novel set in **New York City** about a **Puerto Rican** family's search for a missing girl, has won the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. The award, announced Tuesday, includes a \$15,000 cash prize. "Claire Jiménez has crafted a

visceral work of art full of nuance, humor, and humanity, through incisive and loving character work, the finely calibrated unspooling of narrative, and the exquisite deployment of language, ranging from poetic prose to Spanglish to the sociolect of working-class Staten Island," according to a statement by the prize judges.

The four other finalists - **Jamel Brinkley** for "Witness," **Henry Hoke** for "Open Throat," **Alice McDermott** for "Absolution" and **Colin Winnette** for "Users" - will each receive \$5,000.

Previous winners of the PEN/Faulkner award include **Philip Roth**, **Ann Patchett** and **Deesha Philyaw**. (AP)



## People &amp; Places

## Obits

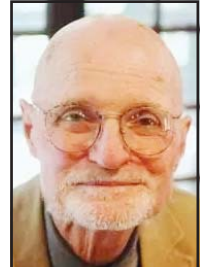
## Activist Sinclair dead

## Postmodern literary icon John Barth dies

ANNAPOLIS, Md., April 3, (AP): **John Barth**, the playfully erudite author whose darkly comic and complicated novels revolved around the art of literature and launched countless debates over the art of fiction, died Tuesday. He was 93.

Johns Hopkins University, where Barth was an emeritus professor of English and creative writing, confirmed his death in a statement.

Along with William Gass, Stanley Elkins and other peers, Barth was part of a wave of writers in the 1960s who challenged standards of language and plot. The author of 20 books including "Giles Goat-Boy" and "The Sot-Weed Factor," Barth was a college writing instructor who advocated for postmodernism to literature, saying old forms were used up and new approaches were needed.



Barth

Barth's passion for literary theory and his innovative but complicated novels made him a writer's writer. Barth said he felt like Scheherazade in "The Thousand and One Nights," desperately trying to survive by creating literature.

He created a best-seller in 1966 with "Giles Goat-Boy," which turned a college campus into a microcosm of a world threatened by the Cold War, and made a hero of a character who is part goat.

The following year, he wrote a postmodern manifesto, "The Literature of Exhaustion," which argued that the traditional novel suffered from a "used-upness of certain forms." The influential Atlantic Monthly essay described the postmodern writer as one who "confronts an intellectual dead end and employs it against itself to accomplish new human work."

He clarified in another essay 13 years later, "The Literature of Replenishment," that he didn't mean the novel was dead - just sorely in need of a new approach.

## Literature

"I like to remind misreaders of my earlier essay that written literature is in fact about 4,500 years old (give or take a few centuries depending on one's definition of literature), but that we have no way of knowing whether 4,500 years constitutes senility, maturity, youth, or mere infancy," Barth wrote.

Barth frequently explored the relationship between storyteller and audience in parodies and satire. He said he was inspired by "The Thousand and One Nights," which he discovered while working in the classics library of Johns Hopkins University.

"It is a quixotic high-wire act to hope, at this late hour of the century, to write literary material and contend with declining readership and a publishing world where businesses are owned by other businesses," Barth told The Associated Press in 1991.

Barth pursued jazz at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, but found he didn't have a great talent for music, and so turned to creative writing, a craft he taught at Penn State University, SUNY Buffalo, Boston University and Johns Hopkins.

His first novel, "The Floating Opera," was nominated for a National Book Award. He was nominated again for a 1968 short story collection, "Lost in the Funhouse," and won in 1973 for "Chimera," three short novels focused on myth.



**John Sinclair**, a poet, music producer and counter-culture figure whose lengthy prison sentence after a series of small-time pot busts inspired a **John Lennon** song and a star-studded 1971 concert to free him, has died. He was 82.

Sinclair died Tuesday morning at Detroit Receiving Hospital of congestive heart failure following an illness, his publicist **Matt Lee** said.

Sinclair drew a 9 1/2-to-10-year prison sentence in 1969 from Detroit Recorder's Court Judge **Robert Colombo** for giving two joints to undercover officers. He served 29 months but was released a few days after Lennon, **Stevie Wonder**, **Bob Seger** and others performed in front of 15,000 attendees at the University of Michigan's Crisler Arena.

"They gave him 10 for two/What else can Judge Colombo do/We gotta set him free," Lennon sang in "John Sinclair," a song the ex-Beatle wrote that immortalized its subject.

Lennon and his wife, **Yoko Ono**, performed at the Dec. 10-11, 1971, "John Sinclair Freedom Rally," held at the basketball arena in Ann Arbor. They took the stage after 3 a.m., about eight hours after the event got underway.

Earlier in the night, Sinclair's wife, **Leni**, had called her imprisoned husband, and the conversation between the couple and their 4-year-old daughter, **Sunny**, was amplified for the crowd, who chanted "Free John!"

"I'm trying to get home. I want to be with you," a sobbing Sinclair told the crowd that night, a Friday.

And he was by Monday.

At the time of Sinclair's arrest, possession of marijuana was a felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison. He was arrested in Detroit while living as a poet and activist who co-founded the White Panther Party. He received the maximum sentence.

## Advocacy

The day before the concert, the Michigan Legislature voted to reduce to a misdemeanor the penalty for possession of small amounts of marijuana, punishable by up to a year in prison.

Because he already had served 2 1/2 years, Sinclair was released from prison three days after the concert.

"For me, it's like coming into a whole different world from the one I left in 1969," Sinclair wrote in "Guitar Army," a collection of his writings that was published in the early 1970s.

Sinclair continued his advocacy for marijuana, helping to usher in Ann Arbor's token \$5 fine for pot possession and celebrating when his home state legalized recreational cannabis in 2018.

"I'm the pioneer. I was the first one in Michigan who said marijuana should be legal, and they said I was totally nuts," he told the Detroit Free Press in 2019. "I'm proud to have played a part in this. I spent nearly three years in prison because of marijuana."

Sinclair was born in Flint in 1941. His father worked for Buick for over four decades and his mother was a high school teacher who gave up her job to raise John and his two siblings. Sinclair grew up in Davison, a town not far from Flint, and graduated from the University of Michigan-Flint in 1964 with a degree in English Literature.

Over the next six-plus decades, Sinclair did a bit of everything - dabbling in performance art, journalism, cultural and political activism. And, of course, poetry.



French writer Maryse Condé reacts after being awarded the New Academy's Literature Prize at a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden, on Dec. 9, 2018. Condé, winner in 2018 of an 'alternate' Nobel Prize, died Monday night at a hospital in Apt, outside Marseille. (AP)

## Obituary

## Prolific 'grande dame' of Caribbean literature

## Literary icon Condé dies at 90

NEW YORK, April 3, (AP): Maryse Condé, an acclaimed French-language novelist from Guadeloupe who in novels, stories, plays and memoirs imagined and redefined the personal and historical past from 17th century New England to contemporary Europe, has died at age 90.

Condé, winner in 2018 of an "alternate" Nobel Prize, died Monday night at a hospital in Apt, outside Marseille. Her longtime editor, Laurant Laffont, told The Associated Press that she had suffered from a neurological illness that impaired her vision to the point of having to dictate her final novel, "The Gospel According to the New World." But she still enjoyed a 90th birthday celebration, in February, when she was joined by family and friends.

"She was smiling, she was joyous," said Laffont, who otherwise remembered her as a woman of uncommon intensity and generosity. "It was a wonderful farewell, a truly great sendoff."

Condé, who lived in Luberon, France in recent years, was often called the "grande dame" of Caribbean literature. Influenced by Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and other critics of colonialism, she was a world traveler who probed the conflicts between and within Western culture, African culture and Caribbean culture, and the tensions between the desire for liberation and what the author would call "the trap of terrorism and simplistic radicalisation."

With her husband, Richard Philcox, often serving as her English-language translator, Condé wrote dozens of books, ranging from historical explorations such as "Segu," her best known novel, to the autobiographical stories in "Tales from the Heart" to fresh takes on Western literature. She reworked "Wuthering Heights" into "Windward Heights," and paired a West Indian slave with Hester Prynne of "The Scarlet Letter" in "I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem."

"A historian is somebody who studies

the facts, the historical facts - somebody who is tied to what actually happens," she explained in an interview included in the back section of "I, Tituba," published in 1992. "I am just a dreamer - my dreams rest upon a historical basis. Being a Black person, having a certain past, having a certain history behind me, I want to explore that realm and of course do it with imagination and my intuition. But I am not involved in any kind of scholarly research."

The mother of four children (with first husband Mamadou Condé), she was nearly 40 when she published her first novel and almost 50 when "Segu" made her an international name. "Segu," released in French in 1984 and in the United States three years later, was set in an 18th century African kingdom and followed the fates of a royal advisor and his family as their community is upended by the rise of Islam and the expansion of the slave trading industry.

## Family

"In the past all a man needed was a bit of willpower to keep wives, children, and younger brothers in order," observes one family member. "Life was a straight line drawn from the womb of a woman to the womb of the earth ... But now the menace of new ideas and values lurked everywhere."

She continued the story in "The Children of Segu," but rejected additional volumes, explaining to one interviewer that her spirit "had journeyed to another world." Over the following decades, her fictional settings included Salem, Massachusetts ("I, Tituba"), Jamaica ("Nana-Ya") and Paris and Guadeloupe for "The Wondrous and Tragic Life of Ivan and Ilana."

Condé received numerous awards over the second half of her life, among them the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government, the U.S.-based Hurston & Wright Legacy Award and the New

Academy Prize for literature, an informal honor presented in 2018 in place of the Nobel, which was sidelined for the year amid allegation of sexual harassment by prize committee members.

"She describes the ravages of colonialism and the post-colonial chaos in a language which is both precise and overwhelming," New Academy judge Ann Pålsson said at the time. "The dead live in her stories closely to the living in a ... world where gender, race and class are constantly turned over in new constellations."

In the mid-1990s, Condé joined the faculty at Columbia University as a professor of French and Francophone literature. She also taught at the University of Virginia and UCLA among other schools before retiring in 2005, around the same time French President Jacques Chirac named her head of the French Committee for the Memory of Slavery.

Condé was married twice, most recently to Philcox, a British academic whom she met in the late 1960s in Senegal.

Born Maryse Boucolon at Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, she was one of six children (two others died) raised in a relatively prosperous and educated family, where French was favored over Creole and the poetry of Victor Hugo over local folklore. Condé was a writer from early on, creating a one-act play at age 10 about her mother, reporting for local newspapers in high school and publishing book reviews for a student magazine in college, the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris.

She was admittedly isolated as a young woman, and would remember how her family "prided itself on being picture perfect in public." But in her teens, she became politicized after reading "Black Shack Alley," a 1950 novel by Joseph Zobel about the coming of age of a boy contending with white oppression in colonial Martinique, a way of life Condé knew little about.

and soon expanded the online presence he established in prison.

His book comes out Sept. 10.

"I make it my life's work to show the world that there is no straight line to success or healing, and that's why writing this book is so important to me," he said in a statement. (AP)



**HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M.:** An archaeological site that might shed more light on New Mexico's ancient history has been discovered recently within the boundaries of Holloman Air Force Base.

Base officials said geomorphologists and members of the 49th Civil Engineer Squadron environmental flight uncovered a campsite in early March that's about 8,200 years old and belonged to some of the state's first settlers.

**Matthew Cuba**, the squadron's cultural resource manager, said the formation of white sand dunes inadvertently buried the site with windblown silt protecting the archaeological remains.

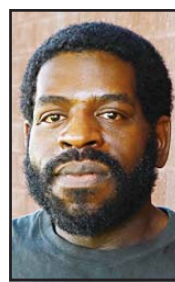
"This site marks a pivotal moment in shedding light on the area's history and its early inhabitants," Cuba said.

He said digs at the site have turned up about 70 items ranging from flake stones to a rare example of an early ground stone.

"We also uncovered a series of hearths, or community campsites, with remnants of mesquite charcoal, which is a tremendous find in and of itself," Cuba said. (AP)



Camila Mendes, (left), and Rudy Mancuso pose together backstage before discussing the film 'Música' at The 92nd Street Y on Tuesday, April 2, in New York. (AP)



Abdurraqib



Rowling

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Poet-critic **Hanif Abdurraqib**, fiction writers **Deirdre Madden** and **Kathryn Scanlan** and playwright **Christopher Chen** are among this year's recipients of Windham-Campbell Prizes, for which winners each receive \$175,000 cash awards.

The prizes are designed to enable artists to "focus on their creative practice independent of financial concerns," prize officials announced Tuesday. The other winners are cultural critic **Christina Sharpe**, dramatist **Sonya Kelly** and poets **M. NourbeSe Philip** and **Jen Hatfield**.

"Each year, I feel incredibly honored to call the eight recipients: to be the messenger delivering the entirely unexpected and life-changing news that they have been awarded \$175,000. It is clear - now, more than ever - how challenging working in the creative industries, around the world, can be," prize director **Michael Kelleher** said in a statement. (AP)



**LONDON:** **J.K. Rowling** did not break the law with tweets criticizing **Scotland's** new hate speech law and referring to transgender women as men, the police said Tuesday.

The "Harry Potter" author opposes the law, which came into force on Monday and makes it illegal to stir up hatred on the basis of characteristics such as age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity.

Rowling is among critics who say the legislation could be used to silence so-called "gender-critical" feminists, who argue that rights for trans women should not come at the expense of those who are born biologically female.

In a series of posts on X, Rowling referred to several prominent trans women as men. Misgendering could be an offense under the new law, in some circumstances.

Rowling posted that "if what I've written here qualifies as an offence under the terms of the new act, I look forward to being arrested." (AP)



**NEW YORK:** **Wallace Peeples** has lived many lives - activist, speechmaker, podcaster, social media influencer - since serving 20 years in prison. And he plans to write about all of them.

13a, an imprint of Gallery Books, announced Tuesday that it has signed Peeples, best known as Wallo267, for his memoir "Armed With Good Intentions." 13a is calling the book a "story of survival." Peeples, who at age 17 was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to 20 years, was released in 2017



Johnny Flynn, (from left), Andrew Scott, and Dakota Fanning pose for a portrait to promote the television miniseries 'Ripley' on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, in New York. (AP)



## The Conversation

## Cancer patients over 60 choose hospice 70% of the time

## Dementia patients lack adequate end-of-life care in hospices

By Maria J Silveira  
University of Michigan

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

Jimmy Carter, who chose to forgo aggressive medical care for complications of cancer and frailty in February 2023, recently reached his one-year anniversary since enrolling in hospice care. During this time, he celebrated his 99th birthday, received tributes far and wide and stood by the side of his beloved wife, Rosalynn, who died in November 2023.

In contrast to the former president, his wife, who had dementia, lived only nine days under hospice care.

Palliative care physicians like myself who treat both conditions are not surprised at all by this disparity.

Hospice brings a multidisciplinary team of providers to wherever a patient lives, be it their own home or a nursing home, to maintain their physical and psychological comfort so that they can avoid the hospital as they approach the end of life.

Hospice is not the same as palliative care, which is a multidisciplinary team that sees seriously ill patients in a clinic or hospital to help them and their families with symptoms, distress and advance care planning.

Strikingly, only 12% of Americans with dementia ever enroll in hospice. Among those who do, one-third are near death. This is in stark contrast to the cancer population: Patients over 60 with cancer enroll in hospice 70% of the time.

In my experience caring for dementia patients, the underuse of hospice by dementia patients has more to do with how hospice is structured and paid for in the US than it does patient preference or differences between cancer and dementia.

## Regulations

In the US, most hospice stays are paid for by Medicare, which dictates what hospices look like, who qualifies for hospice and what services hospices provide. Medicare's rules and regulations make it hard for dementia patients to qualify for hospice when they and their families need support the most - long before death.

In Canada, where hospice is structured entirely differently, 39% of dementia patients receive hospice care in the last year of life.

The first hospice opened in the US in 1974. Medicare began assessing the potential benefits of covering hospice care during Carter's administration. The service gained popularity after Congress formalized a payment structure to reimburse hospice providers through Medicare in 1985.

At the time, lawmakers were responding to the realization that the cost of care at the end of life was the fastest-growing segment of Medicare's budget. Most of those expenses covered costs for hospitalized patients with advanced incurable illnesses who died in the hospital after spending time in intensive care units.

Congress believed hospice would not only give seriously ill Americans an alternative to a medicalized death but would also help control costs. So it required hospices to provide holistic care to entice people to enroll in this new option.

The new Medicare coverage allowed hospice care to follow the patient wherever they lived, at home or in a nursing home. It would support families as well as patients.

These remain among hospices' core values to this day.

In exchange, people enrolling in hospice would have to forgo other kinds of care, such as seeing specialists or being admitted to a hospital.

But letting go of specialists is a nonstarter for many patients.

Researchers have found that people with life-limiting illnesses like dementia are half as likely to enroll in hospice when they want to continue treatments they cannot receive in hospice.

Psychiatrists and geriatricians who treat dementia, and the psychologists, nurses, social workers and others who support them, are in-

valuable to families struggling to manage a dementia patient's disruptive and sometimes violent behavior. They adjust and rotate medications such as antidepressants, antipsychotics, anti-epileptics or sedatives to help their loved one experience less anxiety, agitation or depression as their memory fades.

These adjustments are the norm for many patients with dementia who are particularly prone to side effects such as agitation or drowsiness. Specialized dementia teams are difficult to give up in exchange for hospice clinicians who are generalists following a protocol and adhering to a short list of approved medications.

But that is what Medicare currently asks these families to do.

Hospice advocates and palliative care providers like myself believe dementia patients should have access to both specialists to provide expert guidance and hospice providers to support the care at home.

So-called concurrent care is the standard of care for children facing life-ending illness, as well as for patients in the Veterans Health Administration. There is evidence that the concurrent care approach helps patients and, ironically, saves money.

## Families

For around a decade, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has been studying alternative models for hospice that include concurrent care for Americans covered by Medicare. The agency is proposing to study the issue a bit longer. However, more studies will not bring relief any time soon to the 7 million Americans with dementia and their families.

Even when dementia patients and their families are willing to forgo specialists and hospitalization, they are unlikely to meet Medicare's stringent criteria for hospice, which were designed to limit hospice to patients who are expected to die within six months.

It's so difficult to qualify for hospice under a dementia diagnosis that one of my colleagues is known for saying, "If you want to get a dementia patient into hospice, find a cancer."

Medicare's criteria require that people with dementia not only depend upon others for help with toileting, transferring, bathing, walking and personal hygiene but also that they be bedridden, incontinent, minimally verbal and have a terminal complication of dementia such as aspiration pneumonia, recurrent urinary tract infections, significant weight loss, or bed sores.

These complications typically occur only in the most advanced stages of dementia and are less likely when people receive quality care at home.

More importantly, Medicare's hospice benefits do not provide patients with dementia and their families the support they need most - hands-on care.

Most people are shocked to hear that, aside from providing a bath aide a couple of times a week and a home health aide for brief periods to give a family caregiver a break, hospice does not provide the hands-on care that dementia patients - and, frankly, anyone who is in hospice - require.

Monitoring, toileting, hand-feeding, repositioning, ambulating, medication administration and wound care are left up to family caregivers.

Families of people with dementia must either sacrifice their personal well-being and livelihoods to care for a loved one at home, hire a professional home health aide, which costs from US\$30 to \$50 an hour, or place the loved one in a nursing home. The latter is paid out of pocket unless patients qualify for Medicaid. And hospice care, as currently structured, does nothing to help with that.

My heart breaks for people like the patient with early dementia I met recently. His daughter-in-law - his sole caregiver - requested he be enrolled in home hospice, only to find out that not only did he not qualify for hospice, but that hospice would not provide the hands-on support they needed.

"So, unless we can afford to pay for an aide or place him in memory care, I'm all the hands-on help he's got?," she asked. "I'm afraid so," I answered.

Given this impossible choice, it's no surprise that Rosalynn Carter only entered hospice near the end of her life. (AP)

## Lawsuit seeks to push menthol cigarettes ban

## Bird flu detected in chickens at largest fresh egg producer in US

NEW YORK, April 3, (AP) - The largest producer of fresh eggs in the US said Tuesday it had temporarily halted production at a Texas plant after bird flu was found in chickens, and officials said the virus had also been detected at a poultry facility in Michigan.

Ridgeland, Mississippi-based Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. said in a statement that approximately 1.6 million laying hens and 337,000 pullets, about 3.6% of its total flock, were destroyed after the infection, avian influenza, was found at a facility in Parmer County, Texas.

The plant is on the Texas-New Mexico border in the Texas Panhandle

about 85 miles (137 kilometers) southwest of Amarillo and about 370 miles (595 kilometers) northwest of Dallas. Cal-Maine said it sells most of its eggs in the Southwestern, Southeastern, Midwestern and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.

"The Company continues to work closely with federal, state and local government officials and focused industry groups to mitigate the risk of future outbreaks and effectively manage the response," the statement said.

"Cal-Maine Foods is working to secure production from other facilities to minimize disruption to its customers," the statement said.

The company said there is no known bird flu risk associated with eggs that are currently in the market and no eggs have been recalled.

Eggs that are properly handled and cooked are safe to eat, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The announcement by Cal-Maine comes a day after state health officials said a person had been diagnosed with bird flu after being in contact with cows presumed to be infected, and that the risk to the public remains low. The human case in Texas marks the first known instance globally of a person catching this version of bird flu from a mammal, federal health officials said.

In Michigan, Michigan State University's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has detected bird flu in a commercial poultry facility in Ionia County, according to the Michigan's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The county is about 100 miles (161 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.

The department said it received confirmation of the disease Monday from the lab and that it is the fourth time since 2022 that the disease was detected at a commercial facility in Michigan.

Department spokesperson Jennifer Holton said Tuesday that state law prohibits the department from disclosing the type of poultry at the facility. The facility has been placed under quarantine and the department does not anticipate any disruptions to supply chains across the state, Holton said.

Dairy cows in Texas and Kansas were reported to be infected with bird flu last week - and federal agriculture officials later confirmed infections in a Michigan dairy herd that had recently received cows from Texas. A dairy herd in Idaho has been added to the list after federal agriculture officials confirmed the detection of bird flu in them, according to a Tuesday press release from the USDA.

□ □ □



Cases of eggs from Cal-Maine Foods, Inc., await to be handed out by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce employees at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson, Miss., on Aug. 7, 2020. The largest producer of fresh eggs in the United States said Tuesday, April 2, that it has stopped production at a Texas plant after bird flu was found in chickens there. Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. said in a statement that approximately 1.6 million laying hens and 337,000 pullets, about 3.6% of its total flock, were destroyed after the infection, avian influenza, was found at the facility in Parmer County, Texas. (AP)

## Buzz may not last

## Germany legalizes possession of small amounts of cannabis

FRANKFURT, Germany, April 3, (AP) - Marijuana campaigners in Germany lit celebratory joints on Monday as the country liberalized rules on cannabis to allow possession of small amounts.

The German Cannabis Association, which campaigned for the new law, staged a "smoke-in" at Berlin's landmark Brandenburg Gate when the law took effect at midnight. Other public consumption events were scheduled throughout the country, including one in front of the Cologne cathedral and others in Hamburg, Regensburg and Dortmund.

Germany becomes the third European Union country to legalize cannabis for personal use after Malta and Luxembourg.

The new law legalizes possession by adults of up to 25 grams (nearly 1 ounce) of marijuana for recreational purposes and allows individuals to grow up to three plants on their own. That part of the legislation took effect Monday.

German residents age 18 and older will be allowed to join nonprofit "cannabis clubs" with a maximum 500 members each starting July 1. Individuals will be allowed to buy up to 25 grams per day, or a maximum 50 grams per month - a figure limited to 30 grams for people under age 21. Membership in multiple clubs won't be allowed.

The clubs' costs will be covered by membership fees, which are to be staggered according

to how much marijuana members use.

The legislation also calls for an amnesty under which sentences for cannabis-related offenses that will no longer be illegal are to be reviewed and in many cases reversed. Regional authorities worry that the judicial system will be overburdened by thousands of cases.

Over the past 20 years, the general trend has been for European Union member countries to reduce cannabis penalties in various ways, according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

Those could include making possession a civil offense or diverting offenders to treatment instead of the criminal justice system, or less strict enforcement. In the Netherlands, cannabis remains illegal but sale of small amounts in so-called coffee shops is tolerated by the public prosecution service. A number of countries in Europe permit medical cannabis under differing sets of rules.

But the law may not be the last word. It was pushed through by the current coalition of Chancellor Olaf Scholz' Social Democrats, the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats, against opposition from some of Germany's federal states and the center-right Christian Democrats. Christian Democratic leader Friedrich Merz has vowed that his party will reverse the legislation if it wins national elections expected in the fall of 2025.

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## Kaiserslautern end Saarbruecken's run

## Vlahovic returns to help Juventus beat Lazio 2-0

TURIN, Italy, April 3, (AP): Juventus remained on course for a record-extending 15th Italian Cup title by beating Lazio 2-0 in the first leg of their semifinal on Tuesday.

Juventus was jeered off the pitch at halftime but Federico Chiesa and Dušan Vlahović scored after the break to give the Bianconeri its first win in 10 matches.

The second leg is on April 23. Atalanta plays Fiorentina on Wednesday in the other semifinal.

Juventus had lost at Lazio in the league on Saturday, in Igor Tudor's first match in charge of the capital side.

Vlahović was suspended for that game but returned to the starting lineup Tuesday.

Juventus thought it had a chance to take an early lead when it was awarded a penalty for a foul by Lazio midfielder Matias Vecino on Andrea Cambiaso but the referee revoked his decision after reviewing the incident on the pitchside moni-

tor because the Juventus player had been offside.

Lazio almost broke the deadlock shortly before halftime as Juventus goalkeeper Mattia Perin appeared to think Luis Alberto's header was going into but it came off the crossbar.

Instead it was Juventus that took the lead five minutes after the break when Chiesa raced onto a through ball by Cambiaso and fired it into the bottom right corner.

## SOCCER

That seemed to fire Juventus up and it doubled its tally in the 64th minute as Weston McKennie flicked on a pass for Vlahović, who befuddled his marker with a stepover before drilling into the far bottom corner.

It was Vlahović's 16th goal of the season and his 10th in as many matches.

In Saarbruecken, Germany, Kaiserslautern ended third-division Saarbruecken's fairytale run to the German Cup semifinals with a 2-0 win on Tuesday to book its place in the final.

Alamy Touré set up Marlon Ritter for the first goal and headed in the second himself as second-division Kaiserslautern became the first German Cup finalist from outside the top flight since 2011.

Kaiserslautern heads to the Olympiastadion in Berlin on May 25 to play either runaway Bundesliga leader Bayer Leverkusen or second-tier Fortuna Dueseldorf for the cup and a place in next season's Europa League.

Kaiserslautern is a four-time German soccer champion currently languishing in the second division - and fighting against possible relegation to the third. A win in the May final would be its first trophy of any kind since the league title in 1998 and the

club's third cup win in all.

Saarbruecken, which knocked out three top-division teams including Bayern Munich earlier in the competition, had to battle the rain just to host the game.

The stadium is prone to flooding and Saarbruecken took no chances after its quarterfinal game had to be postponed once. The team's last league game on Saturday was rescheduled to keep the field in good condition and the surface was covered with a tarp to keep off recent rain.

Saarbruecken's best chance to take the lead came just before halftime as Kai Brünker sent a diving header just wide of the post. Kaiserslautern then scored twice in the second half to take the game out of the smaller team's reach.

On its way to the semifinals, Saarbruecken earned an estimated 6.5 million euros (\$7 million), a huge sum for a club of its size.



Lazio's Taty Castellanos (left), challenges for the ball with Juventus' Bremer during the Serie A soccer match between Lazio and Juventus at Rome's Olympic Stadium. (AP)

Kaiserslautern has had a relatively smooth path to the final despite its second-tier status. Its only meeting

with a Bundesliga team was a 3-2 win over struggling Cologne in October's second round.

## Brazilian soccer clubs protest

## Police detain ex-soccer federation 'head' Rubiales on return to Spain

BARCELONA, Spain, April 3, (AP): Spanish police detained former soccer federation president Luis Rubiales on his return to the country amid an on-going corruption probe, Spain's Civil Guard said Wednesday, before later releasing him.

The Civil Guard said that Rubiales was questioned by police at Madrid's airport after he was detained on exiting the plane that brought him back home from the Dominican Republic. He was released a few hours later. An investigative judge is expected to summon him for more questioning in the coming days.

Rubiales was returning to Spain amid a judicial probe into a business deal to hold the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Rubiales was in the Dominican Republic two weeks ago when police raided a property belonging to him in Granada and the offices of the Spanish Football Federation in Madrid. Seven people were detained by police and Rubiales was identified as one of five additional individuals under investigation.

## SOCCER

The corruption and money laundering investigation is looking into contracts for the Spanish Super Cup and the federation's links with Seville's La Cartuja Stadium, which hosts the Copa del Rey final and some international games, among other deals.

Rubiales stepped down as president of the federation in September after causing an international scandal for inappropriate action towards Spain player Jenni Hermoso at the Women's World Cup final. He is facing a trial for allegedly assaulting Hermoso. He has denied any wrongdoing in that case.

Rubiales cut short his stay abroad by three days. He had originally told the court that he was coming back on Saturday.

During his time as president of Spanish soccer, Rubiales overhauled the format of the Spanish Super Cup in 2020, creating a four-team mini tournament and moving the competition to Saudi Arabia as part of a deal that was reportedly worth 40 million euros (then \$42 million) per tournament for the federation.

Prosecutors opened a probe of that deal in 2022 following leaked audio between Rubiales and then-Barcelona player Gerard Piqué regarding millions of dollars in commissions. Piqué's sports entertainment company Kosmos was involved in the deal with the federation and Saudi Arabia. A company official told The Associated Press that no employee of Kosmos has been detained or placed under investigation and no property of the company has been raided.

In a brief preview of a recorded interview with Spanish television chan-

nel La Sexta, Rubiales denied a series of what he called false claims made by Spanish media.

"I don't know what the judge has said or what Civil Guard has investigated," he said. "The money in my bank account is the result of my work and my savings."

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Brazilian club Palmeiras filed a complaint against John Texor at the country's top sports court on Tuesday after the American executive made allegations of match-fixing.

Texor, whose Eagle Football runs top-flight Brazilian club Botafogo, has accused defending champion Palmeiras of being the beneficiary of a match-fixing scheme.

Palmeiras said in a statement that it filed a complaint because of Texor's comments this week claiming that nine players of Fortaleza and Sao Paulo FC were suspicious underperformers in two Brazilian league matches against Palmeiras in the 2022 and 2023 seasons.

Both Fortaleza and Sao Paulo FC said Monday night they are considering legal action against Texor.

Botafogo last year squandered a 13-point lead to lose the national league title.

Texor said his claims are based on an artificial intelligence data-driven report he received, but he has refused to give more details about it. A message sent to Botafogo seeking comment from the club or Texor was not answered.

Palmeiras said it wants the American businessman to be fined and suspended. The Sao Paulo-based club added it will "not speak again about the bizarre attempt of the ludicrous soccer executive to justify their loss of the 2023 Brazilian championship."

Palmeiras won the 2023 title with 70 points, while Botafogo finished fifth with 64 points.

"If the accusations are true, we must applaud him. If they are lies, he should be banned from soccer," Sen. Jorge Kajuru said Tuesday.



In this file photo, President of the Spanish Federation, Luis Rubiales, left, and Saudi General Sport Authority GSA chairman Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal carry the Spanish super cup during a press conference in Jiddah Saudi Arabia. (AP)

## Kumara claims 4 wkts as Sri Lanka win 2nd Test vs B'desh

Lucknow records 28-run win over Bengaluru

CHATTOGRAM, Bangladesh, April 3, (AP): Fast bowler Lahiru Kumara claimed four wickets for 50 runs as Sri Lanka swept the two-test series against Bangladesh with a 192-run victory in the second match on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka won the first test by 328 runs and with the series sweep maintained its record of not losing a test in Bangladesh.

It won the earlier three-match T20 series 2-1 before losing the ODI series by the same margin.

"We're very satisfied with the (test) win," Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva said. "There are many areas for us to improve, and I've talked about those with the team and the coaches are working towards that. If we can learn day by day and raise our game by 1%, we can make winning a habit."

Resuming Day 5 at 268-7 and needing 243 runs for an unlikely victory, Bangladesh was bowled out for 318 with Mehidy Hasan Miraz staying unbeaten on 81.

## CRICKET

Occasional bowler Kamindu Mendis, who took 3-32, got the breakthrough for the visitors in the fourth over of the day when he dismissed Tajjul Islam, caught by Nishan Madushka at gully.

But Mehidy raised his sixth test 50 off 62 balls, hitting Kamindu for a boundary. He batted aggressively to raise the prospect of his only second century but Hasan Mahmud and Syed Khaled Ahmed failed to give him support.

Both of the batters were dismissed by Kumara, leaving Mehidy 19 runs short of his century. He played 110 balls for his 81, including 14 fours.

"After the team does badly, the players feel bad. They always want to improve. They communicate with each other. We don't think about test match fees," Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said. "We are looking for improvement even when we are doing well. Everyone feels bad when we lose, but we prepare very well. We practice very hard."



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Faf du Plessis takes the catch to dismiss Lucknow Super Giants' Ayush Badoni during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Lucknow Super Giants in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

"This is a very young team. We don't have much experience. Every player has the desire to improve. Give it more time, the team will make better decisions."

Sri Lanka posted 531 in its first innings with six batters getting past half-century marks, making it the highest total without any batters scoring a century.

It then dismissed Bangladesh for 178 runs, and took a 353-run lead but the visitors decided against the follow-on. Despite a batting collapse in the second innings, Sri Lanka was able to leave Bangladesh a record chase of 511 after declaring on 157-7.

"The bowlers did their basics on this wicket, and the batters did their job as well," Dhananjaya said. "The batters were a bit disappointed about not getting runs in the first test, but we have experienced players. I was confident they would get runs."

In Bengaluru, India, Mayank Yadav's express pace led Lucknow Super Giants to a 28-run win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Indian Premier League on Tuesday.

The 21-year-old Yadav, who clocked 156.7 kph, grabbed 3-14 as

Bengaluru crashed to 153 all out in 19.4 overs for its third loss in four games.

Earlier, Bengaluru let Lucknow score a formidable 181-5, dropping both main run-scorers Quinton de Kock (81) and Nicholas Pooran (40). De Kock was in the 30s when Glenn Maxwell dropped the South African. Pooran went on to smash five sixes in the last two overs after getting reprieve when he had scored just 2.

Yadav made an impressive IPL debut in Lucknow's previous win over Punjab Kings when the right-arm fast bowler picked up 3-27. He continued to trouble batters with his short balls to bag his second straight player of the match award after Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli had provided a rollicking start of 40 off 26 balls.

Kohli made 22 off 16 balls before he spliced a catch at backward point as he attempted a big shot against impact substitute spinner Manimaran Siddharth. Du Plessis was then run-out while going for a tight single against Yadav's first ball in the power play before the express bowler broke through Bengaluru's middle-order.

Both Maxwell and Cameron Green were undone by the pace of Yadav and went cheaply as Bengaluru slipped to 58-4 in the eighth over. Yadav came close to a four-wicket haul, but Dinesh Karthik took a successful review against leg before decision as the replays suggested the ball would have missed the stumps.

Bengaluru's impact substitute Mahipal Lomror made a quickfire 33 off 13 balls, but Lucknow always looked in control as Afghanistan fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq finished off with 2-25.

Earlier, de Kock capitalized on Maxwell's dropped catch and smashed eight fours and five sixes in his 56-ball knock. Maxwell tried to reduce the damage through his off-spin with a controlled 2-23 spell in the middle overs, but de Kock did enough damage before holing out in the deep in the death overs off Reece Topley's low full toss.

Pooran was dropped by Anuj Rawat but hit three straight sixes to Topley in the penultimate over before providing the perfect finish with another two big hits against Mohammed Siraj in the final over.

## IOC sets deadline to keep boxing in Oly for LA with a new partner

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, April 3, (AP): The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday said it needs to find a suitable new international boxing body by early next year or else risk boxing dropping out of the Olympics for the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

The IOC stripped the International Boxing Association of the right to run the Olympic boxing tournaments in Tokyo in 2021 and Paris this year.

On Tuesday, the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld the IOC's decision to formally de-recognize the IBA, in effect cutting it out of the Olympic movement altogether.

The IOC has long cited concerns about the IBA's governance and the integrity of how boxing matches are refereed and judged. It also accused the IBA's Russian president Umar Kremlev of using "violent and threatening language" about IOC personnel last year.

"Because of the universality and high social inclusivity of boxing, the IOC wants it to continue to feature on the program of the Olympic Games," the IOC said Wednesday.

"Unfortunately, this is far from certain for the Olympic Games LA 2028 because, for governance reasons, the IOC is not in a position to organize another Olympic boxing tournament. To keep boxing on the Olympic program, the IOC needs a

recognized and reliable International Federation as a partner, as with all the other Olympic sports."

The IOC called on national boxing bodies and Olympic committees to help set up a new international governing body for boxing.



Workers build the stands for the upcoming summer Olympic Games on the Champ-de-Mars just beside the Eiffel Tower, in Paris. The Paris 2024 Olympic Games will run from July 26 to Aug. 11, 2024. (AP)

To keep boxing in the Olympics for Los Angeles, "the IOC needs to have a partner International Federation for boxing by early 2025," it said.

The IOC didn't name any candidates but the likeliest might be World Boxing, a breakaway body backed by boxing officials in the United States and Britain which split from the IBA last year and elected its own president, Boris van der Vorst of the Netherlands.

## OLYMPICS

World Boxing has started hosting its own tournaments and said it had members from 27 nations and territories when it held a congress in November.

The IBA said Wednesday it was considering whether to file an appeal to the Swiss supreme court against the CAS ruling, which it said had failed to appreciate the IBA's own reforms. "The IBA feels that disregarding these and other improvements suggests a biased view," the IBA said.

## Most-capped All Blacks int'l Sam to retire

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, April 3, (AP): All Blacks lock Sam Whitelock will retire from all rugby at the end of the current European season, aged 35 and after a record 153 tests for New Zealand.

Whitelock's decision came amid speculation of a recall to the New Zealand team. New All Blacks head coach Scott Robertson reportedly had contacted Whitelock to discuss his availability in what had been interpreted as a search for a new captain.

Whitelock played his last test for the All Blacks as a replacement in the World Cup final in Paris last year. He now plays for the French club Pau but indicated Wednesday he will quit all rugby when his commitments to the club are complete.

"I've been having a few conversations with my wife Hannah and the kids around what the future looks like for us. And it's time to finish the playing chapter of rugby," Whitelock said in a statement.

"I think if you talk to anyone who has played for a long time, that desire (to play) never leaves. It's just that stage of life when you move on. It's not a decision that we have come to lightly, but it's the right thing for myself and it's the right thing for my

wife and our three kids Fred, Iris and Penelope."

Whitelock made his test debut in 2010 and played at four World Cups, winning in 2011 and 2015. Last year he overtook Richie McCaw as New Zealand's most-capped player.

"The thing I'm proud of is that I never really counted test matches, I always wanted to make the test matches count," Whitelock said. "So if it was my last one, I wanted to be able to walk away and say 'I gave it everything, I didn't hold anything back.' I was fully committed."

Whitelock played Super Rugby under Robertson at the Christchurch-based Crusaders and was Robertson's first choice as captain.

"Sam is an immortal of our incredible game," Robertson said. "First and foremost he is a quality person, a great husband and father who has a special ability to build deep connections with people from all walks of life."

"In terms of his rugby, Sam's impact has been immense both mentally and physically over four World Cup cycles. He is a winner who rose to any occasion as his competitive spirit drove him to the highest level of performance. Sam will stand with the greats of our game."



## Al Qadisia receives Wadi boost

## Nasser Al-Shatti begins mission with Al Arabi

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Al-Qadisiya's Mubarak Al-Fanini, returns from the Qatari Aspetar Clinic, concluding a treatment program he attended since mid-March last year for a muscle injury. Al-Fanini's absence was notable in Al-Qadisiya's recent match against

## SOCCER

Al-Fahaheel in the second round of the Zain Premier League (championship group), where the team secured a decisive victory with a score of 5-2.

Meanwhile, defender Yousef Al-Haqqaan has commenced specialized training for his rehabilitation following an injury he sustained last March.

The likelihood of both Al-Fanini and Al-Haqqaan participating in the upcoming "Derby" match scheduled for next



A file photo of Abdulaziz Wadi in action.

Sunday in the third round of the league seems slim. In other news, Abdulaziz Wadi has rejoined group training and is poised to participate against Al-Arabi after recovering from an injury that sidelined him during the last match against Al-Fahaheel.

On the coaching front, Muhammad Al-Mishaan, the coach of Al-Qadisiya, has been emphasizing defensive strategies in recent training sessions following lapses in organization that led to conceding four goals in matches against Al-Salmiya and Al-Fahaheel.

## Al-Arabi continue winning streak in the handball league

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: The Al-Arabi handball team continues its positive streak in the league, securing a hard-fought victory against Al-Fahaheel in the eighth round with a close

## HANDBALL

31-30 scoreline. This places "Al-Akhdar" in third position with 12 points, while Al-Fahaheel sits in seventh place with six points.

This marks the fourth consecutive victory for the "Green Battalion," following wins against Al-Sahel, Yarmouk, and Kazma in previous matches. Conversely, it's the second con-



Al-Arabi player is heckled by two opponents as he goes for a goal.

secutive loss for Al-Fahaheel, following their defeat in the last round against Al-Qadisiyah.

The eighth round will conclude tomorrow, with Sulaybikhat (eighth with five points) facing Yarmouk (ninth with five points) at 8:30 pm. This will be followed by Al Salmiya (leading with 14 points) taking on Burgan (sixth with seven points) at 10:00 pm.

In the first match, both Sulaybikhat and Yarmouk will strive to improve their league standings, making for an evenly matched encounter. The second match between Al Salmiya and Burgan promises to be intense, with Al-Samawi aiming to maintain their top position without any losses, while Burgan seeks to upset Al-Salmiya and secure their first win while closing the gap with the leading teams.

## Warriors overcome triple-double by Luka Doncic to beat Mavericks



Philadelphia 76ers' Buddy Hield (left), goes up for a shot against Oklahoma City Thunder's Chet Holmgren during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

## Embiid scores 24 points in return from surgery as Sixers top Thunder

SAN FRANCISCO, April 3, (AP): Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points and the Golden State Warriors overcame Luka Doncic's 20th triple-double of the season to beat Dallas 104-100 on Tuesday night, snapping the Mavericks' seven-game winning streak.

Doncic, the NBA's leading scorer at 33.9 points per game, finished with 30 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists. His 20 triple-doubles trail only Domantas Sabonis (26) and Nikola Jokic (23). Doncic also recorded his 48th 30-point game of the season, second only to Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (50).

Warriors coach Steve Kerr praised Wiggins for his defense on Doncic, who on Tuesday was chosen Western Conference player of the month for March, winning the award for the second month in a row.

The Mavericks cut the deficit to 102-100 with 15 seconds remaining, but the Warriors were able to close out the game with late free throws from Klay Thompson.

Six Warriors scored in double digits on a night when Stephen Curry shot just 5 for 18 from the floor. Thompson and Chris Paul each had 14 points, Curry scored 13 and Moses Moody had 12 as Golden State won its fifth straight.

Draymond Green made two huge plays down the stretch for the Warriors, blocking Daniel Gafford with 1:30 remaining, before giving Golden State an eight-point lead with a layup on the next possession. He had 11 points.

## Kings 109, Clippers 95

In Sacramento, Domantas Sabonis had 22 points, 20 rebounds and nine assists, and the Sacramento Kings beat the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Kings moved within one game of sixth-place New Orleans in the Western Conference as they seek to avoid the play-in tournament. Sacramento (44-31) is tied with Phoenix with seven games left, including a four-game trip that begins Thursday at New York.

The Clippers are fourth in the West. Sacramento held the Clippers to under 100 points for just the fifth time this season.

Guard Davion Mitchell said the Kings embraced the physicality on defense. They blitzed James Harden, who had six points on 1-of-7 shooting, and forced

him to go right. They showed different looks at Paul George, who scored 18 on 5-for-12 shooting after he had 41 points during Sunday's win at Charlotte.

Los Angeles was without star Kawhi Leonard, who has a sore right knee. Coach Tyronn Lue said he hopes Leonard, who flew back to Los Angeles for treatment after playing Sunday, will be available Thursday against West-leading Denver.

Russell Westbrook led the Clippers with 20 points. Norman Powell, starting for Leonard, scored 17.

## Sixers 109, Thunder 105

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid put Philadelphia ahead with four free throws in the final 40 seconds and finished with 24 points in his first game in nine weeks following knee surgery, leading the 76ers to a 109-105 win over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Embiid added seven assists and six rebounds in nearly 30 minutes - but most important, he brought the confidence that the Sixers can salvage their season and make a postseason run with last season's MVP in the lineup.

Embiid was congratulated by Hall of Famer Allen Iverson after the game.

Chet Holmgren scored 22 points to lead the Thunder, who fell one-half game behind Denver for the top spot in the Western Conference. Minnesota moved into a tie with Oklahoma City.

The Sixers trailed by 11 points with 7:27 left before they went on a torrid run. Kelly Oubre Jr. hit a 3 that got the



Milwaukee Bucks guard Patrick Beverley (21) jumps over Washington Wizards guard Jordan Poole (13) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, in Washington. The Wizards won 117-113. (AP)

comeback rolling, and Embiid capped it off with a series of free throws. Embiid hit two for a 106-105 lead and added two more that made it 108-105. He made all 12 foul shots on the night.

## Nuggets 110, Spurs 105

In Denver, Chalk this one up to Nikola Jokic after Victor Wembanyama came up just short of out dueling the player who is hoping to soon pick up his third MVP award.

Jokic scored 42 points and out dueling the Rookie of the Year favorite in Denver's win over the San Antonio Spurs to retake sole possession of first place in the West.

Jokic also grabbed 16 rebounds and had six assists. Wembanyama had 23 points, 15 rebounds, eight assists and nine blocks. Three of Jokic's baskets came on rare dunks, something he said he had to do facing the sensational rookie.

"He had like 600 blocks tonight, but we got the win," Jokic said after Denver leap-frogged Oklahoma City atop the Western Conference playoff race.

## BASKETBALL

## Cavaliers 129, Jazz 113

In Salt Lake City, Caris LeVert scored 26 points and Jarrett Allen had 21 points and 12 rebounds, helping the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Utah Jazz.

LeVert started in place of Donovan Mitchell, who missed Tuesday's game due to injury management. Evan Mobley added 21 points for the Cavs, and reserve Sam Merrill had 18 points on six 3-pointers.

Cleveland had 38 assists on 46 baskets and shot 54% from the field.

The Cavaliers also scored 26 points off 20 Jazz turnovers while leading wire to wire. They stopped a four-game road losing streak.

## Timberwolves 113, Rockets 106

In Minneapolis, Naz Reid strengthened his case for the Sixth Man of the Year Award with 25 points and six rebounds, Anthony Edwards scored 19 points and the Timberwolves kept up their push for the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference with a 113-106 victory over the Houston Rockets on Tuesday night.

The Timberwolves, who have clinched a playoff berth, are tied for second with Oklahoma City at 52-23, a half-game behind Denver, with seven games remaining in the regular season.

Houston had a seven-game road win streak snapped and has dropped two in a row following 11 straight victories that brought it back into the playoff picture.

The Rockets (38-37) are now two games out of the Western Conference's final play-in position.

## Heat 109, Knicks 99

In Miami, Terry Rozier picked a great time for his highest-scoring game with the Miami Heat.

Rozier scored 34 points, sealed by a beat-the-shot-clock 3-pointer with 34 seconds remaining, and the Heat inched closer to an Eastern Conference playoff berth by holding off the New York Knicks.

Rozier was 10 for 15 from the field, 8 for 11 on 3s. And the Heat - who led by 16, then fell into a tie when New York went on a 12-0 run late - needed every bit of that effort.

Jimmy Butler scored 17 points, Bam Adebayo added 15 and Haywood Highsmith finished with 14 for the Heat.

Donte DiVincenzo scored 31 points for New York, while Deuce McBride added 24 and Jalen Brunson finished with 20 points and 10 assists.

## Wizards 117, Bucks 113

In Washington, Corey Kispert scored 27 points and Deni Avdija added 23 to help the Washington Wizards beat the Milwaukee Bucks despite Giannis Antetokounmpo's triple-double.

Antetokounmpo had 35 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists and reached double figures in all three categories by the end of the third quarter. That wasn't enough for Milwaukee, which came into the night with a 2 1/2-game lead over Cleveland for the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Jordan Poole had 16 points and a career-high 13 assists for Washington, and Jared Butler provided a lift off the bench with 17 points. Tristan Vukcevic, a 7-foot rookie from Serbia whom the Wizards signed in the middle of last month, scored 14. His previous career high was six.

## Lakers 128, Raptors 111

In Toronto, LeBron James scored 23 points, Anthony Davis had 21 points and 12 rebounds and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Toronto Raptors for their seventh win in eight games.

D'Angelo Russell shot 7 for 14 from 3-point range and scored 25 points, Rui Hachimura had 14 and Max Christie 12 as the Lakers handed slumping Toronto a 14th straight loss.

The NBA's career scoring leader, James shot 10 for 12 and had nine assists.

James came in having matched his career high with nine 3-pointers in Sunday's win at Brooklyn. The 20-time All-Star took just one shot from distance against the Raptors, connecting with 5:22 left in the third quarter.

## Kovacevic reaches 2nd round in Houston

## Top-seed Pegula rallies from a set down to beat Amanda Anisimova

CHARLESTON, S.C., April 3, (AP): Top-seeded Jessica Pegula rallied from a set down and beat fellow American Amanda Anisimova 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (3) in a second-round match at the Charleston Open on Tuesday night.

Pegula had seven aces in the match and won despite capitalizing on 4 of 15 break points. Anisimova converted on 4 of 8 break points.

Pegula said Anisimova is tough to play because she is a great ball striker, and she can take the racket out of an opponent's hands.

"I just kind of had to buckle down, and I think I started being a little bit more active with my feet and pressuring her a little bit more and being able to move her and kind of scrap out a few points as well," Pegula said. "So, yeah, I just kind of found a way today, but it was a really great match, I thought, especially the last set was super high level."

Third-seeded Maria Sakkari of Greece also advanced to the third round with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Viktoriya Tomova of Bulgaria, while Magda Linette of Poland lost the first set at love and came back to beat No. 13 seed Dayana Yastremska of Bulgaria 0-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a second-round match.

## TENNIS

Earlier in the day, Miami Open champion Danielle Collins and Sloane Stephens won first-round matches. Collins beat Paula Badosa 6-1, 6-4 at the clay-court tournament, while Stephens, the 2017 U.S. Open champion, defeated Magdalena Frech 6-0, 6-2.

Collins has disclosed this will be her finish season on tour. She has endometriosis, an ailment that affects the uterus.

"I'd rather like to go out with a bang, you know, than the other way," Collins said. "I know everybody has a different way of ending their professional career, and for me I want to go out playing my best tennis."

Stephens is playing on her favorite surface.

"It's more athletic. It's more running, more sliding, just a lot more adversity I feel like, but in a good way," she said. "When you think the point is over, it's never over."

Other winners Tuesday included Taylor Townsend, Astra Sharma, Caroline Dolehide, Ashley Krueger and Elisabetta Cocciaretto.

American Aleksandar Kovacevic outlasted Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis on Tuesday night to reach the second round of the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championship, winning 7-6 (3), 6-7 (2), 6-4 in a match that lasted 3 hours, 16 minutes.

"Go for it. That's the only thing you can really tell yourself, is be brave and in those big moments kind of just let it ride," Kovacevic said. "You don't want to have regrets afterwards that you didn't go for your shots and let the other guy win."

Kovacevic, who entered Tuesday having played just two tour-level clay matches, won 80% of his first-serve points and hit 14 aces.

"I was just trying to get a good performance for my first tournament on clay for this season," Kovacevic said. "So that's what I did and whether I won or lost, I was still happy with my performance today."

He moves on to face either No. 6

## Best of the Rest

**Brighton post profit:** Premier League club Brighton posted an after-tax profit of 122.8 million pounds (\$154.4 million) for the 2022-23 season on Tuesday.

That figure represented a jump from 24.1 million pounds (\$30.3 million) in profit the previous year after sales of star players like Alexis Mac Allister, Yves Bissouma and Marc Cucurella and compensation for former manager Graham Potter, who was hired by Chelsea in September 2022.

Brighton said its accounts did not include further big sales like Moises Caicedo and Robert Sanchez because their transfers to Chelsea were completed after the reporting period.

Caicedo's move was worth up to \$146 million and Sanchez reportedly cost \$32 million.

Brighton's figures were also boosted after it secured its highest Premier League finish - sixth - and advanced to the semifinals of the FA Cup.

"We now have a very solid platform to continue to make significant progress on the pitch, by investing in our squad," Brighton deputy chairman and chief executive Paul Barber said.

Brighton said its turnover was a club high of 204.5 million pounds (\$257 million). (AP)

**Martinez, Lindelof ruled out:** Manchester United defenders Lisandro Martinez and Victor Lindelof have been ruled out of action for at least a month because of injuries, the club said.

Argentina international Martinez suffered a calf strain in training and Lindelof hurt his hamstring in Saturday's 1-1 draw against Brentford.

United hopes both players will return before the end of the season, but their absences will likely hinder Erik ten Hag's attempt to secure Champions League qualification.

The United manager has had to contend with a slew of squad injuries this season, with Rasmus Hojlund, Mason Mount, Luke Shaw and Casemiro among the players who have been sidelined for prolonged periods.

Martinez has made just 11 appearances this season and only recently recovered from knee ligament damage. He was previously out for three months after undergoing surgery on his right foot for a metatarsal injury in October.

Sixth-place United is 11 points behind Aston Villa in fourth with a game in hand. Ten Hag's team is also in the semifinals of the FA Cup and will play second-division Coventry at Wembley later this month. (AP)

seed Jordan Thompson or China's Wu Yibing.

In other action Tuesday, Gijs Brouwer, who was born in Houston and reached the semifinals of this event last year, was ousted in the first round by James Duckworth. The Australian defeated Brouwer 6-3, 6-3.

Max Purcell, the No. 8 seed, beat Alex Michelsen 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-4. Luciano Darderi got past American Denis Kudla 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2.



Danielle Collins hits a return to Elena Rybakina, of Kazakhstan, during the women's singles final of the Miami Open tennis tournament, in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)





West Ham's Kurt Zouma, (right), tries to block a shot from Tottenham's Son Heung-min during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham and Tottenham, at the London stadium in London. (AP)

# Sports

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## Spurs miss chance to overtake Villa as Calvert-Lewin earns Everton draw

Forest move three points clear of drop zone

LONDON, April 3: (AP) Tottenham missed the chance to overtake Aston Villa in the race for Champions League qualification after settling for a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Premier League.

Brennan Johnson had given fifth-place Spurs an ideal start at London Stadium, but that was canceled out by Kurt Zouma's leveler in the 19th.

West Ham could have even gone on to win if Michail Antonio had been more ruthless with a second-half chance.

The forward raced through on goal after an hour, but with only Guglielmo Vicario to beat, he fired straight at the Spurs goalkeeper.

Spurs knew a big enough win would have seen it overtake fourth-place Villa on goal difference. And that looked like a possibility when the visitors raced into an early lead after Timo Werner burst past Vladimir Coufal and played in Johnson to convert from close range.

### SOCCER

But manager Ange Postecoglou was left frustrated when Jarrod Bowen's corner was turned in by an unmarked Zouma.

The result left Tottenham two points behind Villa, having played the same number of games.

After 23 games without a goal, Dominic Calvert-Lewin was a picture of calm as he fired home an 88th-minute penalty that could be crucial to Everton's hopes of Premier League survival.

The England striker stepped off the bench in the second half at St James' Park with his relegation-fighting team trailing 1-0 to a dominant Newcastle.

With Nottingham Forest on its way to a 3-1 win against Fulham, Everton desperately needed something to stay ahead of the Midlands club, which is also in a battle to avoid the drop.

Calvert-Lewin's last goal was on Oct. 29 against West Ham - but, with the pressure on and time running down, he was willing to take responsibility from the spot and salvaged a 1-1 draw that kept 16th-place Everton one point ahead of Forest in 17th.

"He has been working hard and getting in the right areas. He strikes it well enough to go in and I am pleased for him and the group," Everton manager Sean Dyche said.

Even after Calvert-Lewin's rescue act, Everton is still without a league win in 2024.

It is four points clear of Luton in 18th, but having already been handed a six-point deduction this season for breaching the league's financial rules, it could face more punishment for further breaches.

All Dyche can do is to concentrate on turning things around on the field.

"This job wasn't a walk in the park when I got it and it is still not," he said. "There is a long way to go, but there are a lot of steps we are making in the right direction."

The form book might suggest otherwise, with Everton's winless run in the league extending to 13

## Al-Fatah Club claim silver in West Asian Table Tennis Championship



Silver medalists Al-Fatah Club celebrate with the national flag at the end of the championship.

JEDDAH, April 3: Al-Fatah Club secured second place in the women's division of the West Asian Table Tennis Club Championship held in Jeddah on Tuesday. They were defeated in the final by Aali of Bahrain with a score of three games to two.

In the men's final, Bahrain emerged victorious over Al-Itihad of Saudi Arabia with a score of 3-2, clinching the title.

Al-Tadamon finished in sixth place, while Al-Fahaheel took seventh place in the men's category. In the women's category, Salwa Al-Sabah Club also secured seventh place.

The tournament kicked off last Friday in Jeddah and was organized by the Saudi Table Tennis Federation in collaboration with the West Asian Federation. This marked the first time Saudi Arabia hosted an event of such scale in the history of the table tennis federation.

Thirteen clubs competed at the men's level, including Al-Fahaheel and Al-Tadamon from Kuwait, Al-Itihad, Al-Ahly, and Al-Shabab from Saudi Arabia, Darbandikhan from Iraq, Al-Arabi, Al-Sadd, and Qatar from Qatar, Hussein City from Jordan, Sar and Bahrain from Bahrain, and Ghazir from Lebanon.

### TABLE TENNIS

At the women's level, seven clubs participated, namely Salwa Al-Sabah, Al-Fatma from Kuwait, Military Industries from Iraq, Hamada from Jordan, Aali from Bahrain, Al-Women from Qatar, and Al-Raed from Saudi Arabia.

Al-Fatah Club's roster consisted of four players: Manwa Al-Shammari, Maryam Abdul-Rahim, Sheikha Al-Hamad, and Liu Fei.



Everton's Dominic Calvert-Lewin celebrates after scoring their side's first goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Everton at St. James' Park, in Newcastle, England. (AP)

games, but it is.

The draw hardly helped New-

castle either after the home team had looked set to boost its hopes of securing European soccer next season when Alexander Isak struck in the 15th.

It was the Sweden international's 19th goal of the season and came after he showed quick feet in the box before sweeping a low shot past Jordan Pickford.

Everton defender James Tarkowski inadvertently hit his own crossbar with an attempted clearance in the second half and VAR denied Newcastle a second goal through Dan Burn for offside before Everton's leveler.

Again VAR intervened by inviting referee Tony Harrington to review footage of substitute Paul Dummett hauling Ashley Young to the ground.

The official duly pointed to the spot and Calvert-Lewin did the rest.

"It was a decent performance but we needed a second goal. We

## Al-Tadamon bolster chances

## Yarmouk on the verge of league qualification

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Yarmouk edged Burgan 3-1 in the sixteenth round to solidify its position in the first division.

Yarmouk now requires just one point from three remaining matches to secure qualification to the Zain Premier League. This comes after they elevated their tally to 27 points, securing the top spot in the first division league.

Meanwhile, Al-Tadamon has also

bolstered its chances for Premier League qualification with victory over Al-Sahel. Al-Sahel now must win all three of its remaining matches while hoping for Al-Tadamon's stumble.

### SOCCER

For Yarmouk, the path to securing one of the two available seats seems almost assured. However, it is keen to confirm its qualification and avoid a repeat of last season's scenario. It

was on the verge of securing a qualification ticket before Khaitan, third in the standings, managed to snatch the second qualifying spot from it.

Reflecting on the Yarmouk versus Burgan encounter, Burgan took an early lead just eight minutes into the first half. However, Yarmouk swiftly responded, equalizing just two minutes later. It then went on to score its second and third goals in the 57th and 75th minutes respectively, clinching their seventh victory in the competition.

## Showdown with Manama looms

## Kuwait Club dominate Kazma to secure West Asia Basketball League final berth

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Kuwait Club player out jumps two Kazma players to score.

KUWAIT CITY, April 3: Kuwait Club has solidified its position in the final of the West Asia Basketball League for the Gulf region, securing a repeat victory over Kazma with a commanding 122-79 win in the second semi-final match. Kuwait Club will now face off against Manama of Bahrain in the championship clash, who also secured their spot with two consecutive wins against compatriot Muharraq.

The semi-finals followed a playoff format comprising three matches, with the team winning two matches advancing to the final.

### BASKETBALL

were on the end of two tight decisions," Newcastle manager Eddie Howe said. "Bar that penalty we go on to win that game. It would have been a tight win but a deserved one."

Nottingham Forest moved three points clear of the drop zone with the win over Fulham.

Callum Hudson-Odoi, Chris Wood and Morgan Gibbs-White fired Forest into a 3-0 halftime lead. Tosin Adarabioyo pulled one back for Fulham after the break.

Second from bottom Burnley is unbeaten in four after a 1-1 draw with Wolverhampton but Forest's win saw it slip six points adrift of safety.

Crystal Palace could still be dragged into a survival fight after a 1-0 loss to Bournemouth extended its winless run to four games.

Justin Kluivert scored the only goal of the game in the 79th to move Bournemouth up to 11th.

Palace is on 30 points - eight clear of the relegation zone.

With qualification for the final, Kuwait Club has also secured passage to the Asian finals, where teams from the Levant, Iran, and Central Asia will compete. Both finalists advance directly to the next round. Meanwhile, Kazma will face Muharraq in a decisive match, with the winner earning qualification for the continental finals.

In the match itself, Kuwait asserted its dominance early on, led by standout performances from players like Marcus Hunt, Anthony Carr, Turki Hamoud, and Muhammad Adnan. Despite Kazma's efforts, Kuwait Club maintained control throughout the game, ending the first quarter with a 30-18 lead.

While Kazma showed improvement in the second quarter with notable contributions from Ahmed Al-Balushi and American players Chapman and Leslie, Kuwait Club swiftly regained control. The gap widened to 15 points by halftime, with Kuwait leading 58-43.

Kuwait Club further tightened its grip on the game in the third quarter, capitalizing on Kazma's fatigue to extend the lead to 32 points (90-58).

The fourth quarter saw Kuwait Club's absolute superiority on full display, particularly with Fahd Al-Dhafiri's remarkable performance, scoring four consecutive three-pointers. Contributions from Hunt, Abdul-Rahman Al-Saho, and Imran Johar sealed the victory for Kuwait Club in a dominant fashion.



Yarmouk and Burgan players battling for the ball.