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Opinion

Your Highness the Amir, blessed be your international tours

By **Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THERE is no doubt that the illness of the head of state negatively affects the state's movements, and leads to a kind of drought in its relations with the surroundings and the world.

What if this drought continued for about five years, starting with the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and his late successor Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, who suffered from health challenges throughout three years of his rule, shifting most of the burden to his crown prince, who had to work on all fronts - internal and external - at the same time?

That is why Kuwait lived in an almost paralyzed state throughout those years, and was close to isolation at all levels, resulting in several internal crises during that period.

Because of this, the current leadership had to exert double the efforts for dealing with the consequences, and had to work on reviving Kuwait and its people at the same time.

From the time of the illnesses of the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, and his successor the late Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, Kuwait's international image changed, especially in its relations, which have been active for decades, and it has its own connections and tours in regional and international affairs.

Today, the new leadership has committed itself to working with all its might, doubling its efforts due to its conviction that time does not accept the luxury of being occupied with pointless conflicts.

There is no doubt that observers saw the extent of credit that Kuwait enjoys in the Gulf and Arab countries through the state visits made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and its fruitful outcomes that will undoubtedly appear in the days to come.

In this regard, it is known that visits by country leaders are aimed to check on developments in the capitals they visit, exchange advice on the problems facing countries, and build their vision on that.

This is especially if some of them are new to the leadership, and have many aspirations regarding their country. They are moving with confident steps towards working on pioneering acts, such as the case with the Sultanate of Oman where Sultan Hathaim bin Tariq is working to complete the Omani renaissance. The United Arab Emirates witnessed many positive developments in the few years of the era of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. The Kingdom of Bahrain made great strides in thoughtful development. Qatar has become a pillar in major projects. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the reform movement is led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman based on the directives of King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

These are all valuable lessons to be learned from. What if the leader is determined to exert every effort to revive the state and restore its regional and international standing, much like the new Kuwaiti leadership? This vision, outlined in His Highness's speeches, provides a clear direction forward.

Continued on Page 6

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EGYPT HONORS AMIR WITH PRESTIGIOUS MEDAL



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the formal reception ceremony at the Federal Palace on Tuesday, marking his state visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. Amiri Diwan photo

Amir charts course in Egypt

Rain peaks Wednesday with hail, strong winds

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Meteorological Department said that the rainy condition that has affected the country since Sunday evening, will continue Tuesday, with scattered rain of light to moderate intensity, peaking at noon Wednesday, until the early hours of the night, especially in the central and southern regions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Director of the Department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the rains are of varying intensity, ranging from medium to heavy, and may be accompanied by hailstones, with active winds whose speed may exceed 60 kilometers per hour, raising dust in open areas.

Al-Qarawi explained that this leads to a decrease in horizontal visibility and a rise in sea waves as a result of the extension of a superficial depression accompanied by a humid air mass, coinciding with a deepening depression in the upper atmosphere. He stated that the weather will gradually improve Thursday morning, as clouds and rain chances decrease, with chances of fog forming in the evening, and the prospect of rain returning Friday in some areas, especially the northern and coastal areas.

Continued on Page 6

Day by Day

OLD narratives say that during the Umayyad era, the poet Hadba bin Khashram killed a man and his family offered a huge blood money to spare his life. The dead man's family refused the blood money, but one of his sons almost agreed to accept the offer.

The mother was furious and she warned him saying 'what you are doing is wrong'. She told him, 'If you forgive the man who killed your father I will do even worse and marry the man (killer)'. The son realized his folly and refused to accept the blood money.

They are traditions, cultures, and dignity.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to enhance cooperation, and instill necessary skills and knowledge for Foreign Ministry personnel to adapt to various regional and international issues.

Assistant Foreign Minister for the Institute Ambassador **Nasser Al-Sabeeh** told KUNA that the MoU, serving various national establishments, is part of many MoUs signed by the institute and several bodies. (KUNA)

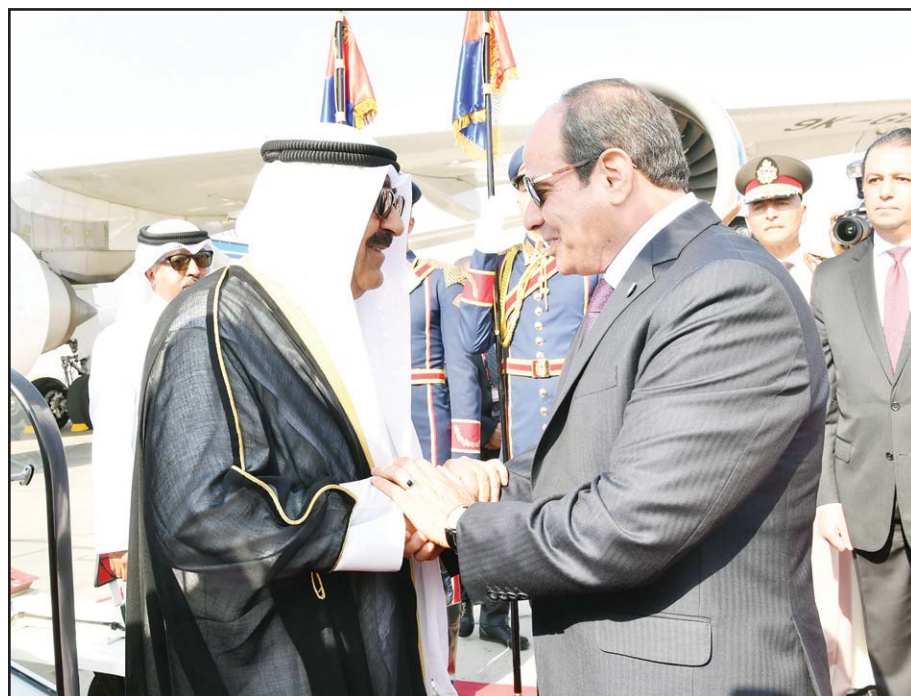
WASHINGTON: United States Central Command (CENTCOM) announced late Monday that the Houthi militia had fired three anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) and three unmanned drones (UAV) from Yemen into the Red Sea toward a merchant vessel.

This came in a statement on social media platform (X), where CENTCOM elaborated the ASBMs and UAVs were directed toward the "MV Cyclades, a Malta-flagged, Greece-owned vessel," indicating "there were no injuries and the vessel continued on its way."

"CENTCOM forces successfully engaged and destroyed one Houthi launched UAV on a flight path towards USS Philippine Sea and USS Laboon in the Red Sea. There were no injuries or damages reported by US, coalition, or merchant vessels," the statement added. (KUNA)



Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi awarding His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the Order of the Nile on Tuesday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah being received by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Amiri Diwan photos

Visit further deepens Kuwait-Egypt ties

CAIRO, April 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi convened for an official session of talks at Al-Ittihadia Palace on Tuesday.

The discussions centered on bolstering the longstanding bilateral relations between their nations and enhancing cooperation across various sectors to fulfill the aspira-

tions of both peoples. They also reaffirmed their commitment to supporting joint Arab initiatives and explored avenues for further development in all domains. The dialogue also touched upon the latest regional and global developments.

The meeting was attended by His Highness the Amir's official delegation.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi Tuesday awarded His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the Order of the Nile, the most prestigious Egyptian medal

Continued on Page 6

GCC Sec-Gen calls for Gaza ceasefire

Kuwait reiterates support for Palestinian cause

DOHA, April 30, (Agencies): The just Palestinian cause remains the central Arab issue, affirmed Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stating that the Zionist entity and its continuous violations are the driving factor behind failure to adopt sustainable solutions.

Ambassador Al-Sabah addressed third session of Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum, with Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan in Doha on Tuesday.

He called on international community to adhere to its responsibilities and put an end to the systemic crimes against Palestinians.

The Kuwaiti diplomat also urged the Security

Council to safeguard international peace and security, address cause of escalation, provide protection to Palestinian people against forced eviction, and guarantee flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Once again, Kuwait asserts its unwavering stance by legitimate rights of Palestinians, their right to just and comprehensive peace, based on international legitimacy rules and Arab peace initiative.

The Ambassador spoke of Kuwait efforts in boosting cooperation, and augmenting exchanged benefit in the region, to achieve integration, and arrive at a realistic implementable economic plan.

Continued on Page 6

Collab eyed

Kuwait, Saudi finmins meet

RIYADH, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwait's Finance and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Anwar Al-Mudhaf, discussed with Saudi Arabia's Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan bilateral cooperation and ways to boost financial and economic relations.

The Kuwait Ministry of Finance mentioned in a statement, that this came in a meeting between the two officials on the

Continued on Page 6



KUNA photo
Kuwait, Saudi finance ministers discuss boosting financial, investment relations.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:42 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 05:08 Maghrib .. 18:24
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 19:47

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot and cloudy with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind to easterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h with a chance for thunder rain that might be heavy at times and a chance for rising dust.

Weather

By Night: Mild and cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station Max Exp Min Rec

Kuwait City	31	28
Kuwait Airport	31	25
Abdaly	30	26
Jahra	31	26
Salmiyah	29	26
Nuwaisib	31	27
Wafra	31	25



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Ahmed Al-Jarallah received the US Ambassador Karen Hideko Sasahara and the accompanying officials.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Ahmed Al-Jarallah in talks with the US Ambassador Karen Hideko Sasahara.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the US ambassador to Kuwait and Public Diplomacy Officer Stuart Turner.

Editor-in-Chief receives US envoy

The Dean of Kuwait Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Ahmed Al-Jarallah, welcomed the Ambassador of the United States of America, Karen Hideko Sasahara, along with Public Diplomacy Officer Stuart Turner and Press

and Media Specialist Dina Al-Mallak, to the Al-Seyassah Press House on Tuesday afternoon.

During the meeting, they engaged in discussions on various topics of mutual interest, particularly focusing on press and media matters.

Also present were the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, Suleiman Al-Jarallah, the Deputy CEO of Al-Jarallah Group, Dr. Ayman Al-Bulushi, and press colleagues Saud Al-Farhan and Abdul Aziz Al-Farhan.

'MEW prepared for peak summer; teams to help out in emergencies'

Plan in place to modernize infrastructure: Al-Anazi

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services and Main Workshops Sector at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Aqul Al-Anazi said the sector is fully prepared for the peak summer season as a logistical unit that serves all technical sectors, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an interview with the daily, Al-Anazi confirmed the formation of teams that work round the clock to provide support in the event of an emergency in the electrical or water networks; as well as the provision of more than 40 mechanisms for transporting equipment and diesel transformers to areas experiencing power outage as quickly as possible.

He revealed a comprehensive plan is being prepared to upgrade and renovate the sector's buildings to become 20 percent energy efficient, which will contribute to reducing consumption.

He also talked about the establishment of a photovoltaic panels factory to achieve self-sufficiency in this field to fully support the transition to renewable energy. He revealed three projects will be awarded soon to the best bidders in order to install panels on the buildings of the northern and southern stations and in Subhan with a capacity of 26 megawatts.

Regarding the preparations for the next stage, he said: "The sector is considered a logistical support unit for all sectors at the ministry. It is responsible for constructing new buildings, developing existing buildings, and providing logistical support to all sectors; including the mechanical and electrical maintenance of their facilities, monitoring and inspecting smart or mechanical meters before and after installation. As for the peak season, we have formed teams to deal with emergency situations. They work in shifts round the clock to help provide services and transportation for emergency maintenance in case of power or water supply disruption and to ensure the readiness of heavy machinery that provides logistical support according to the needs of the technical sectors."

Modernize

He went on to say: "We have a plan for the next six years to modernize the existing buildings, raise the efficiency of the work environment, and save energy. Some buildings are very dilapidated; hence, the need to renovate them. God willing, all the ministry's buildings will undergo radical maintenance and restoration. Civil maintenance contracts have already been signed for a number of buildings that need restoration. We have a plan to construct about 15 new buildings, all of which will be green and energy-efficient."

He added: "We have three projects in the process of awarding for the supply, installation and operation of photovoltaic cells on car awnings in the main workshops and the Emergency Services Department in Subhan with a capacity of 13 megawatts; car awnings and the buildings of the northern electric power stations in Subiya and Doha with a capacity of 6.2 megawatts; and car awnings and station buildings in the Southern Electric Power in Al-Zour with a capacity of 6.2 megawatts.

Asked about the ministry's projects aimed at preserving public money, Al-Anazi disclosed: "We have an integrated plan to establish a number of factories, the first of which is the photovoltaic panels factory. We will establish a factory to produce electrical wires. It will be affiliated with the Production Department. It is aimed at achieving self-sufficiency. We will also establish a factory for manufacturing electrical fuses. Thus, we will stop importing fuses and the ministry will save a lot of money through this; in addition to the establishment of charging stations for electric vehicles."

Meanwhile, the electricity consumption index recorded a noticeable increase of 11,590 megawatts at midday recently with temperatures rising to 37 degrees Celsius as the peak summer season is fast approaching, which usually begins in the middle of May, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the Ministry of Electricity and Water.

In preparation for this season, sources confirmed that the ministry is working hard to complete all maintenance works before the start of the season. They also announced completion of the maintenance of diesel generators and the mechanisms for transport them to the power outage sites, if necessary.

Sources pointed out the ministry is doing everything it can to overcome the peak season from a technical or awareness perspective or securing sources to cover the shortfall in production if it occurs.



Some of the students staging a sit-in at the Shaddadiya University premises.

Genocide condemned

Students stage sit-in, stand in solidarity with people in Gaza

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Shaddadiya university city bore witness to a powerful demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian people, echoing the global student movement's call for justice, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Led by the National Union of Kuwait University Students, the Faculty Members Association, and various student and union forces, along with the support of several members of the National Assembly and a multitude of citizens, the protest rallied in support of the Palestinian right to self-determination.

Gathering together, students, professors, and university members voiced their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause through impassioned speeches and solidarity messages. They emphasized that the Kuwaiti people stand steadfast in solidarity with their Palestinian brothers and sisters, refusing to turn a blind eye to the injustices they face.

Echoing the sentiments of protests across American and Western universities, the demonstration aimed to draw international attention to the ongoing tragedy unfolding in Gaza. Speakers condemned the relentless violence and destruction inflicted by the Zionist regime, highlighting the loss of innocent lives and the urgent need for global intervention.

By standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, the exceptional student movement has not only embarrassed the American administration but also reaffirmed the universal importance of the Palestinian cause. Despite efforts to diminish its significance, the Palestinian struggle remains a global issue and a fundamental human right that demands attention and action.

In the face of adversity, the Kuwaiti student movement stands united, sending a powerful message of solidarity and support to the Palestinian people and reaffirming their commitment to justice, peace, and dignity for all.

NCCAL takes part in 33rd Int'l Book Fair

By Salem Al-Methen

ABU DHABI, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwait represented by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), participated in Abu Dhabi's 33rd International Book Fair (ADIBF), with a pavilion consisting of a variety of Cultural and Literary books reflecting the country's rich heritage. Kuwait's National Book Fair Director Khalifa Al-Rabah told KUNA that the participation of the NCCAL is considered a great opportunity to strengthen the cultural and literary exchange between the participating countries.

Al-Rabah added that the NCCAL in particular, and Kuwaiti private and public publishing houses always participate in the book fair, which helps publicize Kuwaiti literature on a global cultural map. Book fairs are considered a necessity in understanding other cultures, Al-Rabah revealed that Kuwait publications are always in high demand and attendance from the fair audience.

Al-Rabah was impressed with the ADIBF's yearly developments in regard to organization and events, wishing them more success and everlasting growth.

The 33rd Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, organized by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Center, kicked off Monday and will last until May 5 at ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi. The fair includes approximately 1350 publishing houses from 90 countries to embody the slogan "Where the World's Tales Unfold".

Other Voices

Filipino 'Abagnale' in Kuwait

By Ahmad alsarraf

The American Frank Abagnale is considered the biggest forger in modern history. He baffled the security and federal investigation services in America and several European countries for many years, and dazzled their agencies while he was still a teenager. Because of the funny part of his story, Hollywood produced a movie 'Catch me if you can' and went on to win many awards for the exciting and funny events.

Abagnale was born to an American father and a French mother. He studied at a strict Catholic school in Bronxville, New York. He started scamming when he was sixteen. His parents' separation played a role in his deviance. He defrauded his father and managed to rob him of \$3,400, using his bank card to buy fake spare parts.

At the next stage, he succeeded in convincing the famous Pan American airline company, at the same age, that he was a pilot, and he flew 1.6 million km, during which he visited 66 countries, without paying a dollar, by claiming that his mission was to bring a plane from another airport.

He slept and ate in the most luxurious hotels, with the company bearing all his expenses. He fled after it became clear that he had been exposed to the company. He got a job as a pediatrician in a famous hospital in another state, with the help of his doctor friend, with whom he shared an apartment.

He also worked as a lawyer, after successfully forging a law degree from the Harvard University, and reached the position of Attorney General of the State of Louisiana, at the age of 19.

Abagnale was arrested for the first time in France in 1969 when he was working for Air France. He was imprisoned for six months and was handed over to Sweden, but his lawyer there dropped the charge against him, so Sweden handed him over to America.

While on the flight, he escaped by taking off the toilet seat, and decided

to collect his savings and flee to Brazil, via Canada, but he was arrested in Montreal and extradited to America, and he succeeded again, in 1971, in escaping from prison.

After several attempts and various frauds, he was arrested and received a 12-year prison sentence. After seven years, he was released in exchange for helping the federal authorities, without pay, in uncovering fraud crimes.

Abagnale tried working in various professions, such as cooking, grocery, and film production, but he failed in them due to his criminal past. But a bank manager, convinced of his talents, agreed to hire him to help him uncover fraudulent tricks, and thus began his life as a security consultant.

In 2015, Abagnale was named a Fraud Watch Ambassador for AARP, where he teaches clients, via online programs and social forums, how to protect themselves from identity theft and cybercrime.

In 2018, he began presenting a radio program entitled "The Complete Fraud," which talks about fraudsters and the nature of their work. Abagnale currently lives on Daniel Island with his wife, Kelly, and their three sons.

The occasion for writing about this fraudster goes back to the "success" of a Filipino domestic worker in hiding and disappearing from the eyes of all state agencies for more than 31 years, after she fled from her sponsor's house in 1993, and she was finally caught ... by coincidence!

The citizen who told her story called on the authorities to form committees and create an information base that would help using the worker's testimonies, to help the security forces find out how many people have succeeded in 'disappearing', as if they were ghosts, in a small country like Kuwait.

How did she live without an identity, or with false identities, and who protected her, and how did she visit hospitals, and how did she manage her affairs during the two years of Corona and where did she live and work? Have you committed crimes, for example?

The Abagnale of Kuwait needs to be studied, and perhaps a statuette made of it.



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Bullet wounds Kuwaiti citizen

Teacher assaulted by colleague

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: A Kuwaiti teacher of a school in Capital Governorate assaulted and hit his colleague, which prompted the latter to file a case of assault, beating, threats and insults against the former, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to security sources, a Kuwaiti teacher reported to the police that he was beaten, threatened, and insulted by a colleague in the same school where he works. Accordingly, a case was filed against him and referred to investigations. Also, a Kuwaiti woman informed the police that her brother was beaten by a Kuwaiti teacher in his school and said "hurtful" to him in front of his colleagues and students. Accordingly, the complaint was referred to the community police, and as a result, the teacher was detained in the police station pending the

two cases.

The sources indicated that the teacher attempted to commit suicide in the classroom and was contained and referred to forensic for testing. He was then referred to psychiatry.

They revealed that investigations are underway to find out the reasons for the teacher assaulting his colleague of the same school.



Kuwaiti suffers bullet wound: A stray bullet hit a 26-year-old Kuwaiti citizen in his shoulder while he was walking in Waha, Jahra.

According to a security source, when the Operations Room of Ministry of Interior received a report from Jahra Hospital about the arrival of a citizen who was shot in the shoulder, securitymen rushed to the location and was informed that something, which turned out to be a bullet, hit the citizen's shoulder while he was walking on a walkway.

'Time for futile talk over, action imperative for nation progress'

"THE Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port stands as a poignant symbol of missed opportunities for Kuwait, perhaps the most significant among them. Preceded by promising prospects that carried immense potential, its failure has incurred substantial financial losses, reaching into the billions of dinars," columnist **Talal Abdul Karim Al Arab** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Moreover, it has eroded the strategic advantages Kuwait aimed to secure, including setbacks in projects like the fourth refinery and the development of northern fields.

"The cancellation of the Dow Strategic Project, the untapped potential of Kuwaiti islands for tourism, and prolonged negligence in advancing education and sustainable development have all contributed to this unfortunate scenario.

"This failure, unequivocally governmental and parliamentary, has not only hindered Kuwait's progress but also weakened its competitiveness compared to less efficient, experienced, and economically robust nations.

"Political conflicts, power struggles, and a myopic focus on short-term financial gains have been the primary culprits behind the squandering of these opportunities.

"Both obstructive and negligent actions by governmental and parliamentary bodies have exacerbated the situation, leaving Kuwait at a significant disadvantage.

"Despite the commencement of the Mubarak Port project in 2007, progress has been sluggish, with only 52% completion achieved over 17 years. Even now, as efforts are made to revive the project and align it with the Silk Road initiative, one cannot help but wonder if it's too little, too late.

"Envisioned as a hub for international commerce and a vital link between East and West, the Mubarak Port was meant to stimulate local investments, attract foreign capital, and generate thousands of employment opportunities for Kuwaiti youth. Its realization would have also facilitated the acquisition of global expertise in port management, bolstering Kuwait's standing on the world stage.

"The parallels with the missed opportunities of the Dow Strategic Project are stark. The cancellation of this transformative venture deprived Kuwait of significant technological advancements and economic gains, particularly in the realm of petrochemicals.

"Meanwhile, the Iraqi Al-Faw Port, now rapidly progressing with Chinese collaboration, poses a formidable challenge. With its expansive infrastructure and ambitious goals, it threatens to overshadow regional competitors, including Kuwait. This development has spurred concerns in neighboring countries, highlighting the urgency for Kuwait to act decisively in the face of growing competition.

"In essence, Kuwait's penchant for political discord and bureaucratic inertia has come at a considerable cost. It has stifled progress, squandered resources, and undermined the nation's potential for growth and development. The time for futile debates and empty rhetoric is over, action is imperative if Kuwait is to reclaim its position as a leader in the region.

Also:

"The importance of media messages directed at children cannot be overstated, as they shape the future decision-makers of society," columnist **Shaima Nabil Al-Mulla** wrote **Al-Qabas** daily.

"These messages, whether conveyed through traditional media outlets, children's programs, social media, or electronic games and cartoons, play a pivotal role in stimulating imagination, expanding knowledge, and honing abilities. By engaging the senses through audio-visual mediums, children are not only entertained but also educated, fostering the adoption of positive behaviors.

"However, alongside these benefits, there are also potential negative impacts of media exposure on children. These can range from cultural clashes with societal values to the development of aggressive tendencies and addiction to digital platforms, particularly social networking sites, disrupting daily routines and posing risks to health and well-being.

"To guide children in utilizing media in a manner that maximizes positive outcomes, several strategies can be employed. Firstly, establishing clear guidelines regarding the time spent and the nature of content accessed helps children develop healthy media consumption habits. Parental supervision and involvement in monitoring content are crucial in ensuring that children are exposed to appropriate material.

"Encouraging a balanced approach to screen time, digital device usage, and other activities is essential for maintaining a well-rounded lifestyle. Open and ongoing dialogue with children about media content enables them to discern between harmful and beneficial messages, empowering them to make informed choices.

"Additionally, fostering awareness of cultural differences helps children navigate diverse media landscapes with sensitivity and understanding.

"While the question of how to effectively guide children in media usage may be complex, implementing these determinants can mitigate risks and promote positive outcomes. Ultimately, a proactive and collaborative approach involving parents, educators, and media

creators is key to fostering responsible media consumption habits among children."

"Mubarak Port ... a vital Gulf and Arab project. The port war, so to speak, is new in our region. It is not limited in this region as it extends to many parts of the world. The competition is intense and the results are due to the luck of those with good management, quick decision-making and the ability to cooperate internationally. Maritime transport movement is the backbone of trade. Internationalism is one of its most important components. It is no wonder then that in this situation, competition intensifies and turns into a conflict of interests," columnist **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kahrafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Kuwaiti Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and the Iraqi Al-Faw Port are two important centers in the wheel of this conflict. These two ports are close in terms of capacity and energy, although they differ in design, and each has its own advantages and strategic location. Both can achieve the desired economic goals, if the political circumstances surrounding each of them are identified and contained.

"The entry of China on one hand, and the Gulf on the other hand, does not complicate the problem, as it could rather facilitate things if intentions are good and balanced interests are achieved for all parties. This is possible.

"The Mubarak Port project is a vital and strategic project not only for Kuwait, but also for the Gulf. Thus, it must receive Gulf support and cooperation to complete it in order to reach the strategic economic dimension in the northern Gulf.

"In this context, it is also possible to cooperate with brotherly Iraq in a way that protects everyone's interests. From this standpoint, and after the State allocated the required funding, the State should move forward with completing the project and all those associated with it, such as housing, storage, transportation lines and others.

"Without a doubt, moving forward with the implementation of all components of the project and the reconstruction of Boubyan Island are of great importance from the economic and strategic standpoints, and for the Arab trade movement.

"Kuwait is keen on maintaining strong relations with its brothers and neighbors in a way that guarantees the interests of all, and in accordance with the international law and international legitimacy. It is committed to this direction. However, this does not diminish its concern for its national interests within the healthy framework of neighborliness.

"Difference in views regarding Mubarak Port or anything else is possible, but what matters is that the difference is settled through positive and constructive dialogue, not through the media. Kuwait is keen on doing this.

"Our national, Gulf and Arab economy is in dire need of such strategic projects. Mubarak Port is one of the most important projects. It must be viewed from this perspective and from the angle of Arab cooperation.

"Completing this vital project must be the top priority of the next government and the National Assembly due to its positive impact on enhancing transit and intra-regional trade, employing nationals, the island reconstruction project, and completing the components of the northern economic region. All these are enough to push the implementation of Mubarak Port protect to the top of priorities. Allah is the Giver of success."

"Long live the government! A piece of bad news stated that Salmiya police arrested an Asian woman who violated the Residency Law for 'only' 31 years! In fact, the government deceived by this Asian has been existing for three decades. She lives among us, works, receives treatment, transfers her salary to her country, and sleeps peacefully. I believe, and Allah knows best, that she was arrested by chance, and she will leave for her country, strengthened and honored during the government's grace period, without accountability or punishment!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The announcement of this case is in itself a disgrace that should not be tolerated. The weak security grip made this Asian woman flee from the first sponsor and work in another place or other places. The weak security grip also made the shelter work for her, knowing that it was a violation. The weak security grip made her move freely throughout the country - buying, selling and processing without fear or shame.

"Now that she has reached an advanced age, it no longer makes any difference whether she sits or leaves. The result is that she will return to her country during the grace period, which has become an annual custom for violators.

"Thirty years in Kuwait without residency, health insurance or identification papers, yet no one stood in her way. If she is a Kuwaiti woman subjected to a court ruling in relation to debt or even traffic violation, she would not have been able to escape punishment!

"Forgive us, Ministry of Interior, a grace period without the red eye, tightening of the security grip and intensifying inspection procedures will not bear fruit. Some violators, who have not decided to leave the country or those who are 'unsatisfied', are waiting for next year's grace period. They decide when they will leave, not you."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Major General Engineer Issam Nayef and other officers at the start of the drill.

National Guard launches drill to be 'ready' for emergencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Major General Engineer Issam Nayef, Assistant for Administrative Support in the National Guard, announced the commencement of the "Ready" exercise, conducted by the Administrative Support Units, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The primary objective of this exercise is to assess readiness levels, offer support to state agencies, and effectively handle any emergency situations that may arise.

During the opening of the exercise, Major General Nayef conveyed the greetings and appreciation of the Guard leadership, including His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard, Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Under-Secretary Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai.

This exercise, conducted by the administrative support units in collaboration with

the State Apparatus Support Center and units under the Assistant Command for Administrative Support, is the first of its kind. It aims to fulfill the tasks assigned to it in providing support to state agencies.

Major General Nayef highlighted the importance of utilizing the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants during their training and cooperation with ministries and state institutions.

These interactions were facilitated through cooperation protocols signed between these entities and the National Guard, aligning with the leadership's directives and the objectives outlined in the National Guard's 2025 guiding document, "Protection and Support."

He urged participants to collaborate and adhere to security and safety protocols while commending the significant support provided by the National Guard leadership to the administrative support units.

Three fuel theft cases in Al-Jahra & Hawally

'Give me money or I'll kill you'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: It's a misconception to think that theft of small amounts of property doesn't warrant legal prosecution. Recent reports from police stations in Saad Al-Abdullah and Maidan Hawally suggest otherwise, with three separate cases of fuel theft being filed under case numbers 153, 154, and 155/2024, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In the first incident at the Saad Al-Abdullah police station, a driver filled his tank with only one Kuwaiti dinar's worth of fuel and then fled without paying. In another case at the same station, a different driver filled up his car with two dinars' worth of fuel and some gold, then also fled the scene.

Repeatedly

Meanwhile, in Hawally, a representative from a fuel company reported a vehicle with a known license plate that had repeatedly visited the station, filled up, and left without paying. The estimated value of the stolen fuel in this case was approximately 9.5 dinars.

These incidents highlight that even minor fuel theft can lead to legal repercussions, emphasizing the importance of accountability and the risks associated with criminal behavior, regardless of the stolen amount.

— Son threatens father: An arrest warrant

PAM marks safety day

'Low worker injury in first quarter of 2024'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) organized a celebration on World Occupational Health Safety Day with the participation of approximately 105 government and private agencies, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The event, held under the theme "Towards a Safe Work Environment", showcased PAM's commitment to ensuring the safety of workers in Kuwait.

Rabab Al-Osaimi, Acting Deputy Director of the Authority for Planning and Administrative Development Sector Affairs, highlighted the low rates of worker injuries recorded during the first quarter of the current year, attributing this achievement to the Authority's dedication and the cooperation of companies and business owners.

Al-Osaimi outlined the legal requirements set forth by Law 8/2010 for establishments with 25 or more workers to appoint an occupational safety supervisor. This supervisor is responsible for implementing safety measures and ensuring compliance with safety standards, serving as a liaison between the facility and the Authority. Non-compliance with this regulation may result in accountability and the imposition of penalties.

She also mentioned that the inspection of compliance with occupational health and safety requirements has been digitized to ensure transparency and integrity. The Authority recently launched the "Workers' Housing Suitability" automated service, initially targeting government contracts and later expanding to include all private sectors. This service aims to provide suitable housing for workers in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Aseel Al-Mazyad, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department, and Head of the Permanent Coordinating Committee responsible for working with civil society institutions, emphasized the committee's role in promoting human rights awareness and strengthening partnerships that serve all segments of society. The committee has signed three memorandums of understanding to enhance cooperation, raise awareness among workers, and develop a culture of human rights.



Eng. Al-Osaimi

Asian run over, dies

Call to cancel decision, counteract 'monopoly'

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Court of Appeals referred to the Constitutional Court a case filed against the decision to impose compulsory contracting with a medical waste management company.

The referral came against the backdrop of a grievance submitted by the Union of Private Medical Professionals and others against the Ministry of Health's Resolution No. 196/2022 that required all medical facilities to contract with a specific company to manage and operate the medical waste treatment plant.

The decision had provoked dissatisfaction in hospitals, clinics and centers because it constitutes a state of monopoly and violates the law and the Constitution, as well as threatens to have a negative impact on the quality and cost of medical services.

The defense counsel from Taher Legal Group Law Firm, Lawyer Dr. Fawaz Al-Khatib, called for canceling the decision and preventing monopoly, stressing that it violates the principles of free competition and the lack of available alternatives.

He referred to Articles 16, 18, and 20 of the Constitution and Articles 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Competition Protection Law, which limit the restrictive ability of ministerial decisions on property rights and competition.

Lawyer Dr. Al-Khatib affirmed the right of the private sector to invest capital in accordance with the principles of social justice and fair cooperation between public and private sectors to achieve development and raise the standard of living.

All eyes are on the Constitutional Court's ruling, which will affect the medical sector of Kuwait.

Asian run over, dies: An Asian resident died after he was hit by a car near Kabd Cooperative Society while trying to cross the road.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the accident on Kabd Road near the cooperative society, police officers rushed to the location with paramedics and discovered that the Asian man had died.

The motorist, who is an Arab expatriate, has been taken into custody.

MoE denies social media video on student mishap

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Ahmad Al-Wahida, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Education, has refuted claims circulating on social media regarding an incident involving a student falling from the top of a canopy within one of the ministry's schools, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Al-Wahida clarified that the video clip being shared is outdated and that no such incident occurred within Kuwait.

In light of this, Al-Wahida urged caution when sharing information and emphasized the importance of obtaining news from credible, official sources. This serves as a reminder to exercise discernment and responsibility in disseminating information to avoid the spread of misinformation or panic.

Inmate beats officer: A lance corporal from the Sentencing Implementation Sector of the Ministry of Interior has reported being assaulted by an inmate at the Central Prison. The incident was reported at the Sulabiya Police Station, with the lance corporal providing a medical report detailing scratches and abrasions, which supported his claim of being assaulted by another person, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The report led to the filing of a case for assaulting a public employee while performing his duties, under Case No. 131/2024. Further investigations are expected to determine the circumstances and resolve the incident.

'No encroachments'

5 private reserves razed

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Municipality has confirmed the demolition of five private reserves fenced with barbed wires and contained cages in Jahra, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, the Municipality disclosed that a team from the Violations Removal Department in the Municipality branch in Jahra, in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority and Ministry of Interior, carried out an intensive campaign to remove encroachments on State properties.

On the other hand, the Municipality announced that the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Municipality branch in Ahmedi conducted a series of field tours in April to remove everything that obstructs the road and distorts the general view in a bid to raise the level of cleanliness. The team removed abandoned cars, boats and scrap materials from the yards and streets; as well as put warning stickers on 797 abandoned vehicles, impounded 118 abandoned vehicles and obtained 146 pledges.

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ARCS official commends Kuwait's humanitarian support for those in need

KRCS provides humanitarian aid to 450 people in Armenia

ANKARA, April 30, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced Tuesday that it provided humanitarian aid to 450 individuals in the Armenian capital, Yerevan.

Khaled Al-Mutairi, head of the society's field team, clarified in a phone call with KUNA that the aid was distributed according to essential needs, particularly targeting the elderly and the most vulnerable groups, in coordination with the Armenian Red Cross Society.

Food parcels, sufficient for a family of five, were distributed for one month along with blankets, heaters, and cleaning supplies, Al-Mutairi added.

He pointed out Kuwait's commitment to responding promptly to humanitarian appeals and assisting those in need, especially in disaster-stricken and vulnerable countries.

He expressed gratitude to Kuwait's Ambassador to Armenia Nawaf Al-Enezi, and the embassy staff for their

dedication and support to the team, mobilizing all resources to facilitate their mission.

Last Friday, KRCS launched a humanitarian aid campaign to assist over 1,500 individuals in need and displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in various areas of Armenia.

Meanwhile, an Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) official on Tuesday commended Kuwait's relief efforts and humanitarian response in helping those in need

and displaced in Armenia.

In a statement to Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), received by KUNA, ARCS Secretary General Artur Aristakysyan expressed gratitude towards Kuwait's significant humanitarian aid, emphasizing the country's role in humanitarian generosity, acknowledging KRCS' prompt response in providing crucial support to displaced people from the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Over 1,500 people across Armenia

would benefit from KRCS' distinctive humanitarian assistance, he noted.

He underlined KRCS' dedication to humanitarian service worldwide, underscoring the impartial and inclusive nature of their efforts.

Last Friday, KRCS launched a humanitarian aid campaign to assist over 1,500 individuals in need and displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in various areas of Armenia in response to a call from ARCS.

Kuwait keen to support inventors, intellectuals, innovators: Al-Najim

MoCI holds Intellectual Property Offices Forum on World IP Day

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ziyad Al-Najim affirmed on Monday Kuwait's keenness to support Kuwaiti inventors, innovators and intellectuals regionally and internationally.



Al-Najim

In the opening speech of the Intellectual Property Offices Forum, organized by the ministry on the World Intellectual Property Day April 26, Al-Najim said that intellectual property is a continuous course that does not stop at a certain phase, and it's necessary to embrace its pioneers and contribute to its development and sustainability.

Al-Najim added that he stands side by side with state institu-

tions to guarantee the rights of inventors and enlighten society about the importance of protecting intellectual property, as modern inventions are what favor one society over another.

For his part, the Trademarks and Patents Supervisor at the ministry Rashid Al-Owaihian said in his speech that since the outbreak of the industrial revolution and the continuation of scientific and technological progress, there have been tremendous economic changes and countries trade exchanges increased.

Countries then began to pay

attention to enacting laws that regulate intellectual property rights, both industrial property and literary and artistic property, he explained, and the need for industrialized countries to protect industrial intellectual property rights on an international scale.

He stated that the first international agreement that was concluded was the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property signed in 1883, and three years later the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works was concluded.

Al-Owaihian explained that Kuwait has several international agreements including the TRIPS in 1994, WIPO in 1998, Paris in 2014, and the International Patent Cooperation Treaty in 2016.

He stressed the importance of these agreements and treaties, as

they are a joint effort to protect the intellectual property of patent owners and thus create a single, large market that includes global markets.

He explained that intellectual property has two parts, the first is related to literary property, which is copyright, and related rights (literary and artistic rights), and the second relates to industrial property rights and is divided into three branches, trademarks, patent, and industrial models.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) celebrates World Intellectual Property Day annually on April 26 and this year's slogan is (Intellectual Property and the Sustainable Development Goals) and it is an opportunity for the world to reflect on the way in which intellectual property helps the global art scene to progress.



Head of the association's field team, Khaled Al-Mutairi, and a number of volunteers at the Kuwait Red Crescent Society in Armenian capital, Yerevan.



KUNA photos Meeting of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society team with officials of the Armenian Red Cross.



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MoE shifts Kuwaiti teachers to admins roles

'Rate of Kuwaitization in MEW's power & water plants hits 95pc'

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the rate of Kuwaitization among workers in the power plants and water distillation stations has reached 95 percent.

They explained that the total number of workers in the stations is 6,800, including 6,445 Kuwaitis and 355 non-Kuwaitis.

The number of stations affiliated with the ministry is six, where Kuwaitization rates are reaching more than 99 percent. This includes the Shuwaikh station, where the total number of Kuwaiti employees is 467, compared to ten non-Kuwaitis, and the Shuaiba Station, where there are 1,157 Kuwaiti employees and 34 non-Kuwaitis.

Implement

The sources stressed the ministry's keenness to implement the Kuwaitization policy in all sectors, especially the electric power and water distillation sector, which is the backbone of the ministry and the basic foundation of its work.

They indicated that the increase in the number of graduates from engineering colleges with their various specializations helped the ministry in accelerating the pace of Kuwaitization in this important sector.

The sources stressed the ministry's keenness to request the nomination of citizens for engineering and technical jobs from the Civil Service Commission when it estimates its need for employees in the fiscal years that include the needs of agencies and ministries for employees.

Agencies add:

The Ministry of Education has stopped appointing citizens as teachers in some subjects like Physical Education (for boys) and requested for their appointment to the administrative transaction coordinator position, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained the ministry's request includes the graduates of the College of Education at Kuwait University and the College of Basic Education at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), not just those who graduated from foreign universities or local private universities.

Al-Hajraf amends A-4

'Direct contracting' regulations altered

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, State Minister for Housing Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf issued a decision on amending Article Four of the direct contracting regulations, reports Al-Anba daily.

Article One of the decision states that Article Four of the Direct Contracting Regulations as per Ministerial Resolution No. 146/2014 and its amendment -- Ministerial Resolution No. 45/2020 shall be amended as follows: "The Contracting Committee shall be formed as per the decision of the minister based on the approval of the board of directors. It shall be headed by a deputy director general, and the number of members should not be less than five and not more than seven, including the chairman and his deputy. They should have experience and knowledge of tenders, practices and competitions. The members should include the representatives of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department and the Central Agency for Public Tenders. The committee may seek assistance from whomsoever it deems necessary from within the institution or outside, but the latter has no right to vote."

Article Two: This decision shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect from the date of its publication. Everyone within his jurisdiction shall implement it and all that contravenes its provisions shall be repealed.

Sources added the Civil Service Commission (CSC) determines the job title based on the entity's request; indicating it nominates a group of citizens to work in the agencies and each of them informs the commission about their workplaces based on the manpower needs.

Asked if those who will be appointed as administrative transaction coordinator will be included in the teacher cadre, sources clarified this cadre is only for those appointed to the teacher position.

Kuwait eyes major campaign to cut wastage of subsidies

Infrastructure project hits 8.38% completion

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Efforts are currently being exerted to carry out a major consumer awareness campaign aimed at reducing wastage of State subsidies by rationalizing the consumption of subsidized food supplies, electricity and water; in addition to raising the citizens'

awareness on the importance of preserving the State's resources, reports Al-Anba daily.

Chairman of the Consumer Protection Development Committee and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Consumer Protection Association Mishal Al-Mana confirmed in a statement to the daily that the Consumer Protection Development Committee, which was formed by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Joan through Resolution No. 20/2024, reports directly to the minister, agreed during its meeting to conduct this campaign.



The Indian ambassador with the Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate.

Indian envoy calls on new Governor

The Indian Ambassador HE Dr. Adarsh Swaika called on HE Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the new Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate.

During the meeting the Indian envoy congratulated the Governor on his appointment to the high office and thanked him for the continued welfare of the Indian community in his jurisdiction.

'Second consecutive year'

MoSA's campaign benefits debtors

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The nationwide campaign organized to support debtors in the country for the second consecutive year by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Child Affairs under the guidance of Minister Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah will benefit eligible Kuwaiti citizens and the money collected will be paid directly into their accounts in accordance with the established rules and conditions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a statement during the Debt Repayment Committee meeting on Sunday, the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, said the national campaign was organized

between March 25 and April 20.

He stressed, according to the statement, the ministry's keenness to alleviate the burdens of indebted citizens whose circumstances have placed them in the grip of debts that they were unable to pay by helping them pay their debts through the Civil Enforcement Department in the Ministry of Justice.

He stressed, "There is no need for debtors to review any government agency or submit a request, as all data is available at the Ministry of Justice, and payment will be made directly to the eligible groups in accordance with the established rules and conditions."

The National Consumer Awareness Committee had earlier submitted the proposal to carry out the campaign to the minister.

According to Al-Mana, the campaign will be with the participation of several concerned ministries like Commerce, Information, Health and Social Affairs, and other government agencies. He said the committee is keen on achieving economic, environmental, and social goals; explaining that the economic goal is reducing the cost of State subsidies. He explained that the citizens should obtain only the necessary food supplies and dispensing those do not reduces the cost for the State.

8.38% work done: The authority overseeing the South Sabah Al Ahmad City project has announced significant progress in the main roads contract, major infrastructure services networks, and rainwater tanks, reports Al-Jarida daily.

As of March last year, the completion rate has reached 8.38%, with work advancing ahead of schedule by 5.86% by the end of the previous month.

According to a statement to Kuwait News Agency, the authority highlighted that the expected completion date for the contract is June 5, 2026, with a total value of 112,789,000 dinars.

Engineers from the authority's third region are closely monitoring the implementation of the contract's 10 different components.

Furthermore, 19.7% of the rain network work and 35.5% of the rainwater collection tank work have been completed.

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Company Exclusive Sponsor of GUST 25th career fair

Zain attracts national talent to foster private sector growth

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Zain announced its Exclusive Sponsorship of the 25th career fair organized by Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) at the main campus in Mubarak Al Abdullah. The event, which ran for three consecutive days, came under the patronage of H.E. Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Edu-

cation and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al Adwani.

The opening ceremony was attended by the representative of the event's patron, Acting Secretary General of the Private Universities Council Adel Al Bader, Acting President of Gulf University for Science and Technology Dr. Bassam Alameddine, Zain Kuwait Corpo-

rate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al Musaibeh, Zain's Human Resources team, officials from the participating companies, along with GUST students and graduates.

Zain continues to support and actively participate in major career fairs in Kuwait in collaboration with the biggest educational and academic institutions from both the

public and private sectors. The company strives to attract national talent to join the Kuwaiti private sector with the goal of fostering sustainable growth and introducing young people to its success story in the telecom sector.

Through its dedicated booth at the career fair, Zain presented its available job vacancies, shared its

internal policy, and showcased its wonderful workplace environment. Zain's team also provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various departments and divisions and answered all questions and inquiries.

Through such contributions, Zain seeks to stimulate the local job market, exchange experiences, and of-

fer career opportunities to students, fresh graduates, and those who are looking for their next career journey. The company is keen on offering job seekers with career opportunities that best suit their skills, competencies, and passions to progress national economy and increase national talent representation in the Kuwaiti private sector.

Your Highness

Continued from Page 1

That is why these state tours were necessary in order to obtain field knowledge of developments in those countries, and also to bring Kuwait back to the forefront again.

It goes without saying that these tours will not stop at the countries that His Highness visited, as it is clear that they may be completed soon, in order to restore to Kuwait its glories and close relations at all levels.

Today, the country is under a decisive and determined leadership with a strong will in the process of achieving leadership, and for Kuwait to turn into a factory of ideas and initiatives, better than it was in the past.

Amir charts

Continued from Page 1

given to presidents, kings and Amirs in recognition of their roles.

The Order was given to His Highness the Amir, at Al-Itihadya Presidential Palace, to reflect deep-rooted relations between the two sisterly countries, and in the enhancement of friendly bonds of friendship of His Highness the Amir.

Egyptian President AbdelFattah El-Sisi held a banquet in honor of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of the state visit.

Additionally, an official reception ceremony was held at the Federal Palace to honor His Highness the Amir's state visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. Upon the Kuwaiti delegation's arrival at the Federal Palace, they were greeted with trumpets and a twenty-one-gun salute. The national anthems of Kuwait and Egypt resounded as His Highness the Amir exchanged greetings with Egyptian dignitaries, and President AbdelFattah Al-Sisi warmly welcomed the Kuwaiti delegation.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah embarked on a state visit to Egypt on Tuesday, where he was received by President AbdelFattah El-Sisi, Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Ahmed Samih Talaat, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanim Al-Ghanim, and Kuwait's permanent representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi. His accompanying delegation included Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investment Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, and senior officials from the Amiri Diwan.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visits to Arab countries, including Egypt, show Kuwait's desire to unify Arabs amid regional crises, and reflect its rational and wise policy, opined ex-Egyptian officials.

Former Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Esam Sharaf told KUNA that His Highness the Amir's visit is so important that it shows the strong bilateral ties between the two countries and is part of coordinated discussions over regional and international crises.

"The rulers of Kuwait are renowned for their wisdom and rational leadership in dealing with all the problems and crises that the Arab region is going through. Kuwait always seeks to settle disputes between countries through dialogue and peaceful solutions," said Sharaf.

He pointed out the importance of this visit in light of the current regional developments, especially the Israeli occupation war in the Gaza Strip and the targeting of Palestinian civilians.

He noted that these events require collective stances, and unity of visions between Egypt and Kuwait, commending ongoing coordination between the two countries to restore stability to the region, and efforts to stop the expansion of the ongoing war.

Sharaf said that the meeting between His Highness the Amir and Egyptian President AbdelFattah el-Sisi will discuss cooperation mechanisms between the two countries, which will contribute positively to strengthening efforts aimed at maximizing regional understanding and then security and stability, regionally and internationally.

On his part, former deputy speaker of the Egyptian Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee Tareq Al-Khouli underlined the importance of His Highness the Amir's visit because it is his first visit as Kuwait's Amir, especially amid several regional challenges.

Al-Khouli added that Kuwait has its status and influence on its surroundings, pointing out its large and important role in supporting the Palestinian issue, and through the historically extended Egyptian role in supporting the issue, this visit comes to join efforts and exchange viewpoints regarding several issues.

He said that through Egypt's pioneering role in the Arab region, it was necessary that there be an exchange of views regarding various issues, most notably the Palestinian cause, and the multiple practices of genocide to which the Palestinian people are exposed to.

On the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations, Al-Khouli described them as extremely special, deep-rooted in history and has convergence in political views regarding various Arab issues.

He added that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations are witnessing continued harmony and strong relations, looking forward to more joint work and exchanging support between the two countries in increasing fruitful cooperation.

Former Foreign Minister Mohammad Al-Orabi stressed the significance of His Highness the Amir's state visit to Cairo since it

comes at a time when the region is undergoing extraordinary conditions.

Speaking to KUNA, he said the visit would contribute to promoting joint political collaboration about long-lasting regional issues and dossiers in the light of Kuwaiti-Egyptian consensus over the necessity of finding relevant peaceful solutions.

He added that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian summit comes ahead of the forthcoming Arab summit in Manama, Bahrain, to look into an array of issues of mutual interest, chiefly the situation in Gaza and ongoing de-escalation efforts.

For his part, former assistant foreign minister Ambassador Mohammad Hejazi believed that His Highness the Amir's visit to Egypt comes at a very significant time.

He stressed that the tour would certainly result in further bolstering bilateral relations, boosting foreign policy collaboration, and backing Arab and Islamic matters amid the evolving regional situation.

It also comes in the context of the responsibility the State of Kuwait has always been shouldering to strongly support the Palestinian people.

Rain peaks

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, in anticipation of forecasted rainfall due to an impending depression, the Ministry of Public Works and its various sectors swung into action yesterday morning.

With specialists and meteorologists issuing warnings of prolonged rain, the ministry initiated a comprehensive preparation strategy. Teams were dispatched to strategically deploy rainwater pumps across multiple locations to mitigate potential flooding.

According to ministry sources, preparations include the mobilization of emergency response teams to critical sites and the strategic placement of pumps in areas prone to water accumulation.

Emphasizing proactive measures, the ministry ensures the readiness of its fleet of vehicles equipped for water retrieval and the maintenance of pump facilities within tunnels and along highways to ensure efficient operation during emergencies.

Kuwait, Saudi

Continued from Page 1

sidelines of the Islamic Development Bank Group annual meetings, in Riyadh.

The statement said the Finance Ministers discussed bilateral cooperation and reinforcement of the deep-rooted strategic relations that ties the two friendly countries, they also went over topics of shared interest in the economic and financial field.

Kuwait participated in the 49th annual ministerial meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank Group, held in Riyadh.

During the meeting, the forty-ninth annual report for the fiscal year 2023 of the Islamic Development Bank was approved, which includes the bank's financing operations and its various activities, in addition to economic and global developments and their effects on member states.

The audit accounts of the bank and its affiliated institutions for the fiscal year 2023 were also approved, and the president and two vice presidents of the Board of Governors were elected for 2025.

The nomination of Qatar as a member of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector for the ninth session 2025/2027, representing the Arab Group C (non-African Arab countries), was also supported.

The Republic of Algeria was also chosen to host the next meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Bank Group 2025.

Kuwait reiterates

Continued from Page 1

Concluding his statement, Ambassador Al-Sabah took time to highlight Kuwait 2035 vision and its efforts in achieving sustainable development goals.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, stressed on Monday the importance of the strategic and growing partnership between the GCC and the US to improve peace, security, stability, integration, and economic prosperity in the region.

Al-Budaiwi added that the meeting discussed all international and regional issues of common interest, stressing the position of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries on the necessity of reaching an immediate and complete ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, halting all Israeli military operations, ensuring the protection of civilians in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law, and lifting all restrictions that hinder the entry of humanitarian aid and the basic needs of the sector.

Al-Budaiwi stressed the categorical rejection of any attempts to displace the Palestinian people from their land, calling for an end to the escalation and acts of violence against the Palestinians in the West Bank, including settlement expansion, land confiscation, military operations against the Palestinians, settler attacks, and the siege of places of worship for Muslims and Christians.

Al-Budaiwi affirmed on the strong position of the Cooperation Council in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.



Al Bader and Dr. Alameddine recognize Al Musaibeh and Zain's HR team for the company's support.

Dr Al-Kharafi stresses importance of STEM learning at school confab

'Education should extend beyond traditional curricula'

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Dr. Fayza Al-Kharafi, former director of Kuwait University and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Baccalaureate School, emphasized the importance of schools not only as classrooms but as platforms to nurture students' skills and passions in science, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Speaking at the first conference of the STEM program at the American Baccalaureate School, Al-Kharafi highlighted the need for school environments to foster the talents and abilities of young learners in scientific fields. She emphasized that education should extend beyond traditional curricula, offering students an integrated learning experience.

At the conference, Director Areej Al-Ghanim described the event as the school's inaugural student conference on science, engineering, mathematics, technology, and art. She underscored its significance as an opportunity for educational stakeholders to observe the school's advancements in STEM education and exchange ideas to enrich curricula and community services.

Pioneering

Al-Ghanim noted the school's pioneering role in implementing the STEM system in the Gulf since 2015 and praised the students' success in international competitions. She highlighted the importance of such conferences in raising awareness about STEM fields, fostering scientific research skills, and enhancing students' communication abilities.

Looking ahead, Al-Ghanim expressed the school's commitment to supporting other institutions by inviting them to participate in similar events, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaborative learning. She stressed that investing in education and nurturing students' talents are essential for societal growth and sustainable development.

This is in keeping in mind the scientific objectives which include building bridges of cooperation with stakeholders concerned with education, exchanging experiences and providing community service, enriching curricula and enhancing technological education and enhancing scientific communication skills and research interaction.

Meanwhile, Professor of Electrical Engineering at Kuwait University, Head of the Development and Competitive Programs Sector at the Science Club, Dr. Muhammad Al-Saffar, said: STEM programs and science competition events are very important in schools, stressing that all private and government schools must have a STEM program and science exhibitions, through the work of students. In projects related to scientific research and innovation; To develop their skills and test themselves and the curricula they have studied in practice.

Regarding the projects of the students of the American Baccalaureate School, Al-Saffar stated that some of the students' projects are considered very distinguished, expressing his admiration for the projects presented by the students at the school that require a scientific background, programming, and modern technologies.

Dr. Jaafar Ali Barul, from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, spoke about the importance of the STEM program in developing students' skills, stressing the need to embrace and develop these talents.



Honoring the bank's representatives during the exhibition.



Huge turnout at the bank's pavilion.

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait's golden sponsorship of GUST career fair opens doors to opportunities

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) proudly announces its golden sponsorship of Gulf University of Science and Technology's (GUST) career fair. This initiative reflects the Bank's unwavering dedication to supporting education and creating valuable job opportunities for Kuwaiti university graduates.

The Bank's presence at the exhibition offered graduates the chance to explore potential roles within various departments and divisions. During the event, ABK representatives engaged with students, addressed inquiries, and elaborated on the various benefits available to employees.

Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager of the Human Resources at ABK, underscored the importance of this sponsorship, stating, "We are delighted to sponsor GUST's career fair as part of our ongoing commitment

to attracting top talent and showcasing career prospects within the Bank."

She emphasized the significance of university job fairs for both ABK and all participants involved. She said, "Job fairs serve as a platform for talent identification, recruitment, and raising awareness of the Bank's growth and recruitment opportunities, benefiting all stakeholders."

Furthermore, Al Arbash highlighted the Bank's endeavour to attract skilled nationals by fostering a healthy work environment for employee development through specialized training

programs, both in-person and online. Notably, these efforts recently culminated in ABK being recognized as 'Best Workplace in the Banking Sector' in Kuwait by International Finance in 2023.

Looking ahead, Al Arbash affirmed, "We remain committed to actively participating in career fairs at universities in Kuwait to remain abreast of employment trends, assess the capabilities of students and graduates, understand their preferences and requirements, and ensure effective response to their needs."

In conclusion, Al Arbash commended GUST for fostering collaboration among private sector companies at its annual career fair, emphasizing that this event served as a crucial communication channel between students, graduates, and organizations seeking fresh talent.



Afrah Al Arbash

World News Roundup

Asia

Ruang erupts again

Japan PM denies he will step down

TOKYO, April 30. (Agencies): Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** said Tuesday his governing party's major defeat in last weekend's by-elections was largely due to a political fundraising scandal and that he would not step down or replace party executives to take responsibility.

Instead, Kishida said he will push anti-corruption measures and political reforms.

"As I take the results seriously, I believe as president of the governing party we must tackle the challenges we face one by one and achieve results, and this is the way I will take responsibility," Kishida said. "By doing so, I will regain the people's trust."

Kishida said the scandal dealt "a big and heavy hinderance" to the party. The scandal centers on dozens of lawmakers in Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party who allegedly pocketed profits from ticket sales to political events by falsifying accounting reports.

Asked if he would take responsibility for the election loss, Kishida denied he would step down or replace top LDP posts, and pledged to pursue party and political reforms, including a revision to the political funds laws. He also vowed to tackle economic issues.

The conservative Liberal Democratic Party lost all three seats in Sunday's parliamentary by-elections in Nagasaki, Shimane and Tokyo. Kishida's party only fielded its own candidate in Shimane, a conservative stronghold, while the liberal-leaning main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan clinched all three seats previously held by LDP.

The loss is seen as a punishment by voters for the governing party's scandal, which erupted last year and has undermined Kishida's leadership.

Solomons PM won't keep his job: Solomon Islands pro-Beijing Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare on Monday withdrew from the contest to remain head of the strategically important South Pacific island nation's government following general elections two weeks ago that are central to the US-China rivalry in the region.

Sogavare has been re-elected to the parliament. But he told a press conference in the capital Honiara on Monday he would not be nominated as a candidate when the 50 newly elected lawmakers vote on Thursday for the prime minister, Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Sogavare had hoped to become the first Solomons prime minister to maintain power in consecutive four-year terms following the April 17 election. During his previous term, China's influence increased more in the Solomons than anywhere else in the South Pacific.

Sogavare switched diplomatic allegiances from Taiwan to Beijing and struck a secret security pact that has raised fears of the Chinese navy gaining a foothold in the region.

Sogavare said in his press conference he had been "vilified by media" and his family had been subjected to "unprecedented abuse," the ABC reported.

'Blast caused by ammo mishandling': A huge explosion in southwestern Cambodia over the weekend that killed 20 soldiers at an army base appears to have been an accident caused by mishandling of ammunition by troops, a senior military official said Tuesday.

The Saturday afternoon blast in Kampong Speu province also destroyed military vehicles and four buildings at the base, and damaged homes in a nearby village.

Army spokesperson Maj Gen Mao Phalla said the soldiers were transferring ammunition from trucks into a storage facility when the blast occurred, killing them instantly. He said another 11 people, including soldiers and nearby villagers, were slightly injured, mostly from debris from the damaged buildings, not shrapnel.

Cambodia held a mass funeral on Sunday for those killed in the explosion.

Philippine students told to stay home: Southeast Asia was coping with a weeks-long heat wave on Monday as record-high temperatures led to school closings in several countries and urgent health warnings throughout the region.

Millions of students in all public schools across the Philippines were ordered to stay home Monday after authorities canceled in-person classes for two days. The main advice for everyone, everywhere has been to avoid outdoor activities and drink plenty of water, but the young and the elderly were told to be especially careful.

Cambodia this year is facing the highest temperatures in 170 years, Chan Yutha, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, told The Associated Press on Monday. His agency has forecast that temperatures in most parts of the country could reach up to 43 degrees Celsius (109 degrees Fahrenheit) this week.

Manila vehicle crash kills 3: A speeding bus crashed into several vehicles along a busy highway in the Philippine capital on Monday night, killing three and injuring 17 others, police said on Tuesday.

According to the police, the multi-vehicle accident happened around 9 p.m. local time and involved a bus, a passenger van, a taxi, and five motorcycles.

Initial investigation showed that the bus first ramed into the motorcycles during a red light before crashing into the passenger van and the taxi.

Indonesia's Ruang erupts again: Mount Ruang volcano in Indonesia's Sulawesi erupted again early Tuesday morning, triggering an increase in danger status to its highest level and the temporary closure of airports.

Volcanic earthquakes have increased since Monday, developing into explosive and effusive eruptions, accompanied by loud rumbling sounds and the ejection of incandescent lava into the sky.

This increase in activity spurred the Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation to raise Mount Ruang's dangerous level from 3 to 4, its highest level.

Abdul Muhari, spokesperson for the National Disaster Management Agency, said rocks and gravel rained down on villages around the mountain.



Kishida



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla meet with patients during a visit to the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in London on April 30. (AP)

King Charles III returns to public duties with trip to cancer charity

King Charles III returned to public duties on Tuesday, visiting a cancer treatment charity and beginning his carefully managed comeback after the monarch's own cancer diagnosis sidelined him for three months.

The event marks the king's first formal public engagement since Feb 6, when Buckingham Palace announced that he would be taking a break from public duties to focus on his treatment for an undisclosed type of cancer.

It will be the first of several public appearances Charles will make in the coming weeks as he prepares to host a state visit by the emperor and empress of Japan in June.

It is unclear how many of the summer's traditional royal events, including the king's formal birthday parade and the horse racing at Royal Ascot, Charles will attend as his treatment continues. The palace said last week that doctors were "very encouraged" by the king's progress, but his schedule would be

adjusted as needed to protect his recovery.

For now, Tuesday's appearance gives Charles another opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of early diagnosis and treatment of cancer and other health problems as he has done throughout his illness.

Unlike most royals before him, Charles chose to publicly disclose details about his health when he first underwent treatment for an enlarged prostate and later when he was diagnosed with cancer. The decision raised awareness of these issues. (AP)

America

Trump and DeSantis meet to make peace

Biden, Mexico's prez discuss migration

WASHINGTON, April 30. (AP): US President Joe Biden spoke with his Mexican counterpart, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, about cooperating on migration policy as the US leader continues to deliberate whether to take executive action that would crack down on the number of migrants arriving at the southern US border.

The call occurred on Sunday at Biden's request, López Obrador said during his daily news conference Monday in Mexico City. In a joint statement, Biden and López Obrador said the call centered on their joint efforts to "effectively manage" migration and "strengthen operational efficiency" on the US-Mexico border.

"We talk periodically," López Obrador said. "I seek him out, he seeks me out, we chat."

Measures

The joint statement said Biden and López Obrador have directed their national security aides to "immediately" put in place concrete measures to reduce the number of unauthorized border crossings. The policies would also protect human rights, according to the statement. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre would not elaborate what those new measures were, nor would officials from the National Security Council.

The Mexican leader said the two countries have made progress in controlling unauthorized migration by persuading many migrants not to use illegal methods to move from country to country. López Obrador also applauded a January decision by the US Supreme Court that allowed Border Patrol agents to resume cutting razor wire that the state of Texas had installed along the border to try and deter migration.

Since the collapse of border legislation in Congress earlier this year, the White House has not ruled out Biden issuing an executive order on asylum rules to try and reduce the number of migrants arriving at the US southern border. Any unilateral action would likely lean on a president's authority under Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which offers broad powers to block entry of certain immigrants if doing so is deemed detrimental to the national interest.

Administration officials have been poring over various options for months, but Biden has made no decision on how to proceed with any executive actions. White House aides have also seen little immediate urgency for the president to take any action, considering the number of illegal border crossings have declined since a record high of 250,000 in December as Mexican officials stepped up their enforcement efforts.

Also:

NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump met privately with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis over the weekend, marking a détente between the former rivals after a brutal Republican primary contest marked by insults and bruised egos, according to three people familiar with the discussion.

The meeting, which lasted three hours, was organized to help the men bury the hatchet and discuss potential joint fundraising efforts, according to one of the people, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to share details of the private get-together. The governor, during the conversation, committed to helping Trump as he faces President Joe Biden in the general election, said the person. It ended with the

two shaking hands, said another.

The meeting, which was first reported by The Washington Post, was orchestrated by Florida real estate investor Steve Witkoff, and took place at his Shell Bay Club in Hollywood, Florida.

Witkoff did not immediately respond to a request for comment through his office.

On Monday, Trump said the two had had "a great meeting yesterday" and that he was "very happy to have the full and enthusiastic support of Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida."

BUFFALO, NY: Voters in an upstate New York congressional district will choose between a Democrat regarded by many as the natural successor to the longtime congressman who vacated the seat earlier this year and a Republican with crossover appeal in a special election Tuesday.

Democratic Rep. **Brian Higgins**, who arrived in Congress in 2005, resigned in February to become president of Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo. With Republicans holding a narrow margin in the U.S. House, even a race for a seat widely expected to remain in Democratic hands has drawn its share of scrutiny.

The race in the 26th District features state Sen. **Timothy Kennedy**, a Democrat who regards Higgins as a mentor, and **Gary Dickson**, the first Republican elected as a town supervisor in the Buffalo suburb of West Seneca in 50 years.

The district spans Erie and Niagara counties, including the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. With registered Democrats outnumbering Republicans by more than 2-to-1, it is considered a safe seat for Democrats.

istry claimed Monday its forces had also taken the village of Semenivka. (AP)

Police clear migrant camp: French police evicted migrants from a makeshift tent-camp next to Paris City Hall early on Tuesday, the latest clear-out of people without

homes that aid groups allege is a campaign to beautify the French capital ahead of the Summer Olympics.

In an operation that began before dawn, police woke around 100 teenage boys and young men from West Africa, telling them to pack their tents and belongings.

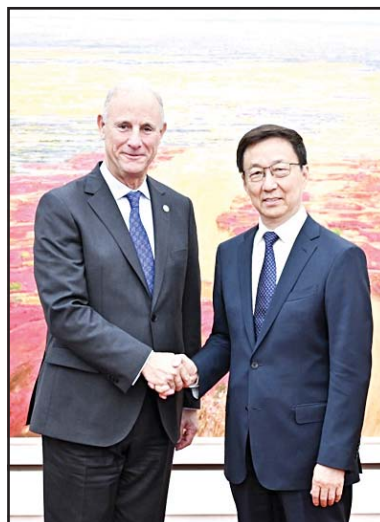
Paris police said the operation was carried out for security reasons, notably because the camp was near schools.

Paris-region officials told the men - many of them minors and in the process of seeking residency papers - that they could be housed temporarily for three weeks in the Loire-region town of Angers if they wished. (AP)

Serbia to include ex-intel chief: Serbia's new government will include a former intelligence chief who has fostered close ties with Russia and is sanctioned by the United States, the country's prime minister-designate said Tuesday.

Aleksandar Vulin will serve as one of several vice-premiers, said Milos Vučević as he announced the composition of his future Cabinet, which is expected to be voted into office in the coming days in Serbia's parliament.

Serbia is formally seeking European Union membership but has maintained friendly relations with Russia and refused to join Western sanctions against Moscow over its war in Ukraine. (AP)



Chinese Vice President Han Zheng meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi on Monday in Beijing, capital of China, April 29. China is willing to work with Peru to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, strengthen the synergy of development strategies, fully tap cooperation potential, pursue high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and push for new progress in China-Peru relations, Han said. (Xinhua)



Zelenskyy



Stoltenberg

Europe

Sword-wielding man kills 1: A man wielding a sword attacked members of the public and police officers in an east London suburb early Tuesday, killing a 13-year-old boy and injuring four others, authorities said.

A 36-year-old man was arrested in a residential area near Hainault underground station, police said. The incident is not being treated as terror-related or a "targeted attack."

Two police officers were in hospital being treated for stab wounds. Two other people were also injured.

Chief Supt. Stuart Bell described the incident as "truly horrific."

The Metropolitan Police said they were called early Tuesday to reports of a vehicle being driven into a house in a residential street and people being stabbed close to the Hainault underground station. (AP)

NATO chief chides members: NATO countries haven't delivered what they promised to Ukraine in time, the alliance's chief said Monday, allowing Russia to press its advantage while Kyiv's depleted forces wait for military supplies to arrive from the US and Europe.

"Serious delays in support have meant serious consequences on the battlefield" for Ukraine, NATO Secretary-General **Jens Stoltenberg** told a news conference in Kyiv with President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**.

Outgunned, Ukraine's troops have struggled to fend off Russian advances on the battlefield. They were recently compelled to make a tactical retreat from three villages in the east, where the Kremlin's forces have been making incremental gains, Ukraine's army chief said Sunday. The Russian Defense Min-



A man picks tulips at a tulip pick farm in Ridgeville, Ontario, Canada, on April 29. (Xinhua)

oil plunges

The Kuwaiti oil price slightly fell 24 cents to USD 89.63 per barrel (pb) on Monday, compared to USD 89.87 pb, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Tuesday.

In international markets, futures of the Brent crude oil fell USD 1.10 to reach USD 88.40 pb and those of the West Texas Intermediate crude oil dropped USD 1.22 pb to USD 82.63 a barrel. (KUNA)

Kuwait's crude exports to Japan dip

Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in March fell 22.0 percent from a year earlier to 5.11 million barrels, or 165,000 barrels per day (bpd), down for the sixth consecutive month, government data showed Tuesday.

As Japan's third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.9 percent of its total crude imports, compared with 8.4 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil in the reporting month declined 4.4 percent year-on-

year to 2.40 million bpd, down for the fourth month in a row. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 94.7 percent of the total, down 1.9 percentage points from the year before.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) remained in the top spot, with imports from the country growing 9.8 percent from the year before to 1.06 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 982,000 bpd, down 7.1 percent. The US ranked fourth with 97,000 bpd and Qatar fifth with 50,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US. (KUNA)

KOC develops valuable oil reservoirs

The Kuwait Oil Company is currently in the process of developing several commercially valuable oil reservoirs, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting reliable sources from the oil industry.

It's emphasized that forthcoming production will increasingly rely on unconventional oil sources, heavy oil, marine operations, and new oil reservoirs. Exploiting these resources effectively will necessitate the implementation of new technologies and meticulous strategic, commercial, and

economic assessments.

The source highlights the need for developing systems to generate production forecasts and allocate costs, enabling thorough economic evaluations and analysis of various investment options within the portfolio.

This process will help prioritize investments in these hydrocarbon resources and pinpoint high-cost investment opportunities, which can then be addressed through a precise cost optimization program.

Market Movements

30-04-2024

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	TASI	+25.45	12,394.91	DUBAI	DFMGI	-4.89	4,155.77
	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+470.89		38,405.66	PHILIPPINES	PSEI
				EGYPT	EGX 30	-1,562.55	24,448.73
				PAKISTAN	KSE 100	-724.96	71,125.44

Business

Overall real estate price index registers marginal increase

Kuwait's real estate sales dip again in Q1 2024, reflecting economic challenges

By National Bank of Kuwait

Having picked up at the end of last year, real estate sales dipped again in Q1 2024 as commercial sector sales fell while other sectors were steady. Our overall real estate price index showed a modest year-on-year rise, but prices in the residential sector eased slightly. Some of the softness in market activity in Q1 could be due to seasonal factors, but while sales levels could improve going forward, we expect any pick-up in 2024 to be constrained by the sluggish economic climate, elevated interest rates and affordability issues in the residential segment. Upside risks include a faster pace of interest rate cuts, stronger credit growth and more rapid implementation of housing-related reforms.

Total sales in Q1 2024 declined by -9.5% q/q to KD697 million, having jumped 13.6% in Q4 2023. (Chart 1.) However, in yearly terms, the decline in real estate sales continued to ease, suggesting that the trend of steady conditions across the sector following declines since mid-2022 remains intact.

Residential sales in Q1 24 were stable q/q at KD353 million, though the number of transactions, at 784, fell during the quarter and remained at historically low levels. (Chart 2.) In addition to the factors mentioned above, such low demand levels could be due to reduced speculation in the segment given low sentiment, uncertainty over market reforms and improved yields on deposits resulting in delayed buying decisions. Still, on a yearly basis residential sales saw their smallest decline since Q4 2021, supporting the view that sales may have reached the bottom of the cycle.

In the investment (i.e. apartment and apartment building) segment, sales were helped by a solid performance in March though remained at moderate levels for the quarter and still fell 9% compared to the same quarter in 2023. Transaction volumes dipped by 13.7% q/q with sales in Al-Ahmadi governorate (Al-Mahboulah) rising to acquire nearly 39% of total quarterly sales, partly offsetting transaction declines in Hawalli and Al-Farwaneyah governorates. We note that housing rent inflation as recorded in the consumer price index fell back to only 1.4% y/y in March from a peak of 3.2% in mid-2023, suggesting a lack of strength in the apartment segment, while growth in credit to real estate firms, although improving a bit recently, remained lackluster at 2.5% y/y in February. More positively, the recent resumption of family visa issuance for expatriates (who account for most apartment demand) combined with relatively attractive valuations within this segment compared to the residential sector, should provide some support for demand going forward.

Commercial segment sales, which jumped in Q4 2023 on large deals, adjusted back down in Q1 and dipped below their 2023 average quarterly levels. Most of

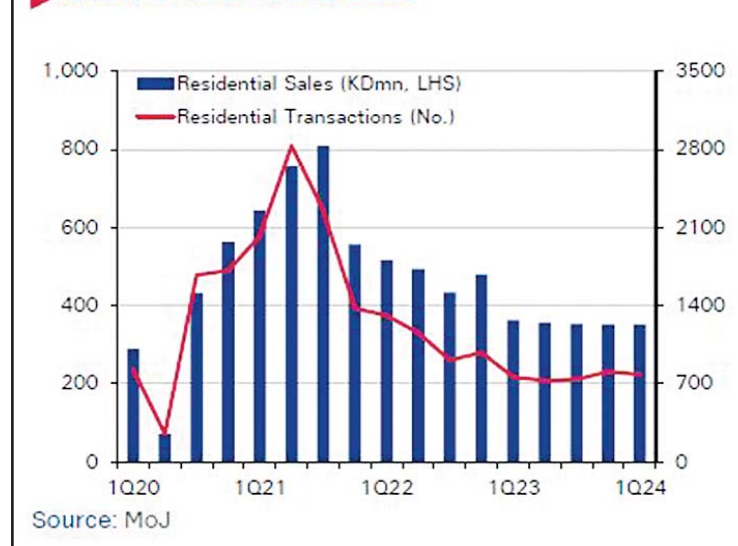
Chart 1: Real estate sales



the sales remained in Kuwait City and Hawalli governorates. Transaction volumes also declined to their lowest level since Q2 2023, with average transaction sizes declining by 26% q/q, pointing to a shift toward less luxurious or smaller size properties.

Investment segment price rises outpace residential sector in Q1 2024
Our overall real estate price index, which is calculated based on Ministry of Justice transaction data, registered a marginal increase of 0.4% q/q in Q1 2024, reversing the -0.9% q/q decline in the previous quarter. The improvement came from a smaller decline in residential prices. On the other hand, investment segment prices saw their second solid quarterly rise in a row (+2.7% q/q). On a yearly basis, real estate price rises were little changed, rising by 1.4% in Q1 2024, with the investment segment (5.0%) outperforming the residential segment (-1.4%), helping to close the valuation gap between the two.

Chart 2: Residential sales



Rising existing housing applications

According to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), residential plot distributions eased during Q1 2024 to 2,145 plots from 3,030 plots in the previous quarter. This was likely due to seasonality factors. Distributions were focused in South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah city (N4), but overall numbers remained broadly in line with historical levels. The city of South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah remains the main current source for residential plot distributions, with 14,042 distributed so far out of 24,508 residential plots available under the project. PAHW is also working on distributing 4,400 residential units in Taima and Al-Sulaibiya areas while tendering the infrastructure works for seven districts in South Sabah Al-Ahmad city with total residential units of 13,812. The number of outstanding applications for the government housing program at the end of March rose by 0.8% q/q compared with a 4.6% increase in the previous quarter, to reach 96,090 applicants.

Islamic finance industry sees rapid asset growth, says S&P

Slow but steady growth expected in Sukuk issuance size

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Standard & Poor's, the credit rating agency, has reported that the Islamic finance industry is experiencing rapid asset growth, particularly in its core markets. The agency anticipates positive contributions from all components of the industry throughout the remainder of the current year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a recent report, the agency highlighted the industry's growth but noted challenges facing Sukuk, with expectations that new standards will weaken Sukuk issuance growth in 2025 and beyond. Despite emerging sources of growth such as sustainability and digital transformation, the industry's recovery is relatively slow.

The report revealed strong growth in the total assets of the global Islamic finance industry, with high single-digit growth expected for these assets in 2024 and 2025, following an 8% growth in 2023.

Regarding the Sukuk market, the report indicated slow but steady growth in issuance size, with expectations ranging between \$160 billion and \$170 billion in 2024. The global Sukuk market started 2024 strongly, with total issuances reaching \$46.8 billion in the first quarter, suggesting further expansion in the Islamic fund and takaful fund sectors.

While Islamic finance struggles to attract capital outside its core markets, Gulf financial institutions dominated the industry's growth in 2023, with Saudi Arabia leading the contribution. The agency expects Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the growth of corporate and real estate lending to continue supporting the Islamic finance industry in the coming months.

Although Gulf countries face long-term risks related to oil production and prices, Standard & Poor's believes they possess significant competitive advantages, including low oil extraction costs and the ability to increase production, which bode well for their economies and banking sectors.

Looking ahead, the agency suggests that if Sukuks evolve into investment instruments similar to stocks, investor and issuer appetite and pricing mechanisms may change significantly. Sustainable Sukuks and their digitization could further support the future contributions of the Islamic finance industry.

Muthaib affirms commitment with ISO certifications

stc continues to maintain its ISO certifications

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has successfully completed a certification exercise across various fields. The exercise aligns with the Company's ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality and level of services it provides to its valued customers. The below ISO standards include:

- o ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems (QMS)
- o ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems (EMS)
- o ISO 27001:2022 Information Security Management System (ISMS)
- o ISO 20000-1:2018 IT Service Management Systems (ITSMS)
- o ISO 22301:2019 Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS)
- o ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines (RM)

The certifications come after a thorough and rigorous auditing process performed by one of the leading international certification body in the world.

stc released a statement indicating that the certification process, managed by the Quality Assurance, Cyber Security, Risk, Sustainability and IT Teams, while involving several other sectors in the Company, revealed that the practices and procedures implemented within the Company are as per ISO Standard's best practices. During the evaluation process, the team presented the necessary requirements requested by the international ISO standards in details, while confirming that internal policies and procedures are adhered to. The requirements and documented procedures were delivered to the independent certification body for verification prior to the submission.

These ISO Certifications come as a testament to the diligent approach taken by stc to implement policies and guidelines to maintain all business-re-



lated operations. While the continuity plan goes beyond any restrictive measures, the team at stc had developed a comprehensive management system to effectively control such incidents in case they occur. Through active monitoring and continuously enhancing the system, stc manages to safely continue its operations for its customers and stakeholders while abiding to the guidelines imposed by the government.

Eng. Anowd Hamad Muthaib, Acting Chief Strategy Officer & Chief Transformation and Synergies Officer at stc: "indicated that the continuation of these ISO certifications confirms and demonstrates the Company's commitment to implementing robust Quality Management, Environmental Management, Information Security, IT Service Management, Risk Management and Business Continuity Systems that are adaptable to different circumstances." Additionally, Muthaib: "highlighted that the Company continuously searches for new ways to enhance the offerings and services it provides to enrich its customers' experiences. To maintain the same

quality of services to its customers, stc finds it critical that it also provides its employees with access to the necessary resources they need in a user friendly manner."

Muthaib also highlighted that: "it aspires to uphold the highest international standards when delivering digital solutions to customers, in line with the implementation of its digital transformation strategy. Throughout the year, stc was committed to supporting customers and the Kuwaiti community during a challenging period, while delivering its range of services interruption-free. During this time, the Company identified the challenges that appeared in its path and transformed them into opportunities to elevate the user experience. This in return enabled stc to introduce new-to-market products that can leverage on the strength of the Company's strong 5G network, revamping its services to provide convenient access to individual and corporate customers. Moving forward, stc aims to further enhance its offerings and expand its spectrum of digital solutions to cater to the needs of its diverse customer base."

Bursa Kuwait follows with significant net buying trend

Foreign investors net buyers on GCC markets in Q1

By KAMCO Invest

Foreign investors, including institutional and retail investors, were net buyers on GCC stock markets during Q1-2024 with net buying at USD 1.5 Bn as compared to USD 1.3 Bn in net selling during Q4-2023. The trend remained positive since the start of the year with consecutive buying by foreign investors during the first three months of the year. The biggest buying was seen in UAE listed stocks with both Abu Dhabi and Dubai exchanges witnessing consecutive buying during each of the three months during Q1-2024, aggregating total net buying of USD 888.4 Mn. Bursa Kuwait was next with the exchange also seeing consecutive buying by foreigners during the three months of the quarter with USD 334.9 Mn.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia and Qatar witnessed net sell trades by foreign investors during January-2024 followed by net buy trades during the remaining two months. Oman and Bahrain were the only exchanges in the GCC that witnessed net sale by foreign investors during the quarter. Data for Oman showed net buying only during January-2024 followed by net sale during the remaining two months. In the case of Bahrain, the net sale was minimal at USD 1.9 Mn during Q1-2024.

Some of the key factors that affected the flow of foreign money in the region included regional market trends, IPOs, geopolitical issues, economic health of the individual countries and crude oil prices. The quarter saw mixed trend in the equity market that favored gainers as five out of seven exchanges reported gains during Q1-2024. The expectations

related to global interest rate changes also steered performance in the region. However, the seasonal selling pressure during the month of Ramadan resulted in a decline in the market during March-2024. As a result, local investors were net sellers during the month and these shares were grabbed by foreign investors resulting in a broad-based net buy trades by the latter.

In terms of m-o-m performance, net buying value by foreign investors peaked during February-2024 with aggregate monthly net buying at USD 678.4 Mn. March witnessed a decline with net buying at USD 582.0 Mn while January registered the smallest net buying at USD 199.4 Mn.

Historical trend for trading by foreigners in GCC listed stocks showed declines merely in two quarter over the last five years. Foreigners bought the most stocks during Q1-2022 with net buy transactions of USD 11.0 Bn, reflecting steep increase in buying mainly in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Trading by GCC investors in GCC exchanges showed net sales during Q1-2024. Net sale trades of GCC investors reached USD 414.6 Mn compared to a net sale trades of USD 570.7 Bn in Q4-2023. Oman witnessed the biggest net selling by GCC investors during Q1-2024 at USD 141.7 Mn closely followed by Saudi Exchange and Dubai exchanges at USD 140.2 Mn and USD 120.9 Mn, respectively. On the other hand, Abu Dhabi exchange recorded the biggest net buying by GCC investors in Q1-2024 partially offsetting the overall selling by GCC investors.

In terms of the aggregate trading activity, total GCC volume traded during q-o-q gained by 35.9% to reach 80.6

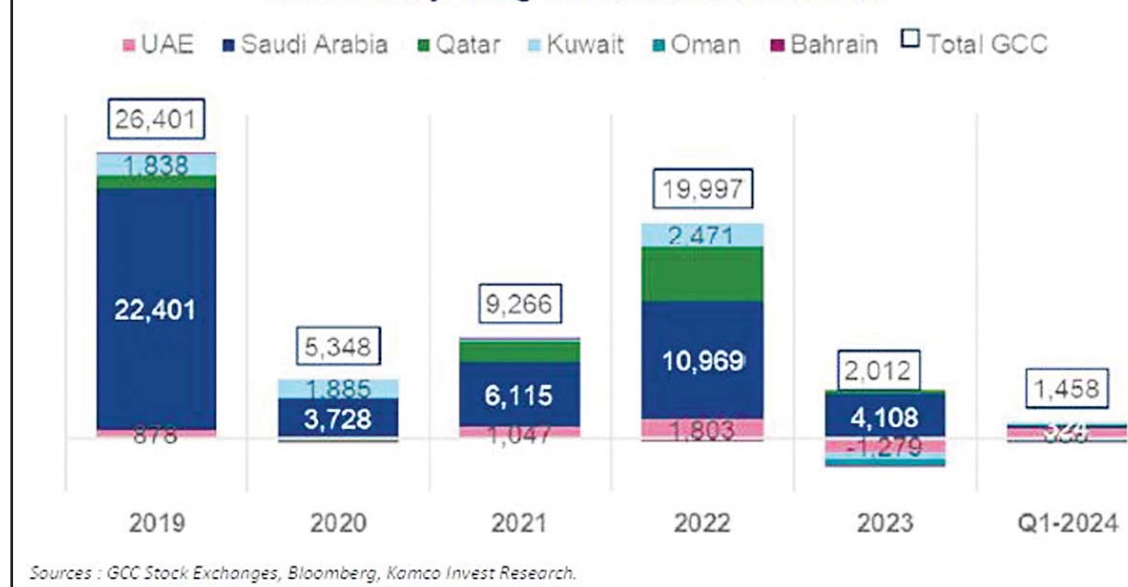
Bn shares in Q1-2024 as compared to 59.3 Bn shares in Q4-2023. Saudi Arabia topped the list with a gain of 68.5% to record 24.1 Bn in Q1-2024 compared to 14.3 Bn in Q4-2023, followed by Abu Dhabi with 61.5% to record 18.3 Bn in Q1-2024 vs. 11.4 Bn in Q4-2023. Qatar, on the other hand, declined from 11.5 Bn in Q4-2023 to 10.5 Bn in Q1-2024.

Similarly, the total value of shares traded during Q1-2024 also reported a gain and was largely broad based. Qatar, Bahrain and Oman declined in value traded while the rest of the markets gained during Q1-2024. Aggregate value traded reached USD 202.0 Bn in Q1-2024 vs. USD 137.5 Bn in Q4-2023. Saudi Arabia reported the biggest increase in trading activity with value traded increasing from USD 93.6 Bn in Q4-2023 to USD 154.5 Bn in Q1-2024 resulting a share of 76.5% vs. 68.0% in Q1-2023. Trading activity on the Qatar Exchange declined q-o-q from USD 9.0 Bn in Q4-2023 to USD 8.8 Bn in Q1-2024.

Top 10 GCC Stocks by Trading value

Nine Saudi-based stocks ranked among the top 10 most traded GCC stocks by trading value in Q1-2024. Aggregate traded value of the top 10 listed stocks in the GCC stood at USD 41.7 Bn, accounting for 20.6% of the total value traded on the GCC exchanges during the year. Saudi Arabian Oil Co (Aramco), topped the list by recording USD 7.7 Bn in trades followed by Al Rajhi Bank at USD 6.3 Bn and Sal Saudi Logistics Services at USD 6.1 Bn. Abu Dhabi's International Holding Co. was the only non-Saudi stock in the list with a quarterly traded value.

Net Trades by Foreign Investors in GCC - USD Mn



BUSINESS

Tesla's stock up on reports of Chinese OK for the co's driving software

Shares of Tesla stock rallied Monday after the electric vehicle maker's CEO, Elon Musk, paid a surprise visit to Beijing over the weekend and reportedly won tentative approval for its driving software.

Musk met with a senior government official in the Chinese capital Sunday, just as the nation's carmakers are showing off their latest electric vehicle

models at the Beijing auto show.

According to The Wall Street Journal, which cited anonymous sources familiar with the matter, Chinese officials told Tesla that Beijing has tentatively approved the automaker's plan to launch its "Full Self-Driving," or FSD, software feature in the country.

Although it's called FSD,

the software still requires human supervision. On Friday the U.S. government's auto safety agency said it is investigating whether last year's recall of Tesla's Autopilot driving system did enough to make sure drivers pay attention to the road. Tesla has reported 20 more crashes involving Autopilot since the recall, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Admin-

istration.

In afternoon trading, shares in Tesla Inc., which is based in Austin, Texas, surged to end Monday up more than 15% - its biggest one-day jump since February 2020. For the year to date, shares are still down 22%.

Tesla has been contending with its stock slide and slowing production. Last week, the

company said its first-quarter net income plunged by more than half, but it touted a newer, cheaper car and a fully autonomous robotaxi as catalysts for future growth.

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives called the news about the Chinese approval a "home run" for Tesla and maintained his "Outperform" rating on the stock.

"We note Tesla has stored

all data collected by its Chinese fleet in Shanghai since 2021 as required by regulators in Beijing," Ives wrote in a note to investors. "If Musk is able to obtain approval from Beijing to transfer data collected in China abroad this would be pivotal around the acceleration of training its algorithms for its autonomous technology globally." (AP)

Gulf Bank records KD 12.9m in net profit for Q1 of 2024

Operating income of KD 48.3 million logged

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first three months ending 31 March 2024. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 12.9 million, a decline of KD 4.4 million or 25.6% compared to 2023 first three months net profit of KD 17.3 million.

In addition, Gulf Bank recorded an operating income of KD 48.3 million for the first three months of 2024, representing an increase of 4.1% compared to the same period of last year. Moreover, operating profit before provisions and impairments has increased to KD 26.6 million, representing a healthy growth of 6.5% compared to the first quarter of 2023.

The decline in net profit for the first three months of 2024 is attributed to the concurrent rise in total provisions and impairments of KD 6.3 million compared to the same period of last year. The increase in total provisions was partially driven by a KD 2 million increase in general provisions as a result of the good year-to-date growth in net loans and advances of 3.6% and a KD 4.2 million increase in credit cost, which includes specific provisions and loan recoveries net of write-offs. While this increase in credit cost have impacted short-term results, we are actively implementing prudent risk management protocols to position ourselves for long-term sustainable growth.

As for asset quality, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio was 1.2% as of 31 March 2024, compared to the prior year level of 0.8%. Additionally, the Bank continues to have significant non-performing loans coverage ratio of 458% including total provisions and collaterals.

Total credit provisions as of 31 March 2024 reached KD 300 million whereas IFRS 9 accounting requirements (i.e., ECL or expected credit losses) were KD 170 million. As a result, the Bank has a very healthy excess provision level of KD 130 million, above and beyond what is required by the IFRS 9 accounting requirements.

Compared to 31 December 2023, total assets increased by 1.3% to KD 7.3 billion, net loans and advances increased by 3.6% to KD 5.4 billion,



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi – Gulf Bank's Chairman

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi:

- Gulf Bank has showcased a robust operational performance during the first quarter supported by a solid top line growth, and healthy balance sheet indicators.
- The expansion of our loan book during the first three months of 2024 reflects the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives to meet our clients' evolving needs.
- The excellent enhancement in our operating profitability reflects our dedication to strategic growth and financial prudence to maintain our market share.
- We are well positioned for sustainable growth in the years ahead with our firm commitment to innovation, strong financial foundation, and customer-centric approach.

while customer deposits increased by 4.6% to KD 4.4 billion and total Shareholders' equity reached KD 788 million.

The Bank's regulatory Tier 1 ratio of 14.7% was 2.7% above the regulatory minimum of 12% and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 16.8% was 2.8% above the regulatory minimum of 14%.

On the 23rd of March 2024, Gulf Bank held its Annual General Assembly Meeting, where shareholders approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 12 fils per share for the year 2023, representing a 57% cash payout ratio, in addition to a 5% bonus shares.

Financial Performance and growth
Commenting on Gulf Bank's first quarter 2024 financial results, Mr. Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "I am pleased to announce that Gulf Bank has showcased a robust operational performance during the first quarter supported by a solid top line growth, and healthy balance sheet indicators. While the first quarter results may reflect a fall in net profit

growth compared to the same period of last year, we remain optimistic about the Bank's future prospects." He added: "Having said that, the expansion of our loan book during the first three months of 2024 reflects the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives to meet our clients' evolving needs. This upward trajectory in loan growth demonstrates our ability to adapt and thrive in dynamic market conditions solidifying our position in the Kuwaiti market." On the improvement of the Bank's operational profitability, Mr. Al-Kharafi stated: "The excellent enhancement in our operating profitability lines, particularly in net interest income, operating income, and operating profit, reflect our dedication to strategic growth and financial prudence, while highlighting our success in maintaining our market share."

Operational Efficiency
While Gulf Bank continues its digital transformation journey, it remains consistent in accelerating business developments and driving operational efficiencies. Following the completion of implementing phase I of the new core



Waleed Khaled Mandani, Gulf Bank Acting CEO

Waleed Khaled Mandani:

- The Bank remains committed to harnessing technology to streamline processes, improve accessibility, and deliver tailored financial solutions to our diverse customer base.
- We are in the process of implementing phase II of our core banking system, following the completion of phase I.
- Gulf Bank is fostering long-lasting customer relationships by promoting savings through incentives and rewards to customers and cultivating a culture of fiscal responsibility and wealth accumulation.
- The AlDanah Millionaire account is a pivotal strategy strengthening the Bank's Current and Saving Accounts portfolio, thereby optimizing the cost of funds, and expanding its funding channels.

banking system during 2023, the Bank is now in the process of launching and implementing phase II of its core banking system. Commenting on this essential digital core banking transformation initiative, Mr. Waleed Khaled Mandani, Gulf Bank Acting CEO said: "Gulf Bank is ready to leverage these foundational changes to drive operational efficiencies and enhance customer experience. The Bank remains committed to harnessing technology to streamline processes, improve accessibility, and deliver tailored financial solutions to its diverse customer base."

Customer Centric
As part of Gulf Bank's innovation strategy and focus on customer-centricity, the Bank launched its latest initiative, the Kids Savings Account "Neo", aimed at nurturing customer financial literacy and inclusion from a young age. Commenting on this latest offering, Mr. Waleed Mandani said: "This initiative demonstrates our dedication to providing innovative solutions that prioritize the needs of our customers at every

stage of life."

Moreover, and on the recent increase of the Al Danah Millionaire account prize to two million dinars, Mr. Mandani stated: "The AlDanah product is a pivotal strategy in strengthening the Bank's Current and Savings Accounts (CASA) portfolio, thereby, optimizing the cost offunds and expanding our funding channels." It is worth mentioning that Gulf Bank's CASA was 30.5% as of 31st March 2024.

Mr. Mandani concluded his remarks by saying: "By promoting savings through incentives and rewards to customers, the Bank is fostering long-lasting relationships and cultivating a culture of fiscal responsibility and wealth accumulation".

ESG Initiatives

As part of Gulf Bank's comprehensive ESG initiatives, the Bank inaugurated its first eco-friendly branch during the first quarter of 2024. The Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area branch is designed with energy-efficient features and sustainable materials, aligning with the Bank's environmental stew-

ardship. Furthermore, Gulf Bank is engaged in promoting environmental consciousness within the community. The Bank is actively advocating the use of reusable bags and minimizing plastic consumption five co-operative societies. Through these relentless efforts, the Bank aims at mitigating its environmental impact and fostering a culture of sustainability within the Bank and the broader community.

Positive Credit Outlook

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its creditworthiness and financial strength internationally. During the year 2023, Moody's Investor Services has affirmed the 'A3' long-term deposit ratings of Gulf Bank and changed the outlook to "Positive" from "Stable". This upgrade is an acknowledgement of Gulf Bank's sound capitalization, improving profitability and strong asset quality.

In addition, Fitch Ratings affirmed the Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with a 'Stable' Outlook and a Viability Rating of 'bbb-'. The Bank has also an affirmed Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Capital Intelligence Ratings.

Appreciation

Mr. Al-Kharafi concluded his remarks by stating: "Looking forward, we are well positioned for sustainable growth in the years ahead with our firm commitment to innovation, strong financial foundation, and customer-centric approach." He added: "On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our shareholders for their ongoing trust, and our employees for their commitment and dedication. I would also like to thank the Regulatory Authorities for their continuous support. Finally, I want to thank our customers for their loyalty, and reiterate our commitment to offering them the best banking experience."

Key Financial indicators for the first quarter:

- First Quarter 2024 net profit of KD 12.9 million.
- First Quarter 2024 operating income of KD 48.3 million, an increase of 4.1% compared to same period of last year.
- Net loans and advances grew by 3.6% year-to-date to reach KD 5.4 billion.
- Non-performing loan ratio for the First Quarter 2024 was 1.2%, with a strong non-performance loan coverage ratio of 458%.
- Capital ratios as of the First Quarter 2024, Tier 1 ratio was 14.7% and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) was 16.8%.

WB assures African countries of 'cheaper', long-term loans

NAIROBI, April 30, (Xinhua): The World Bank on Monday said it would provide concessional loans to African nations and work with governments to enable the continent's sustainable development.

Ajay Banga, president of the World Bank Group, said the institution's International Development Association (IDA) would provide Africa with funding for climate change mitigation, green development, and poverty reduction initiatives.

"We must seize the opportunity and unlock the potential of Africa. Africa can and must charge towards a better future," he said during the IDA21 Replenishment African Heads of State Summit in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Banga said there are many success stories in countries that have embraced IDA funding and transitioned their economies.

He identified China as one of the best examples, which transitioned from an IDA borrower to an IDA lender as it lifted millions out of poverty.

"In the success stories, governments

played a key role in providing an enabling environment for growth. Each recognized challenges and implemented many policies to reduce trade barriers," Banga said, adding that 36 countries have successfully graduated from the IDA.

He observed that Africa faces many headwinds, including debt, poverty, and climate change, which eclipse its numerous resources and stifle progress.

"We all must partner to progress, with governments leading in the development agenda and the IDA as a partner," he said.

Kenyan President William Ruto, at the meeting, called for increased funding for the IDA, noting it should rise from 93 billion U.S. dollars in 2022 to 120 billion dollars in 2024.

He called for the issuance by the IDA of loans that have up to 50 years of repayment period.

Ruto said Africa's escalating debt burden, compounded by global challenges, needs to be addressed through partnerships with institutions like the IDA.

Microsoft to invest \$1.7b in AI and cloud infrastructure in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia, April 30, (AP): Microsoft will invest \$1.7 billion over the next four years in new cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure in Indonesia - the single largest investment in Microsoft's 29-year history in the country - Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said Tuesday.

Microsoft runs one of the world's largest cloud computing operations and has taken a significant step into artificial intelligence by incorporating an AI chatbot into its search engine, Bing. Its earnings report Thursday said profit rose 20% for the January-March quarter as it tries to position itself as a leader in applying artificial intelligence technology to make workplaces more productive.

"This new generation of AI is reshaping how people live and work everywhere, including in Indonesia," said Nadella, in Jakarta on the first stop of a tour of Southeast Asia.

"The investments we are announcing today - spanning digital infrastructure, skilling, and support for develop-

ers - will help Indonesia thrive in this new era," he said.

Microsoft sees Southeast Asia as a growing market and potential location for more AI product development. The rise of AI in the region is expected to significantly impact its economic landscape. A study held by Kearney, a global consulting firm, said that AI could contribute nearly \$1 trillion to Southeast Asia's GDP by 2030, of which Indonesia is expected to capture \$366 billion.

The investment announced Tuesday will include AI training for 840,000 people, as well as support for Indonesia's growing community of tech developers.

Indonesia is home to the third-largest developer community in the Asia-Pacific region after India and China. More than 3.1 million developers in Indonesia use GitHub, a Microsoft-owned platform for software development, collaboration, and innovation. It is projected to be one of the top five developer communities on GitHub globally by 2026.

The bank views sustainability as an important issue: Al-Ghanem

Warba Bank issues its 2023 Sustainability Report

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Warba Bank issued the sustainability report for the year 2023, which explains the impact of the environmental, social and economic aspects and provides transparency about the Bank's contribution to sustainable development.

On this occasion, Mr. Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, CEO of Warba Bank, said: "With the continuous world-

wide growth in sustainability and the necessity of applying it, which has become one of the most important factors in evaluating institutions in all sectors locally and internationally, today we are launching the Warba Bank Sustainability Report 2023, which focuses on the effective integration of sustainability indicators and elements to enhance the ability to address any challenges. This enables the Bank to achieve the highest standards of service."

He stated that Warba Bank views sustainability as an important issue and the Bank is building the necessary structure for its vision and enabling it to be at the forefront of sustainability in Kuwait. Explaining that Warba Bank launched a journey of sustainability and sustainable growth to add value by incorporating environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects, as the Bank aligned its objectives with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, pointing out that issues such as climate change, reducing carbon emissions resulting from operational activities, and financial inclusion are at the forefront of Warba Bank's sustainability strategy.

Al-Ghanem explained that the 2023 sustainability report issued by Warba Bank includes disclosures about the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

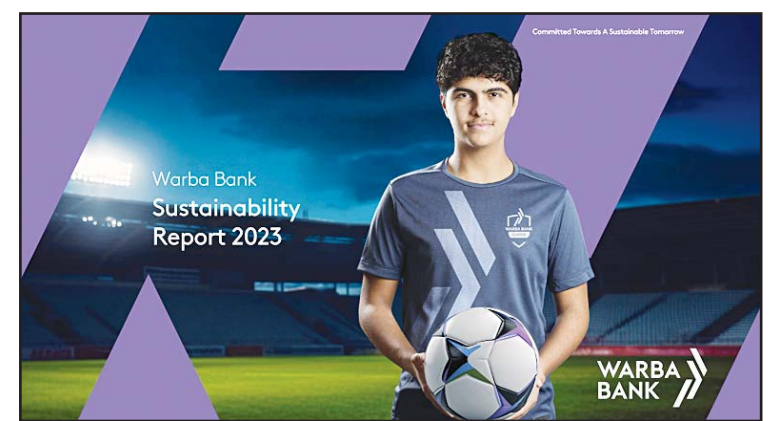


Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, CEO of Warba Bank.

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem:

- We are keen to monitor and measure the Bank's performance at the level of environmental, social and governance sustainability standards
- We aim to be at the forefront through our sustainable performance, and we look forward to enhancing this practice in the future

standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in addi-



A cover of the report released by Warba Bank.

tion following the Central Bank of Kuwait's guidelines on sustainable financing, the Capital Markets Authority's sustainability report regulations, and the Kuwait Stock Exchange's Boursa Kuwait guide.

Al-Ghanem pointed out that sustainability reports are an important tool for companies and institutions to demonstrate their commitment to social, environmental and economic responsibility, as they help enhance transparency and trust between companies, investors and society. In addition, reports help identify matters that can be improved in the Bank's performance, motivating it to take more sustainable and effective actions in the future, and as a tool to measure the Bank's social, environmental and economic impact. Sustainability reports also help enhance awareness of corporate social

responsibility and its role in society and the environment. Moreover, reporting helps companies and banks to improve their reputation, manage risk and meet clients' growing needs for sustainable products and services.

Al-Ghanem stressed that we at Warba Bank are keen to monitor and measure the Bank's performance at the level of ESG standards, and to inform stakeholders of these achievements and commitments, indicating that Warba Bank views sustainability as one of the drivers of its vision.

Al-Ghanem further said that the 2023 Sustainability Report is based on the evaluation and disclosure of all sustainability standards, especially everything related to ESG standards, which includes a number of main aspects that concern our clients, shareholders, employees and society as a whole.

China's clean energy sectors gain edge via innovation, supply chain

HEFEI, April 30, (Xinhua): A notion that China's burgeoning clean energy sector is propped up by market-skewing subsidies has been a new whisper in Washington's corridors of power. Yet, an on-the-ground investigation at the nation's industrial powerhouse debunked the myth.

A glimpse into the inner workings of a solar panel facility revolutionized by augmented reality (AR), a

highly automated and intelligent assembly line of electric vehicles, and a battery manufacturer using smart robotics in warehousing tells a compelling story.

Their cost competitiveness, a boon for global consumers and for initiatives to wean off fossil fuels, is a direct result of tech prowess and the strength of supply chains instead of a reliance on subsidies.

Automated Factory

At new energy vehicle (NEV) maker NIO's state-of-the-art manufacturing hub in the eastern Chinese city of Hefei, Anhui Province, an innovative vehicle storage and retrieval platform, aptly named the "Rubik's Cube," efficiently manages over 700 car bodies, facilitating a seamless process for personalized production.

Within the bustling workshop, a

fleet of over 800 intelligent robots are operating with high precision. These advanced machines are capable of installing four car doors with remarkable accuracy in a mere 98 seconds, achieving an error margin that does not exceed 0.5 millimeters.

The entire process, from the moment a customer submits an order to the car's completion on the production line, is streamlined to take just 14 days.

Inauguration ceremony attended by dignitaries

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches 350th global showroom at Naperville, Illinois



Photo during the event

LuLu Kuwait partakes in UAE Companies Investment Meet

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading player in the retail landscape of Kuwait, reaffirmed its dedication to fostering economic cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE at the UAE Companies Investment Meet, held on 28 April at the Regency Kuwait. Organized by the UAE Embassy in Kuwait, the event served as a platform for enhancing bilateral trade relations and exploring investment opportunities between the two nations.

The opening ceremony witnessed the attendance of prominent figures from both nations, including UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al-Zeyoudi, the UAE Ambassador H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, and Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Joan, representing His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Additionally, a host of businessmen, corporate officials, and owners of small and medium enterprises from both countries graced the event.

Among the distinguished attendees was Director of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait, Mohamed Haris, whose presence represented the company's commitment to furthering economic ties and exploring avenues for collaboration between the two states.

LuLu's active involvement in the event underscored its strategic vision to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the Kuwaiti economy by leveraging synergies with the UAE. With a focus on enhancing trade and investment flows between the two nations, LuLu Hypermarket remains steadfast in its mission to foster mutually beneficial partnerships and drive sustainable economic development.

As the leading retail entity in Kuwait, LuLu continues to explore avenues for expansion and investment, aligning with the broader strategic objectives of both Kuwait and the UAE. Through its participation in events such as the UAE Companies Investment Meet, LuLu Hypermarket reaffirms its role as a catalyst for economic growth and a staunch advocate for bilateral cooperation.

30 clients win prizes worth KD 1,500

KFH reveals Al-Rabeh winners

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 30 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 13th until the 15th week of 2024. Additionally, KFH announced Khaled Al-Dosari as the monthly winner of 1 kilo Gram of KFH Gold for the month of March 2024 and the bank also announced Nawaf Al-Dhafeeri as the winner of the 1st quarter draw of a prize worth 25,000 K.D.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Mefareh Al-Enezi, Abdulrahman Edhedle Mohammad Mustafa, Mahmoud Al-Rabiah, Ehab ghazal, Said Younes, Dalal Al-Saddah, Abdullah Al-Rubah, Nadiyah Al-Sadeqi, Fatemah Al-Zaid, Dana Al-Foudari, yousef Mendkar, Salwa Al-Oraifan, Mohammad Al-Harbi, Mohammad Al-Rasheedi, Samah Hazaa, Sally Mohsen, Sami Al-Huwaidi, Dana Al-Azmi, Jarrah Al-Terkait, Aisha Al-Othman, Adel Al-Khurair, Ahmad Al-Mutairi, Rasha Al-Shammari, Atiyah Abdulmaqsood, Sultan Al-Khalidi, Humood Al-Rasheedi, Khaled Awshan, Jawaher Al-Ajmi, Meshari Al-Rabiah.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in

the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with an annual turnover of USD 6.2 billion and retail presence of 350 showrooms across 13 countries, has just unveiled its 4th showroom in the USA at Naperville, Illinois. This brings the global jewellery brand's showroom count globally to 350, with 5 showrooms in North America. Malabar Gold & Diamonds currently has an extensive retail presence across the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, India, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, KSA, Malaysia & Singapore.

The new showroom was inaugurated by HE. Somnath Ghosh, Consul General of India in Chicago in the presence of Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Rakesh Patel of Patel brothers, Mr. Joseph Eapen, President of North America operations of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, community leaders, representatives from government and other authorities, management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers.

"The launch of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' 350th Global showroom in the USA is a proud occasion for us as it signifies the growing footprint of our brand in the international jewellery arena. Located in the city of Naperville, this showroom will undoubtedly bring the best of what we have to offer in terms of both jewellery & experience. Our unwavering commitment to offering every customer complete transparency and an exceptional jewellery shopping experience has propelled us to being one of the most preferred jewellery retailers in the USA and all the other regions in which we operate. On behalf of Malabar Group, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to all our customers, management team members, shareholders and other stakeholders for their contributions in making this occasion truly significant," commented the Chairman of Malabar Group, M.P. Ahammed.

Located at Patel Plaza in Naperville and spread across 6,400+ sq.ft, the new outlet houses over 30,000 designs across 25 exclusive brands and collections in gold, diamond & precious gem jewellery. The new store will also showcase an extensive collection of bridal jewellery, alongside a wide range of options for occasional wear, daily wear & office wear. The other 3 showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds are in Chicago, New Jersey & Dallas.

"The USA is one of the largest jewellery markets in the world in terms of both buying power and population, and I am very excited to launch our 4th showroom in the country. The large segment of the Indian subcontinental diaspora in the USA is an opportunity for us to expand our offerings to a base of consumers who truly appreciate the artistry of Indian jewellery. Our future initiatives in North America

include expansion into Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco, Seattle, Austin, Tampa & Virginia in the USA and in Canada, we have plans covering British Columbia & Alberta," commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Offering an exclusive jewellery shopping experience to the plethora of jewellery lovers in Illinois, the new showroom is equipped with a customized jewellery designing facility, presenting customers with the option to design their own jewellery with the assistance of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' expert designers and craftsmen.

Mr. Abdul Salam K.P., Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, commented: "With 5 showrooms in the region, Malabar Gold & Diamonds' success in North America speaks volumes about the growing demand for Indian-made jewellery in the western hemisphere. Aligning with the motto of 'Make in India; Market to the world', the heights to which our brand has grown in the international jewellery arena is perfectly encapsulated by Malabar Gold & Diamonds being the highest-ranked Indian jewellery retailer in the Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2023 report published by Deloitte recently."

In pursuit of promoting India's renowned indigenous craftsmanship on a global scale, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has embarked on an ambitious expansion plan, which involves strengthening their retail presence in existing regions with more showroom launches, as well as charting their expansion into new countries such as South Africa, Egypt, Bangladesh, Turkey and New Zealand.

"While Malabar Gold & Diamonds is making great strides in the international jewellery sector, our operations in India, which remains our biggest market, is going forward with equal momentum. Our prestigious position in the Indian jewellery market is poised to be strengthened further by our planned expansion within existing states of operation as well as into states such as Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Goa, Assam, Tripura, and Jammu & Kashmir," commented Mr. Asher O., India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance. Apart from this, the Malabar Promise also includes transparent pricing, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 13 countries, guaranteed buyback, tested and certified diamonds, 100% value on diamond and gold jewellery exchange, 916 hallmarked jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labour practices.



Photo during the inauguration.

Premium Banking customers eligible for 3% cashback

Exclusive express checkout counters for NBK's Premium Banking clients at Lulu Hypermarket

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) consistently offers exclusive advantages to its Premium Banking customers, ensuring they enjoy a personalized experience featuring a range of benefits tailored to their individual lifestyle and diverse needs.

In line with this commitment, the bank has initiated a special campaign tailored for Private, Privilege & Thahabi clients, granting them exclusive access to an enhanced shopping experience at select branches of Lulu Hypermarket in Jahra, Qurain, Egaila, Khairan, and Sabahiya (the Warehouse branch). These designated counters ensure NBK customers can enjoy expedited and seamless transactions, facilitating their purchases across the diverse range of brands offered by Lulu Hypermarket.

The campaign extends to NBK Private and Privilege Banking clients, along with NBK Thahabi Banking account holders, all of whom are eligible to receive a 3% cashback when paying with their eligible NBK KWT Visa Infinite Credit Card.

Mr. Hisham Al-Nusif – Deputy Head, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, commented on the campaign, highlighting its



Photos during the event.

uniqueness as the first collaboration of this nature between a bank and grocery retail chain Lulu Hypermarket in Kuwait. "We are committed to leveraging our long-term partnerships with leading organizations across various sectors to provide our customers with exclusive benefits, services, and discounts tailored to their needs and aspirations," he remarked.

Al-Nusif emphasized that this campaign is part of the bank's dedication to enhancing its customers' experience, affirming that NBK will persist in introducing unique and innovative services and offers aimed at provid-

ing Premium Banking customers with added luxury and peace of mind.

Mohammed Haris, Director of Lulu Hypermarket, expressed delight in the collaboration with NBK, enabling customers of the bank's Premium Banking services to enjoy a unique shopping experience at Lulu Hypermarket stores across Kuwait. Dedicated payment counters have been designated, facilitating their purchases with ease.

He added that Lulu Hypermarket aims to strengthen its partnership with NBK to extend further offers and benefits to its customers.

NBK provides Premium Banking

Customers with an array of services across five key pillars; exclusive services, investment solutions, advantages such as Family Banking services & Global Banking services; freebies such as luggage delivery and an entire suite of lifestyle benefits tailored to all customer persona's. In addition to the above premium banking customers also have access to premium lounges & teller services giving them priority when making financial transactions and deposits in branches, in addition to card home delivery service. Furthermore, Premium Banking customers have exclusive access to our concierge services.

Burj Alshaya complex recognized for sustainable practices

Four Seasons Kuwait achieves Platinum LEED certification

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya continues to set the standard for responsible tourism and hospitality in the Middle East by becoming the first and only hotel in Kuwait to achieve Platinum certification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

One of the industry's most prestigious accolades in the drive towards a greener future, LEED is the world's most widely recognised and independently verified green building rating system.

The certification marks both the Hotel and the 140,000-square-metre (1.5-million-square-foot) Burj Alshaya complex in which it is located as only one of two buildings in the country to have received the LEED Platinum certification – the highest of LEED's three-tier levels after Silver and Gold. Burj Alshaya also includes the head office of Alshaya Group and offices for many of Kuwait's prestigious businesses.

Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya is one of the most striking hotels in the world: a sleek, avant-garde address with a distinctly modern vision of Middle Eastern design that has been devoted to sustainable practices since it opened its doors in the summer of 2017.

Innovative on-site sustainability initiatives that contributed to its Platinum LEED certification include on-site



Sustainable practices propel Four Seasons to LEED platinum.



Four Seasons Kuwait, In-House Water Bottling.

water bottling, extensive recycling, AI-driven waste management, the elimination of single-use plastics and Styrofoam, energy consumption tracking and carbon footprint measurement.

In addition, the Hotel offers complimentary e-charging stations for guests' electric vehicles and uses eco-friendly key cards instead of plastic alternatives while its first e-limousine is due to cruise into use in 2024.

"LEED Platinum certification highlights the importance that both Alshaya group and Four Seasons alike place on the environment and sustainability," comments Martin Kipping, General Manager of Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya. "It represents the efforts of everyone involved with the

hotel and its environment and is also a recognition of the willingness of our guests to work with us in creating a greener future."

LEED-certified green buildings are better buildings

Since its inception in 1998, the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED certification has emerged as a globally recognised symbol of sustainability achievement, supported by an entire industry of committed organisations and individuals paving the way for market transformation.

LEED has a holistic approach, considering all the critical elements that work together to create the most sustainable building possible. The certification aims to create better buildings

that mitigate global climate change, enhance human health, protect water resources, enhance biodiversity, promote sustainable and regenerative material cycles, and improve community quality of life.

Community at the core

Beyond its sustainable design features and water-saving initiatives, the team at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya practices responsible hospitality through community initiatives; 2023's events included fun-filled family events at the Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) and a beach clean-up that saw the Hotel's 'Four Seasons For Good' team restore the local beach to a pristine condition.

Win with your salary

536 Winners

Your chance to win is bigger

الراجح

The campaign visual

Ashley Judd advocates women's rights and equality at UN

UNITED NATIONS, April 30, (AP) — Actor Ashley Judd, whose allegations against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein helped spark the #MeToo movement, spoke out Monday on the rights of women and girls to control their own bodies and be free from male violence.

A goodwill ambassador for the UN Population Fund, she addressed the UN General Assembly's commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the landmark document adopted by 179 countries at its 1994 conference in Cairo, which for the first time recognized that women have the right to control their reproductive and sexual health - and to choose if and when to become pregnant.

Judd called the program of action adopted in Cairo a "glorious, aspirational document" that has been "imprinted into my psyche ... (and) has guided my 20 years of traveling the world, drawing needed attention to and uplifting sexual and reproductive health and rights in slums, brothels, refugee and IDP (internally displaced) camps, schools and drop-in centers."

The Cairo conference changed the focus of the UN Population Fund, known as UNFPA, from numerical targets to promoting choices for individual women and men, and supporting economic development and education for girls. Underlying the shift was research showing that educated women have smaller families.

While Cairo recognized sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for women, it did not recognize sexual rights. That came a year later at the 1995 UN women's conference in

Beijing.

On one of the most contentious issues at the Cairo conference, delegates recognized that unsafe abortion is a fact that governments must deal with as a public health issue to save women's lives. But it did not condone abortion as a method of family planning or mention legalization, and 30 years later the issue remains contentious.

Judd recalled some of her travels including to Madagascar, where she said she spoke to women being commercially exploited by men. She said they were all forced into that work by the same root cause: "The sexual, reproductive, legal, political, social and cultural inequality of girls and women."

Refugees

In Turkey last August, Judd said she met with both Turkish families and refugees living in tents and containers "with one semi-functioning latrine for hundreds of people."

Many said they were in no emotional, mental or physical condition to bring another baby into the world and Judd expressed gratitude that UNFPA was doing all it could "to provide modern family planning choices to those who want them, in spite of the government removing their availability in the public sector."

A UNFPA goodwill ambassador since 2016, Judd stressed the importance of women choosing when to have children and "the ability to say no to sex free from retaliation."

Natalia Kanem, executive director of UNFPA which now calls itself the U.N.'s sexual and reproductive health and rights agency, cited tremendous progress over the last three decades on the Cairo platform at the commemoration.

Maternal mortality declined by a third between 2000 and 2020, the number of women using contraceptives has doubled since 1990, adolescent births have dropped by a third since 2000, and rates of child marriage have decreased globally, she said.

Kanem also pointed to more than 60 countries passing legislation against domestic violence, and punitive laws against LGBTQ+ individuals "falling more quickly than ever."

"And yet today, progress is slowing," she said. "Annual reductions in maternal deaths have flattened, inequalities, between and within countries, are widening. And the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people are the subject of increasing pushback."

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told the crowded General Assembly chamber that the great progress in 30 years "has been masked by those that have been left behind."

She cited many developing countries whose child mortality rates remain too high and the 164 million women of reproductive age around the world with no access to family planning.

"We must remain vigilant and continue to address situations where sexual and reproductive health and rights are being rolled back," Mohammed said. "We must respond and push back when women's rights are being eroded."

People

Variety



This image released by FX shows Rob McElhenney in a scene from the third season of 'Welcome to Wrexham.' (AP)

Television

Reynolds and McElhenney on balancing investment and passion

'Welcome to Wrexham' back in action

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP) — Four years after purchasing Wales' Wrexham A.F.C., Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney seem to have no regrets about their investment — despite the high costs of ownership.

The Wrexham Red Dragons recently clinched a promotion and is now two-tiers away from the top level, known as the Premier League.

The last few years have been a crash course for Reynolds and McElhenney in both the game of English soccer and the economics behind it.

The experience has been captured in the FX docuseries "Welcome to Wrexham," debuting its third season May 2. The actors spoke with The Associated Press about separating their inner-fan with public-facing jobs as chairmen and how the new episodes will be released closer to real-time.

AP: Has learning the business of sports changed you as a spectator?

McElhenney: No. I have to separate myself. I think what's important about that is it allows me to give space to the supporters of Wrexham, because they deserve the right to complain and get upset when things aren't going well because that's their right as supporters.

I have that relationship with the Philadelphia Eagles. I both have respect for all the players in the organization, but (football) is a way I deal with my frustrations and anxiety and it's something I look forward to on the weekend. It's also something I have a passionate feelings about that I express to my friends, not necessarily publicly.

As chairmen of a football club, we have to hold ourselves to a different standard. We have to have at least a modicum of decorum in our exchanges about how we talk about things, because these are human beings, not characters on a screen. These are not athletes who mean nothing to us. These are our friends. These are our employees. These are people who we have to treat with dignity, grace and re-

spect, and to recognize that this is their livelihood, so there's a very clear line of demarcation.

Reynolds: Just to piggyback on that, we do have each other. We have the public facing side of it, but then we can also take a moment to enjoy a festival of expletives when we're frustrated or if things aren't going according to plan. You obviously express your joy for the team succeeding outwardly. You want to make sure it's being expressed to all those supporters who have been there.

Some have spread the ashes of their grandparents and parents on the field where this club is playing. We have an impossible amount of respect for that tradition and that fan base and everything that they've been through, all the ups and downs. But I'm always grateful that Rob and I can have that sidebar where we both go, you know, "Holy (expletive), I can't believe this is happening right now. I can't believe we got out of the National League. I can't believe we've just lost to this club."

AP: With a show like this, viewers can do an internet search to see some of the outcome. Has there become a pressure to churn out episodes quicker?

Reynolds: Absolutely, but what we're most excited about with respect to season three is that as the episodes are finished, we will get closer and closer to continuity with the actual football season happening. So, by the time we're midway through season three, you'll see we don't have any idea what's going to happen. Just from that sort of macro 30,000-foot narrative standpoint, we have no clue. Everything that we're doing right now is for broke. We have to get promoted. There's no real consolation prize if we don't. So we are all in.

McElhenney: That's truly the most exciting part about season three is that it will coincide with the end of the season. There was such a large gap between the end of last season and the documentary coming out. And we thought, 'Well, if we're going

to continue to make the show, we want to innovate a little bit, so that it becomes more exciting, so both the fans and the documentarians don't know what's going to happen.' We will catch up with the end of the season and those final few episodes. We actually will have trucks in the racecourse parking lot that will have editing facilities in them, and they will be taking footage and cutting the show as quickly as possible to get it out on onto the air, because we want it to happen in real time.

Reynolds: And if this season so far has taught us anything, this is going to be an absolute nail-biter yet again.

AP: Obviously the money that's been put into the team has helped and it's been a great emotional investment. What about financially? Where are you at?

Reynolds: Accountants don't really want to hear about the emotional investment.

McElhenney: You want to know, like how far in the red I am? It's pretty significant. It's true that in the beginning when we asked our advisors if this was a good economic investment, there was not one person that I can remember that was like, "Yes."

It was more like, "Don't."

Reynolds: Run away, yeah. History has an unbelievable amount of examples of how this was not the best idea, but we're not in it to make money and goddamn it, we won't. (Laughs) I think we recognize how lucky we are that we can be in this position where it isn't about making money or any of those things. I mean, you have to be in a pretty privileged spot to be able to do this to begin with. But eventually, you know, as we climb up the leagues, we're going to need outside help in order to sustain this club. One of our great mission statements and — this is something that is still a huge target — is to create a sustainable model for a sports club like this and allow it to support itself long after we're dead and gone.

LOS ANGELES: Britney Spears and her father Jamie Spears will avoid what could have been a long, ugly and revealing trial with a settlement of the lingering issues in the court conservatorship that controlled her life and financial decisions for nearly 14 years.

A hearing on those issues — including a request from Jamie Spears for a broad ruling dismissing them — had been scheduled for Monday but was pulled from the court calendar after the settlement was approved by a judge on Friday.

Britney Spears was taken out of the conservatorship in November 2021, after a pair of speeches she made to a judge turned what had been a growing public sentiment against it into a cause best known by the hashtag #FreeBritney.

But several elements remained and dragged on in court, including final payments to the attorneys who helped operate the conservatorship. Spears' attorney **Mathew Rosengart** had also sought a public reckoning over what he said was financial malfeasance by Jamie Spears and allegations of excessive surveillance of Spears.

All of that will now be dispensed with in the settlement whose terms were not disclosed in a series of filings last week, one of which said Jamie Spears had been "fully and finally discharged as Former Conservator of the Estate."

"Although the conservatorship was terminated in November, 2021, her wish for freedom is now truly complete," Rosengart said in a statement. "As she desired, her freedom now includes that she will no longer need to attend or be involved with court or entangled with legal proceedings in this matter. It has been our honor and privilege to represent, protect, and defend Britney Spears."

The trial had been slated to begin next month.

Jamie Spears' attorney, **Alex Weingarten**, said the settlement was confidential at the insistence of her lawyer.

"Jamie has nothing to hide and would be happy to disclose everything about every aspect of the conservatorship so that the public knows the actual truth," Weingarten said in a statement to The Associated Press on Monday. "Jamie loves his daughter very much and has always done everything he can to protect her." (AP)

□ □ □

PARIS: A lawyer for Gérard Depardieu says French police are no longer holding the actor, following a day of reported questioning Monday over accusations by two women that he sexually assaulted them on movie sets.

The lawyer, **Christian Saint-Palais**, said: "The police custody is over. He is no longer held in the



Britney



Depardieu

police station." Broadcaster BFMTV and the daily Le Parisien reported that the 75-year-old actor was summoned Monday morning by Paris police and placed in custody.

The Paris police force said it wasn't authorized to comment and directed questions to the Paris prosecutor's office, which said it

had no comment "at this stage."

"We have no information to communicate or confirm before having assessed any eventual charges and directions," the office said in an emailed response to questions from The Associated Press.

One of Depardieu's lawyers, Christian Saint-Palais, was seen

walking into a police station in the 14th district of Paris after lunching at a nearby restaurant.

"No need to ask me any questions," he said. "You know very well that a lawyer cannot speak at this stage of the procedure, and personally I regret that other persons have spoken, so I won't make any comment." (AP)

People & Places

Stage

Diverse talent

Female directors shine at Tony Awards noms

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): After a final, frantic push to open the last raft of Broadway shows before the eligibility window closed, the final list of almost 40 plays and musicals vying for Tony Award nominations this year are ready and hoping for their closeups.

Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Renée Elise Goldsberry will announce nominees for the 26 competitive Tony Awards on Tuesday morning, the result of voting by the 60 members of the nominating committee.

The spring barrage - 14 shows opened in an 11-day span this year - is not unusual these days as producers hope their work will be fresh in the mind of voters ahead of the Tony Awards ceremony on June 16. But no clear single musical juggernaut has emerged, like the megahit "Hamilton" in 2016 or a critical darling like last year's "Kimberly Akino."

One possible change this year indicates women may be poised to outnumber the men for the first time in directing nominations. Nearly half of the 21 musicals - new and revivals - that opened this season were helmed by a woman or featured a team of co-directors where at least one was a woman. Five out of the season's 16 new plays and play revivals were also staged by women.

The 2022 Tony Awards currently holds the record for most female directing nominees, with four total across the two races. Only 10 women have gone on to win the directing crown.

The eligible shows this season include reworking of existing movies or books - "The Outsiders," "The Great Gatsby," "The Notebook," "Back to the Future" and "Water for Elephants" - and new works transferring over to Broadway, like the suffrage play "Suffs," the dance-heavy Sufjan Stevens-scored "Illinoise," the rock band imploding "Stereophonic" and "Hell's Kitchen," loosely based on Alicia Keys' life.



Ferguson

Breakthrough

There are some coincidences, like that Huey Lewis & The News songs are heard at both his jukebox show "The Heart of Rock and Roll" and an unconnected musical of "Back to the Future." Rachel McAdams, who made a breakthrough in the film version of "The Notebook," is competing against the musical version of that movie a few blocks away in the play "Mary Jane." Plus, "The Wiz" and "Wicked" now share Broadway, and Nazis are in both "Cabaret" and a musical about artist Tamara de Lempicka.

This season attracted plenty of big stars to Broadway in addition to McAdams, like Jessica Lange and Jim Parsons in "Mother Play," Steve Carell in a revival of "Uncle Vanya," Eddie Redmayne in a new "Cabaret," Liev Schreiber in "Doubt," "Succession" star Jeremy Strong in a revival of "An Enemy of the People" and Sarah Paulson in the play "Appropriate."

There were some firsts this season, including "Here Lies Love" with Broadway's first all-Filipino cast, as well as mostly Filipino producers, including singer H.E.R., comedian Jo Koy and Black Eyed Peas' Apl. de.Ap. And seven openly autistic actors starred in "How to Dance in Ohio," a first for Broadway.

Big musical revival splashes were made by "Monty Python's Spamalot," "The Wiz," "The Who's Tommy," Stephen Sondheim's "Merrily We Roll Along" and the fourth revival of "Cabaret."

Academy Award winner and Tony Award-nominee Ariana DeBose, who hosted both the 2023 and 2022 ceremonies, will be back this year and will produce and choreograph the opening number.

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 Theater, which houses the Broadway venue Beaumont Theater.

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, and some Tony Awards handed out there.

It's July 1976 in a Northern California recording studio and the rock 'n' roll band cutting their latest album is exhausted and wary. The coffee machine is broken. Never mind, there's always cocaine - and heaps of it.

"That's not the same thing," one of the musicians says.

"It's the exact same thing," she is told. So begins "Stereophonic," one of the most thrilling pieces of theater in years, a play with better songs than most musicals on Broadway and an ensemble that rocks, literally. You won't need any of their coke to last the three-hour-plus run time.

Playwright David Adjmi tells the story of a Fleetwood Mac-like band with five members - some married, some dating - working on music with two sound engineers over a life-changing year, with personal rifts opening and closing and then reopening. The rifts also change, as songs endure dozens of takes and changes in tempo.

Meditation

The play, which opened recently at the Golden Theatre, is a hypernaturalistic meditation on the thrill, and also the danger, of collaborating on art - the compromises, the egos and the joys. It's an ode not just to the music business but perhaps to the theater world, too.

"Stereophonic" is a very human play, featuring deep moments about love and the pursuit of art interspersed with digressions about dry cleaners and Marlon Brando. We learn to care about each of the five characters and even anticipate their reactions. Will they survive this album intact?

David Zinn's marvelous set, with the engineers manipulating dials and faders in the office-hangout spot, in front of a glassed-off recording space, allows for multiple conversations at once, including one intense argument completely offstage that the engineers overhear.

The effect is almost to turn the actors into instruments themselves, alternating silence for one or two moments in one scene and in another with their volumes raised high. There is cross-talk, mufflers and even the clunk of machines whirring when a recording is started. It's the most interesting soundscape since "The Humans." Kudos to director Daniel Aukin and the nimble cast for making it all so seamless.

Will Butler, formerly of Arcade Fire, provides the original, layered blues- and folk-based songs - perfect for progressive rockers in the late '70s. The songs are instantly funky, head-bobbing bangers and audience members will care about them, too.



Models walk the runway during the Ralph Lauren Fall/Holiday 2024 presentation on Monday, April 29, in New York. (AP)

Fashion

Muted tones and maximum impact

Ralph Lauren goes minimalist

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): Ralph Lauren has been known for many a grand fashion show over the years: taking over Central Park for a sumptuous anniversary celebration, for example, or staging a runway show amid his eye-popping classic car collection.

But for his Fall/Holiday 2024 collection, he decided to go minimal - at least, minimal in Ralph Lauren terms. That meant an intimate show Monday night in a (relatively) small design studio at his New York City offices, inspired by his first women's fashion show in 1972, where he displayed his wares to editors and friends in his own office.

In front of a typically starry front row that included actors Glenn Close, Jessica Chastain, Kerry Washington, Rebecca Hall and Jodie Turner-Smith, Lauren opened his show on a note of timelessness - his longtime ethos - with the appearance of muse and supermodel Christy Turlington, now 55, in a sleek beige wool coat.

What followed were a series of designs in soothing neutral tones: tans, browns, grays, black and metallics. The soft palette characterized both daytime garments like tailored jackets and sweaters with trousers, and evening wear like slinky, sequined gowns. There were roomy sweaters, lots of boots and wide leather belts with "RL" buckles.

Jacket

There were Lauren's familiar Western accents, like long fringes on coats and jacket sleeves. And especially the occasional cowboy hat, which accompanied not only casual ensembles but, to close out the show with a memorable look, a backless gown dress in sparkly gold.

Lauren, 84, appeared briefly at the end, in well-worn jeans, to cheers from the crowd, which also included Vogue editor Anna Wintour.

Close wore a white Lauren pantsuit. "This is a very, very special suit," the actor said. "It was made especially for me. Custom. Five years ago. I won a SAG award in it. So here I am. It looks just as beautiful. It's a shame to wear something like this only once."

Close added that growing up in New England, "the mentality was, you buy something that has great quality and then you wear it until it wears out. That's how I was brought up."

the board of directors. Among the issues the new CEO trio must face are a reported \$11 billion offer from private-equity firm Apollo Global to acquire the studio, which produces films and television programs and runs the streaming service Paramount+.

There have also been reports of a possible merger with Skydance, David Ellison's media company that has helped produce such Paramount releases as "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Mission: Impossible -

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): True love's kiss or an invite to the Met Gala? Those in the rarefied ranks of international celebrity - and Anna Wintour's good graces - need not choose.

Stars of film, fashion, music, sports, politics and social media will ascend the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the first Monday in May - May 6, that is - to sip cocktails, have dinner and sample the new exhibit, "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion." As fashion's biggest night approaches, it's time for The Associated Press to issue the 2024 version of our annual guide.

It started in 1948 as a society midnight supper, and wasn't even at the Met. Fast forward 70-plus years, and it's one of the most photographed events in the world, renowned for its head-spinning red carpet - though the carpet isn't always red.

It's important to note, though, that the party has a purpose, raising money for the Met's Costume Institute - nearly \$22 million last year, a record for the self-funding department - and launching the annual spring exhibit that brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to the museum.

But it's the carpet itself that draws the world's eyes, with the 400-strong guest list the subject of rabid speculation until the last minute - a collection of luminaries that arguably makes for the highest celebrity wattage-per-square-foot of any party in the world.

"Anna Wintour Me Pregunto," Bad Bunny could sing. Multi-hyphenate Jennifer Lopez adds yet another role to her busy year. And

then there are two Marvel stars who have been spending a lot of time in the desert lately: Zendaya, who has continued to stun on red carpets with her "Dune" and "Challengers" looks, and Chris Hemsworth, who is trading in Mjolnir for the upcoming "Furiosa." (Hemsworth is, in fact, a first-time gala attendee.)

And, of course, Wintour herself. The theme actually has little to do with fairytales. "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion," the title of the accompanying exhibit, refers to garments from the Costume Institute's collection that have been "in slumber" and now will be on display, some too fragile to hang upright lest they disintegrate. Curator Andrew Bolton picked 250 pieces spanning four centuries.

The theme is accompanied by a dress code - this year, it's "The Garden of Time." The theme and dress code are often interpreted ... loosely. So there's a chance you may see an Aurora on the carpet, after all.

Wrong question. You cannot just buy a ticket. The right question is: If I were famous or powerful and got invited, how much would it cost?

Well, you might not pay yourself. Generally companies buy tables. A fashion label, for example, would then host its desired celebrities. A table of 10 starts at \$350,000 this year.

You can watch the whole carpet unfold on a Vogue livestream. If you're in New York, you can also join fans across the street, behind barricades on Fifth Avenue or even further east on Madison. And the AP will have a livestream of departures from the Mark Hotel, where many gala guests get ready.

new ways to bring the brand to life. But there is a philosophy. There is a style."

With Wintour's Met Gala coming up in exactly a week, David Lauren was asked if the label would be dressing any stars. "Not this year," he said. "We've been so involved over the years, but this year we have a fashion show and we're about to outfit team USA (for the Olympics in Paris) and do a men's presentation in Milan. So our our plate is full."



Kerry Washington attends the Ralph Lauren Fall/Holiday 2024 presentation on Monday, April 29, in New York. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Billie Eilish is hitting the road.

The pop performer will embark on a worldwide arena tour this fall, kicking off in Quebec City in Canada on Sept. 29 and concluding in Dublin on July 27, 2025. She'll hit many major cities in North America in 2024 before heading to Australia and then Europe.

Presale begins Tuesday, and any remaining tickets will become available Friday at billieeilish.com. A percentage of proceeds will benefit the environmental nonprofit REVERB.

Earlier this month, Eilish announced her highly anticipated third studio album, "Hit Me Hard and Soft," will be released May 17.

The news arrived via Instagram, where Eilish shared the album artwork showing the pop singer floating in a body of water after being ejected from a door. In the caption, she wrote that she will not drop singles in advance of the release.

"I wanna give it to you all at once," she captioned the image. "I truly could not be more proud of this album." (AP)

NEW YORK: Taylor Swift continues to dominate in the week following the release of her 11th album, "The Tortured Poets Department." The 31-track album has hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart, tying Swift with Jay-Z for second-most No. 1 albums at 14. Only The Beatles, with 19 No. 1 albums, have had more.

The double album has amassed 2.61 million equivalent album units, according to Luminate, the industry data and analytics company. A shocking 1.91 million of those units come from traditional album sales - people purchasing downloads, CDs, cassettes and vinyl. Vinyl accounts for 859,000 units sold, the highest number of vinyl sales in modern history.

It is the top-selling album of 2024, eclipsing Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter," which sold 228,000 units. (But streaming was a boon: "Cowboy Carter" hit 407,000 equivalent album units, a combination of pure album sales and on-demand streams, earned in the U.S. in its first week.)

"The Tortured Poets Department" hit 891.34 million album streams, according to Luminate, the biggest streaming week for an album in history. (AP)

NEW YORK: Paramount Global on Monday announced that Bob Bakish is stepping down as CEO of the film, television and multimedia company.

Bakish will be replaced by a troika of executives who will form a new "Office of the CEO." The group includes George Cheeks, the CEO of CBS; Chris McCarthy, CEO of Showtime/MTV Entertainment Studios and Paramount Media Networks; and Brian Robbins, the CEO of Paramount Pictures.

The company said Cheeks, McCarthy and Robbins will work closely with Chief Financial Officer Naveen Chopra and



Swift



Eilish

Dead Reckoning."

Co-CEOs are rare but far from unknown: roughly 100 public companies such as Salesforce, Netflix, Chipotle Mexican Grill, SAP and Oracle have all had co-CEOs for various periods of time over the past quarter century. A 2022 study published in the Harvard Business Review found that among 87 co-CEO led companies, dual leadership coincided with better-than-average stock performance. (AP)

Program to highlight dangers of smoking and legal ramifications

Kuwait launches anti-smoking campaign to protect children

KUWAIT, April 30. (KUNA): The Kuwait Ministry of Health (MoH) will launch, Thursday, an awareness campaign on a national anti-smoking program aiming at protecting children from smoking, in cooperation with other ministries and state agencies.

In a statement to KUNA on Tuesday, the ministry's Health Promotion Director Dr. Abeer Al-Baho said that the anti-smoking awareness campaign targets men, women, and children, and warns of the harms of smoking.

This campaign will bring awareness to the legal and criminal charges the smoker might face when smoking in undesignated smoking spaces, protecting people with health issues, children, and environment, added Dr. Al-Baho.

Dr. Al-Baho said the campaign also aims to reduce the amount of diseases and deaths that result from smoking, underscoring the lung damage smoking can cause directly or indirectly.

She mentioned that the anti-smoking awareness campaign will last until

May 31, the World No Tobacco Day, and will extend to all six Kuwaiti governorates by holding demonstrations in regards to the dangers of smoking.

Statistics show that children from the ages of 13-15 have been smoking electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) threefold in comparison to adults.

She warned against the harms and dangers of being exposed to tobacco, traditional smoking, and e-cigarettes, underscoring the effects on fetuses and growing children.

Dr. Al-Baho mentioned there are 34 countries that ban the use of e-cigarettes, 88 countries that do not enforce an age limit on e-cigarettes, and 74 countries that do not have any regulations toward e-cigarettes.

Dr. Al-Baho also discussed the long-term illness derived from smoking, cancer, lung and heart diseases being a few examples, warning that there must be ways to limit the use of these harmful substances.

Cloud seeding debated

'Warmer world' blamed for deadly Dubai deluge

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): Circumstantial evidence points to climate change as worsening the deadly deluge that just flooded Dubai and other parts of the Arabian Gulf, but scientists didn't discover the definitive fingerprints of greenhouse gas-triggered warming they have seen in other extreme weather events, a new report found.

Between 10% and 40% more rain fell in just one day last week - killing at least two dozen people in the United Arab Emirates, Oman and parts of Saudi Arabia - than it would have in a world without the 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) warming that has come from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas since the mid-19th century, scientists at World Weather Attribution said recently in a flash study that is too new to be peer-reviewed.

In at least one spot, a record 11 inches (28.6 centimeters) of rain fell in just 24 hours, more than twice the yearly average, paralyzing the usually bustling city of skyscrapers in a desert.

One of the key tools in WWA's more than 60 past reports has been creating computer simulations that compare an actual weather event to a fictional world without climate change, but in the Dubai case there wasn't enough data for those simulations to make such a calculation. But analysis of decades of past observations, the other main tool they use, showed the 10% to 40% bump in rainfall amounts.

Even without computer simulations, the clues kept pointing at climate change, scientists said.

Evidence

"It's not such a clear fingerprint, but we have lots of other circumstantial evidence, other lines of evidence that tell us that we see this increase," said Imperial College of London climate scientist Friederike Otto, who coordinates the attribution study team. "It's what we expect from physics. It's what we expect from other studies that have been done in the area, from other studies around the world, and there's nothing else that's going on that could explain this increase."

There is a long-known effect in physics that finds the air holds 7% more moisture with every degree Celsius (4% for every degree Fahrenheit).

Otto said she has confidence in the conclusion, but said this was one of the harder attribution studies the team has

undertaken.

El Nino, which is a natural occasional warming of the central Pacific that changes weather systems worldwide, was a big factor, the report said. These heavy Gulf downpours have happened in the past but only during an El Nino. And the researchers said those past deluges seem to be trending heavier - something scientists have long said would happen in many parts of the world as the world warms.

This flooding, which came from two separate and near simultaneous storm systems, would not have happened without El Nino, said study co-author Mansour Almazroui of the Center of Excellence for Climate Change Research (CECCR), King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. Nor would it have been like this without human-caused climate change, Otto added.

Because rainfall amounts varied over the region and the lack of data, the report couldn't put a figure on if climate change had increased the likelihood of downpours like this in Dubai, but Otto estimated that it's probably about three times more likely to happen now than in pre-industrial times.

Speculation

The report and its authors threw cold water on speculation that UAE cloud seeding had anything to do with the amount of rain or its likelihood. Many scientists dispute cloud seeding's effectiveness in general. Even so, the clouds in the storm system were not seeded, the report said. And the results of cloud seeding, if any, in general are more immediate, Otto said. And this storm was forecast days in advance.

"This type of rainfall never comes from cloud seeding," Almazroui said in a Thursday news conference.

While the authors use well-established techniques and this is what scientists expect with climate change, when there's a disagreement between computer simulations and observations, conclusions shouldn't be drawn, said University of Victoria, Canada, climate scientist Andrew Weaver, who wasn't part of the research.

It's a strong enough case that greenhouse gas emissions are a factor, several other outside scientists said.

University of Melbourne, Australia, climate scientist Malte Meinshausen called Thursday's study "a well-balanced, impressively detailed and adequately cautious assessment."

BEIJING, April 30, (Xinhua): A surgical robot capable of peeling a raw quail egg made a splash at the recently concluded 2024 Zhongguancun Forum in Beijing.

"It is a robot for single-port endoscopic surgery, and it can be used for urological and gynecological operations," said Hu Shiyou, an employee of Beijing Surgerii Robotics Co., Ltd., the robot's developer.

Increasingly digitized operating rooms, as well as the application of surgical robots and artificial intelligence (AI) systems, contribute to improving surgical precision, according to Zhang Qiang, chairman and co-chief executive officer of Shanghai United Imaging Healthcare Co., Ltd.

"Based on the innovative technology, we are exploring the establishment of a new ecosystem covering disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment and recovery stages," Zhang said.

Barry Marshall, Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine and a foreign academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, emphasized the importance of basic research in the development of medical science and technology, which promotes medical technology innovation.

Development

Take the development of thoracic surgery as an example. There have been two major breakthroughs in the field over the past century -- a lung cancer patient who was cured through surgery in the 1930s, and the use of a thoracoscope in the early 1990s, according to Wang Jun, head of Peking University People's Hospital.

"Today, nearly 90 percent of lung cancer operations in China can be conducted by thoracoscope," said Wang, adding that the hospital is cooperating with experts in the AI field to assist in surgery.

Chen Jiachang, vice minister of science and technology, noted that promoting innovative research and development, including basic research, can lead to more efficient and accurate treatment methods, more convenient and intelligent health management solutions, and the accelerated development of drugs and vaccines.

In recent years, the world has faced health challenges. Liang Wannian, dean of the Institute for Healthy China at Tsinghua University, said that it is vital to deal with the threat of infectious diseases, chronic diseases and aging issues, and enhance our capabilities to prevent future epidemics or pandemics.

"I could say that the health system in China is very good and the science is good," Marshall said in a recent interview with Xinhua. "When I talk to medical scientists in China, everybody is thinking about the same problems in cancer, infectious disease, epidemiology, viruses, and trying to innovate."

"I can see how quickly China has improved, and the top universities in China are really world-class. We have to emphasize the top universities, hospitals and institutions need to keep a high scientific standard," he added.

Yu Yingjie, a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China Beijing Municipal Committee, said that a number of biopharmaceutical companies are developing at rapid speeds in Beijing's Changping District and Yizhuang area.

Surgical robots shine at ZGC Forum

China addresses global health challenges through innovation



This photo taken on April 28, shows an intelligent interaction tea art robot platform during a permanent exhibition at the Zhongguancun Exhibition Center in Beijing, capital of China. The permanent exhibition will be opened to the public recently, showcasing more than 430 technologies and products from more than 320 research institutions and enterprises in Beijing in cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum information, commercial aerospace, life and health, and synthetic biological manufacturing. Among them are some of the major achievements released or unveiled at the 2024 Zhongguancun Forum. (Xinhua)

New regulations enforced

US tightens oversight of lab test for accuracy and safety

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): Makers of medical tests that have long escaped government oversight will have about four years to show that their new offerings deliver accurate results, under a government rule rigorously opposed by the testing industry.

The regulation finalized Monday by the Food and Drug Administration will gradually phase in oversight of new tests developed by laboratories, a multibillion-dollar industry that regulators say poses growing risks to Americans. The goal is to ensure that new tests for cancer, heart disease, COVID-19, genetic conditions and many other illnesses are safe, accurate and reliable.

"The agency cannot stand by while Americans continue to rely on results from these tests without assurance that they work," FDA Commissioner Robert Califf told reporters on a conference call.

Treatment

Califf said inaccurate tests can lead to unnecessary treatment or delays in getting proper care.

But in a significant move, the FDA decided that the tens of thousands of tests currently on the market will not have to undergo federal review. The agency said it will essentially grandfather those tests into approval to address concerns that the new rule "could lead to the widespread loss of access to beneficial" tests.

Under the government's plan, most newly developed tests that pose a high risk - such as those for life-threatening diseases - will need to be FDA approved within 3 1/2 years. Lower risks tests will have four years to obtain approval.

All lab tests - old and new - will be

required to register with the agency and report problems or errors. Based on this information, FDA officials said they will be able to target problematic tests.

"If we identify problems with the tests we can move forward to take action against them," said Dr. Jeff Shuren, director of the FDA's device center. "We think this overall strikes the right balance."

The agency also won't require approval of tests for which there are no alternatives, such as those for certain rare diseases.

The FDA already reviews tests and kits made by medical device manufacturers.

But labs, large hospitals and universities that develop their own in-house tests have been able to market them without each one undergoing agency review. The industry has resisted additional scrutiny for decades, saying it will stifle innovation and drive up costs.

There are an estimated 80,000 medical tests currently available from about 1,200 labs, according to the agency's estimate. They include tests for complex diseases, as well as simpler conditions like high cholesterol and sexually transmitted infections.

In the 1970s and '80s, most lab-based tests were "lower risk, small volume" products used mostly for local patients, according to the FDA.

Over time, the tests have grown into a nationwide business, with labs processing thousands of blood, urine and other samples per week from hospitals and clinics. Others advertise directly to consumers - including some claiming to measure the risk of developing ailments like Alzheimer's and autism.

Probe launched

Vampire facials tied to HIV cases: CDC

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): Three women were diagnosed with HIV after getting "vampire facial" procedures at an unlicensed New Mexico medical spa, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a report last week, marking the first documented cases of people contracting the virus through cosmetic services using needles.

Federal health officials said in a new report that an investigation from 2018 through 2023 into the clinic in Albuquerque, VIP Spa, found it apparently reused disposable equipment intended for one-time use, transmitting HIV to clients through its services via contaminated blood.

Vampire facials, formally known as platelet-rich plasma microneedling facials, are cosmetic procedures intended to rejuvenate one's skin, making it more youthful-looking and reducing acne scars and wrinkles, according to the American Academy of Dermatology.

After a client's blood is drawn, a machine separates the blood into platelets and cells.

The plasma is then injected into the client's face, either through single-use disposable or multiuse sterile needles.

Vampire facials have gained popularity in recent years as celebrities such as Kim Kardashian have publicized receiving the procedure.

HIV transmission via unsterile injection is a known risk of beauty treatments and other services, officials say. Despite this, the Academy says vampire facials are generally safe.

Transmission

Health officials say spa facilities that offer cosmetic injection services should practice proper infection control and maintain client records to help prevent the transmission of blood-borne pathogens such as HIV.

Platelet-rich plasma injections were initially most used medically for bone grafting and osteoarthritis, and then became popular in cosmetic treatments.

Other services, such as Botox and lip fillers, are also delivered with needles, as are tattoos.

Though this procedure works for hair growth, its use for rejuvenation purposes is not Food and Drug Administration-approved, said Zakiya Rahman, a clinical professor of dermatology at Stanford University.

But as such procedures grow in popularity, she said, it is "important for people to know and understand a medical procedure should be done in a medical setting."

The New Mexico Department of Health was notified during summer 2018 that a woman with no known HIV risk factors was diagnosed with an HIV infection after receiving the spa's vampire facial services that spring.

During the investigation, similar HIV strains were found among three women, all former clients of the spa. Evidence suggested that contamination from services at the spa resulted in the positive HIV infection tests for these three patients, according to the CDC report.

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The two-day event witnesses many close encounters and nail-biting finishes

IBAK concludes 11th edition of IBAK Masters Cup tourney



Left-right: The winners receive their prizes at the end of the tournament.

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Indian Badminton Association Kuwait (IBAK) successfully concluded the 11th edition of IBAK Masters Cup Badminton Tournament at its Salwa Gym on the 11th and 12th of Apr, 2024. The event witnessed players participating from all major clubs in Kuwait with over 200 players registered for this event.

The two-day event witnessed many close encounters and nail-biting finishes which made it very exciting. The event also witnessed the clash of many young talents and veterans alike. The audience

turnout and their constant cheering added further brilliance to the mood in the arena.

IBAK thanked all the untiring committee members who worked hard to mark the completion of yet another successful tournament under the leadership of the beloved Chairman, Dr. Manimara Chozhan and President Mr. Anesh Mathew. IBAK also thanked all the families and friends who came to witness this thrilling event and made this tournament a grand success.

IBAK also sincerely thanked the event sponsors Grand Hypermar-

ket and Eagle Burgmann.

The Indian Badminton Association- Kuwait (IBAK) was founded in April 2010 as a non-profit organization committed to the popularization and development of the game of badminton in Kuwait.

BADMINTON

IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

Flight 1 - Professional Doubles Winner

Rohan Vagvala, Shiva Shankar
Runner-up: Abdul Jabbar, Hisham Ezzi

Semifinalist 1: Varun Shiva, Avaneeshwar; Semifinalist 2: Har-sath K, Surya Kanth
Flight 2 - Advance Men's Doubles
Winner: MC Arun, Varghese Subin; Runner-up: Sebastian Binu, Abheek Isaac

Semifinalist 1: Varghese Ajay, Mammen Ajin; Semifinalist 2: Nurrohim Mohamed, Nasir Ariefuddin

Flight 3 - Intermediate
Winner: Justin Manuel, Prathap

Kumar; Runner-up: Edwin Bobby, Varad Bharaskar

Semifinalist 1: Jose Jeswin, Sajeesh Kumar; Semifinalist 2: RajanRathesh, Singh Ranjith

Flight 4 - Lower Intermediate (Open to All):

Winner: Raja Guru, Vijay Kumar; Runner-up: Khan Pathan Moola, Siva Kumar

Semifinalist 1: Lijo Jose, Praveen K.; Semifinalist 2: Alma Alma, Ahmed Ferose Ibrahim

Above 40 - Men's Doubles
Winner: Ismail P, Varghese Subin; Runner-up: Nurrohim Mo-

hamed, SajeeshPunnakkal

Semifinalist 1: Varghese Ajay, Puthenveedu Ismail; Semifinalist 2: Manual Justin IPratap Kumar

Singles (Open to All)
Winner: Addison Sumesh; Runner-up: Hisham Ezzi

Semifinalist 1: Varun Siva, Semifinalist 2: Rohan Vagvala

Ladies Doubles:
Winner: Sajeesh Anjana, Vagavela Sruthi; Runner-up: Biju Neha, Rebello Nikita

Semifinalist 1: Emperialde Gemma, Vilanueva Joy; Semifinalist 2: Alma Alma, Nates Dave Grace

Knight Riders limit Capitals to 153 in 'crushing' victory

Delhi scored 220-plus in 2 of its last 3 games



Kolkata Knight Riders' Venkatesh Iyer plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders in Kolkata, India, Monday, April 29, 2024. (AP)

KOLKATA, India, April 30, (AP): Kolkata Knight Riders dismantled the Delhi Capitals at home in a commanding seven-wicket win in the Indian Premier League.

Delhi scored 220-plus in two of its last three games but crashed to 153-9, a total saved from embarrassment by No. 9 batter Kuldeep Yadav lashing out for an unbeaten 35 off 26 balls.

CRICKET

Kolkata raced to 157-3 in 16.3 overs and cemented second place on the table. Phil Salt capitalized on a second-over dropped catch to smash 68, his fourth half-century of the season.

Delhi stayed sixth. Delhi made a rollicking start when Prithvi Shaw smashed three successive boundaries off fit-again Mitchell Starc's first three legitimate balls in the first over that went for 19 runs.

Jake Fraser-McGurk then lofted Starc for a six and a sliced boundary over point in the left-armer's next over.

But Fraser-McGurk holed out to deep square leg as Starc found his groove.

The bowlers were brilliant. Fellow fast bowler Vaibhav Arora (2-29), recalled after two games, found a thin edge off Shaw's bat as he attempted a glance to fine leg, and also

knocked the top of Shai Hope's (6) stumps as Delhi slipped to 3-37.

Spinner Varun Chakravarthy (3-16) and Narine (1-24) entangled Delhi in the middle overs as it slumped to 111-8 before the last five overs.

Delhi captain Rishabh Pant got a life on 18 when Harshit Rana dropped him at short third man but miscued a fuller delivery by Varun and was caught at extra cover on 27.

Tristan Stubbs on 4 edged Varun to Phil Salt behind the wickets.

Rana compensated with 2-28. Only Andre Russell was expensive, his one late over costing 10 runs that helped Yadav and Delhi

cross 150.

Kolkata's chase was aided by Delhi.

Fast bowler Lizaad Williams' first over went for 23 and he spilled a skier by Salt on 15 at mid-on.

Salt pounded five sixes and seven boundaries in a whirlwind 26-ball fifty as he and Sunil Narine plundered the power play for 79 without loss. Narine was out next ball for 15.

Salt was next to go for a 33-ball 68, attempting to cut left-arm spinner Axar Patel and beaten by pace. By then it was 96-2 in the ninth over.

Captain Shreyas Iyer, 33 not out, and Venkatesh Iyer, 26 not out, saw out the win.



Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarthy (second right), celebrates the wicket of Delhi Capitals' Tristan Stubbs with teammates during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders in Kolkata, India. (AP)

Career has been derailed by injuries

Archer picked by England for T20 World Cup

LONDON, April 30, (AP): Jofra Archer was selected in England's provisional squad for the T20 World Cup on Tuesday, setting up a much-awaited international return for one of cricket's most exciting bowlers whose career has been derailed by injuries.

The 29-year-old Archer has barely featured for England in any format since 2021, mainly because of ongoing issues with his right elbow for which he has undergone two operations. A back injury ruled him out of most of 2022.

The Barbados-born pacer was a breath of fresh air after switching nationality to be eligible for England ahead of the 2019 Cricket World Cup, which he helped his adopted country win on home soil. Then he played a starring role in the Ashes that year.

England will hope he stays fit to play in a four-match Twenty20 series against Pakistan and then the World Cup, which is being held in the Caribbean and the United States.

England's opening match is against Scotland on June 4 at Kensington Oval in Barbados, which Robert Key - managing director of England men's cricket - said would take on extra poignancy for Archer.

"He's special," Key said. "You do everything you can to try to get him back playing. We have taken the longer road this time. As always with Jofra, it's fingers crossed until he's out there playing. You know when you're waiting for something really good to happen, you don't quite believe it until it's there."

Archer, who hasn't played competitive top-level cricket since May 2023, is currently out of the limelight and playing some club matches in the Caribbean to get himself match-sharp. He might get some matches for English county team Sussex before the Pakistan series, when England will put his fitness to the test.

In a recent interview, Archer said he didn't know "if I've got another stop-start year in me."

CRICKET

"I know it has been a massive toll on him," Key said. "He hasn't been around for a while now but every single thing he does creates noise and I think mentally it's been tough."

"That's why we made sure we try and get it right, let him go back home, spend some time in Barbados, doing the training there rather than staying in England all the time. It's always been a balance with Jofra, trying to take into account his mental well-being and actually how we get him ready for what we need. Fingers crossed he gets a bit of luck he deserves really."

Also in the 15-man squad were Jonny Bairstow and Will Jacks, who have hit big knocks in the Indian Premier League in recent weeks. Left-arm spinning all-rounder Tom Hartley is the sole uncapped player in the group.

Key said players featuring in the IPL - the list also includes Jos Buttler and Phil Salt - would be returning to England for the Pakistan series starting on May 22, even if that means missing the latter stages of the IPL. The final is on May 26, with the playoff matches beginning May 21.

Valladolid is next

Ronaldo sells stake in Brazil club Cruzeiro amid criticism

SAO PAULO, April 30, (AP): Two-time World Cup winner Ronaldo Nazário agreed to sell his stake in embattled Brazilian soccer club Cruzeiro on Monday. And he plans to do the same at Spain's second division club Real Valladolid, which he has controlled since 2018.

Ronaldo Nazário bought the indebted Cruzeiro's soccer department in 2021 for about \$78 million and is reportedly selling it for almost \$117 million.

The Brazil great started his career at the Belo Horizonte-based club, but as an owner he has been accused by supporters of failing to invest as much as promised.

"Maybe some (Cruzeiro fans) have exaggerated a little going against me, but this is irrelevant to me," Ronaldo Nazário said in a news conference.

"I know most fans are grateful to me and my team for putting Cruzeiro back in the national and international scene. My goal was reached. That was always the idea - to bring Cruzeiro back and, at the right time, give it to the right person."

He did not provide many details on how he will divest from Valladolid, where he bought a 51% stake six years ago.

"My answer will be a short one; Valladolid is next," Ronaldo Nazário said. "I will take some time off (after selling both Cruzeiro and Valladolid)."

Fans of the Spanish club have criticized Ronaldo Nazário's management for selling their players for high numbers, but failing to return some of that to their team, which was relegated twice since the Brazilian took over.

The new owner of Cruzeiro's soccer department is Pedro Figueiredo, a billionaire and ardent fan who built one of Brazil's biggest supermarket chains. He told Monday's news conference it will take him 10 years to pay the club's debts.

Ronaldo Nazário bought Cruzeiro's soccer department in a business operation that Brazilians know as SAF, which creates public limited companies in clubs that are often on the brink of bankruptcy. Such a move separates the profitable soccer departments from the rest of the club, which remains under control of its associates.

Cruzeiro stockpiled trophies over the past two decades but was in Brazil's second division from 2020-22 amid fears it could disappear due to its huge debt, which amounted to more than 1 billion Brazilian reais (\$200 million).

Ronaldo Nazário's decision to chip in helped the club stay afloat during its worst days.

"Cruzeiro was in intensive



In this file photo, former Real Madrid player Ronaldo Nazário, now president of Valladolid, looks out onto the pitch before a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Valladolid and Real Madrid in Valladolid, Spain. (AP)

care when I came. I halved the debts, the revenue increased five times. I am leaving Cruzeiro in a comfortable hospital bedroom now," he said.

Six other top-flight clubs have sold their soccer departments in SAF operations in recent years; Cruzeiro archrival Atletico Mineiro; Bahia, which is owned by the Manchester City group; John Textor's Botafogo; Cuiba; Fortaleza; and Vasco da Gama.

SOCCER

Cruzeiro's is Brazil's first SAF operation to change hands.

Cruzeiro fans showed on Sunday they were excited about Ronaldo Nazário leaving the club. A banner at Mineirao Stadium read "Bye, Ronaldo" during the team's 3-1 win against Vitória in the Brazilian championship.

Valladolid fans also protested against the Brazilian after their team was relegated in 2023. The Spanish club co-leads the second division with Leganes on 64 points after 37 matches. The top two teams will automatically be promoted to La Liga next season.

For many Cruzeiro supporters, Ronaldo Nazário was identified more with local rival Corinthians, where the striker finished his professional career in 2011.

New owner Figueiredo defended Ronaldo Nazário's management of the club.

"I apologize on behalf of Cruzeiro fans," Figueiredo said. "What some did to Ronaldo was not fair. He put his name in the business and he is upset with this situation. I hope tomorrow (the criticism) is not against me."

England will be captained by Buttler, with the team seeking a second T20 World Cup title.

Squad: Jos Buttler (captain), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny

Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood.

SPORTS

Kuwait Equestrian Center prepares for exciting season finale

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Next Saturday, all attention will converge on the Kuwait Equestrian Center track for the eighth and final round of the third edition of the local league. Here, champions will be honored, marking the conclusion of the season. Following this, riders will transition to foreign summer camps in preparation for the upcoming season.

Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi, the star of the Kuwait Equestrian Club, continues to illuminate the world of show jumping both locally and abroad. This success is attributed to the meticulous preparation and equipping of his horses, the establishment of camps, and unwavering family support since the inception of his equestrian journey. Transitioning from a mere hobbyist to a seasoned professional, he has earned the moniker "Lebanon" since his entry into the field several years ago.

The Kuwait Club maintains its customary dominance in equestrian sports, evident from the season's results. Likewise, Knight Ali Al-Kharafi sits comfortably atop the standings with 150 points, a significant

lead over his competitors, securing his third consecutive league title. He stands alone as the sole knight to claim this honor, elevating the stature of his club to the pinnacle.

EQUESTRIAN

Within the Kuwait Club, numerous knights, such as Ghazi Al-Jariwi and Yara Al-Hunaidi, fiercely vie for the top five positions. The legacy of success extends beyond the seasoned champions, as a new generation emerges poised to carry on the club's illustrious journey. Led by Hussein Ahmed Al-Kharafi and Ali Ahmed Al-Kharafi, alongside Fatima Al-Khunaini, Faisal Al-Khunaini, Muhammad Al-Mulaifi, Muhammad Al-Rifai, Badra Al-Awadi, Ghanima Al-Marzouq, Dalal Safar, and Abdullah Al-Hamad, they bear the responsibility of upholding the club's tradition of excellence.



Ali Al-Kharafi with Ali and Hussein Al-Kharafi

Uzbekistan, Japan qualify for men's Olympic soccer by reaching U23 Asian Cup final

Chinese striker confesses losing sleep over wasted chance against S. Korea

DOHA, April 30, (Agencies): Uzbekistan qualified for men's Olympic soccer after years of near-misses by reaching the Under-23 Asian Cup final.

The Uzbeks beat Indonesia 2-0 in the semifinals in Doha, Qatar, and will face Japan for the title on Friday.

Japan secured an eighth consecutive Olympic appearance with a 2-0 win over Iraq.

The top three teams qualify automatically for the Paris Games, and Iraq and Indonesia will meet in Thursday's playoff to decide the remaining place.

Uzbekistan has had an unlucky run. It won the biennial Asian tournament in the non-Olympic years of 2018 and 2022. In 2020, the team finished fourth, missing out on the Tokyo Games after losing the playoff against Australia.

There was no heartbreak this

time. After Indonesia found the back of the net but had a goal disallowed for offside, Khusain Norchaev scored midway through the second half to give Uzbekistan the lead.

Indonesia's hopes of an equalizer were set back when Rizky Ridho was sent off in the 84th, leaving his team with 10 men. Uzbekistan

SOCCER

doubled the margin four minutes from time when Pratama Arhan conceded an own goal.

Uzbekistan captain Abdurauf Buriev was delighted to secure an historic Olympic berth but still wanted the Asian title.

"It's a very big moment in my career but I cannot say anything (more) because it was a very emotional match and we still have one game to prepare for," the midfielder said. "There was no pressure on

me by being the captain, it gave me some additional motivation and I focused on the game and obtaining the victory."

Japan scored twice in the first half to take control against Iraq, with captain Joel Fujita instrumental in creating chances for Mao Hosoya and Ryotaro Araki.

The Indonesia-Iraq loser will face Guinea in a playoff in May with a place in Paris at stake.

Indonesia, which upset Australia in the group stage and then edged South Korea in a shootout after their quarterfinal finished 2-2, is aiming to reach the Olympic tournament for the first time since the 1956 Games in Melbourne, Australia.

Meanwhile, Chinese forward Behram Abduweli said he was unable to sleep well for three days after wasting a scoring chance in a group game against South Korea during the U23 Asian Cup earlier this month.

The 21-year-old striker was put on a solo run by a through pass from teammate in the 15th minute of that game on April 19, only to see his shot blocked by the South Korean goalkeeper.

"To be honest, I didn't get enough sleep for three days after that match, keeping thinking about the reasons for my failed shot," he said.

"I still need to work hard to be more clinical before the goal. The number six player of the South Korean team, Lee Young-jun, did well in this aspect and is a good example for me," he said.

Lee scored twice from as many scoring chances the South Korean side created throughout the game for a 2-0 win over China.

China failed to reach the knockout stage as they lost to Japan and South Korea before beating the United Arab Emirates in their group games.



The joy of Kazma players with the first goal against Al-Shabab.

Kazma's Dehelis commits to building a winning culture with young talent

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kazma coach Mohamed Dehelis has affirmed his commitment to integrating young players into the upcoming matches of the Zain Premier League's relegation group. Since taking charge of the "Orange" team last December, Dehelis has actively promoted talents such as Dhari Al-Raqam, Salem Al-Khatlan, Youssef Al-Kandari, Talal Al-Qaisi, Nawaf Thamer, Jarrah Al-Hilaili, Youssef Al-Khatib, and Fahd Al-Fadhli.

Emphasizing the importance of cultivating a winning mentality, Dehelis aims to instill this culture in the team's remaining three fixtures of the season. He underlines that securing survival in the Premier League marks just the beginning, not the conclusion, of the team's journey.

Following Kazma's recent 2-0 victory over Al-Shabab in the third round of relegation group matches, the team stands atop the standings with 29 points, boasting a comfortable 14-point lead over Khaitan.

Dehelis plans to conduct a thorough assessment of all squad members and devise a comprehensive plan for the upcoming season. However, he stresses that the primary focus remains on delivering

outstanding results in the remaining matches of the current tournament.

Expressing gratitude to the players for their dedication and performance, Dehelis expresses optimism for the team's continued success in the future.

In other news, Kazma administration has terminated its contract

SOCCER

with Colombian professional Hansel Zapata, with both parties reaching an agreement on his future participation with the team. Zapata, who enjoyed a stellar season with Al-Nasr, finishing second in the league's top scorers' chart with 17 goals, will not be part of Kazma's plans for the next season.

With an eye toward future success, Kazma has initiated preparations for the upcoming season following its early exit from the Emir's Cup and missed opportunities in the league. Negotiations are underway with a "super" foreign player, with an official announcement expected soon.

Notably, Kazma began the season with several foreign professionals before making strategic adjustments during the winter transfer period in January, reinforcing the squad with new signings.



Karrar Mohammed Ali (left), and Japan's Ryotaro Araki run for the ball during a U-23 Asian Cup semi-final match between Iraq and Japan in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

Valencia beaten 4-2

Lewandowski hat-trick puts Barca back to second

MADRID, April 30, (Xinhua): A second half hat-trick from Robert Lewandowski helped FC Barcelona come back from a goal down to beat Valencia 4-2 in the former Olympic Stadium in Montjuic.

The result sees Barca move back above Girona in La Liga ahead of its game in Girona next weekend and also means that Real Madrid can't assure the La Liga title in its match at home to Cadiz next week.

SOCCER

Barcelona opened the scoring in the 21st minute when Fermin Lopez again showed his intelligence around the penalty area when he darted in between two defenders to head home Raphinha's pinpoint cross.

Barca's lead didn't last long in a rainy Montjuic after Hugo Duro leveled five minutes later.

Valencia's top scorer chased down a long ball over the top and although Marc Andre Ter Stegen

got to the ball with time to spare, he tried to clip the ball over the striker's leg, only to give Duro the gift of an open goal to put the ball into.

Another ball over the top saw Peter Gonzalez through on goal before being wiped out by Ronald Araujo in the Barca area, with Pepelu stepping up to put Valencia

ahead from the spot.

The game took another dramatic turn in the last minute of the half when Valencia goalkeeper, Giorgi Mamardashvili's control let him down and he committed handball outside his area as Lamine Yamal looked to beat him.

Referee De Burgos Bengoetxea had no option but to send

Mamardashvili off, leaving Valencia to play the second half with 10 men.

Barcelona levelled three minutes into the second half when Lewandowski flicked home a near-post corner, with Valencia claiming a positional offside from Fermin.

The second half was one-way traffic, with Barcelona playing in the Valencia half, although defended with two ordered lines to deny them spaces.

The visitors should have gone back ahead with 17 minutes left to play when Peter and Diego Lopez combined to leave the latter through on goal, only for Pedri to make a last-gasp challenge as Lopez looked certain to score.

Lewandowski headed in his second of the game in the 82nd minute after Araujo won a challenge against substitute keeper Jaume Domenech, leaving him with a simple finish.

Lewandowski completed his hat-trick in injury time with a free kick into the top-corner that gave Domenech no chance.



Barcelona's Ronald Araujo fights for the ball with Valencia's Pepelu during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Valencia at the Olympic Lluís Companys stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Kuwait Volleyball Federation strategizes preparation for junior team tournaments

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Training and National Teams Committee of the Volleyball Federation convened at the federation's headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex to discuss the preparation plan for Kuwait junior team. The meeting was attended by the technical staff of the national team, led by Khaled Al-Mutairi and his assistant Mishal Al-Sabti, along with the players.

VOLLEYBALL

Kuwait junior volleyball team is gearing up for the upcoming Arab Championship for players born in 2008-2009, set to take place in Jordan from July 7th to July 20th. Additionally, they are preparing for the Asian Under-18 Championship scheduled in Bahrain from July 28th to August 4th.

Chairman of the Training and National Teams Committee, Nayef Al-Failakawi, affirmed that the meeting would cover the training plan, which will be executed in two phases. The first phase will span three days to finalize the initial player list before a hiatus



Kuwait Volleyball Association logo.

for academic tests. Following this, the team will resume training as part of the second phase of the preparation plan.

The initial roster for the junior volleyball team comprises 40 players from various clubs, including Burgan, Al-Jahra, Al-Shabab, Al-Arabi, Al-Qadisiya, Kazima, Kuwait Club, and Yarmouk. These players will undergo rigorous training to represent Kuwait with excellence in the upcoming championships.

Best of the Rest

Genoa survive: Genoa guaranteed its Serie A status for another year by beating Cagliari 3-0 thanks to its Scandinavian contingent.

Genoa's first home win since Feb. 24 ensured top-flight football at Stadio Luigi Ferraris next season.

Norwegian Morten Thorsby got the opener with a textbook header in the 16th minute and Dane Morten Frendrup doubled their lead 11 minutes later with a neat side-foot finish in a busy penalty area.

Icelandic striker Albert Gudmundsson got his 14th goal of the league in the second half.

Cagliari was languishing in 14th place, just three points above the relegation zone.

Only six points separate Cagliari

and second-to-last Sassuolo. Bottom club Salernitana has been relegated and two other teams will join it. There are four games remaining. (AP)

Barbosa cleared by CAS: Brazilian soccer player Gabriel Barbosa can resume playing pending an appeal against his ban for a breach of doping rules, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said on Tuesday.

The Flamengo and Brazil forward, known as Gabigol, is challenging a two-year ban imposed in March by an anti-doping tribunal in Brazil.

He was judged to have evaded a doping control in April 2023 and banned until April next year. He denied a charge of doping fraud. (AP)



Japan's Kuryu Matsuki (left), and Josef al-Imam jump for the ball during a U-23 Asian Cup semi-final match between Iraq and Japan in Doha, Qatar. Japan won 2-0. (AP)
— See Page 15

Sports

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Kuwait Club players celebrate with the championship trophy.

Kuwait Club handball youth team completes a remarkable double

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Club handball youth team beat Al-Qurain 26-17 at the Martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad Center in Daiya to clinch the Federation Cup title for the 2023-2024 sports season, completing a remarkable "double" following its earlier triumph in the league. Meanwhile, Khaitan secured third place by defeating Al-Nasr 31-19.

Following the final match, Khaled Talib, Treasurer of the Handball Federation, and Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, Assistant Secretary, presented the championship trophies to the top three

HANDBALL

teams. The ceremony was attended by Abdulaziz Yalos, Director of Handball at Al-Qurain Club, Faisal Al-Anazi, and Director of the Junior Sector at Kuwait Club, and Ali Al-Mansouri, Director of Handball at Khaitan Club.

Faisal Al-Enezi expressed gratitude to the Chairmen and members of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Club and Al-Aneedi fans, dedicating this achievement to them after the club's exceptional double success in both the league and cup competitions. He attributed its dominance in the game to the unwavering support and dedication from the club's management and staff, enabling it to build a championship-winning team under the banner of the White Castle.

'Some transfer rules may breach EU law'

BRUSSELS, April 30, (AP): FIFA rules on transfers can conflict with European Union legislation relating to competition and freedom of movement because they limit possibilities for players to change clubs, and for clubs to hire, a senior EU legal adviser said on Tuesday.

Advocate General Maciej Szpunar gave his opinion after French soccer player Lassana Diarra legally challenged FIFA rules. The Diarra case went through FIFA judicial bodies before the 2016 election of FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who has made it a priority to modernize transfer market rules.

Former France international Diarra signed a four-year contract with Lokomotiv Moscow in 2013. The deal was terminated a year later after Diarra was unhappy with alleged pay cuts.

Lokomotiv Moscow applied to the FIFA dispute resolution chamber for compensation and the player submitted a counterclaim seeking compensation for unpaid wages. The Court of Arbitration for Sport found the Russian club terminated the contract with Diarra "with just cause" and the player was condemned to pay 10.5 million euros (\$11.2 million).

Murray hits another game-winner as Nuggets bounce Lakers from playoffs

Thunder sweep Pelicans, Celtics stretch lead

DENVER, April 30, (AP): Jamal Murray scored 32 points despite a strained calf and sank the game-winner with 3.6 seconds left as the defending NBA champion Denver Nuggets bounced LeBron James from the playoffs again with a 108-106 win over the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 5 Monday night.

James' two free throws tied it at 106 with 26 seconds left and the Nuggets, just as they did in Game 2, eschewed the timeout and Murray took the ball on a high screen and roll to his left, shaking Austin Reaves and he crossed through the lane and swished the 14-footer.

It was Murray's buzzer-beater that won Game 2.

"This one was a little better," Murray said as confetti swirled around him and his celebrating teammates.

Nikola Jokic, who committed an uncharacteristic seven turnovers, narrowly missed his 19th career playoff triple-double with 25 points, 20 rebounds and nine assists and Michael Porter Jr. scored 26.

James had 30 points and 11 assists and Davis had 17 points and 15 rebounds but appeared bothered down the stretch after banging his left shoulder into MPJ in the second half.

The Nuggets advanced to face the Minnesota Timberwolves in the second round starting next weekend. That series starts in Denver, where the Nuggets are a Western Conference-best 36-8, including 3-0 in the playoffs.

Not that it's been easy. The Nuggets trailed for about three-fourths of the minutes in this series, they scuffled through extended shooting slumps and they're a banged-up bunch that can definitely use the rest.

The Nuggets, who swept the Lakers in the Western Conference finals last summer on their way to winning the franchise's first NBA championship, beat the Lakers for the 12th time in their last 13 games.

Thunder 97, Pelicans 89

In New Orleans, Jalen Williams highlighted a 24-point performance with a back-breaking 3 with three minutes left, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans to complete a four-game sweep of their first-round playoff series.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 24

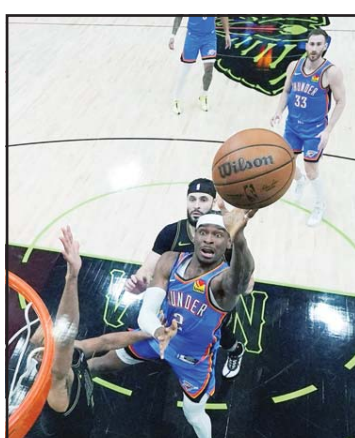


Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (left), fields a pass as Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (right), tries to make a steal in the first half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Denver. (AP)

points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma City, which trailed by five in the fourth quarter before suddenly seizing control with a combination of stifling defense and opportunistic shooting.

New Orleans led 80-75 and had a chance to take what would have been the biggest lead for either team when Jose Alvarado blocked Gilgeous-Alexander and sent CJ McCollum the other way on a two-on-one break.

McCollum could not convert at the rim, however. Soon after, Chet Holmgren's putback and Josh Giddey's 3 tied it at 80 and ignited a decisive 18-2 run, capped by Williams' second-chance 3, that put the Thunder up 93-82 with 3:08 left.



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) goes to the basket in the first half of Game 4 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the New Orleans Pelicans in New Orleans. (AP)

New Orleans, which played the entire series without star power forward Zion Williamson, never recovered.

Giddey and Holmgren each scored 14 points. Holmgren also had nine rebounds.

McCollum scored 20 for New Orleans, which continued to be plagued by poor 3-point shooting. The Pelicans hit just eight of 34 shots from deep (23.5%).

Jonas Valanciunas had 19 point and 13 rebounds but might have produced more had he not been limited by foul trouble to 26 minutes on the court. Najj Marshall hit half of the Pelicans' 3s and finished with 16 points.

Celtics 102, Heat 88

In Miami, Derrick White scored a career-high 38 points, Jayson Tatum added 20 points and 10 rebounds, and the Boston Celtics beat the Miami Heat 102-88 on Monday night to take a 3-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

BASKETBALL

Jaylen Brown scored 17 points and Jrue Holiday had 11 for the top-seeded Celtics, who lost Kristaps Porzingis in the first half to what the team said was a right calf injury. Boston won at Miami for the sixth straight time and improved to 14-3 in their last 17 games on the Heat's home floor.

Bam Adebayo finished with 25 points, 17 rebounds and five assists for Miami, which had a sellout crowd - including Lionel Messi - but played again without injured starters Jimmy Butler (knee) and Terry Rozier (neck). The Heat managed only 84 points in Game 3 and struggled again on offense in Game 4. Tyler Herro scored 19 points and Caleb Martin had 18 for the eighth-seeded Heat.

The Celtics can advance to the second round on Wednesday when they host Game 5. The Boston-Miami winner will meet the Cleveland-Orlando winner in the East semifinals; that Cavaliers-Magic series won't end until at least Friday.

But the Celtics now have an injury concern, with Porzingis lifting his jersey over his face in exasperation after getting hurt late in the first half. And with 5:04 left, the drama ramped up again when Tatum tried to shoot a 3-pointer after a foul was called. Adebayo defended the dead-ball play, and Tatum rolled his left ankle - but stayed in the game - after Adebayo stepped into his landing area.

Manama edge Kuwait Club in thriller to force a decider



Manama player is well guarded by a Kuwait Club defender.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: In the final round of the West Asian Basketball Championship for the Gulf region, the Bahraini team Manama dealt a blow to Kuwait Club, securing 77-73 victory at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Halls Complex, setting the stage for a compelling third playoff encounter in Bahrain next week.

Joining the final duo, along with Kazma III, Manama now advances to the final round, which will feature three teams from the Levant region, alongside champions from India and Kazakhstan. Scheduled for a rally system format in June, the championship promises exhilarating competition.

Manama showcased dominance from the onset, establishing an early lead of 5-0 within the first three minutes through staunch defense and swift counterattacks. Kuwait Club's American player Marcus Hunt managed to notch a free throw, yet Manama, led by the dynamic trio of Cadi Lallan and the Adnan brothers Muhammad and Hamad, surged ahead to a commanding 12-5 lead, finishing the quarter

with a 22-15 advantage.

A resilient Manama leveled the playing field in the second quarter, drawing even at 32-32 midway through the period. However, Al-Abyad retained its edge, concluding the quarter with a 39-35 lead.

The third quarter witnessed intense competition; with Manama's Ahmed Haji's stellar performance securing a 48-45 lead. Despite a spirited effort

BASKETBALL

from Al-Abyad, led by professionals Lallan and American Anthony Carr, Manama maintained its dominance, finishing the quarter with a 63-54 advantage.

The final quarter saw heightened excitement as Manama extended their lead to 12 points at 70-58 through robust defense. However, Al-Abyad staged a dramatic comeback, with Muhammad Adnan's triples leveling the score at 73-73 less than a minute before the final whistle. In the end, a missed opportunity by American Hunt allowed Manama to capitalize, securing victory with four crucial free throws in the closing seconds.