



Pages 14 & 16



Governors welcomed

HH Amir hosts Crown Prince, Acting Premier

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday, in the presence of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, Al-Asma Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Jahra Governor Hamad Jassem Al-Habshi, and Al-Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Also on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives (left) President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani and (right) Bahraini Minister of Telecommunication and Transportation Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa at Seif Palace. – See Page 2



Amiri Diwan photos

Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear Government, what is the fate of the assets of those whose citizenship was revoked?

CITIZENSHIP revocation, regardless of the cause, has negative repercussions; particularly in terms of property rights. Non-Kuwaitis are prohibited from owning real estate properties, leading to a huge problem.

Therefore, it is imperative to resolve these issues; considering they pertain to inalienable rights that cannot be transferred without the consent of the owner, as stipulated in the Constitution. Article 16 of the Constitution stipulates that “property ownership, capital and work are fundamental components of the social structure of the State and of the national wealth. All of them are individual rights with a social function as regulated by law.” This article does not specify whether the owner is Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti.

In the same manner, this point was not addressed in the amended Nationality Law, which causes complications for property owners who are subsequently unable to sell. If the situation continues as it is, they will face a major problem. What is the solution?

If an individual wants to sell or required to relinquish a property due to his non-Kuwaiti status, the absence of a trusted intermediary poses a substantial problem.

The law should uphold societal order and humanistic values. No legislation can be enacted if it contradicts such principles, particularly with respect to the constitutionally protected private property.

Any direct or indirect coercion applied to an individual is tantamount to compelling illegal conduct.

Consequently, a non-Kuwaiti owner may feel compelled to transfer property through irregular means to avoid legal infringement; especially if he wants to leave the country

permanently after the citizenship revocation, while being prohibited from disposing his assets. What should be done? The affected individuals are facing a big problem.

Meanwhile, other Gulf states and most countries around the world allow foreigners to own a property. This helps stimulate economic activity and increases State revenue.

As a result, it is ironic to preclude foreign investment in Kuwait. The potential for any employee to purchase a house should not be an issue. While concerns regarding housing care are understandable; there is a clear distinction between this and freehold ownership, which is subject to certain regulations in various nations.

Housing care has its own specifications and it is exclusive for citizens like the case in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others.

In the West, Europe and other countries; the buyer of a house or property is granted citizenship and encouraged to spend his money there, but the opposite happens in Kuwait.

Thus, solving the problem regarding the properties of those whose Kuwaiti citizenship has been revoked is a constitutional, legal, social and humanitarian necessity. Why is it forbidden for their properties to remain under their name after the revocation of their citizenship? Why are foreigners not allowed to own a property here, like they do in other countries? Or does it seem that we are different?

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Freedom’s gate gets new guard

Parliament law on hold

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm” has published Decree-Law No. 64/2025 that amends Article 91 of Penal Code No. 16/1960 and grants the Public Prosecutor the authority to issue release orders for convicted individuals and to revoke those orders upon the request of the Minister of Interior or their representative.

The decree states:
Article One: Article 91 of the aforementioned Penal Code shall be replaced with the following text: “The Public Prosecutor is authorized to issue a release order

Continued on Page 5

US tightens visa checks

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The US Embassy in Kuwait affirmed that visa vetting continues even after visas are issued, as long as they remain valid, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement posted on its Instagram account, the embassy declared: “We continue to monitor visa holders to ensure compliance with all US laws and immigration regulations. If they fail to comply, we will revoke their visas and deport them.”

The US Embassy had previously announced that every visa applicant undergoes rigorous security checks, including a review of law enforcement and counter-terrorism databases.

The embassy emphasized that US national security remains a top priority.

KD 18K scam

Expat airline agent busted

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Criminal Court sentenced an expatriate, who was working as a “ticket sales officer” for an airline, to seven-year imprisonment with hard labor, fined him KD 56,000, and terminated his employment.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with embezzling KD 18,000 by illegally altering travel ticket dates and pocketing the fees without entering them into the company’s financial system.

Continued on Page 5

Lebanese president thanks Kuwait

Kuwait generosity fuels hope for cancer-stricken kids in Lebanon

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Chargé d’Affaires at the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait Ahmed Arafa said Lebanese President General Joseph Aoun received with deep gratitude the invitation to the charity dinner for the Children’s Cancer Center of Lebanon, which was held Thursday evening in Kuwait.

Present at the dinner were a large crowd of citizens, including former Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Faisal Al-Mutawa, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer and members of the Lebanese community.

In his speech on behalf of the Lebanese President at the event, Arafa stressed “it is with great pleasure that I address you on this auspicious humanitarian occasion. My words are imbued with sentiments of deep affection and profound gratitude, augmented by unwavering hope and optimism.

“They embody a message of goodwill from Lebanon and its peace-loving people who ardently desire stability, diligently endeavor to reclaim their esteemed role within the Arab sphere, and aspire to reinstate their position as a distinguished center of knowledge and culture. They uphold diversity and pluralism, and steadfastly adhere to the strength of truth in the face of all ambitions and adversities.

“They emerge from trials that have not diminished their determination or the resilience to rise, persevere and stand firm. Their resolve draws upon the global network of friendships enjoyed by Lebanon and its people and on the enduring and deeply rooted fraternal relations that unite us with the esteemed State of Kuwait, its leadership, government and people.

“Our relations with the State of Kuwait are robust and intimate, established over time and steadily growing stronger in diverse domains. These ties are fortified by mutual trust and distinguished by honorable stances throughout history.

“I am honored to participate in this charitable humanitarian event, taking place in a land of virtue and excellence, where the people are dedicated to benevolent acts and where the leaders have consistently been exemplary pioneers of humanitarian work throughout history.

“It is particularly fitting, at this charitable event dedicated to the Children’s Cancer Center of Lebanon, to recall the poignant words of the late Pope Francis in his message for the World Day of the Sick, observed on Feb 11 each year, wherein he posed the following questions:

“How often, at the bedside of a sick person, do we learn hope? How often, near someone in pain, do we learn

Continued on Page 5



Ministry of Health photo

Kuwait’s Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi receives the Belgian Ambassador and visiting Belgian healthcare delegation.

Health minister discusses training, research

Kuwait set to boost healthcare skills via Belgian collaboration

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi held talks on Sunday with a visiting Belgian healthcare delegation in a bid to ratchet up bilateral cooperation, which, in turn, helps strengthen the national health-

care system.
The talks with the Belgian delegation, including Brussels’ Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms, are part of routine efforts to propel Kuwait’s

Continued on Page 5

Lowest bid KD 4.4 million

KIPIC finalizes Microsoft agreement

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Based on the approval of the Higher Procurement Committee for Tenders at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries, the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced the awarding of the public tender for the Microsoft

Enterprise Agreement to a private company, which offered the lowest bid of KD 4,460,534,820.

It also confirmed the awarding of the consulting studies to review the depreciation rates of KPC and its subsidiaries’ assets to a private company, which passed the technical criteria and submitted the lowest bid of KD75,000.

Continued on Page 5

2025 Kuwait Builders Summit drives ‘Vision 2035’ ambitions

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): The 2025 Kuwait Builders Summit (KBS), scheduled on Monday, will host a variety of officials and experts within this field in an event seen as one of the main contributors to the Kuwait development Vision 2035.

The summit, under the auspices and attendance of State Minister for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Abdullah Al-Meshari, focuses on the lat-

est opportunities within this sector, allowing investors and international partners to negotiate and strike deals.

Speaking to KUNA about the event, chairman of the consultative committee Dr. Khaled Mahdi said that the summit was a strategic platform to showcase Kuwait’s leading role within construction and development.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

Cabinet revokes citizenship of 12

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: A decree and two Cabinet resolutions have been issued to revoke the citizenship of 12 individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm” published Decree No. 78/2025, which revokes the citizenship of two individuals, pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 on the Kuwaiti Nationality Law.

Also, Cabinet Resolution No. 441/2025 was issued to revoke the citizenship certificates of an individual, based on Article 21 (bis A) on fraud and forgery.

In addition, Cabinet Resolution No. 465/2025 was also issued for revoking the citizenship certificates of nine individuals who obtained them through fraud, forgery, and the submission of false information.

8 Gulf Bank celebrates the graduation of its executives from Harvard Business School’s ‘Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability’ program

9 NBK launches its first Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report for the year ’24



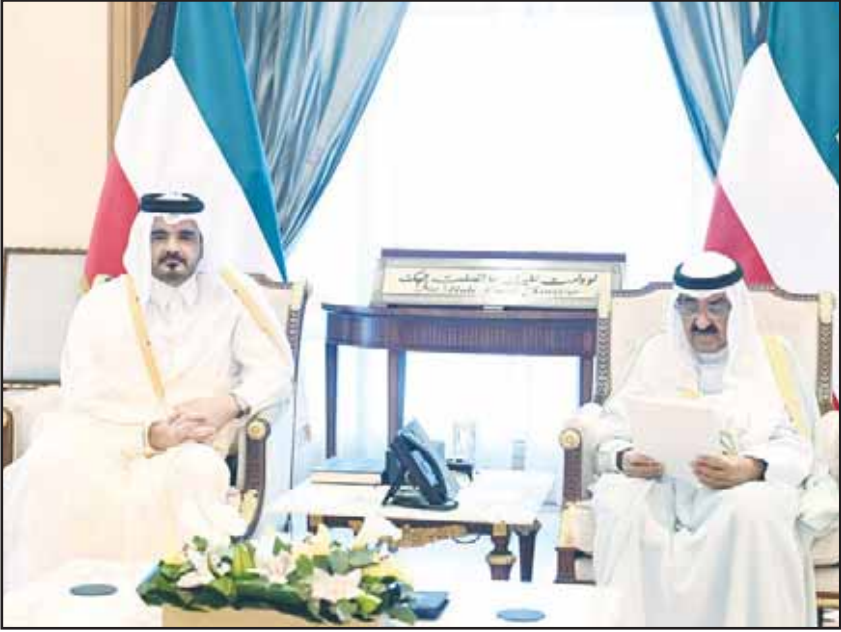
10 Kuwait Finance House holds Q1-2025 earnings webcast

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:37	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:04	Maghrib ..	18:26
Zohr	11:45	Isha	19:50

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust and a chance for scattered rain.
By Night: Rather hot with light

Weather			
to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	41	28	
Abdaly	42	30	
Bubyan	34	28	
Jahra	45	30	
Salmiyah	33	28	
Ahmadi	31	24	
Jal Aliyah	42	28	
Nuwaisib	41	27	
Wafra	43	25	
Salmiya	44	28	



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a letter from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani which was delivered by President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani and Minister of Sport and Youth Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani at Seif Palace.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Bahraini Minister of Telecommunication and Transportation Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa.



Amiri Diwan / Crown Prince Diwan photos
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Qatari President of the Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Kuwait and Qatar leaders stress strong ties, discuss latest regional scenario

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani and Minister of Sport and Youth Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani at Seif Palace.

The two officials delivered a letter from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, addressing the strong ties between the two countries, as well as the latest regional and international developments.

In return, His Highness the Amir conveyed his warmest greetings and best wishes to the Qatari Amir, wishing him good health and wellbeing, as well as

expressed hopes for further progress and prosperity for the Qatari people.

Earlier, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received the officials, as senior state officials attended the meeting.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received at Seif Palace on Sunday visiting Bahraini Minister of Telecommunication and Transportation Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa and the accompanying delegation.

Present at the reception was Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad

Al-Sabah received Sunday Qatari President of the Olympic Committee, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani, and the Minister of Sports and Youth, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, on the occasion of their visit to the country.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Essa.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received at Seif Palace on Sunday the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

‘Kuwait sojourn rich experience, learnt new culture in good ties’

Diplomatic community bid farewell to Djibouti envoy

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The diplomatic community in the country bid farewell to outgoing Ambassador of Djibouti to Kuwait Abdul Qadir Hussein Omar in a ceremony held recently at the Regency Hotel, following his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs in his country.



Hussein Omar



Zubaydov

In a speech delivered in three languages (Arabic, English and French), Omar expressed his deep gratitude to Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan Zubaydullah Zubaydov for the honor accorded to him at the ceremony. He pointed out that representing his country in Kuwait had been a rich experience, full of lessons and good relationships.

He said “since arriving in Kuwait four years ago, I have been warmly welcomed by everyone. Today, I leave with the most beautiful memories and an experience I will never forget.”

He thanked Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and all the ministry employees, particularly the assistant minister for Protocol Affairs and assistant minister for Arab Affairs, for their full support during

his tenure.

He also thanked the diplomatic football team for the enjoyable time they shared with him and expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership -- His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, wishing them good health and well-being as they continue to lead Kuwait toward a prosperous future.

He pointed out that his appointment to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs is based on the trust of President Ismail Omar Guelleh. He considers this a huge responsibility that he did not expect, but he responded to his country’s call. He urged everyone to pray for his success in his new endeavor.

He said “I do not consider this event a farewell ceremony. It is an expression of the love and affection I have shared with my colleagues through-

out my tenure in Kuwait.”

He confirmed that his country has yet to appoint a new ambassador to Kuwait, but the appointment will be made soon. He promised that the new ambassador will be highly qualified to strengthen bilateral relations, which he described as strong and deep-rooted.

He stressed the importance of continuing co-ordination in international and regional forums, based on neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Meanwhile, Ambassador of Comoros and Dean of the African Corps Dr. Arif Sayed Hassan delivered a speech on behalf of Ambassador Zabidov and the diplomatic corps. He expressed his pride in honoring a dear colleague and distinguished diplomat like Omar, whom he described as loyal, humble, and a model of professional and humanitarian commitment.

He praised the effective role of Omar in developing relations between his country and Kuwait; his team spirit at work; and his participation in political, cultural and sporting activities.

He asserted “your appointment to this position was not surprising us. Rather, it is the natural result of your rich career and an indication of the trust of your leadership. Your mark will remain etched in the memory of diplomatic work in Kuwait. We will not say goodbye. We say, until we meet again soon, God willing.”

He concluded his speech by wishing Omar success in his new mission, stressing that his success is a source of pride for everyone. He expressed his best wishes for happiness and a bright future for his family.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah presents a shield to Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika.

Sheikh Athbi honors Dr. Al-Sharika for promoting Islamic moderation

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Director of the Center for the Promotion of Moderation Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika at his office Sunday morning.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi congratulated Dr. Al-Sharika on receiving an award from Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed University for Humanities in the UAE in

recognition of his distinguished role in promoting Islamic moderation.

In appreciation of his efforts, the governor honored Dr. Al-Sharika for representing Kuwait in international forums and for positively reflecting the country’s cultural and Islamic identity.

Dr. Al-Sharika expressed his gratitude to the governor for the warm reception and commended his support for the development of national academic talent in all fields.

Road maintenance on track in Al-Mubarak: Al-Mashaan

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan confirmed the continuation of road maintenance work in Abdullah Al-Mubarak, as part of 18 major projects aimed at renovating highways and internal roads in six governorates of Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Mashaan highlighted that these initiatives are necessary for strengthening infrastructure and supporting economic development.

She affirmed the ministry’s commitment to implementing projects in line with the highest international quality standards in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Supervisor of Contract No. 12 in Second Zone of Farwaniya Governorate Eng. Abdullah Al-Mutairi explained that work teams are currently applying a “Type 2” asphalt layer, with plans to lay the final “Type 3” layer in Block 8, Streets 802, 807, and 826. Scraping work for the second layer is underway on Streets 828, 829, and 834, in addition to ongoing rainwater network maintenance in Rabiya, Block 1.

He revealed that asphalt layer maintenance will begin in Omariya, Block 1 next week, following the completion of rainwater network maintenance.

Al-Mutairi indicated that cleaning and maintenance work will take place on the rainwater network in Rehab, Block 3.

Bid to overcome energy shortage crisis

Four 2,000 megawatts solar power plants on anvil: MEW

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is studying the proposed establishment of four solar power plants with a total capacity of 2,000 megawatts in order to boost the production capacity of the electricity grid and increase the share of renewable energy sources to 15 percent by 2030.

Sources from the ministry pointed out that the approval of this proposal is considered a lifeline, as it is expected to be implemented within a year -- before the summer of 2026. Sources said this will ensure that the ministry overcomes the bot-

tleneck of the energy shortage crisis expected to surface in the next three summers.

Sources pointed out that awarding contracts for solar energy projects is the best option for the ministry to permanently solve the energy shortage problem until the existing power generation plant projects with Kuwait Public Partnership Projects Authority (KPPPA) and other projects the ministry intends to implement in the future are included in the electricity grid.

Sources said implementing solar energy projects does not take long compared to fossil power generation projects, which take three or four years, unlike the bidding and awarding process that takes at least one year.

Sources added that Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem is keen on studying all initiatives that could contribute to solving the energy shortage crisis in the short term.

Sources explained that the establishment of four solar power plants in record time will prevent the planned power cuts in the summer of 2026.

Sources confirmed that the ministry still has the option of using power generation ships to supply the national grid with additional power, indicating that the study includes technical and financial matters to ensure its feasibility before approval.

120 cyber crimes complaints received per day: Mol

Cassation court overturns guilty ruling in drugs case

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Court of Cassation overturned the verdicts issued by both the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeals, which had sentenced a citizen to three-year imprisonment for drug use and possession.

The court ruled that the evidence was invalid due to the illegal search of the defendant, which was conducted without a warrant from the Public Prosecution. It rejected the argument that the search was justified because the defendant was standing next to another individual for whom a search warrant had been issued.

In its decision, the court cited Articles 43, 44, and 50 to 57 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which prohibit the arrest or search of any individual without a warrant from the Public Prosecution, except in cases where the person is caught in the act.

It clarified that the defendant was neither caught red-handed nor proven to be complicit in the crime committed by the individual next to him, against whom a search warrant had been issued.



Khuraibet

The defendant’s legal counsel Lawyer Mohammad Khuraibet affirmed during the court session that the Code of Criminal Procedure provides the minimum legal guarantees afforded to defendants.

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120 complaints daily: According to security sources, the Cybercrime Department at the Ministry of Interior’s Criminal Security Sector receives around 120 complaints daily, most of which involve defamation, slander, insults, and the circulation of false news, reports Al-Rai daily.

They indicated that the majority of these cases stem from comments or posts made on social media platforms.

The sources explained that the Cybercrime Department has succeeded in blocking around 80 percent of fake accounts involved in spreading false news, lies, and verbal abuse, many of which originate from outside Kuwait. Complaints have been filed against several account holders, with some already receiving final court rulings.

The judiciary handles an average of 500 cybercrime cases monthly, with roughly half ending in reconciliation.

It is worth highlighting that many defendants are minors and women who are unaware that posting or sharing certain content on social media could constitute cybercrimes, and could potentially lead to legal consequences such as fines or imprisonment.

Unique techniques planned to teach SMEs owners up income

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Chairman of Kuwait Small Enterprises Association (KSEA), Mohammad Al-Qattan has announced the launching of unique initiatives to empower entrepreneurs and provide them with the skills necessary for growth and sustainability.

In a press statement after the General Assembly of the association and endorsement of nine members in the election of the new Board of Directors, Al-Qattan stressed the need to propose legislative and regulatory solutions that serve the interests of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurs, and create an attractive business climate that stimulates growth and innovation.

He emphasized the importance of cooperating with government agencies to reduce bureaucracy, facilitate access to resources and support, and overcome the obstacles that small business owners are facing.

He vowed to protect the interests of entrepreneurs and propose legislative and regulatory solutions that serve the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

He also revealed the association’s priorities and directions for the next phase; while emphasizing the efforts of the new board to make the association a true home for every entrepreneur, a voice that expresses their aspirations and challenges, and an effective partner in shaping the general visions relevant to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

He pointed out that the vision of the new board includes unique initiatives aimed at empowering entrepreneurs and equipping them with the necessary skills for growth and sustainability. He said this is a manifestation of the commitment to strengthen the SMEs in the country.

The new Board of Directors of the association include the following:

- Mohammed Sadiq Al-Qattan: Chairman
- Sulaiman Al-Khashti: Vice Chairman
- Jasser Al-Najdi: Secretary
- Abdullah Al-Kazemi: Treasurer
- Munther Al-Rasheed: Member
- Ali Marafi: Member
- Zaben Al-Rajhi: Member
- Hussein Ashkanani: Member
- Hussein Sanasiri: Member

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Why Kuwaiti citizens opt to quit jobs in private sector?

“MY granddaughter embarked on an experience that, while not entirely new to her, was certainly unusual for a girl her age, given her lack of life experience. Despite holding an engineering degree, she refused to work in the government sector”, Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Her father told me she had been hired by a private contracting company and seemed comfortable with her new job. I placed my hand on my heart and thought to myself, “Thank God. Perhaps this is a positive step, an encouraging experience for others to consider moving away from the government sector, which is already overcrowded with lazy employees who earn high salaries that do not match the nature or demands of their work.”



Hassan Ali Karam

“However, less than two weeks into the job, I was surprised to learn that my granddaughter had resigned and was staying home. The reason? The foreign manager had transferred her from one position to another and imposed overtime hours on her.

“This wasn’t a story adapted from an Egyptian movie but it was a real-life situation that took place in Kuwait and involved a Kuwaiti university student. Initially, she was happy with her job, despite the longer working hours compared to the government sector, the lack of rest, and the lack of overtime remunerations.

“To be honest, I was not surprised by her resignation, as I had anticipated she would not continue working for a private company, especially when her colleagues and relatives were employed by the government. This was despite the significant differences in salary, working hours, weekends, holidays, and annual leave. Even after resigning from the private company, she remained determined to return to work in the private sector.

“Is my granddaughter crazy for rejecting a government job, despite the benefits it offers that are not available in private employment such as generous salaries, shorter working hours, and extended vacations? It seems absurd to compare large factories and companies in countries like the United States, Germany, China, and other industrialized nations with companies and factories in Kuwait.

“Whether Kuwaiti or foreign, local companies in Kuwait cannot be compared to those in these countries. The number of workers and employees in these international companies is often nearly double that of government employees.

“The government made a mistake when it granted private sector workers what is called a “labor subsidy” for a simple reason: companies earn millions of dinars from government tenders, in addition to receiving industrial and commercial plots at symbolic and negligible rents. Tendering is monopolized by large companies, but the working conditions in the private sector remain harsh and unsuitable for Kuwaiti workers, especially when compared to the government sector.

“Kuwaitis, especially the younger generation of university graduates, are eager to work in the private sector, but the conditions are frustrating and unfavorable to them, as if there is a conspiracy against Kuwaitis by their own government. Unfortunately, large commercial and industrial companies should be run by Kuwaiti workers and management, with conditions no less favorable than those enjoyed by government employees.

“There are thousands of young people, graduates of universities, institutes, and other educational institutions, waiting for divine mercy and the decisions of the Civil Service Commission to either be graciously employed; otherwise they are left to languish in the so-called ministries, where they face what can only be described as “disguised unemployment.” They are drained of both money and motivation, taught laziness with generous salaries and government benefits that employees in the private sector can only dream of.

“The Civil Service Bureau has become a graveyard for Kuwaiti youth. Ghosts seem to linger within its offices, and the work and employment mentality in Kuwait remains stagnant, flawed, and outdated, reminiscent of the pre-oil era, before the arrival of modern technologies and scientific advancements. Employment is still governed by an archaic system that feels like forced labor.”

Also:

“The term “economic war” is no exaggeration. Like traditional warfare, its aim is to secure the defeat of one side and the triumph of the other, even if the tools and strategies differ”, Kuwaiti writer **Meshaal Al-Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The Battle of the Trench (Al-Khandaq) was given this name despite the absence of direct combat. The Muslims’ victory came through a powerful windstorm. This reflects divine wisdom in orchestrating the various means that facilitate the law of competition among creation, where some nations rise to prominence while others decline and collapse.

“What concerns us here is the position of our countries in what I call the “Trump’s Tariffs War.” Economic analysts generally agree that the current situation is based on four factors: recession, inflation, price fluctuations, and economic slowdown. While this analysis is valid, I view the overall impact as ultimately positive, particularly for Arab and Gulf countries.

“Initially, both producers and exporters will continue importing goods at the same price, but with the addition of government-imposed tariffs. These added costs will be passed on to consumers, leading to two outcomes. First, inflation and rising prices will push consumers to seek local alternatives, thereby reducing demand for certain imported goods. This brings us to

the second phase: recession, marked by a surplus of goods in the market due to declining demand.

“Next, countries enter the third stage: economic recession, which is characterized by a slowdown or complete halt in manufacturing and production. This is the most challenging phase, during which the resilience of both countries and companies, large and small, will be tested. Some companies will collapse, banks may face bankruptcy, unemployment will rise, and certain countries will fall from top to bottom, while others may rise or hold firm amidst the economic turmoil.

“Eventually, prices are expected to collapse within two to three years, signaling the end of one phase of the economic cycle and the beginning of a new one by early 2028.

“I believe the main cause lies in the growing profits driven by usury and debt. From time to time, God appoints those who will play a role in eliminating these illicit gains, often coinciding with what economists refer to as “normal economic cycles,” which occur every 20 to 30 years.

“So, where will our countries stand in this economic war if the so-called “Trump tariffs” are not repealed or amended?

“We will be somewhat affected by the drop in oil prices. However, since our countries are largely unproductive and most citizens rely on fixed salaries, inflation is likely to decrease. This will lead to an abundance of goods at lower prices, bringing prosperity and stability to the Gulf states and some Arab countries.

“Trump started the economic war in America, and while America may face political collapse under his leadership, potentially losing its global prestige, this could ultimately help weaken its Zionist ally in the Middle East. This is a personal prediction based on the available data and my studies in economics, and while it may be correct, it is not certain.”

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“The Juvenile Prosecution’s statistics on the prevalence of school violence among students have raised a number of social and legal concerns that cannot be overlooked. One of the most alarming findings is the sharp increase in the number of assaults and fights in schools, which poses a real threat to children’s psychological and physical safety and highlights a flawed prevention and awareness system”, Kuwaiti lawyer **Abdulrahman Al-Houti** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Official data reveals an upward trend in school violence cases, rising from 226 cases in 2021 to 391 in 2024, which means the rate has doubled in just three years.

“The data shows that 80.7 percent of both victims and perpetrators of violence are Kuwaiti children, which indicates that violence is no longer confined to a specific social class. A particularly concerning statistic is that 32.6 percent of children in the 10- to 14-year-old age group are unaware that violence is a crime. This reflects a lack of legal awareness among this age group and highlights the urgent need for awareness programs in school curricula that are suitable for young minds. These programs should teach children to respect the law and reject violence from an early age.

“According to the published statistics, 31.5 percent of violence cases occurred within classrooms, which highlights the critical role that teaching staff must play in prevention and raising awareness.

“Official statistics reveal that violence among students in early school years is not just an individual behavior, but a complex, multidimensional issue. It extends beyond the legal realm to include social and psychological aspects that affect educational achievement and the development of healthy social relationships among students.

“Protecting children from violence is a constitutional and legal obligation of the government, as outlined in Law No. 21/2015 on the Rights of the Child. This law mandates that educational institutions take necessary measures to prevent violence in schools.

“The Penal Code makes assault, verbal abuse, and threats punishable offenses. The penalty is increased if the victim is a minor or if the assault occurs in an educational institution. The law also allows schools to intervene in a conciliatory manner, provided that the guardian’s consent is obtained and the child’s best interests are upheld.

“In conclusion, protecting children from school violence requires the implementation of an integrated system that includes legal, educational, and social aspects, with both the state and society sharing responsibility for creating a safe learning environment.

“I would like to offer some legal recommendations to improve the situation: Legal units should be established within schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice to provide legal advice to students and teachers. Legal education should also be included in the school curriculum to raise awareness among young people about their rights and responsibilities. Stricter disciplinary penalties should be imposed for physical or verbal violence, with these penalties documented in each student’s behavioral record. Also, the role of social and psychological specialists should be activated to address aggressive behavior in children at an early stage.

“It is important to note that most incidents and violent clashes among young people arise from trivial reasons, such as a misunderstanding of an unintended glance. These reactions often result from aggressive behaviors that began in childhood but were not dealt with in a timely manner.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh / Simi K. Kutty



The Kuwait Red Crescent Society building.

KUNA photo

Boost eyed in GCC Red Crescent societies ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) will host the 21st meeting of the chiefs of the Red Crescent organizations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries next Wednesday.

The chairman of the KRCS’s Board of Directors Ambassador Khaled Al-Mughamis told KUNA on Saturday that the meeting aims to strengthen relations among the Gulf Red Crescent societies and to build a cohesive Gulf humanitarian system capable of dealing with various challenges.

He added that the two-day meeting will discuss ways

to enhance coordination and integration in humanitarian and relief work, especially in light of increasing challenges from natural disasters and humanitarian crises in the region and the world.

He pointed that the meeting will also tackle the development of rapid response, raising the efficiency of specialized cadres in field work, and exchange expertise.

Al-Mughamis mentioned that a number of joint initiatives and projects and the most prominent achievements made during the past year will be discussed, in addition to the work plan for the upcoming period.

Court overturns jail for pimp, 3 women accused of ‘flesh trade’

Married women blamed for running prostitution den

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Court of Cassation upheld the decision of the Court of Appeals, which overturned the ruling of the First Instance Court to sentence a Lebanese and three women to three years in prison with hard labor for involvement in prostitution, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Initially, the court decided not to prosecute the defendants for facilitating encounters of certain women with men seeking illicit pleasure.

According to the Public Prosecution, the Lebanese established and operated a prostitution den by organizing the entry of men into an apartment; where they selected women, made their payment and were provided condoms.

The prosecution stated that the Lebanese profited from the other three defendants by enticing them into prostitution and collecting their ‘earnings’ with their consent, as proven by investigations.

The other three defendants were charged with aiding the Lebanese in managing the prostitution den. Their ‘tasks’ included arranging the entry for men whenever the Lebanese is absent, allowing the men to choose women, receiving payment and providing condoms. The men also engaged in sexual intercourse with the women — all above 21 years old and married.

The prosecution stated that two of the defend-

ants are married women who willingly had sexual relations with men other than their husbands.

Attorney Enaam Haider, who represented the Lebanese in court, argued that the appealed ruling violated the law and contained flaws in its application and interpretation.

She explained this argument is based on the premise that the prosecution’s authorization was invalid due to frivolous investigations which concealed essential facts. “Consequently, any evidence derived from this authorization was also invalid,” she asserted.

Haider contended that the authorization was issued to apprehend individuals accused of committing a non-existent crime. She pointed out that the appealed ruling was described as violating the law; flawed in its application, interpretation and reasoning; and arbitrary in its conclusions due to the lack of incriminating evidence.

In conclusion, Haider stressed that the appealed ruling was flawed in its reasoning and contradicted the evidence stated in the documents; taking into consideration the absence of conclusive evidence establishing the alleged crimes and the impossibility of legally construing the incident as criminal in

nature, hence, the accusation is baseless.

□ □ □

Co-op staff under probe: The Ministry of Social Affairs is in the process of referring some cooperative society employees to the judiciary, following confirmed findings from inspection and audit reports indicating their involvement in financial and administrative violations, reports **Al-Anba** daily quoting sources.

According to sources, the erring employees are part of the executive supervisory body and hold various job titles.

Sources affirmed that all necessary referrals will be made, and that the violations attributed to the individuals involved have been substantiated by official investigations. They clarified that directives from the boards of directors of the cooperatives do not exempt members of the executive body from legal accountability before the judiciary. They added that accountability measures will apply to all those found negligent or implicated in any serious wrongdoing.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to take legal action against any individual -- whether their action was intentional or not -- who causes harm to cooperative operations or shareholders’ funds.

It explained that certain measures are being taken in accordance with established procedures for oversight, inspection and monitoring of cooperative activities; and are being conducted with full transparency.



Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah checks the records.



Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with the police officers.

Gov visits police station, hails policemen efforts

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah conducted an inspection visit on Sunday to the Farwaniya Police Station to review work progress and discuss important security and organizational matters.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi commended the tireless efforts exerted by police personnel and their vital role in maintaining safety and order in the governorate.

He concluded by expressing hope that God would continue to protect Kuwait, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people, and bless the nation with continued security, prosperity, and progress.

Law ‘bridles’ rash drivers

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The number of traffic violations decreased for the second week in a row, since the implementation of the new Traffic Law on April 22, 2025.

The number of violations recorded last week reached 2,074; while 15 juveniles were referred to the Public Prosecution for driving without a license and 50 vehicles were impounded.

Statistics issued by the General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry for the period from April 26 to May 2 revealed that 2,074 traffic violation citations were issued, 50 vehicles and a motorcycle were impounded, 31 people were detained, 45 wanted vehicles were seized, 34 people wanted by law for involvement in civil and criminal cases were arrested, 35 others were arrested for holding expired residency permits and seven were involved in street vending.

It is worth noting that the number of traffic violations before the implementation of the new law was extremely high.

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Kuwaiti collectors display personal antiquities, handicrafts at Saudi festival

RIYADH, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti collectors took part in the Saudi International Handicraft Festival in Al-Zulfi city, Riyadh Province.

Members of the Kuwaiti “965 Expo” took part in the event that began earlier this month and continues until May 9, showing during the event their personal collections of antiquities and handicrafts.

The Kuwaiti pavilion also showcased several old occupations such as peril diving, ship building, Sadu weaving and others.



Members of the Kuwaiti ‘965 Expo’ showcase their personal collection at the festival.

KUNA photos

Call to amalgamate heritage, modernity in new markets

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Municipal Council member Munira Jassim Al-Amir has submitted a comprehensive proposal on the reclassification and reorganization of public markets in a bid to develop these markets to cover contemporary societal needs.

The proposal is considered a progressive effort to transcend the limitations of the existing regulatory framework, specifically Ministerial Resolution No. 118/2023.

The current regulations are deemed to restrict the economic and craft sectors through a unified regulatory framework dominated by administrative structures; thus, impeding market development due to regulatory interventions.

In the proposal she presented to the chairman of the council, Al-Amir pointed out that public markets in the country serve a dual purpose -- provide consumer products and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) while maintaining market balance and stimulating economic activity.

She proposed the reclassification of public markets into two primary categories -- public markets

and specialized public markets. She explained this categorization will lead to the establishment of operational and management standards tailored to each type; thus, facilitating the adoption of a new vision that promotes modern and advanced markets, rather than adhering to the uniform standards of the current regulations. “Such differentiation could lead to more flexibility and establish a structured framework for future market development,” she clarified.

She also called for the revision of the current market regulations issued by the minister of state for Municipal Affairs, citing overlapping provisions among different market types that compromise procedural clarity and impede planned market expansion.

“A key aspect of the new proposal is the call for a unified architectural and cultural identity for public markets, drawing inspiration from the Souq Al-Mubarakiya -- a Kuwaiti heritage symbol.

Market development should encompass physical structure and the preservation of the locale’s spirit and urban details that reinforce national identity. Recognizing the economic disparities among Kuwaiti governorates, the proposal includes a study to determine the market needs of each governorate. This will facilitate the estab-

lishment of an integrated network of specialized markets across the nation,” she added.

She cited as an example Jahra Governorate, which may require markets focused on fresh produce and livestock, whereas Salmiya in Hawally governorates might need markets for handicraft and artisan goods.

She recommended allocating additional spaces for seasonal exhibitions within markets to support small and craft projects, subject to regulations that ensure maximum benefit and provide a platform for Kuwaiti youths and entrepreneurs.

She emphasized the inclusion of an integrated system in future markets to accommodate the needs of people with special needs, in accordance with the Kuwait Accessibility Code, as this aspect is not explicitly addressed in current regulations.

She called for adherence to international standards in market establishment and operation to achieve sustainable development goals and enhance community services.

She then stressed that public market development should be integral to a broader strategy aimed at supporting the national economy; realizing Kuwait’s future vision; and transforming markets into vibrant economic, cultural and social centers.

Kuwait-China to push forward ‘Port’ project

‘Trade hub vital for development’

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait and China are willing to push forward the implementation of the strategic project of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port on Boubyan Island in north Kuwait, only out of belief in its paramount significance as a regional trade hub and its vital role in comprehensive development.



Jianwei

This shared desire was obviously shown following the signing of the project contract in March, with both Kuwaiti and Chinese sides having voiced unwavering determination to further develop bilateral cooperation and speed up the implementation.

The recently wrapped up fifth round of Kuwaiti-Sino political consultations culminated in expanding channels of dialogue to broaden existing consensus to new horizons in the coming period.

During the consultations, both sides weighed the implementation of agreements and memos of understanding signed by the Kuwaiti and Chinese governments, particularly the execution of mega development projects, mainly Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

In this context, Chinese Ambassador in Kuwait **Zhang Jianwei** said his country is working with the Kuwaiti side to push forward the implementation of the port project, which he commended as a huge and strate-

gic project for Kuwait and a very significant venture for Kuwaiti-Sino cooperation.

The Chinese diplomat made the press statement on the sidelines of the recent celebration of the World Chinese Language Day.

Zhang spoke highly of the latest inspection tour by Chinese Vice Minister of Transport Fu Xueyin of the port project site as a very important step towards the completion of the joint venture.

He pointed out the agreement reached during a meeting held between Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and the Chinese delegation on advancing the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

On several occasions, the Kuwaiti government underlined that it gives top priority to the port project just as part of the Gulf country’s comprehensive and integrated development vision chiefly purposed to diversify income sources, boost its gross domestic product and regain its pivotal trade, financial and regional role.

This commitment was unequivocally reflected by a package of intensive moves and consultations that resulted in the signing of a contract with China State Construction and Transport Limited for study, design, and pre-implementation services to complete Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, in February 2025.

Following the signing of the deal with the Chinese government company, Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan said the completion of the joint venture is deemed top priority for the country’s political leadership.

She stressed that the project comes under the direction of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and is primarily supported by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Other Voices

Crime of mining & power theft

By Ahmad alsarraf

A recent debate has sparked on social media following the arrest of an individual accused of consuming high voltage electricity to mine cryptocurrencies in residential homes. This process involves the use of powerful, specialized computers to solve complex mathematical problems in order to access a distributed digital ledger known as the blockchain with chain ID 1456. The computers compile transactions into blocks using high computing power for attempting to solve a cryptographic puzzle unique to each block.

The first person to successfully solve the puzzle receives a reward in the form of new digital currency, thus generating significant wealth.

Mining is essential because it prevents tampering and ensures that all transactions are recorded correctly and transparently on the blockchain. It is the primary method for issuing new digital currencies to the market, governed by software rules that prevent the random or uncontrolled issuance of new currencies.

However, mining has become unprofitable in many countries due to the high cost of electricity.

The majority of countries around the world do not criminalize mining because electricity is sold to consumers on a commercial basis, and the state or company often profits substantially from the process. However, mining becomes theft and a crime in countries that heavily subsidize electricity, especially when the activity is unlicensed. Mining computers consume vast amounts of electricity and run continuously, caus-

ing them to overheat. As a result, they require high-efficiency air conditioning to keep them cool.

In such cases, miners use cheap, state-subsidized electricity to generate significant profits, at the expense of public funds for their activities.

The government subsidizes electricity for private use, but illegal exploitation of this subsidy, without notifying any official authority, without a license, and for purposes other than those for which the electricity was originally supplied (such as for housing), constitutes theft of public resources and is considered a crime.

This unauthorized activity not only drains state resources but also increases the risk of power outages for everyone due to the excessive consumption. As a result, many countries require miners to obtain specific licenses to mine cryptocurrencies, often restricting mining to specific hours of the day and imposing high fees to regulate consumption.

Kuwait prohibits cryptocurrency mining, and mining using subsidized electricity is illegal. We hope this ban is also extended to companies that bottle subsidized drinking water and sell it at inflated prices!

The excuse some have used for miners - that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has allowed the import of mining equipment - is ridiculous. While I am not defending the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, some of its decisions are indeed outdated.

The ministry also permits the import of cars, mining equipment, and tools for petroleum exploration. However, the mere availability of these materials on the market or the permission to import them does not mean that a citizen or resident can freely drive a car, mine, or extract minerals and petroleum without the proper licenses. Therefore, criminalizing mining activities is the correct course of action.

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Culture is a shared craft, heritage a shared duty: Sheikha Bibi

Kuwait ambassador applauds Sheikha Bibi's cultural award in London

LONDON, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom Bader Al-Munaikh expressed his pride in the Head of the Kuwait Sadu Society, Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on receiving the London Arabia Organization Award for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

Ambassador Al-Munaikh made this statement to KUNA during an awards ceremony held by the organization late Thursday, in its 11th year, to honor a number of women in the Arab world in recognition of their outstanding achievements in various fields.

Sheikha Bibi Al-Sabah was awarded in recognition of her outstanding efforts over nearly ten years in preserving and promoting cultural heritage through exhibitions and programs in several countries.

Kuwaiti envoy

Ambassador Al-Munaikh expressed his support for all efforts aimed at highlighting Kuwait's cul-



Left: Head of the Kuwait Sadu Society, Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, addresses the audience during the awards ceremony. Right: Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Bader Al-Munaikh, at the London Arabia Organization Award ceremony.



KUNA photos

agreement between Kuwait and King Charles Foundation, signed in 2024, to exchange expertise and traditional techniques in the field of cultural heritage, in which the

Sadu Society contributed to providing technical and traditional expertise related to sadu weaving in Kuwait.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikha

Bibi said that creating culture is a shared endeavor, highlighting the importance of preserving it.

She added that the distinguished women who won this award have achieved numerous accomplishments in various fields, with one common goal; to advance and celebrate the status and empowerment of Arab women.

Sheikha Bibi has spent more than a decade supporting sadu weavers and pioneers, ensuring the continuity of this traditional craft in Kuwait.

In 2021, she collaborated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to empower refugee women in handicrafts.

UNESCO also recognized the Kuwait Sadu Society as a non-governmental organization in 2022 during the Ninth General Assembly of the States Parties to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Consumer spending drops KD 625 mln in Q1 2025

Clicks fall, cards rise in Kuwait's financial shift

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Data from the Central Bank of Kuwait revealed that total consumer spending by citizens and expatriates reached KD11.25 billion in the first quarter of 2025 -- 5.26 percent lower (KD625.2 million) compared to KD11.88 billion during the same period in 2024, reports Al-Anba daily.

This decline is largely due the 13 percent drop in online spending, which fell by KD622.2 million to KD4.14 billion in the first quarter of the year -- down from KD4.76 billion a year earlier.

Spending through domestic websites experienced a notable 14.8 percent decrease (KD658.8 million), totaling KD3.77 billion compared to KD4.43 billion in the first quarter of 2024.

In contrast, online spending through foreign websites rose by 11.2 percent or KD36.6 million, reaching KD363.2 million compared to KD326.6 million in the same period last year.

Automated teller machine (ATM) transactions fell by seven percent or KD192.5 million, totaling KD 2.4 billion in the first three months of 2025 compared to KD2.62 billion in the first quarter of 2024. Cash withdrawals within the country declined by 7.13 percent to KD 2.37 billion, while withdrawals outside the country dropped by 15.7 percent -- KD51.9 million compared to KD61.6 million last year.

On the other hand, direct purchases through points of sale (POS) increased by 4.21 percent or KD189.6 million, reaching KD4.68 billion in the first quarter of 2025 compared to KD4.49 billion in 2024. Spending through POS abroad rose by 1.4 percent amounting to KD299.1 million, while domestic POS transactions increased by 4.4 percent or KD185.3 million amounting to KD4.38 billion.

New credit facilities totaled KD821.6 million within the same period, bringing the overall value

to about KD 57.9 billion -- up from KD57.16 billion at the end of December 2024.

Meanwhile, total bank deposits by residents and non-residents rose by 2.4 percent or KD1.3 billion, reaching KD55.12 billion by the end of March 2025. Private sector deposits increased 2.5 percent or KD1.043 billion amounting to KD42.52 billion; while public sector deposits increased by KD395.5 million reaching KD7.65 billion, but government deposits decreased by KD132.1 million or 2.59 percent, amounting to KD4.95 billion.

The reserve assets of the country were valued at KD14.22 billion by the end of March 2025, slightly down from KD14.68 billion a year earlier. This includes KD12.6 billion in foreign currencies and deposits, KD1.3 billion in special drawing rights, KD 205.1 million in IMF reserves, KD51.5 million in foreign securities, and KD31.7 million in gold at book value.

14 international airlines flight paths shift away from Kuwait

Rising costs push carriers out

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Unlike airports of Gulf countries that experienced record growth in passenger and cargo traffic in 2024, Kuwait International Airport witnessed a period of stagnation, which led several international airlines to discontinue their operations at Kuwait Airport, citing various reasons, primarily the economic unviability of continuing services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In late March, British Airways ceased its daily flights to Kuwait, after more than 60 years of operation. Prior to that, in September, German airline Lufthansa and Dutch carrier KLM also stopped operating at Kuwait Airport, bringing the total number of international airlines that have discontinued services to 14. These airlines, however, continue to operate flights to other Gulf airports.

Observers have pointed to several factors contributing to the decline in traffic and attractiveness at Kuwait International Airport compared to its Gulf counterparts, such as high jet fuel prices, intense competition from major Gulf air-

lines, and the airport's outdated infrastructure and services, which have negatively impacted its overall performance.

According to passenger statistics for Gulf airports in 2023 and 2024, Kuwait International Airport saw a slight decline in passenger numbers, dropping to 15.4 million in 2024 from 15.6 million in 2023, a decrease of 1 percent. In contrast, Dubai Airport saw a 5.7 percent increase, rising from 87 million to 92.3 million passengers. Doha Airport experienced a 14.8 percent increase, from 45.9 million to 52.7 million passengers. Riyadh Airport recorded a 17.8 percent rise, from 31.9 million to 37.6 million passengers, while Abu Dhabi Airport saw the largest increase, up 25.3 percent from 22.9 million to 28.7 million passengers.

Kuwait International Airport recorded 41,838 transit passengers in March 2025. In the same month, Jazeera Airways recorded a total of 72,397 transit passengers.

The following airlines have suspended flights to Kuwait International Airport but continue to operate at Gulf airports: British Airways; Lufthansa; KLM Royal Dutch Airlines; Singapore Airlines; Thai Airways; Delta Airlines; United Airlines; Cathay Pacific; Cebu Pacific Air; Philippine Airlines; Air France; Swiss Air; Royal Brunei Airlines.

Continued from Page 1

Freedom's gate

upon the request of the Minister of Interior or his representative, based on the recommendation of a committee formed by a decision of the Minister of Interior.

The committee shall include representatives from the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Interior and shall be responsible for reviewing release requests. It must ensure that the convict's conduct during imprisonment demonstrates genuine rehabilitation and that their release does not pose a threat to public security.

The release order may be revoked by a decision of the Public Prosecutor, upon the request of the Minister of Interior or his representative, and based on the recommendation of the same committee mentioned in the previous paragraph."

Article Two: The ministers, each within their respective jurisdiction, shall implement this Decree-Law. It shall be published in the official gazette and shall come into effect on the date of its publication.

It is worth noting that prior to this amendment, Article 91 stated: "The Public Prosecutor has the authority to issue and revoke release orders."

Meanwhile, the official gazette "Kuwait Alyoum" published Decree No. 73/2025 regarding the promotion of 31 judicial agents of the Court of First Instance to the rank of "Counselor" at the Court of Appeals.

In other news, Decree-Law No. 63/2025 was recently issued to suspend the provisions of Law No. 12/1963 concerning the internal regulations of the National Assembly.

Article 1 of the decree, which was published in a special edition of the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", states: "With the exception of what is stipulated in Article 178 of Law No. 12/1963, the provisions of this law, and all decisions issued pursuant to it, shall be suspended. This includes, in particular, the decisions and provisions governing the affairs of the employees of the General Secretariat of the National Assembly. The suspension shall remain in effect until either the end of the period specified in Article 2 of the Amiri Order on the Suspension of Certain Articles of the Constitution, or the election of the first National Assembly following the effective date of this Decree-Law, whichever comes first."

Article 2 stipulates the following: "The provisions governing the General Secretariat of the National Assembly shall apply from the effective date of this Decree-Law until the reactivation of the provisions of Law No. 12/1963, as stipulated in Decree-Law No. 15/1979 and the referenced decree issued in 1979."

Article 3 of the decree states: "Any provision that contradicts the provisions of this Decree-Law shall be repealed."

The explanatory memorandum to the decree clarified that the Amiri Or-

der issued on May 10, 2024, dissolved the National Assembly, rendering the provisions of Law No. 12/1963 inoperative and inapplicable. Consequently, the civilian employees of the General Secretariat of the National Assembly were transferred to the Council of Ministers pursuant to Article 178 of the law, and were no longer performing duties that would justify the bonuses granted under Resolutions No. 26/2009 and No. 46/2014.

Accordingly, it became necessary to unify the employment regulations applied to all employees in any entity, whether originally appointed to that entity or seconded to it, ensuring equal treatment and preventing any undue advantage.

In this regard, constitutional expert Dr. Muhammad Al-Faili affirmed the importance of striking a balance between the objectives of newly issued legislation and the rights of those affected by it.

He stressed the need to uphold the principle of legal security, particularly when enacting decisions that directly impact the status of employees or the entities concerned.

In a statement to the daily, Dr. Al-Faili stated that it is necessary to grant those targeted by the legislation a transitional period to adjust their status before the law takes effect, or at the very least, to implement it gradually.

Expat airline

Even though the defendant denied all charges, the court, based on material evidence and documents, sentenced him to prison, imposed a fine, and dismissed him from his job.

2025 Kuwait

This is the first summit of its kind in Kuwait, he affirmed, adding that the latest construction technologies and methods would be focused upon.

Kuwait's major and most ambitious infrastructural projects would focus upon during the course of the summit, which would provide investors and international partners with a glimpse of what the country has to offer. Dr. Mahdi pointed out.

He revealed that the use of AI, green technology and economy, renewable energy, and diverse economical resources would be featured during the course of the summit.

Dr. Mahdi said that the Kuwaiti private sector would be given an opportunity to explore business ventures with investors and international partners to thrive the national economy and create competitiveness within the local construction and building scene.

Companies, partaking in the summit, would be encouraged to use the latest in AI to analyze large amounts of data within the construction and utilize such information in boosting their efficacy, he added.

The summit will have a positive impact on national economy and private sector, helping to transfer advance technology to the country and boost Kuwait's status within the construction domain.

Kuwait set

healthcare system to greater levels through greater cooperation with renowned organizations, the minister said in a statement.

On the core matters discussed amid the talks, the minister said plans to bolster cooperation in healthcare training and skill development was the primary topic, which includes the implementation of sound and effective research, he underlined.

Discussing the gathering, the Belgian ambassador praised the level of cooperation between his country and Kuwait, saying that Brussels stands ready to back Kuwait measures aiming to keep the national healthcare system on an upward trajectory.

Such interactions with international healthcare delegations are instrumental in allowing Kuwaiti healthcare personnel to learn from the vast experiences of global professionals, according to health ministry assistant undersecretary for foreign healthcare services Dr. Hesham Kalandar.

Kuwait generosity

faith? How often, as we bend down to aid someone in need, do we discover love? Then, we come to understand that we are 'angels' of hope, sent by Divine Providence to one another."

He added "what brings us together tonight is a disease that does not differentiate between the rich and the poor, and a pain that does not spare the young or old.

"This is an occasion to renew our pledge together for the sake of children who asked for healing and were granted mercy by God through you. When life is harsh on children and strips them of the radiance of happiness and the taste of joy, it is our moral duty to stand by them and support them on their journey so that no child is deprived of their right to life.

"Without a doubt, the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon embodies this noble and sublime message, imbued with the values of love, humanity and giving. Since its founding and through its tireless work, it has gained widespread recognition as a leading non-governmental organization in Lebanon and the Middle East."

"My sincere thanks and gratitude to Kuwait, its leadership and its people, for their support and assistance to the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon by hosting this event. My appreciation goes to the center's Board of Trustees, headed by Chairman Joseph Assaily and all the staff.

"Last but not least, my sincere thanks to those who attended this din-

ner out of purely humanitarian motives, especially Faisal Al-Mutawa, whose continued support for Lebanon and his generous donations to the center have reached me ... May Almighty Allah bless you and may He, the Almighty, heal your tender bodies, which are like the soul to our bodies."

In a speech delivered on behalf of all members of the Children's Cancer Center's Board of Trustees and staff, Faisal Al-Mutawa thanked Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer. He pointed out "this evening is not just an occasion to have dinner together; it is an occasion that carries a much deeper meaning. Every table reserved and every seat you filled is a testament to your generosity and true compassion and to your commitment to making a difference in the lives of children facing the most difficult battles -- cancer."

He said "many of these children come from families that are struggling financially. No child should be forced to choose between treatment and basic necessities. Thank you, this will not happen. With your blessings this evening, you are helping cover medical costs, treatments, transportation and even the little things that bring joy and comfort to the hearts of children in pain."

He concluded "this is a night of hope. Thanks to you, these children and their families can believe that tomorrow will be better. Thank you for being with us, thank you for your compassionate hearts, and thank you for embodying the true meaning of a united community."

KIPIC finalizes

KPC issued a tender for consulting services in the field of communication and media. The tender opening date is May 4, 2025 and the closing date is June 3, 2025.

A tender for cleaning the KPC tower and common areas in the Oil Sector Complex (Tender No. 9) was awarded to Al-Ruwad Environmental Services Company, with the lowest bid meeting the technical specifications and conditions. The tender was valued at KD 1,118,653.500.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) announced the extension of the deadline for submitting bids for the tender to provide marine services with specialized labor for its Maritime Agency Branch until May 27, instead of April 6.

The company added that the deadline for submitting bids for the tender to supply 320,000 12-kg steel LPG cylinders with valves for the Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish LPG filling stations is extended until May 27, instead of April 29.

Similarly, the tender for the supply of 40,000 25 kg LPG cylinders with valves and 5,000 5 kg LPG cylinders with valves for the Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish LPG filling stations is extended until May 27, instead of April 29.



KUNA photo

Yemeni officials launch distribution of manual tillers to small farmers on Socotra with Kuwaiti funding.

Kuwait's IICO empowers Yemeni farmers with 100 manual tillers

ADEN, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) has launched the distribution of 100 manual tillers to small-scale farmers in Yemen's Socotra Governorate, as part of the "Kuwait is by Your Side" campaign, now in its tenth consecutive year.

During the launch ceremony, Yemeni Deputy Minister of Agriculture Abdul Malik Obaid lauded Kuwait's ongoing and substantial support for the agricultural sector in liberated areas, describing the initiative as a vital contribution that will significantly benefit small farmers in the underdeveloped governorate.

Socotra Governorate's Deputy Undersecretary Raed Al-Jeribi echoed similar sentiments, commending the initiative as a testa-

ment to the commitment to improving agricultural livelihoods in the region. He also praised the collaborative efforts between Kuwaiti donors and Yemeni authorities in implementing impactful development projects.

Imad Abdul Rahim, Vice President of the Communication Foundation for Human Development -- the project's implementing partner -- noted that the tillers were distributed with the generous backing of IICO. He emphasized that the initiative aims to ease the burdens faced by local farmers, boost agricultural productivity, and help them move toward self-sufficiency.

The campaign is part of Kuwait's broader humanitarian efforts to support stability and development across Yemen.



KUNA photo

100 Yemeni farmers benefit from Kuwaiti-funded manual tillers distribution.

INTERNATIONAL

Former US vp Pence to receive Profile in Courage Award for actions on Jan 6



US Vice President Mike Pence hands the electoral certificate from the state of Arizona to Sen Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn, as he presides over a joint session of Congress as it convenes to count the Electoral College votes cast in November's election, at the Capitol in Washington on Jan 6, 2021. (AP)

BOSTON, May 4, (AP): Former US Vice President Mike Pence on Sunday will receive the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for his refusal to go along with President Donald Trump's efforts to remain in office after losing the 2020 election.

The award recognizes Pence "for putting his life and career on the line to ensure the constitutional transfer of presidential power on Jan. 6, 2021," the JFK Library Foundation said, when it made the announcement last month. Pence will receive the award at the JFK Library in Boston.

Trump pressured Pence to reject election results from swing states where the Republican president falsely claimed the vote was marred by fraud. Pence refused, saying he lacked such authority. When a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, some chanted that they wanted to "hang Mike Pence." Pence was whisked away by Secret Service agents, narrowly avoiding a confrontation with the rioters.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify," Trump wrote at the time on X, formerly Twitter, as rioters moved through the Capitol and Pence was in hiding with his family, aides and security detail inside the building.

Pence rejected the Secret Service's advice that he leave the Capitol, staying to continue the ceremonial election certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential victory once rioters were cleared.

The Profile in Courage Award, named for a book Kennedy published in 1957 before he became president, honors public officials who take principled stands despite the potential political or personal consequences. Previous recipients of the award include former Presidents Barack Obama, George H.W. Bush and Gerald Ford.

"Political courage is not outdated in the United States. At every level of government, leaders are putting country first, and not backing down," Caroline Kennedy and Jack Schlossberg, JFK's daughter and grandson, both of whom will present Pence with the award, said in a statement. "His decision is an example of President Kennedy's belief that an act of political courage can change the course of history."

Pence said in a statement that he's "deeply humbled and honored" to get the award.

"I have been inspired by the life and words of President John F. Kennedy since my youth and am honored to join the company of so many distinguished Americans who have received this recognition in the past," Pence said.

Pence has emerged as one of the few Republicans willing to take on the Trump administration.

His political action group, Advancing American Freedom, campaigned against the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to lead the nation's health agencies. He's delivered speeches urging the president to stand with longtime foreign allies and posted an article he penned more than a decade ago on the limits of presidential power after Trump claimed that, "He who saves his Country does not violate any Law."

Trump, in new interview, says he doesn't know if he backs due process rights

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., May 4, (AP): US President Donald Trump, in a new interview, was circumspect about his duties to uphold due process rights laid out in the Constitution.

He also said he does not think military force will be needed to make Canada the "51st state" and played down the possibility he would look to run for a third term in the White House.

The comments in a wide-ranging, and at moments combative, interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" came as the Republican president's efforts to quickly enact his agenda face sharper headwinds with Americans just as his second administration crossed the 100-day mark, according to a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Trump, however, made clear that he is not backing away from a to-do list that he insists the American electorate broadly supported when they elected him in November.

Here are some of the highlights from the interview with NBC's Kristen Welker that was taped Friday at his Mar-a-Lago property in Florida and aired Sunday.

Critics on the left have tried to make the case that Trump is chipping away at due process in the United States. Most notably, they cite the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran man who was living in Maryland when he was mistakenly deported to El Salvador and imprisoned without communication.

Trump says Abrego Garcia is part of a violent transnational gang. The Republican president has sought to turn deportation into a test case for his campaign against illegal immigration despite a Supreme Court order saying the administration must work to return Abrego Garcia to the US.

Asked in the interview whether US citizens and non-citizens alike deserve due process as laid out in the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, Trump was noncommittal.

"I don't know. I'm not, I'm not a lawyer. I don't know," Trump said when pressed by Welker.

The Fifth Amendment provides "due process of law," meaning a person has certain rights when it comes to being prosecuted for a crime. Also, the 14th Amendment says no state can "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Trump said he has "brilliant lawyers ... and they are going to obviously follow what the Supreme Court said."

He said he was pushing to deport "some of the worst, most dangerous people on Earth," but that courts are getting in his way.

"I was elected to get them the hell out of here, and the courts are holding me from doing it," Trump said.

The president has repeatedly threatened that he intends to make Canada the "51st state."

Before his White House meeting on Tuesday with newly elected Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Trump is not backing away from the rhetoric that has angered Canadians.

Trump, however, told NBC that it was "highly unlikely" that the US would need to use military force to make Canada the 51st state.

He offered less certainty about whether his repeated calls for the US to take over Greenland from NATO-ally Denmark can be achieved without military action.

"Something could happen with Greenland," Trump said. "I'll be honest, we need that for national and in-



US President Donald Trump arrives at Tuscaloosa National Airport on May 1, in Tuscaloosa, Ala. (AP)

ternational security. ... I don't see it with Canada. I just don't see it, I have to be honest with you."

Trump said the US economy is in a "transition period" but he expects it to do "fantastically" despite the economic turmoil sparked by his tariffs.

He offered sharp pushback when Welker noted that some Wall Street analysts now say the chances of a recession are increasing.

"Well, you know, you say, some people on Wall Street say," Trump said. "Well, I tell you something else. Some people on Wall Street say that we're going to have the greatest economy in history."

He also deflected blame for the 0.3% decline in the US economy in the first quarter. He said he was not responsible for it.

"I think the good parts are the Trump economy and the bad parts are the Biden economy because he's done a terrible job," referring to his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden.

Trump doubled down on his recent comments at a Cabinet meeting that children might have to have two dolls instead of 30, denying that is an acknowledgment his tariffs will lead to supply shortages.

"I'm just saying they don't need to have 30 dolls. They can have three. They don't need to have 250 pencils. They can have five."

The president has repeatedly suggested he could seek a third term in the White House even though the 22nd Amendment of the Constitution says that "No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice."

Trump told NBC there is considerable support for him to run for a third term.

"But this is not something I'm looking to do," Trump said. "I'm looking to have four great years and turn it over to somebody, ideally a great Republican, a great Republican to carry it forward."

Trump's previous comments about a third term sometimes seem more about provoking outrage on the political left. The Trump Organization is even selling red caps with the words "Trump 2028."

But at moments, he has suggested he was seriously looking into a third term. In a late March phone interview with NBC, Trump said, "I'm not joking. There are methods which you could do it."

Trump said in the interview that Vice President JD Vance is doing a "fantastic job" and is "brilliant." Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whom Trump last week tasked to simultaneously serve as acting national security adviser, is "great," the president said.

US Secretary of State Rubio criticizes Germany, foreign ministry hits back

BERLIN, May 4, (AP): Germany's foreign ministry hit back at US Secretary of State Marco Rubio after he criticized the decision to classify the Alternative for Germany party as a "right-wing extremist" organization.

The spat deepened Friday to embroil the foreign office, Rubio, US Vice President JD Vance and tech billionaire Elon Musk. It also occurred at a complicated time for Germany - just days before the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and Nazi Germany's unconditional capitulation.

Plus, a coalition deal between the center-right and center-left parties was just approved, and now parliament is set to vote next week to elect conservative leader Friedrich Merz as the country's new chancellor.

Merz has not commented publicly on the intelligence service's decision.

Oleksii Makeiev, Ukraine's ambassador to Germany, told German news agency dpa that he's concerned about AfD's ties to Russia in light of the classification.

AFD has long faced criticism for Russia-friendly positions, and opposes Germany's stance toward the war in Ukraine. Berlin is Ukraine's second-biggest weapons supplier after the United States.

Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution described the party, known as AfD, as a threat to the country's democratic or-



A man stands in front of the logo at the AfD party headquarters in Berlin, Germany on Feb 23, 2025, after the German national election. (AP)

der, saying it "disregards human dignity" - in particular by what it called "ongoing agitation" against refugees and migrants.

The German domestic intelligence service's move to classify the AfD, which placed second in national elections in February, as a right-wing extremist group means its officials can now use informants and other tools such as audio and video recordings to monitor its activities nationwide.

But it also risks fueling the party's claims of political persecution. Far-right parties have been gaining ground

across Europe and the AfD attracts international attention, including support from Musk, who is a close ally of US President Donald Trump.

Party leaders Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla on Friday condemned the move as "a severe blow to German democracy," given that the party has grown into one of the country's most popular political forces. They alleged that it was politically motivated, a claim the government denies.

"The AfD will continue to legally defend itself against these democracy-endangering defamations," they said.

Russia's President Putin hopes there will be no need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine

MOSCOW, May 4, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin said in comments broadcast Sunday that the need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine had not arisen and that he hopes it will not.

In a preview of an upcoming interview with Russian state television, published on Telegram, Putin said Russia has the strength and the means to bring the conflict in Ukraine to a "logical conclusion."

Responding to a question about Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Putin said: "There has been no need to use those (nuclear) weapons ... and I hope they will not be required."

"We have enough strength and means to bring what was started in 2022 to a logical conclusion with the outcome Russia requires," he said.

Putin signed a revamped version of Russia's nuclear doctrine in November 2024, spelling out the circumstances that allow him to use Moscow's atomic arsenal, the world's largest.

That version lowered the bar, giving him that option in response to even a conventional attack backed by a nuclear power. Russia and Ukraine are at odds over competing ceasefire proposals.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday, in comments made public Saturday, that Moscow's announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire next week in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II is merely an attempt to create a "soft atmosphere" ahead of Russia's annual celebrations.

Zelenskyy instead renewed calls for a more substantial 30-day pause in hostilities, as the U.S. had initially proposed. He said the proposed ceasefire could start anytime as a meaningful step toward ending the war.

Putin on Monday declared a unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II, as the U.S. presses for a deal to end the 3-year-old war. The Kremlin said the truce, ordered on "humanitarian grounds," will run from the start of May 8 and last through the end of May 10 to mark Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 - Russia's biggest secular holiday.

Meanwhile, 11 people were wounded in a Russian drone attack overnight on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said Sunday. Two children were



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends the educational marathon at the Victory Museum on Poklonnaya Gora in Moscow, Russia on April 30. (AP)

among the wounded.

The attack woke up Valentyna Fesiuk, an 83-year-old resident of Kyiv's Obolon district.

"I was just sleeping when the house shook. It was at 12:30. An apartment on the 12th floor caught fire," she told The Associated Press.

The car of another resident, Viacheslav Khotab, caught fire.

"I saw my car burning. I was covered with broken glass," he said. "I couldn't do anything."

The 54-year-old was frustrated with stalled peace negotiations: "They can't agree on anything, and we are the ones who suffer the consequences."

Daryna Kravchuk, an 18-year-old student in the district, described how "five to six minutes after the air raid was activated, we heard a strong impact, everything started shaking. ... There were three strikes almost in a row after the air raid was activated."

"It's very scary to witness, we have been suffering from this for so long. People are just suffering all the time. ... It's still very hard to see our country constantly being destroyed," she told the AP.

Romanians cast ballot in critical presidential election redo

BUCHAREST, Romania, May 4, (AP): Romanians are casting ballots Sunday in a critical presidential election redo after last year's annulled vote plunged the European Union and NATO member country into its worst political crisis in decades.

Eleven candidates are vying for the presidency and a May 18 runoff is expected. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) and will close at 9 p.m. (1800 GMT). By 2 p.m., 5.1 million people - about 28.7% of eligible voters - had cast ballots, according to the Central Election Bureau, with a massive 630,000 coming from voters at polling stations set up in other countries.

Romania's political landscape was shaken last year when a top court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

Like many countries in the EU, anti-establishment sentiment is running high in Romania, fueled by high inflation and cost of living, a large budget deficit and a sluggish economy. Observers say the malaise has bolstered support for nationalist and far-right figures like Georgescu, who is under investigation and barred from the rerun.



Calin Georgescu, winner of the first round of last year's annulled election, (right), and presidential candidate George Simion cast their votes in the first round of the presidential election redo in Mogosoaia, Romania on May 4. (AP)

While data from local surveys should be taken with caution, a median of polls suggests that hard-right nationalist George Simion will enter the runoff, likely pitting him against Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan, or the governing coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu.

At a polling station in the capital, Bucharest, Simion appeared Sunday morning alongside Georgescu and told reporters: "We are here with one mission only: the return to constitutional order, the return to democracy. I have no other goal than first place for the Romanian people."

Chinese leader Xi to pay official visit to Russia

Japan and China trade accusations of airspace violation near disputed islands

TOKYO, May 4, (AP): Japan and China have accused each other of violating the airspace around the Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands, which Beijing also claims.

The latest territorial flap came as both appeared to have warmer ties while seeking to mitigate damages from the U.S. tariff war.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement it lodged a "very severe protest" with Beijing after a Chinese helicopter took off from one of China's four coast guard boats, which had entered Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku islands. The helicopter violated Japanese airspace for about 15 minutes on Saturday, the ministry said.

The statement called the incident an "intrusion ... into Japan's territorial airspace" and urged the Chinese government to ensure preventive measures.

Japan's Self-Defense Force scrambled fighter jets in response, according to the Defense Ministry

China also protested to Tokyo over a Japanese civilian aircraft violating its airspace around the islands, saying it was "strongly dissatisfied" about Japan's "severe violation of China's sovereignty," according to a statement by the Chinese embassy in Japan late Saturday.

China Coast Guard said it "immediately took necessary control measures against it in accordance with the law" and dispatched a ship-borne helicopter to warn and drive away the Japanese aircraft.

Japanese officials are investigating a possible connection between the Chinese coast guard helicopter's airspace intrusion and the small Japanese civilian aircraft flying in the area around the same time.

China routinely sends coast guard vessels and aircraft into waters and airspace surrounding the islands, which China calls the Diaoyu, to harass Japanese vessels in the area, forcing Japan to quickly mobilize its jets.

Saturday's intrusion was the first by



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force P-3C Orion surveillance plane flies over the disputed islands, called the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China, in the East China Sea, on Oct 13, 2011. (AP)

China since a Chinese reconnaissance aircraft violated the Japanese airspace off the southern prefecture of Nagasaki in August. Chinese aircraft have also violated the Japanese airspace around

the Senkaku twice in the past.

Also:
MOSCOW: Chinese leader **Xi Jinping** will pay an official visit to Rus-

sia from May 7-10, the Kremlin confirmed Sunday.

Xi was already among the leaders set to attend the Victory Day Parade in Moscow on May 9.

The Kremlin said Xi was visiting at the invitation of Russian President **Vladimir Putin** and, as well as taking part in Victory Day celebrations, the leaders would discuss "further development of relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction" and "issues on the international and regional agenda."

Putin and Xi will sign a number of bilateral documents, it said.

Xi's visit to **Russia** will be his third since the Kremlin sent troops into **Ukraine** in February 2022. **China** claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed the Kremlin's contentions that Russia's action was provoked by the West, and it continues to supply key components needed by Moscow for weapons production.

Xi last visited Russia in September 2024 for a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies. He also paid a state visit to Russia in March 2023 and Putin reciprocated with his own trip to China in October that year. The two leaders have since also met in **Beijing** in May 2024, where Putin took the first foreign trip of his fifth presidential term, and in **Kazakhstan** in July.

After launching what the Kremlin insists on calling a "special military operation" in Ukraine, Russia has become increasingly dependent economically on China as Western sanctions cut its access to much of the international trading system. China's increased trade with Russia has helped the country mitigate some of the worst blows from the sanctions.

Moscow has diverted the bulk of its energy exports to China and relied on Chinese companies to import high-tech components for Russian military industries to circumvent Western sanctions.



First responders work the scene after a vehicle drove into a departures entrance at Manila's International Airport, in Manila, Philippines on May 4. (AP)

2 dead including young girl after car crashes at Manila airport

A vehicle crashed into an entrance at Manila's airport on Sunday morning, leaving two people dead including a young girl, officials said.

The Philippine Red Cross said the girl was 4 years old, but Secretary of Transportation Vivencio Hizon said she was 5 years old.

The other victim was an adult

male, the humanitarian group said in a statement.

Three other people were injured in the incident and were being treated in a hospital, Hizon said.

The driver of the vehicle was in police custody, according to the airport's operator, New NAIA Infra Co.

Dozens of emergency personnel could be seen at Ninoy Aquino International Airport surrounding a black SUV that had rammed into a wall by an entrance. The vehicle was later removed from the site.

The airport operator said it is coordinating with the authorities to investigate the incident. (AP)

'We'll be a disciplined govt in our second term'

Voters chose unity over division: Albanese

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 4, (AP): Australia's re-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday was greeted by well-wishers at a Sydney café and said the country had voted for unity over division.

Albanese's center-left Labor Party won an emphatic victory in elections on Saturday. As vote counting continued, the government was on track to win at least 85 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form an administration.

Labor held 78 seats in the previous Parliament, and gaining seats in a second term is rare in Australian politics.

"The Australian people voted for unity rather than division," Albanese told reporters in the crowded café in inner-suburban Leichhardt where he and his fiancée, Jodie Haydon, gathered with colleagues and supporters for coffee.

"We'll be a disciplined, orderly government in our second term, just like we have been in our first," he added.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers, the government's top economic minister, explained the election result as voters seeking stability after US President Donald Trump's tariff disruptions to the global economy.

"This was beyond even our most optimistic expectations," Chalmers told Australian Broadcasting Corp. of the election result.

"We know that this second term has been given to us by the Australian

people because they want stability in uncertain times," he added.

In an election result reminiscent of Canada's recent contest, conservative opposition leader Peter Dutton lost his parliamentary seat. His alliance of parties was reduced to 37 seats.

Canada's opposition leader, Pierre Poilievre, lost his seat after Trump declared economic war on the US neighbor. Poilievre had previously been regarded as a shoo-in to become Canada's next prime minister and shepherd his Conservative Party back into power for the first time in a decade.

Senior Australian lawmakers say



Labor Party supporters react as results are shown on a screen at their party headquarters in Sydney on May 3. (AP)

they feared late last year they would become the first government to be tossed out after a single three-year term since the turmoil of the Great Depression in 1931.

Like the center-left Canadian government, the Australian government had linked their political opponents to Trump's administration and its Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency.

Australia was hit during the five-week election campaign with 10% tariffs on exports to the United States despite trading with its bilateral free trade partner at a deficit for decades.

3 tourists rescued in Puerto Rico: Authorities in Puerto Rico said they rescued three US tourists on Friday as heavy rains continue to pelt the U.S. territory.

Police said in a statement that floodwaters left two men and one woman stranded at the Gozalandia River, a popular recreational spot in the western town of San Sebastián.

One of the men, who lives in Milwaukee, was swept away by the current but was rescued, police said. The other two tourists live in Washington.

Flood advisories and flash flood warnings were in place for several cities and towns across the island on Friday.

Heavy rains began falling across Puerto Rico a week ago and are forecast to continue for several more days. They have unleashed landslides while floodwaters have knocked down trees and cut off access to dozens of roads.

On Monday, a man who tried to drive his car through floodwaters was swept away and killed, police said. The incident occurred in the city of Bayamón, located just southwest of the capital, San Juan.

Gov **Jennifer González** declared a state of emergency in four municipalities, while the mayor of San Juan did the same for the capital. (AP)



González

was swept away and killed, police said. The incident occurred in the city of Bayamón, located just southwest of the capital, San Juan.

Gov **Jennifer González** declared a state of emergency in four municipalities, while the mayor of San Juan did the same for the capital. (AP)

Mexican President Sheinbaum rejected Trump plan to send US troops across border

MEXICO CITY, May 4, (AP): Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Saturday that U.S. President Donald Trump proposed sending American troops into Mexico to help her administration fight drug trafficking but that she rejected it.

Her remarks to supporters in eastern Mexico came in response to a Wall Street Journal article published the day before, describing a tense phone call last month in which Trump reportedly pressured her to accept a bigger role for the US military in combating drug cartels in Mexico.

"He said, 'How can we help you fight drug trafficking? I propose that the United States military come in and help you.' And you know what I said to him? 'No, President Trump.'"

She added: "Sovereignty is not for sale. Sovereignty is loved and defended."

White House National Security Council spokesman James Hewitt said in a statement later Saturday that Trump has worked closely with Mexico's president "to achieve the most secure southwest border in history."

"Dangerous Foreign Terrorist Organizations, however, continue to

threaten our shared security and the drugs and crime they spread threaten American communities across the country," the statement said. "The President has been crystal clear that Mexico must do more to combat these gangs and cartels and the United States stands ready to assist and expand the

already close cooperation between our two countries."

The US military presence has increased steadily along its southern border with Mexico in recent months, following Trump's order in January to increase the army's role in stemming the flow of migrants.



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum attends her morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, April 2. (AP)

MSF condemns deadly attack on hospital in S.Sudan as 'clear violation of int'l law'

JUBA, South Sudan, May 4, (AP): At least seven people have been killed after a hospital in a remote part of South Sudan was targeted in an aerial bombing, Doctors Without Borders said Saturday.

The medical facility is located in a northern town known as Old Fangak, some 475 kilometers (295 miles) outside of Juba, the capital.

The medical charity, also known by its French initials as MSF, released a statement condemning the attack on its hospital, said to be the only source of medical care for 40,000 residents, including many people displaced by flooding.

The attack began after 4 am when two helicopter gunships dropped a bomb on a pharmacy, burning it to the ground, the statement said. In addition to seven deaths, 20 people were injured, according to the statement.

MSF said the attack was "a clear violation of international law."

It was not immediately clear why the facility was targeted. A spokesman for South Sudan's military could not be reached for comment.

Additional strikes occurred hours later near a market in Old Fangak, causing widespread panic and displacement of civilians, according to several eyewitnesses.

Old Fangak is one of several major towns in Fangak county, an ethnically Nuer part of the country that has been historically associated with the opposition party loyal to Riek Machar, South Sudan's first vice president, who is now under house arrest for alleged subversion.

The town has been ravaged since 2019 by flooding that has left few options for people to escape the fighting. One eyewitness, Thomas Mot, said that some left by boat, while others fled on foot into flood waters.



South Sudan soldiers patrol the street in Juba, South Sudan on Feb 13. (AP)

Lat/Am

Cayman Islands to be led by coalition govt: The Cayman Islands will be led by a new coalition government after no single party clinched a majority following a general election this week.

André Ebanks will be the new premier of the wealthy British territory, according to a government statement late Thursday.

He'll lead a coalition of three independent candidates and two new political parties - the Cayman Islands National Party, founded by a former manager at Ernst & Young, and The Caymanian Community Party, established by Ebanks and other members of the dissolved United People's Movement.

The two parties won four seats each in Wednesday's parliamentary election. Meanwhile, the People's Progressive Movement won seven seats, but was three short of a majority.

The territory's Parliament has a total of 21 seats, two of which are appointed.

Ebanks has pledged to stabilize the territory's finances and address what he described as a cost of living crisis.

During the election, voters also approved in a referendum decriminalizing the possession and consumption of small amounts of marijuana and creating a national lottery. But they rejected a proposal to develop cruise berthing infrastructure, which environmentalists have opposed. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait general index gains 0.22%

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday's trading session with its General Index gaining 17.34 points, or 0.22%, to settle at 7,966.54 points.

The session saw 304.6 million shares exchanged in 16,598 transactions, with a total trading value of KD 66.5 million (approximately

\$203.4 million).

Despite the overall uptick, the Main Market Index dropped 44.58 points, or 0.63%, to close at 7,023.02 points. This came on the back of 194.2 million shares traded through 10,047 transactions, valued at KD 27.7 million (around \$84.7 million).

Business

Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 with Strategic Leadership program

Gulf Bank celebrates the graduation of its executives from Harvard Business School's 'Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability' program

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: In line with its continued commitment to nurturing national talent and empowering the next generation of leaders, Gulf Bank is proud to celebrate the graduation of several senior executives from the "Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability" program. Developed in collaboration with Harvard Business School, the program is tailored to equip leaders in the banking and financial sectors with the strategic tools and insights required to thrive in today's rapidly changing economic environment.

The program features a curriculum rooted in real-world case studies from diverse industries, designed to strengthen participants' analytical thinking and elevate their leadership abilities – reflecting the distinguished teaching approach of Harvard Business School.

The graduating Gulf Bank leaders completed the 16th edition of the Executive Leadership Development Program, part of "Kafaa", an initiative launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in partnership with Kuwaiti banks and managed by the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (IBS).

The initiative is focused on enhancing the expertise and leadership potential of Kuwaiti professionals in the financial industry.

Among the Gulf Bank leaders who successfully completed the program and earned certificates from Harvard Business School are:

- Mr. Ahmad AlSaleh, Assistant General Manager of Legal Affairs
- Mr. Ali Dashti, Chief Dealer of Treasury
- Mrs. Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer
- Ms. Sarah Abdulkareem, Executive Manager of Risk Management

Gulf Bank continues to place strong emphasis on investing in its people, recognizing that its employees are the driving force behind its success and long-term growth. By providing continuous opportunities for learning and development, the Bank reaffirms its commitment to building a future-ready workforce and solidifying its position as a leading financial institution in Kuwait.

As one of the private sector's leading investors in human capital, Gulf Bank continues to empower its employees with the knowledge and experience needed to keep pace with the rapid transformation of the banking industry, both locally and globally.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community.

Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the Bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions.

The Bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and ex-ternally.



Kuwaiti executives enhance skills in financial sustainability at Gulf Bank.

'OPEC+ committed to cooperation'

Oil Minister marks OPEC+ impact on future oil policy

KUWAIT CITY, May 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi said on Saturday the OPEC+ meeting would significantly affect production policy formulation in the upcoming period.

Al-Roumi announced this after participating in the video conference meeting of the eight OPEC+ member countries, the 'Oil Ministry' said in a press statement.

He reiterated Kuwait's commitment to supporting collaborative endeavors aimed at enhancing the stability of global oil markets in response to ongoing economic developments.

The minister praised the results of the meeting, which is being held at a very important time with the escalation of international trade tensions and their direct effects on the energy sector, it noted.

He commended the unwavering commitment of the eight countries to the Declaration of Cooperation, along with their readiness to implement additional voluntary adjustments in production of 411,000 barrels per day in June 2025, and the determination of the countries to fully compensate for any surplus production since January 2024, according to the statement.

Al-Roumi emphasized the potential for temporarily suspending or even canceling these gradual increases in response to evolving market conditions, it stated.

This flexibility empowers the Group to maintain its support for the stability of the oil market.

The eight OPEC+ countries noted that this approach would also provide member nations with the opportunity to expedite their compensation efforts, it pointed out.

Mohammad Al-Shatti, Kuwait's Governor to OPEC, and Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Salem Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, Kuwait's National Representative to OPEC also participated in the meeting.

Members agree to 411k bpd production cut

OPEC+ reaffirms commitment to stability, production adjustments

VIENNA, May 4, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman reaffirmed their commitment on Saturday to market stability on current healthy oil market fundamentals and adjust production upward.

In a joint statement, the eight OPEC+ countries, which previously announced additional voluntary adjustments in April and November 2023, namely Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman met virtually on 3 May 2025, to review global market conditions and outlook.

The statement noted, "in view of the current healthy market fundamentals, as reflected in the low oil inventories, and in accordance with the decision agreed upon on 5 December 2024 to start a gradual and flexible return of the 2.2 million barrels per day voluntary adjustments starting from 1 April 2025, the eight participating countries will implement a production adjustment of 411 thousand barrels per day in June 2025 from May 2025 required production level." This is equivalent to three monthly increments as detailed in the table below.

The gradual increases may be paused or reversed subject to evolving market conditions.

This flexibility will allow the group to continue to support oil market stability.

The eight OPEC+ countries also noted that this measure will provide an opportunity for the participating countries to accelerate their compensation.

The eight countries reiterated their collective commitment to achieve full conformity with the Declaration of Cooperation, including the additional voluntary production adjustments that were agreed to be monitored by the JMMC during its 53rd meeting held on April 3rd 2024.

They also confirmed their intention to fully compensate for any overproduced volume since January 2024.

The eight OPEC+ countries will hold monthly meetings to review market conditions, conformity, and compensation.

The eight countries will meet on 1 June 2025 to decide on July production levels.

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for April 2025. Kuwait equity market continues to be the top performer among GCC markets on year-to-date basis as of April 2025. However, during April, Kuwait markets were negative, in line with many global and regional markets. Kuwait's All Share Index declined by 1.4% amid concerns over impact of trade tensions on economic outlook and oil prices. Consumer staples and real estate were the top gainers, rising by 6.3% and 4.9% respectively. The banking sector index declined by 1.9% for the month. Among Premier Market stocks, Gulf Cables and Kuwait Real Estate Company were the top gainers, rising by 12.5% and 11.2% respectively.

Gulf Cables announced that its subsidiary, Gulf Cable and Multi Industries Company has been awarded a tender for supplying copper and aluminium cables to Jordan Electric Power Company to the tune of KD 3.95 million (USD 12.91 million). This is likely to improve operational profit by 5% to 7% in 2025. Kuwait Real Estate Company had reported an 18.9% y/y increase in net profit in FY 2024 driven revaluation gains on investment properties. Its net rental income has also grown by 9.4% y/y amid strong demand and high occupancy levels.

IMF has lowered its estimate for Kuwait's real GDP growth in April 2025 to 1.9% down from its December 2024 estimate of 2.6%, due to delayed unwinding of production cuts during the year. OPEC+ began unwinding production cuts in April 2025, while it had initially planned to start in October 2024. However, OPEC+ has announced plans to further increase its production in May 2025. According to the new plan, Kuwait would be producing 2.443 million bpd, up from the earlier planned 2.428 million bpd. Kuwait has initiated merger of two of its state-owned oil firms, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), as the country plans to restructure its energy industry.

The S&P GCC Composite index declined by 1.0% in April 2025 with mixed performance across GCC markets, pressured by trade war concerns and the decline in oil prices. As part of its levy of tariffs on imports from countries across the World, the U.S has also levied a 10% blanket tariff on imports from GCC, effective from April 5. Saudi equity index declined by 2.9% during the month, even as positive earnings lent some support. ACWA Power and Saudi Aramco had declined by 6.2% and 5.2% respectively for the month. Saudi Telecom gained 5.0% for the month supported by 11% y/y increase in its net profit for Q1 2025. Abu Dhabi's equity index increased by 1.8% in April 2025, supported by gains in blue chips. First Abu Dhabi Bank gained 8.7% for the month on the back of major restructuring of its executive committee. Dubai's equity index gained 4.1% for the month, supported by real estate and banking stocks. Dubai Islamic Bank gained 5.4% for the month, as its net profit increased by 8% y/y in Q1 2025 on the back of growth in quality earning assets. Qatar's equity markets gained 2.2% for the month supported by positive earnings.

IMF has lowered Saudi Arabia's GDP growth for 2025 to 3.0%, down from 3.3% in January 2025 amid decline in oil prices and rising global risks. UAE is expected to grow by 4.0% in 2025, down from an earlier estimate of 5.1%. S&P has downgraded Bahrain's outlook to negative from stable citing elevated fiscal deficits amid lower oil prices, maintenance at the Abu Sa'fah oil field, impact of market volatility on funding costs and higher social spending.

Global markets were mixed during April 2025. The MSCI World index was slightly positive while the S&P 500 index declined by 0.8% for the month. Earlier in the month, U.S equities declined steeply on the back of Trump administration's announcement of a broad range of higher-than-expected tariffs as they fueled concerns over economic slowdown and resurgence of inflation. U.S had levied 145% tariffs on most Chinese goods and Beijing had retaliated with 125% levies on U.S. imports. U.S has also levied a 10% baseline tariff on almost all imports to the U.S. However, subsequent announcement of a 90-day pause on the reciprocal tariffs for most countries to allow time for negotiations and possible de-escalation of trade tensions between U.S and China have helped markets recover some of the losses. Nasdaq 100 gained 1.5% during the month, supported by better-than-expected earnings from tech stocks. IMF has lowered its global growth estimate for 2025 to 2.8%, down from 3.3% in January. The MSCI EM index gained 1.0% during the month supported by 3.7% rise in Indian equities. Chinese equities declined by 1.7% during the month due to trade tensions even as hopes of stimulus lent some support to the markets. While Indian equities had also been weighed down by concerns over levy of tariffs in the earlier part of the month but later recovered.



Markaz logo.

U.S inflation stood at 2.4% y/y in March 2025, declining from the 2.8% y/y reading in February 2025 due to decline in energy prices. The U.S labor market added 228,000 jobs in March, up from 117,000 jobs added in February. Job gains were supported by job gains in sectors such as healthcare, retail, transportation and construction.

The yield on the 10-year US treasury notes remained volatile during the month, declining by 6 bps for the month to 4.17%. Earlier in the month, amid concerns over high inflation and lower growth due to tariff tensions, 10-year yields had risen to about 4.48%. Subsequently, yields trended lower later in the month on hopes of easing trade tensions.

Oil (Brent) prices closed the month at USD 63.1 per barrel, down 15.5% during the month. The commodity reached a four-year low during the month, weighed by OPEC+'s decision to increase oil production and trade tensions. OPEC+ has decided to raise output by 411,000 bpd in May 2025, up from the earlier announced hike of 135,000 bpd citing healthy market fundamentals and the positive market outlook. However, output cut plans for some OPEC+ members, U.S sanctions targeting Iranian oil exports and optimism over U.S-EU trade deal aided in stemming decline in oil prices. OPEC+ has also announced updated output cut plans for 7 countries including Iraq, Kazakhstan etc. who have pumped above their agreed quotas. Gold prices closed at USD 3,287, gaining 5.3% during the month and 25.3% so far this year as the commodity continued to benefit from safe-haven demand and Central Bank buying amid trade tensions.

Persisting trade tensions amid levy of tariffs by U.S and retaliatory tariffs by countries like China has increased concerns over global growth and inflation outlook. This is likely to continue to impact global markets. However, pause in levy of reciprocal tariffs by U.S, E.U-U.S tariff negotiations offer some cause for optimism. While trade tensions and lower oil prices might dampen investor sentiment in GCC, positive outlook on corporate earnings, uptick in non-oil economic activity and continued implementation of reforms are likely to provide some support to markets.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.41 billion (USD 4.57 billion) as of 31 December 2024. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Exxon Mobil Q1 profit falls to multi-year low at \$7.71 billion

WASHINGTON, May 4, (AP): Exxon Mobil's first quarter profit slumped to the lowest level in years, stung by weaker crude prices and higher costs.

The oil and gas giant earned \$7.71 billion, or \$1.76 per share, for the three months ended March 31. It earned \$8.22 billion, or \$2.06 per share, in the year-ago period.

The results topped Wall Street expectations, but Exxon does not adjust its reported results based on one-time events such as asset sales. Analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research expected earnings of \$1.74 per share.

Revenue totaled \$83.13 billion, which fell short of the \$84.15 billion that analysts were calling for.

Chevron also reported its lowest first-quarter profits in years, with per-share adjusted profit falling to \$2.18 per share on revenue of \$47.61 billion. Similar to Exxon, Chevron does not adjust its reported results based on one-time events such as asset sales. Analysts predicted earnings of \$2.15 per share on revenue of \$48.66 billion.

The last time first-quarter profits were this low for Exxon was in 2022 and for Chevron, in 2021.

This week, a barrel of U.S. benchmark crude fell below \$60, a level at which many producers can no longer turn a profit.

"In this uncertain market, our shareholders



This is the sign on a Exxon gas station in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024. (AP)

can be confident in knowing that we're built for this," Chairman and CEO Darren Woods said in a statement Friday. "The work we've done to transform our company over the past eight years positions us to excel in any environment."

U.S. benchmark crude is down 18% this year and Brent, the international benchmark, is right about there as well. This week, BP and Shell also reported falling first quarter profits.

Oil prices plummeted last month, at one point sinking to a four-year low in anticipation of slowing economic growth due to a burgeoning trade war.

U.S. crude and Brent fell again Friday by more than 1%. A barrel of U.S. crude now costs \$58.30,

down almost 30% from this time last year.

Trump announced far-reaching tariffs on nearly all U.S. trading partners April 2 and then reversed himself a few days later after a market meltdown, suspending the import taxes for 90 days. Amid the uncertainty for both U.S. consumers and businesses, the Commerce Department said Wednesday that the U.S. economy shrank 0.3% from January through March, the first drop in three years.

Tariffs on steel and other materials, used for everything from tools to drilling and storage, can have an outsized impact on oil companies and amplify the detrimental effect of falling oil and gas prices.

The first bank in Kuwait to publish it independently

NBK launches its first Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report for the year '24

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: In an unprecedented move as the first and only bank in Kuwait, the National Bank of Kuwait published its first annual Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures Report (TCFD) for the year 2024. This report emphasizes NBK's awareness about the importance of following a proactive approach to incorporate climate considerations into its decision-making process and comes as a response to continued transparency requirements about climate-related risks and their potential impact on businesses.

This report echoes NBK's pioneering role and institutional approach towards fully incorporating Sustainability in its operations and businesses, in line with its environmental, social, and institutional governance strategy, and in compliance with its continuous efforts to align its financial disclosures with the best practices within internationally recommended climate-risk frameworks.

Moreover, the report evaluates the extent to which the Bank's non-retail portfolio is exposed to climate-change risks, how its mitigating impact, and the opportunities climate change provides as per the recommendations of the TCFD.

The report also explores several achievements by NBK in the field of sustainability in the year 2024, including issuing its debut USD 500 million Green bond, which is the first of its kind among local financial institutions. In addition, it highlights NBK's sustainable asset, which reached USD 5 billion as of end of December 2024 and constitutes 50% of its aim to reach USD 10 billion by 2030.

It also points to the initiatives that NBK presented in 2024 that aim to minimize the impact of climate change, accelerate the transformation into a low-carbon economy, support green projects, and enhance economic flexibility in facing environmental crises.

Additionally, the report outlines NBK's development of an innovative approach aimed at integrating climate-risk with the internal capital adequacy assessment process (ICAAP) in line with pillar 2 capital requirement, which reflects NBK's commitment to organizational resilience and business continuity.

In the report, the Bank also states the objectives for the year 2025, including incorporating environmental, social, and institutional governance measures in its credit evaluation process of current and new corporate clients as well as conducting a comprehensive evaluation of their ESG performance, particularly with regards to mitigating and adapting to climate-risks.

The National Bank of Kuwait strives to enhance its capabilities to support transformation plans for its clients and provide sustainable financial solutions, while expanding its sustainable retail offers that include eco-friendly auto loans and eco-friendly residential loans.

In 2024, NBK institutionalized its process of aligning its standards with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). This comes as part of its awareness of the significant impact that climate change could have on its operations, customers, and the broader financial landscape, and as part of its commitment to factoring climate-related risks and opportunities into its strategy to ensure preparedness for future changes.

Recognizing the essential role of appropriate management of climate-related risks and opportunities in enhancing governance resilience, NBK skillfully manages the balance of environmental, social, and corporate governance issues in its strategic and operational decisions.



NBK headquarters.



Climate risk strategy boosts NBK's business resilience.

- The report emphasizes NBK's awareness on the importance of taking a proactive approach to incorporate climate considerations in its decision-making process.
- The report comes in response to the requirements of transparency in the backdrop of climate-related risks and their impact on businesses.
- It evaluates climate-change risks and opportunities facing the Group's portfolio of activities.
- The report provides information that enables stakeholders to make informed decisions based on the Bank's resilience in the face of climate change.
- NBK targets incorporating environmental, social, and institutional governance standards in credit evaluations for its corporate clients.

- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental impact on customers and their contributions to climate change.
- The Bank strives to enhance its abilities to support transformation plans for its customers and provide sustainable financial solutions.
- NBK issued its debut USD 500 million Green bond in 2024, which landmarks the first green bond issuance by a Kuwaiti financial institution.
- NBK developed an innovative approach to merge climate-change risks with the internal capital adequacy assessment process (ICAAP).
- NBK's total sustainable assets as of end of December 2024 reached approximately USD 5 billion.

UAE set to lead GCC in 2025 growth

IMF cuts 2025 MENA growth forecast to 2.6% despite global trade tensions

By KAMCO Invest

In its latest Regional Economic Outlook for the MENA region, the IMF has once again downgraded its growth forecast for both the MENA and GCC regions. This revision reflects the broader global economic impact stemming from a series of recently enacted tariff measures by the United States, as well as retaliatory actions by its trading partners. These developments, including both announced and implemented measures, culminated in the imposition of near comprehensive US tariffs as of April 2, pushing applied tariff rates to levels not seen in over a century. For the MENA region as a whole, the IMF reduced its growth forecast for 2025 by 140 (bps), bringing it down to 2.6%, and lowered its 2026 projection to 3.4%. The IMF also emphasized that ongoing conflicts, localized political instability, and heightened climate vulnerability are continuing to weigh on economic activity across the region throughout 2025. Although the direct impact of US tariffs is expected to be limited – due to hydrocarbon exemptions and the relatively small volume of trade between the MENA region and the US, the IMF highlighted the potential for more substantial indirect effects.

For oil-exporting countries in the region, the IMF cautioned that fiscal and external balances may worsen, driven largely by continued weakness in oil prices. In 2024, the MENA region registered a growth rate of 1.8%, following a 30-bps downward revision from October-2024 Regional Economic Outlook. This adjustment was attributed to disruptions related to regional conflicts in certain oil-importing nations, as well as the ongoing implementation of voluntary oil production cuts by OPEC+ members in the region. Regarding the GCC countries, the IMF noted that while robust non-oil sector activity – supported by economic diversification initiatives – provided a degree of resilience, its impact was largely neutralized by oil production curbs. Nevertheless, the IMF suggested that stronger growth may materialize in 2025, contingent on a recovery in oil output, the stabilization of conflict-driven disruptions, and continued advancement on structural reforms. Still, the IMF revised its 2025 growth outlook for the GCC downward, citing a weaker global economic environment as the primary driver.

The IMF downgraded the GCC's GDP growth forecast for 2025 by 120 bps from its October-2024 estimate, bringing it to 3.0%, while its 2026 forecast was revised down by 40 bps to 4.1%. At the same time, the IMF projected that inflation would continue to ease across the MENA region in 2025, with a particularly notable decline anticipated within the GCC. All GCC countries saw downward revisions in their GDP growth forecasts between the October-2024 and April-2025 outlooks – except for Qatar, which received a 50 bps upgrade, raising its 2025 forecast to 2.4% from a previous estimate of 1.9%.

The UAE is projected to lead GCC growth in 2025, with a forecasted GDP expansion of 4.0%, despite a 110 bps downward revision from the October-2024 forecast. Saudi Arabia follows with the second-highest projected growth at 3.0% for 2025, although it experienced a 160 bps downgrade. Similarly, Kuwait's GDP growth forecast for 2025 was revised down to 1.9%, marking a 140 bps reduction from the earlier October-2024 projection.

GCC Oil GDP Growth Significantly Reduced; Non-Oil GDP Growth Marginally Downgraded.

Real oil GDP in the GCC is now projected to grow by 1.7% in 2025, following a contraction of 2.8% in 2024. The headline forecast for oil GDP in 2025 was cut by 300 basis points, driven by expectations that voluntary oil production cuts will remain in effect through the end of 2025.

This adjustment aligns with OPEC's recent downward revision to global oil demand growth, which reflects rising trade tensions and weaker macroeconomic indicators. OPEC now anticipates global demand to increase by 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2025, down from its previous estimate by 150,000 bpd. Similarly, the 2026 forecast was revised down to 1.28 million bpd. Nonetheless, GCC oil GDP is expected to rebound strongly in 2026, with growth projected to average 5.4%, as a recovery in global oil demand is anticipated to allow for a gradual increase in production before the phase-out of current voluntary cuts by year-end 2026.

The IMF downgraded oil GDP growth projections for all GCC countries, except Qatar, which saw its forecast revised up by 20 bps to 1.7% for 2025. Bahrain is the only GCC member expected to experience a contraction in oil GDP in both 2025 (-2.1%) and 2026 (-1.1%). For the remaining five GCC nations, oil GDP is anticipated to grow

over both years, with the UAE leading in 2025 at +2.2%, followed by Saudi Arabia (+2.0%), Qatar (+1.7%), Kuwait (+1.3%), and Oman (+0.2%).

Regarding non-oil economic activity, the GCC is expected to post a healthy 3.4% growth in 2025, despite a 60 bps downward revision, and a further 3.5% in 2026. The resilience in non-oil GDP growth reflects the continued momentum of diversification and structural reform programs, which have been sustained even as oil and energy revenues declined. The IMF projects that the UAE will continue to lead non-oil GDP growth among GCC countries in 2025 at 4.6%, followed by Bahrain at 3.6% and Oman at 3.3%.

Subdued Inflation Trends Persist Across the GCC

Global headline inflation is forecasted to decline to 4.3% in 2025 and to further ease to 3.6% by 2026. In Advanced Economies, inflation is projected to return to target, reaching 2.2% by 2026. Meanwhile, in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies, inflation is expected to fall to 4.6% during the same period. The elevated global inflation forecast for 2025 is mainly attributed to the inflationary impact of newly implemented tariff measures. Specifically, inflation projections for Advanced Economies in 2025 have been revised upward by 40 basis points. For GCC oil-exporting economies, inflation is expected to remain well-contained, staying below the 2% threshold in both 2025 and 2026, with headline rates forecasted at 1.9% for both years. This marks a slight increase from the 1.6% inflation rate recorded in 2024.

In contrast, among oil-importing MENA countries, inflation moderation has primarily resulted from falling food prices. However, inflation pressures remain elevated in some countries due to ongoing geopolitical conflicts and currency depreciation, keeping inflation rates above long-term averages. The MENA region's headline inflation is forecasted to decline from 14.6% in 2024 to 12.7% in 2025 and further drop to 10.7% in 2026.

Oil Revenues Expected to Remain Subdued Through 2025

Oil prices are likely to face continued downward pressure in 2025 amid a slightly oversupplied global market. The IMF projects that global oil demand in 2025 will fall short of earlier expectations, primarily due to escalating policy uncertainty, subdued economic momentum, and mounting trade tensions. Risks flagged by the IMF include the introduction of new tariffs and unforeseen shifts in the OPEC+ production adjustment schedule.

Given the anticipated continuation of voluntary production cuts and weaker oil demand, oil revenues for GCC and other MENA oil-exporting countries are expected to remain under pressure through 2025. The average Brent crude spot price for initial April-2025 is projected to be around USD 74.3 per barrel. When compared with this benchmark, the fiscal breakeven oil price is expected to exceed the projected average for three of the six GCC countries. Bahrain is forecasted to face the highest breakeven price at USD 137/b, while Qatar remains the most fiscally resilient with the lowest breakeven price at USD 44.7/b.

GCC oil production is projected to rise marginally by 1.9% in 2025, reaching 16.4 million barrels per day (mb/d). This increase follows two consecutive years of output declines in 2023 and 2024, and will be supported by the phased return of 2.2 mb/d of voluntarily curtailed production starting April-2025. The IMF expects total GCC oil production to rise further to 17.4 mb/d in 2026, assuming improved market conditions and higher demand.

Fiscal Balance Expected to Move Into Deficit

On the fiscal front, the IMF now anticipates the GCC region will move into a slight fiscal deficit in both 2025 and 2026. The previously projected surplus of 1.5% of GDP in 2024 is expected to shift to a deficit of -0.2% of GDP in both 2025 and 2026. These adjustments are driven by weaker oil revenues and persistent global uncertainties. A similar trend is projected for the broader MENA region. The IMF revised its 2025 fiscal deficit forecast from -2.0% of GDP (October-2024) to -3.4% of GDP, reflecting mounting expenditure pressures and lower fiscal revenues. The deficit is expected to moderate slightly to -3.2% in 2026. Current account surpluses are also expected to narrow across the GCC. For 2025, the region's surplus has been revised down to USD 51.7 billion, from a previous October-2024 estimate of USD 98.3 billion. A further decline is anticipated in 2026, with the current account balance projected at USD 41.8 billion. This narrowing reflects reduced oil export receipts and the potential indirect effects of lower oil prices and extended production cuts on broader economic performance.

US stocks surge on strong job data

Global markets resilient in early May despite 'tariff uncertainty'

By National Bank of Kuwait

Market Commentary

Global markets showed resilience in early May, supported by robust economic data despite lingering tariff uncertainties. In the U.S., stocks rallied with the S&P 500, Dow Jones, and Nasdaq all climbing over 1%, supported by stronger than expected job creation of 177,000 in April, and steady unemployment at 4.2%. Meanwhile, China's Commerce Ministry signals signs of openness to engage in trade negotiations with the US, marking a potential shift in ongoing tariffs disputes. The Bank of Japan maintained its interest rate at 0.5%, revising down its growth forecasts amid tariff-driven uncertainties, but continued signalling future rate hikes. In the Euro area, inflation remained stable at 2.2% with strength in services offsetting declines in energy prices. Australia's trimmed mean inflation notably returned within the RBA's target range, spurring expectations of an imminent interest rate cut.

United States & Canada

US Labor Demand Slips to Six-Month Lows as Openings Broadly Decline

U.S. job openings dropped by 288,000 to 7.192 million, in March 2025, the lowest in six months and below expectations of 7.49 million. The decline was broad-based, led by transportation, food services, construction, and federal government. However, openings rose in sectors like finance, education, and manufacturing. Regionally, the Midwest saw gains, while the Northeast, South, and West declined. Hiring remained steady at 5.4 million, with total separations at 5.1 million. Quits held at 3.3 million, and layoffs slightly decreased to 1.6 million.

Core Inflation Edges Slightly Higher, with Fears of Tariffs Pushing Prices Further

U.S. Inflation moderated in March, with the PCE index rising 2.3% year-over-year slightly above the 2.2% forecast. Core PCE, the Fed's preferred gauge that excludes food and energy, came in at 2.6%, its lowest reading since March 2021 but still above the Fed's 2% target. On a monthly basis, both headline and core PCE rose by less than 0.1%, aligning with expectations. However, President Trump's tariffs are expected to push inflation higher in the coming months. Goldman Sachs predicts core PCE could reach 3.5% by August, which would be the highest level since September 2024.

Q1 GDP Growth Slows to 0.3%, as Import Surge Skews Data

U.S. economic growth slowed significantly in Q1 2025, with GDP contracting at an annualized rate of 0.3%, down from 2.4% growth in Q4 2024, according to the Commerce Department's initial estimate. This marks the weakest quarterly performance since early 2022. The decline was largely driven by businesses rushing to import goods ahead of President Trump's sweeping tariffs, which were announced in April but prompted early stockpiling. Economists caution that the data may be distorted by this import surge, which can make growth appear weaker by skewing trade and consumption figures.

April Non-Farm Payrolls Beat Forecasts Despite Tariff Uncertainty

The U.S. labor market showed resilience in April 2025, adding 177,000 nonfarm payrolls, surpassing economists forecasts of 138,000. The unemployment

Previous Week Levels					This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
Currencies	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1358	1.1265	1.1424	1.1295	1.1200	1.1400	1.1360
GBP	1.3286	1.3257	1.3444	1.3271	1.3200	1.3380	1.3279
JPY	143.48	141.96	145.92	144.93	144.00	147.00	143.47
CHF	0.8286	0.8195	0.8332	0.8267	0.8155	0.8350	0.8177

Highlights

- US PCE rose 2.3% y/y, slightly above the forecasted 2.2%.
- US GDP at 0.3% down from 2.4%, as tariff fears prompt early stockpiling.
- US non-farm payrolls added 177k jobs in April, beating forecasts of 138k.
- Europe inflation remained stable at 2.2% in April.
- BOJ held interest rates steady at 0.5%, aligning with expectations.
- Australia's trimmed mean inflation remains within RBA target at 2.9%.

rate remained steady at 4.2%. While average hourly earnings increased modestly by 0.2% month-over-month, slightly below expectations. Significant job gains occurred in healthcare (51,000), transportation and warehousing (29,000), and leisure and hospitality sectors (24,000). Federal government employment slightly declined at 9,000, whereas overall government jobs, including state and local hiring, rose by 10,000. Despite the ongoing uncertainty triggered by President Trump's recent tariff announcements, the labor market has not shown substantial signs of distress. Analysts noted that the April data largely reflects conditions before tariff-related disruptions, emphasizing that immediate impacts on employment from the trade tensions might not yet be fully evident. Markets reacted positively, indicating confidence that severe economic downturn scenarios due to tariffs could potentially be avoided.

The USD Dollar Index closed the week at 100.03.

Tariff Concerns Add to Political Volatility Ahead of Canada's Federal Vote

Investor uncertainty remains over Canada's federal election results and ongoing concerns surrounding U.S. tariffs. Early predictions indicated that Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal Party could retain control but would likely fall short of a majority in the 343-seat House of Commons. The former Bank of Canada Governor's attempt to strengthen Canada's stance against U.S. tariffs faced significant opposition from Conservatives, increasing the possibility of a minority government that could struggle to maintain policy stability.

The USD/CAD currency pair closed the week at 1.3819.

Europe

Eurozone Inflation Holds at 2.2% While Energy Prices Slide

Annual inflation in the Euro area remained stable at 2.2% in April 2025, unchanged from March. The main drivers of inflation were led by the services sector, which recorded the highest increase at 3.9%, slightly up from March's 3.5%. Food, alcohol, and tobacco also saw an increase, reaching 3.0%, compared to 2.9% previously. Non-energy industrial goods inflation remained stable at 0.6%, while energy prices saw a significant decrease of -3.5%, down from -1.0%

in March. The data indicates continued price pressures, particularly from services and food sectors, offset by declining energy costs.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.1295.

Asia-Pacific

BOJ Holds Rate Steady at 0.5%, Pushes Back Inflation Target Amid Trade Pressures

The Bank of Japan held its key interest rate steady at 0.5% following unanimous agreement, aligning with market expectations. In its latest quarterly outlook, the BOJ significantly lowered its economic growth forecast due to increased uncertainty stemming from ongoing U.S. tariff disputes and their negative impact on exports. BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda stated the expected timeframe for achieving the bank's 2% inflation target has been postponed by approximately one year, now anticipated in the second half of fiscal 2026 or later. Despite this setback, the BOJ remains committed to potential future rate hikes, supported by expected wage growth and higher inflation. Governor Ueda highlighted persistent global trade tensions as a major source of economic uncertainty, cautioning that this could continue suppressing corporate investment and household spending in the short term.

The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 144.93.

Australia Mean Inflation Returns to Target, RBA Rate Cut Anticipated

Australia's headline inflation rate remained steady at 2.4% in the March quarter. However, the Reserve Bank of Australia's preferred measure (trimmed mean inflation) fell to 2.9%, returning within the RBA's 2-3% target range for the first time in over three years. Economists had anticipated headline inflation slightly lower at 2.3%, with the trimmed mean expected at 2.8%. Quarterly data indicated headline inflation rose by 0.9% in March, following two consecutive quarters with more modest increases of 0.2%. Markets have reacted by pricing in a certain 25-bps interest rate cut at the upcoming RBA meeting on May 20.

The AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6442.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30665.

AlShamlan sheds light on bank's financial performance for the period

Kuwait Finance House holds Q1-2025 earnings webcast

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the earnings webcast for highlighting the Group's financial performance and results during Q1-2025. The webcast was attended by KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled AlShamlan, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, and Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting, Yameen Abdulsattar.

KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled AlShamlan commenced the meeting by shedding light on the Bank's financial performance for Q1-2025.

He said: "By the grace of Allah, KFH has reported a net profit to the shareholders of KD 168.1 million for Q1 2025, representing an increase of 3.2% compared to the same period last year.

Earnings per share reached 9.77 fils for Q1 2025, an increase of 3.1% compared to Q1 2024. Net financing income for the quarter reached KD 318.9 million, reflecting growth of 21.1% compared to the same period last year. Total operating income also saw a significant rise, reaching KD 454.9 million, with an increase of 15.9% compared to Q1 2024.

Financing receivables as of the end of Q1 2025 stood at KD 19.3 billion, while total assets amounted to KD 36.9 billion. Shareholders' equity reached KD 5.5 billion, and depositors' accounts totaled KD 19.5 billion. Additionally, our capital adequacy ratio remained strong at 19.38%, well above regulatory requirements, underscoring the robustness of our financial position.

Alshamlan pointed out that KFH's financial performance demonstrates its consistent ability to grow profits sustainably. This success validates the effectiveness of KFH's efforts at every level in attaining its objectives.

He added that KFH continued to execute its strategic objectives, delivering sustainable and high-quality profits despite a complex operating environment. Our expansion abroad has gained significant momentum, transforming KFH into a global banking entity with a presence in eight countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, the UK, and Germany. This growth is supported by an extensive network of over 600 branches, reinforcing our position as a leader in Islamic finance.

AlShamlan indicated that KFH also maintains its leadership as the largest bank listed on Boursa Kuwait, with a market capitalization exceeding KD 13 billion. KFH newly launched "Beyond Horizons" visual identity reflects the bank's substantial growth, achievements, global reach, and future ambitions. This new identity also underscores KFH's ongoing commitment to technological advancement, digital innovation, and its leading position in Islamic finance.

KFH remains steadfast in supporting the Kuwaiti economy, especially through financing for corporates, SMEs, and infrastructure projects. We hold the largest SME financing portfolio in the market, demonstrating our commitment to fostering economic growth and job creation.

Additionally, KFH further diversified its funding sources by successfully issuing a 5-year, \$1 billion Senior Unsecured Sukuk under the \$4 billion Sukuk Program. This issuance strengthens KFH's long-term liquidity and supports infrastructure projects, productive economic sectors, and customer expansion plans.

In line with our sustainability goals, KFH Capital remains at the forefront of green Sukuk initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability and ESG standards. Our investments in green finance continue to grow, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change and promote responsible banking.

AlShamlan said:" Our efforts in sustainability have been recognized globally, including our inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index and an "A" rating from MSCI ESG Index.

KFH is dedicated to enhancing customer experience through innovative digital solutions. Our platforms, including KFHOnline, and XTMs offer over 200 electronic services, from instant card printing to QR code-based withdrawals. These advancements ensure seamless, secure, and competitive banking for our customers.

Our employees remain at the heart of our success. Through initiatives like the "Innovation Challenge" and comprehensive training programs, we continue to invest in their development, empowering them to drive innovation and

Al-Mukhaizeem: Our diversified business model blends robust domestic performance with strategic international expansion



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

Abdulsattar: Higher profit is mainly from an increase in total operating income



Yameen Abdulsattar

excellence."

AlShamlan pointed out that beyond finance, KFH continues to lead in social responsibility. KFH advanced its pledge of KD 15 million to establish a cardiac center at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital in partnership with the Ministry of Health. KFH also contributed KD 2 million to the Ministry of Social Affairs' debt relief campaign, building on our previous KD 20 million initiative to settle insolvent individuals' debts in coordination with the Ministry of Justice. These efforts reflect the Bank's commitment to social well-being and sustainable development.

AlShamlan added that KFH's exceptional performance has been acknowledged with approximately 15 prestigious awards in 2025, including "Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East" and "Best Bank in Kuwait" from EMEA Finance Magazine. These awards reflect our commitment to excellence, sustainability, and leadership in the banking sector.

Additionally, KFH attained ISO 22301 certification for its Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS), reflecting the bank's readiness to face potential risks.

He concluded: "As we move forward, we remain focused on sustainable growth, innovation, and delivering value to our stakeholders. With our solid financial foundation and strategic vision, KFH is well-positioned to achieve even greater milestones in the coming years."

Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer

Meanwhile, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem shared insights into Kuwait's economic landscape and KFH's strategic progress in the first quarter.

He said: "Kuwait's economy remains resilient amid global uncertainties. The IMF projects real GDP growth to recover to 2.6% (reaching KWD 40.7 billion at constant prices in 2025). The oil sector is projected to grow by 3.1%, driven by an easing of OPEC+ cuts, boosting oil production and export revenues. The non-oil sector is anticipated to grow by 2.1%, fueled by fiscal stimulus driving significant economic expansion.

Kuwait's average crude oil export price closed at USD 77.99 per barrel at the end of March 2025, down 9.7% from last year. Despite this decline, it supports a stable economic foundation as Kuwait advances its diversification efforts.

Inflation has eased to an average annual rate of 2.4% in 2025, down from 3% in 2024 reflecting the Central Bank of Kuwait's effective monetary policies, which balance price stability with economic growth. Looking ahead, Inflation is expected to remain subdued and will be shaped by a mix of domestic and global factors, including oil market dynamics, monetary policy, fiscal strategies, and external economic conditions including the trade war."

Al-Mukhaizeem pointed out that in September 2024, the Central Bank of Kuwait lowered the discount rate by 25 basis points to 4.00%. This move has fostered credit growth and investment, further fueling economic expansion. Kuwait's strong credit ratings—A+ from Standard & Poor's, A1 from Moody's, and AA- from Fitch, all with stable outlooks—reinforcing its appeal to global investors.

He added that the recently introduced Public Debt Law is expected to enhance Kuwait's economic flexibility by enabling the government to fund strategic development projects and advance diversification efforts. For banks, including KFH, it opens new avenues to develop innovative Sharia-compliant investment products, expand lending portfolios, and boost revenues through managing these financial instruments. This reform underscores Kuwait's commitment to fostering a dynamic business environment, driving sustainable growth, and reinforcing confidence in our financial markets.

Al-Mukhaizeem mentioned that the capital market performed strongly in Q1 2025. Boursa Kuwait's market capitalization grew by 10.8% year-on-year to KWD 47.8 billion, with traded volume surging 69.3% to 24.3 billion shares. In this vibrant market, KFH remains the largest listed company, with our market capitalization rising 8.9% to KWD 13.2 billion. This performance reflects confidence in our strategic direction and ability to deliver consistent results.



One of Kuwait Finance House branches.

AlShamlan: KFH's financial performance demonstrates consistent ability to grow profits sustainably



Khaled AlShamlan

In 2025, Kuwait's economic strategy is expected to make bold strides to reduce reliance on oil through targeted reforms and investments. Key sectors like financial services, technology, logistics, and tourism are emerging as pillars of a diversified economy. How is KFH contributing to this transformation? Our focus on innovative financial products and digital solutions aligns closely with these goals, supported by regulatory reforms that streamline licensing and strengthen investor protections.

Al-Mukhaizeem said: "at KFH, we have built on our strong 2024 performance with an excellent start to 2025. Our strategy emphasizes strengthening our financial position, expanding digital capabilities, and growing our global footprint. Our diversified business model, blending robust domestic performance with strategic international expansion, continues to drive success. Looking ahead, we are confident in navigating the evolving economic landscape. Our strong capital base, diverse revenue streams, and investments in technology and talent position us to seize new opportunities. KFH remains committed to pioneering Sharia-compliant solutions that meet our customers' needs while supporting Kuwait's economic diversification."

Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting, Yameen Abdulsattar

Meanwhile, Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting, Yameen Abdulsattar, presented the financial performance of KFH group for the first quarter of 2025.

Abdulsattar said that the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders of KD168.1mn higher by KD 5.3mn or 3.2% compared to Q1-24 of KD 162.8mn.

The higher profit is mainly from an increase in total operating income. Partly offset by an increase in operating expenses and provision charge.

Financing income has increased by KD 73.6mn or 10.9% compared to same period last year mainly due to an increase in yield.

Net financing income at KD 318.9mn increased by KD 55.5mn or 21.1% compared to same period last year mainly due to an increase in financing income by KD 73.6mn offset by increase in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 18.1mn.

Abdulsattar mentioned that the contribution of net financing income to operating income increased from 67% in Q1-24 to 70% in Q1-2025 due to an increase in net financing income.

Group NFM for Q1-2025 at 3.44% is higher by 55bps compared to Q1-2024. Average yield improved by 99bps while the average COF also increased by 44bps. This is the result of both the impact of rate changes and the repricing of assets and liabilities during the period.

Abdulsattar pointed out that the Group total impairment charge increased by KD 23.9mn compared to Q1-2024.

KFH cautious approach towards provisioning have contributed to financing provision balance exceeding ECL required as per CBK IFRS 9 guidelines by KD 552mn as of 31 March 2025.

Application of IAS-29 on the financial statements of Kuyvet Turk resulted in recognition of net monetary loss of KD 42.1mn in the current period, lower by KD 9.4mn compared to Q1-2024 due to lower rate of inflation in Turkey.

Abdulsattar pointed out that the Total Assets at KD 36.9bn increased by 0.4% in Mar-2025 compared to Dec-2024.

Net financing receivables at KD 19.3bn increased by 1.1% compared to Dec-2024 mainly on account of the increase in corporate portfolio.

Investments in debt securities at KD 6.9bn have increased by 1.4% compared to Dec-2024.

Additionally, deposits for Q1-2025 at KD 19.5bn have increased by 1.3% compared to Dec-2024 mainly due to an increase in CASA deposits.

The contribution from CASA deposits to total group customer deposits as of 31 Mar-25 was 45.5%. On an overall basis the group continues to benefit from a large pool of low-cost deposits.

Harry seeks reconciliation, blames palace over security row

Prince Harry shows pain, forgiveness in raw interview

LONDON, May 4, (AP): The rift between Prince Harry and his family has burst into the open again with the prince's raw television interview after losing a court case over his security.

In a long and at times emotional conversation, the 40-year-old prince said he wants reconciliation, while re-arranging grievances against the royal family, the UK government and the media.

Here are key takeaways from Friday's BBC interview:

Harry said his father, King Charles III, won't speak to him because of "this security stuff" - a legal wrangle over protection for the prince when he is in Britain.

"This, at the heart of it, is a family dispute," he said.

Harry has been estranged from his family since he and his wife Meghan quit royal duties in 2020 and moved to the United States, alleging hostility and racist attitudes by the press and royal establishment. Harry's tell-all 2023 memoir "Spare," stuffed with private details and embarrassing revelations, made things worse.

But Harry said what's souring the relationship now is a decision to remove his police protection detail after he stopped being a working royal. On Friday the Court of Appeal in London rejected Harry's bid to restore the protection, saying a government committee was justified in deciding that security should be assessed on a case-by-case basis whenever Harry visits the UK.

Harry blamed the palace, alleging that the decision to withdraw his security had been made at the direction of royal officials, who sit on the committee alongside police and government representatives. He said they were "knowingly putting me and my family in harm's way," hoping that the

sense of threat "would force us to come back."

He suggested his father was part of the problem, saying he'd asked the king "to step out of the way and let the experts do their job."

King Charles, 76, has been treated for an undisclosed cancer for more than a year. Buckingham Palace has given infrequent updates, and has not disclosed what form of cancer the king has.

Harry, who has met his father only once, briefly, since his diagnosis early last year, said "I don't know how much longer my father has."

He held out little hope of another meeting soon.

"The only time I come back to the UK, is, sadly, for funerals or court cases," he said.

After taking several months off last year, Charles has returned to a full slate of public duties. This week he told a reception for cancer charities that being diagnosed was "a daunting and at times frightening experience." He added: "I can vouch for the fact that it can also be an experience that brings into sharp focus the very best of humanity."

Harry has well-founded concerns for the safety of himself and his family.

He is fifth in line to the throne, behind his brother William and William's three children. He spent 10 years in the British army, serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan.

Harry said that before 2020 he was placed in the highest tier of at-risk royals, alongside his late grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

Since then, he has been stripped of taxpayer-funded police protection, and also denied permission to pay for it himself, leaving private security his only option.



Prince Harry gestures as he arrives at the High Court in London, England, April 8, 2025. (AP)

He said that is not as good as police protection, which is provided for life to "people who leave public office," such as former prime ministers.

"I can never leave the royal family," he said. "I was born into those risks, and they've only increased over time."

He claimed that "some people want history to repeat itself," an apparent reference to the death of his mother Princess Diana. She was killed in a car crash in Paris in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi.

Harry, Meghan and their children Archie, 5, and 3-year-old Lilibet, currently live in California, and Harry said he "can't see a world in which I would be bringing my wife and children back to the UK."

The prince said he loves Britain and "it's really quite sad that I won't be able to show my children my homeland."

Harry claimed that he and his family are endangered when visiting Britain because of hostility aimed at him and Meghan on social media and through relentless hounding by news media.

Harry's explosive memoir "Spare" scattered bitterness and blame at Charles, Queen Camilla - Harry's stepmother - and his elder brother William.

In the interview, he said he could forgive his family, and even the British press that he reviles and has repeatedly sued.

"I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point in continuing to fight anymore," Harry said.

Historian Anthony Seldon said Harry had chosen his words deliberately to signal he "wants to make a new start."

"There will be no more spiteful books," Seldon told Sky News. "He has signaled he wants to be back in a way that needs to be worked out."

But Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine, said it's hard to see how reconciliation can happen.

"He clearly feels aggrieved at the outcome of this legal action, but there is a great deal to be gained by maintaining a dignified silence," Little said. "Sadly, as we know from past events, this isn't Harry's way of doing things."

Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Mason Thames in a scene from 'How to Train Your Dragon.' (AP)

Rihanna brings 'Smurfs' to life with music and wonder

Family movies lean into magic this summer

Variety

NEW YORK: "Roundball Rock" is coming home.

NBC answered the biggest question many have had since it won back NBA rights last July during Saturday's coverage of the Kentucky Derby when it aired a 60-second commercial featuring **John Tesh**'s iconic theme song.



Tesh

The song was the soundtrack of NBC's coverage of the NBA from 1990 until 2002 along with the Chicago Bulls dynasty of six NBA titles.

"Roundball Rock is one of the greatest pieces of theme music in sports history. Hearing it immediately conjures images of NBC Sports' coverage of one of the golden ages of the NBA, from Magic to Michael to Kobe and many others," NBC Sports president Rick Cordella said. "It was a pleasure working with John Tesh to bring Roundball Rock back to NBC, and we're equally excited to hear its debut on Peacock. We couldn't imagine beginning our coverage any other way."

The spot features current NBA stars Luka Dončić, Donovan Mitchell and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, along with stars from NBC shows humming the theme. It concludes with Tesh playing "Roundball Rock" on a keyboard in the center of Los Angeles' Intuit Dome - the home of the Los Angeles Clippers - before cutting to the front row where Tracy Morgan says, "John Tesh still got it." (AP)

LOUISVILLE, Ky.: NBC Sports host Mike Tirico said on social media he hates being a "late scratch" from Saturday's 151st Kentucky Derby because of a "significant" nut allergy reaction during coverage of the marquee race at Churchill Downs.

Ahmed Fareed took over coverage for the veteran broadcaster, who was scheduled to host coverage of the first jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown for the ninth time. Tirico left the storied track in late afternoon and returned to his hotel, an NBC Sports spokesman said.

Tirico referred to the allergy on his official account on X and added that, "If you have one you know how it can knock you down."

He thanked Churchill Downs for their care along with network horse racing colleagues Randy Moss, Jerry Bailey, Fareed and his "Syracuse fam" for stepping up "to do a great job." (AP)

LOS ANGELES, May 4, (AP): "How to Train Your Dragon" filmmaker Dean DeBlois has heard the "remake fatigue" concerns. In Hollywood's quest to get family audiences to movie theaters, the industry has often opted to re-package something familiar, lately in the form of a live-action, or hybrid remake. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

That's part of the reason why DeBlois, who directed the animated movies, wanted to also be the person behind the live action remake, coming to theaters June 25. He knew how to do it, and how to do it well.

"We were careful," DeBlois said. "We wanted to make sure that if we were going to do it, we wanted to do with a lot of integrity and love and make sure there's nothing cynical about it."

Several of this summer's family friendly options have come from a personal place including the Rihanna-produced "Smurfs" (July 18) and the Hawaii-shot "Lilo & Stitch" (May 23). And a lot of them are PG-rated, including "The Bad Guys 2" (Aug. 1); "Freakier Friday" (Aug. 8); And the new Pixar movie "Elio" (June 20), about a space fanatic kid whose dream of being abducted by aliens comes true.

The PG rating is having a bit of a resurgence in box office cred after years of being the "uncool" little sibling to PG-13. Last year PG movies made up 1/3 of the annual box office, led by "Inside Out 2."

Rihanna and the Smurfs might seem like an odd match, but the Grammy-winning megastar is "steeped in Smurfs knowledge," according to director Chris Miller. She told Miller that growing up in Barbados, her family's television had one channel, and that channel played the Hanna-Barbera show constantly.

It's why she wanted to produce and star as Smurfette in "Smurfs," a hybrid reboot that takes the little blue creatures on a rescue mission to save Papa Smurf. There have been other attempts (including two with Neil Patrick Harris), but for this one Miller wanted to do something different that drew on the original comics by Belgian artist Peyo.

"I thought, let's make a contemporary version and a real immersive visual experience but reference those drawings," Miller said.

They also had a sharp, witty script from Pam Brady, best known for her collaborations with Trey Parker and Matt Stone. Plus, Rihanna would contribute music too. This, Miller thought, could be



This image released by Paramount Animation shows No Name, voiced by James Corden, (left), and Smurfette, voiced by Rihanna in a scene from 'Smurfs.' (AP)

really fun.

"Rihanna's performance is so great," he said. "She's really funny and gets to the heart and soul of everything."

Practically everyone in the starry voice cast (which includes Kurt Russell, John Goodman, Nick Offerman, Octavia Spencer, Amy Sedaris and Dan Levy) had some nostalgia for the Hanna-Barbera show. But no one needs a degree in "smurfology" to take a chance on the film. Offerman said it reminds him of "The Lego Movie."

"It has a freshness and a sass that I think makes it appealing and kind of imperative for everybody to see," Offerman said.

The animated "How To Train Your Dragon" films already leaned into a live-action sensibility, but DeBlois took it to the next level for the new version, creating an immersive world where the dragons felt credible, and mythology that went deeper in telling this story of the unlikely friendship between a Viking boy Hiccup (Mason Thames) and a dragon named Toothless.

"It aspires to be and does deliver on the promise of being a crowd pleaser," DeBlois said. "It has thrills and it has adventure and it has wonder, which I think is kind of rare and important."

GTA VI delayed again, now set for May 2026

BOSTON, May 4, (AP): Fans of the hugely popular video game series Grand Theft Auto (GTA) will have to wait a little longer to play the latest version.

In a post on X Friday, Rockstar Games said it delayed the launch of Grand Theft Auto VI until May 26, 2026. It apologized for the delay of a game, the release of which has been talked about for several years. It didn't provide any specifics on why the release date has been pushed back from fall of this year.

"With every game we have released, the goal has been to try and exceed your expectations and Grand Theft Auto VI is no exception," the company said in a statement. "We hope you understand we need this extra time to deliver at the level of quality you expect and deserve."

Strauss Zelnick, the chairman and CEO for Take-Two Interactive Software, stood by Rockstar in a statement and said it supports the company taking additional time to realize their creative vision. He said it still expects a "groundbreaking, blockbuster entertainment experience that exceeds audience expectations."

"While we take the movement of our titles seriously and appreciate the vast and deep global anticipation for Grand Theft Auto VI, we remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence," Zelnick said in a statement. "As we continue to release our phenomenal pipeline, we expect to deliver a multi-year period of growth in our business and enhanced value for our shareholders."

Fans of the game reacted to the delay with disappointment but also a shrug -- since it has been suggested the game would be released in 2024 and then this year.

On a Reddit discussion forum dedicated to the game, several fans noted they had seen this before and wouldn't be surprised if the release was delayed again. Others took a more optimistic tone, saying an exact release date means it will actually happen this time around.

One of the last times the game garnered this much buzz was in 2023, when a trailer for the game was leaked online. At the time, Rockstar released the first look of the sixth game 15 hours earlier than planned, citing the leak.

‘The Undoing of Alejandro Velasco’ challenges Latin stereotypes

Actor Boneta trying something new with debut novel

LOS ANGELES, May 4, (AP): Diego Boneta had grown tired of Hollywood’s obsession with narco storylines for Latinos. The actor decided he would provide some new source material with his debut novel, out Thursday, a self-described “murder mystery, sexual thriller” set around a fictional business dynasty.

“As someone who’s from Mexico City, seeing all these stories that are Mexican stories, most of them have been about narcos or border crossing. And that is part of our culture. But that’s only this,” the actor said, gesturing to indicate it only makes up a small portion of Mexico. “So why don’t we show the other stuff?”

Boneta, best known for portraying Latin pop icon Luis Miguel in Netflix’s 2018 biopic series and co-starring in “Rock of Ages,” is now fighting against these stereotypical portrayals by unveiling his debut novel, “The Undoing of Alejandro Velasco.” The Amazon Crossing book is publishing in English and available in Spanish on digital and audio formats. It is also slated for a television adaptation.

“I feel weird calling myself an author. I feel like I’m a storyteller,” said Boneta, 34, who is also a pro-

ducer and a musician. “It’s the most personal thing I’ve ever done, so it’s really close to my heart.”

The novel centers on a mysterious man named Julian Villareal, who sets out to solve the mystery behind his friend and tennis rival Alejandro’s sudden death but finds himself in a series of twists and turns thanks to the Velasco family’s wealth and business ties.

“It’s in the vein of ‘The Talented Mr. Ripley’ meets ‘Match Point,’ set in San Miguel de Allende, full of plot twists,” Boneta said.

Boneta says he wanted to set the novel in San Miguel de Allende to showcase a different side of Mexico to mainstream audiences. He grew up visiting family in the historic city and calls it the “Florence of Mexico.”

“I really wanted it to feel like it was coming from my heart. So, I had to write about things that I was really passionate about, and San Miguel is one of them,” he said. “It’s truly a magical town.”

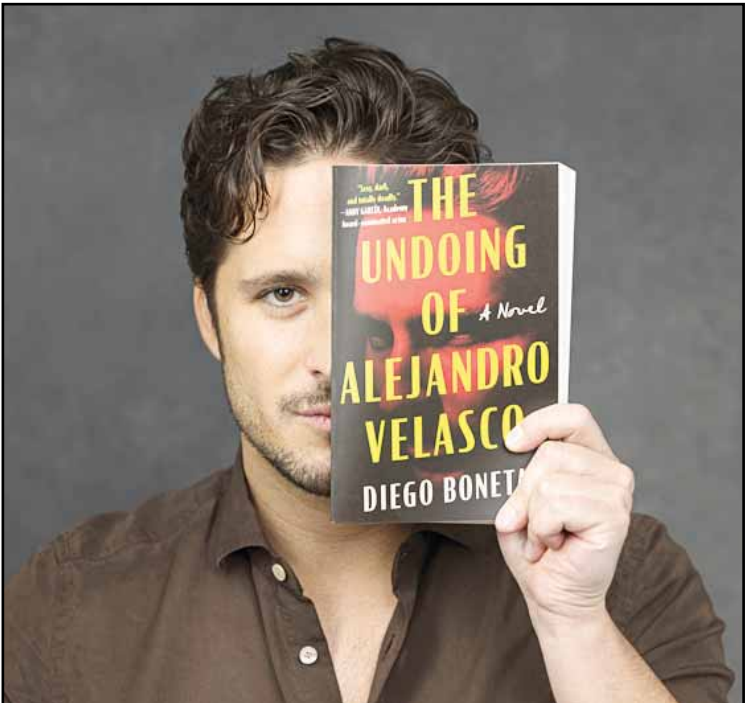
Boneta did not plan on adding author to his list of attributes, until his sister and producing partner, Natalia González-Boneta, suggested that they create their own intellectual property. Boneta will star as Julian in the Amazon Studios MGM series adaptation,

which is currently in development. The actor and his team developed the novel and the series in tandem, though they put a pause on the series during the 2023 Hollywood strikes. Boneta says that he crafted the character to challenge himself when bringing the story to the screen.

“I love transformative roles. I love the chameleon aspect of acting,” he said. “That’s what we tried to do with Julian and having the con man not be the introvert, but be like this like bon vivant guy. He’s so worldly and says he has so much money, but is he really who he says he is?”

Julian is a role Boneta dreamed about as a kid when he failed to see himself represented on screen. He still remembers growing up and wondering why Batman wasn’t someone who looked like his family members.

“To me, that’s the most powerful way of creating an exclusive environment,” he said. “If you’re like, ‘Oh, we’re doing the Latin Batman, and he’s gonna have a mariachi, sombrero and a lucha libre mask and maracas.’ I’m like, ‘Dude, I don’t wanna see that.’ I want the real Batman to happen to be a Latin guy. You don’t even have to make a thing out of it.”



Diego Boneta poses for a portrait to promote ‘The Undoing of Alejandro Velasco’ on Monday, April 14, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Art

‘Broken Heart’

Defaced Banksy work up for sale

NEW YORK, May 4, (AP): When the enigmatic street artist Banksy spray-painted a heart-shaped balloon covered with a Band-Aid on the wall of a Brooklyn warehouse, the nondescript brick building was instantly transformed into an art destination and the canvas of an unlikely graffiti battle.

Almost as soon as Banksy revealed the piece back in 2013, an anonymous tagger brazenly walked up and spray painted the words “Omar NYC” in red beside the balloon, to the dismay of onlookers.

Days later, someone stenciled “is a little girl” in white and pink beside Omar’s tag, followed by a seemingly sarcastic phrase in black: “I remember MY first tag.” Some think it was Banksy himself who secretly returned to the scene to add the rejoinder.

The apparent graffiti battle didn’t end there. Another tagger also attempted to leave his mark but was stymied by security guards. Today the phrase “SHAN” is still visible in light purple paint.

Maria Georgiadis, whose family owned the now-demolished warehouse and ultimately removed the section of wall to preserve the artwork, says the graffiti pastiche is quintessentially New York.

Preserved

“It looks like a war going on,” she said recently. “They’re literally going at it on the wall.”

The preserved wall, dubbed “Battle to Survive a Broken Heart,” will be going up for sale May 21 at Guernsey’s, the New York auction house.

Georgiadis, a Brooklyn school-teacher, says the sale is bittersweet. Her father, Vassilios Georgiadis, ran his roofing and asbestos abatement company from the warehouse adorned with the balloon.

He died four years ago at age 67 from a heart attack, which is why some of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the American Heart Association.

“It’s just very significant to us because he loved it and he was just so full of love,” Maria Georgiadis said on a recent visit to the art warehouse where the piece was stored for more than a decade. “It’s like the bandage heart. We all have love, but we’ve all went through things and we just put a little Band-Aid over and just keep on moving, right? That’s how I take it.”

The nearly 4-ton, 6-foot-tall (3.6-metric ton, 1.8-meter-tall) wall section is one of a number of guerrilla works the famously secretive British artist made during a New York residency in 2013.

At the time, Banksy heralded the work by posting on his website photos and an audio track recorded partly in a squeaky, helium-induced voice.

Guernsey auction house President Arlan Ettinger said it is impossible to know for certain because Banksy works clandestinely. But he said the neat stenciling and wording “strongly suggest that this was a gentle way for Banksy to put the other artist in his place.”



A slab of wall art, The ‘Battle to Survive a Broken Heart,’ created by the artist Banksy, sits on display inside the Brookfield Place atrium, April 29, 2025, in New York. The nearly four-ton piece will be auctioned off on May 21. (AP)

Music



Lady Gaga performs during her free concert on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, May 3. (AP)

Pop star wows 2 million fans with epic free concert

Lady Gaga rocks Copacabana Beach

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 4, (AP): Lady Gaga gave a free concert Saturday night in front of 2 million fans who poured onto Copacabana Beach for the biggest show of her career.

“Tonight, we’re making history. (...) Thank you for making history with me,” Lady Gaga told a screaming crowd.

The Mother Monster, as she is known, kicked off the show at around 22:10 p.m. local time with her 2011 song “Bloody Mary.” Cries of joy rose from the tightly-packed fans who sang and danced shoulder-to-shoulder on the vast stretch of sand.

Concert organizers said 2.1 million people attended the show.

Lady Gaga performed her classic hits, including “Poker Face” and “Alejandro,” switching between an array of dresses including one with the colors of the Brazilian flag.

Some fans - many of them young - arrived on the beach at the crack of dawn to secure a good spot, armed with snacks and drinks. They spent the day under a blazing sun, while others perched in trees, determined to get a panoramic view.

“Today is the best day of my life,” said Manoela Dobes, a 27-year-old designer who was wearing a dress plastered with a photograph from when she met Lady Gaga in the United States in 2019. “It’s surreal to be here.”

Madonna also turned Copacabana Beach into a massive dance floor last year.

The large-scale performances are part of an effort

led by City Hall to boost economic activity after Carnival and New Years’ Eve festivities and the upcoming month-long Saint John’s Day celebrations in June.

“It brings activity to the city during what was previously considered the low season - filling hotels and increasing spending in bars, restaurants, and retail, generating jobs and income for the population,” said Osmar Lima, the city’s secretary of economic development, in a statement released by Rio City Hall’s tourism department last month.

Rio’s City Hall said in a recent report that the show should inject at least 600 million reais (some \$106 million) into Rio’s economy.

Welcome

Similar concerts are scheduled to take place every year in May at least until 2028.

Lady Gaga arrived in Rio in the early hours of Tuesday. The city has been alive with Gaga-mania since, as it geared up to welcome the pop star for her first show in the country since 2012. Rio’s metro employees danced to Lady Gaga’s 2008 hit song “LoveGame” and gave instructions for Saturday in a video. A free exhibition celebrating her career sold out.

While the vast majority of attendees were from Rio, the event also attracted Brazilians from across the country and international visitors.

More than 500,000 tourists poured into the city in the days leading up to the show, more than double the initial forecast, according to data from the local bus station and Tom Jobim airport, Rio’s City Hall said

in a statement on Friday.

Ingrid Serrano, a 30-year-old engineer, made a cross-continent trip from Colombia to Brazil to attend the show.

“I’ve been a 100% fan of Lady Gaga my whole life,” said Serrano, who was wearing a T-shirt featuring Lady Gaga’s outlandish costumes over the years.

For her, the mega-star represents “total freedom of expression - being who one wants without shame.”

Rio officials have a history of organizing huge concerts on Copacabana Beach. Madonna’s show drew an estimated 1.6 million fans last year, while 4 million people flooded onto the beach for a 1994 New Year’s Eve show by Rod Stewart in 1994. According to Guinness World Records, that was the biggest free rock concert in history.

To ensure fans could hear the songs, sixteen sound towers were spread along the beach.

Rio state’s security plan included the presence of 3,300 military and 1,500 police officers, and 400 military firefighters.

Among those present were Lady Gaga admirers who remember their disappointment in 2017, when the artist canceled a performance scheduled in Rio at the last minute due to health issues.

Ricardo Filho, who has been a fan since childhood, said it was worth the wait.

“She’s the best artist in the world,” the 25-year-old said, as chants of “Gaga, I love you” in Portuguese rose from the crowd behind him.

Canvas is bigger than a soccer field

Nigerian teenager sets world painting record

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 4, (AP): A 15-year-old Nigerian has set a Guinness World Record for the world’s largest art canvas to raise awareness for autism.

Kanyeyachukwu Tagbo-Okeke, who is autistic, executed a painting featuring a multi-colored ribbon - the symbol for autism - surrounded by emojis, covering 12,304 square meters. That’s a lot bigger than a typical soccer field, which is 7,140 square meters.

The massive painting is aimed at highlighting the spectrum disorder and challenges that people like him face amid stigma and limited resources in Nigeria.

“I felt fine. Happy. Just fine,” said Tagbo-Okeke, whose disorder limits his speech.

His artwork eclipsed that of Emad Salehi, the previous world record holder, who was nearly three times older at 42 when he set the record with a 9,652-square meter canvas.

The artwork, created in November 2024, was unveiled and officially recognized by the Guinness World Record organizers in Nigeria’s capital of Abuja during the World Autism Acceptance Day in April.

Nigeria’s art and culture minister Hannatu Musawa said Tagbo-Okeke’s artwork is “a beacon of hope and inspiration” for people with autism.

“We recognize the unique abilities and potential of individuals with autism and are dedicated to providing opportunities for them to thrive in the creative industries,” Musawa added.



Kanyeyachukwu Tagbo Okeke, a 15-year-old autistic Nigerian, who set a Guinness World Record for the world’s largest art canvas, is photograph during an interview in Abuja, Nigeria, April 18, 2025. (AP)

Born in Canada before moving to Nigeria, Tagbo-Okeke’s upbringing has been challenging, his family said. His father told The Associated Press during a recent interview that there was often fear, confusion and sadness along the way.

“Not being able to communicate with your son or have regular activities you could have with any other child is quite depressing,” Tagbo Okeke said.

Many people on the spectrum face stigma and limited resources in Nigeria, but Tagbo-Okeke’s family

was determined to give him the best support.

The young artist’s record-breaking attempt, accompanied by a campaign tagged “Impossibility is a Myth,” was widely celebrated among Nigerians, partly because of his young age.

“We felt an overwhelming sense of relief and pride, knowing the countless hours and months of effort he poured into breaking the record,” his mother Silvia said.

Many young people in Nigeria have attempted to break the Guinness World Record in recent years. At least seven Nigerians have broken world records in the past three years, including Hilda Baci, who won the longest cooking marathon and Tunde Onakoya, who played the longest chess marathon.

Kanyeyachukwu’s world record attempt also sought to raise funds for the Zeebah Foundation, a nonprofit focusing on providing support to those on the spectrum and their families.

While there are no official records from within Nigeria, about 1 in 100 children worldwide is autistic, according to the World Health Organization.

Like in many other countries, autism is often not diagnosed in Nigeria until in older years.

The lack of reliable data on autism, adequate awareness and government support for the spectrum disorder are some of the biggest challenges autistic people face in Nigeria, said Stanley Effah, founder of the Ferdinand Effah Music Heritage Foundation.

Variety

STOCKHOLM: The seventh season of Swedish slow TV hit “The Great Moose Migration” will end Sunday night after 20 days of 24-hour live coverage.

The show, called “Den stora älgvandringen” in Swedish, began in 2019 with nearly a million people watching. In 2024, the production hit 9 million viewers on SVT Play, the streaming platform for national broadcaster SVT.

By midday Sunday, the livestream’s remote cameras captured 70 moose swimming across the Ängerman River, some 300 kilometers (187 miles) northwest of Stockholm, in the annual spring migration toward summer grazing pastures.

The livestream will end at 10 p.m. local time (2000 GMT) Sunday. It kicked off April 15, a week ahead of schedule due to warm weather and early moose movement.

Johan Erhag, SVT’s project manager for “The Great Moose Migration,” said this year’s crew will have produced 478 hours of footage - “which we are very satisfied with,” he wrote in an email to The Associated Press Saturday evening.. (AP)

TOETENSEN, Germany: Did you steal the sign?

German pop star **Dieter Bohlen** is asking his fans to return a sign spelling out the name of his hometown of Toetensen.

The village in northern Germany outside Hamburg is famous, well, because of Bohlen. He’s a singer, music producer, judge on Germany’s version of “American Idol” and formerly half of German pop duo Modern Talking.

Bohlen believes the sign was taken by a fan as memorabilia, according to German news agency dpa.

He posted a video on Instagram Saturday where he stood in front of the empty signpost and promised a reward of a ticket to one of his concerts this fall for its return.

One fan’s suggestion? Rename the town: Bohlensen. (AP)



VITERBO, Italy: It was the mounting rage of citizens in Viterbo, a small town north of Rome, that put an end to the longest papal election in the history of the Catholic Church, forging for the first time the word “conclave.”

The Viterbo conclave in the 13th century was a pivotal event in papal elections, lasting almost three years - exactly 1,006 days - due to deep divisions among the cardinals over the name of the new pope.

Viterbo is also considered the birthplace of modern conclaves, where cardinals are confined to a single place until they elect a new pontiff, and often need to negotiate before reaching a compromise on the final name.

In November 1268, the cardinals - summoned in Viterbo to elect the successor of the late Pope Clement IV - were split mainly between two factions and couldn’t reach a consensus before September 1271.

As the cardinals continued to deliberate in Viterbo, frustration rose among locals due to the lack of progress, as political and internal struggles had cast a shadow over the election. (AP)

STAMFORD, Conn.: Carmelo Anthony is joining NBC Sports as a studio analyst when NBC and Peacock begin their NBA coverage in October.

The announcement was made on Saturday afternoon during NBC’s coverage of the Kentucky Derby.

Anthony will be enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame in September. He was a 10-time NBA all-star and is currently 10th on the NBA all-time scoring list with 28,289 points. He also was part of the U.S. team in four Olympics, including three gold-medal winning squads.

NBC Sports said in a release that Anthony is expected to be in the studio one or more nights per week through the playoffs. After leading Syracuse to an NCAA title in 2003, Anthony played 19 seasons in the NBA, mostly with Denver and the New York Knicks. He retired after the 2022-23 season. (AP)



This undated photo provided by Centivax in 2025 shows Tim Friede, who is hyper-immune to the venom of various snakes, with a water cobra wrapped around his arm. (AP)

Universal antivenom

Snakebite survivor’s blood may unlock new treatment

NEW YORK, May 4, (AP): Tim Friede has been bitten by snakes hundreds of times - often on purpose. Now scientists are studying his blood in hopes of creating a better treatment for snake bites.

Friede has long had a fascination with reptiles and other venomous creatures. He used to milk scorpions' and spiders' venom as a hobby and kept dozens of snakes at his Wisconsin home.

Hoping to protect himself from snake bites - and out of what he calls "simple curiosity" - he began injecting himself with small doses of snake venom and then slowly increased the amount to try to build up tolerance. He would then let snakes bite him.

"At first, it was very scary," Friede said. "But the more you do it, the better you get at it, the more calm you become with it."

While no doctor or emergency medical technician - or anyone, really - would ever suggest this is a remotely good idea, experts say his method tracks how the body works. When the immune system is exposed to the toxins in snake venom, it develops antibodies that can neutralize the poison. If it's a small amount of venom the body

can react before it's overwhelmed. And if it's venom the body has seen before, it can react more quickly and handle larger exposures.

Friede has withstood snakebites and injections for nearly two decades and still has a refrigerator full of venom. In videos posted to his YouTube channel, he shows off swollen fang marks on his arms from black mamba, taipan and water cobra bites.

"I wanted to push the limits as close to death as possible to where I'm just basically teetering right there and then back off of it," he said.

But Friede also wanted to help. He emailed every scientist he could find, asking them to study the tolerance he'd built up.

And there is a need: Around 110,000 people die from snakebite every year, according to the World Health Organization. And making antivenom is expensive and difficult. It is often created by injecting large mammals like horses with venom and collecting the antibodies they produce. These antivenoms are usually only effective against specific snake species, and can sometimes produce bad reactions due to their nonhuman origins.

115-year-old's life hack

Never argue: World’s oldest woman’s secret to longevity

LONDON, May 4, (AP): For Ethel Caterham, the trick to a long life - and in her case, it really has been - is not to argue.

Caterham, who is 115, became the world's oldest living person, according to the Gerontology Research Group, after Sister Inah Canabarro, a Brazilian nun and teacher, died on Wednesday at the tender age of 116.

"Never arguing with anyone, I listen and I do what I like," she said from her nursing home in Surrey, southwest of London, on the secret to her longevity.

She was born on Aug. 21, 1909, in the village of Shipton Bellinger in the south of England, five years before the outbreak of World War I. She was the second youngest of eight siblings.

Travel has been in her blood, it's clear. In 1927, at the age of 18, Caterham embarked on a journey to India, working as a nanny for a British family, where she stayed for three years before returning to England, according to the GRG.

She met her husband Norman, who was a major in the British army, at a dinner party in 1931, and they were stationed in Hong Kong and Gibraltar, the GRG said. They had two daughters whom they raised in the UK Norman



This undated handout provided by Hallmark Care Homes shows Ethel Caterham, who on Friday, May 2, is now the world's oldest woman according to LongeviQuest. (AP)

Workshop held on rectal and pelvic floor surgeries

Kuwait performs first-of-its-kind rectal surgery

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Farwaniya Hospital, in cooperation with international experts, organized a workshop on rectal and pelvic floor surgeries. During the workshop, the first operation of its kind in Kuwait was performed using an innovative technique that relies on implanting muscle tonics under local anesthesia. This technique restores the shape and efficiency of the sphincter muscle in patients suffering from advanced fecal incontinence. It is one of the latest innovations in the field of rectal surgery. The operation was carried out at Farwaniya Hospital by a joint medical team led by consultant surgeon at the hospital Dr. Obaid Al-Harbi and general surgeon Dr. Mahmoud Farghali.

The team included international experts in this type of surgery. The workshop is part of the activities and events line up for the training of Kuwaiti medical personnel on the latest techniques in rectal surgeries. Al-Harbi confirmed the attendance of surgeons from various public hospitals in the workshop that included educational sessions and a live explanation of the surgical procedures. He explained that the aim is to transfer knowledge and enhance practical experience for local medical professionals. He added that this workshop is among a series of scientific activities organized by the ministry.

He thanked Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi for their dedication to develop subspecialties and improve the quality of medical services provided to patients in the field of rectal and pelvic floor surgery.

On the other hand, Farghali said the workshop is considered a qualitative shift in the treatment of chronic fecal incontinence, opening the door to advanced treatment options previously unavailable in Kuwait.

He affirmed that the team also examined a number of complex cases and provided specialized medical consultations to several patients.

Dr. Al-Awadhi

Malnourished children strain overcrowded hospitals

Hunger & malnutrition surge in Gaza as blockade leaves mothers helpless

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, May 4, (AP): The little boy is in tears and, understandably, irritable. Diarrhea has plagued him for half of his brief life. He is dehydrated and so weak. Attached to his tiny left hand is a yellow tube that carries liquid food to his frail little system.

At 9 months old, Khaled is barely 11 pounds (5 kilos) - half of what a healthy baby his age should be. And in Gaza's main pediatric hospital ward, as doctors try to save her son, Wedad Abdelaal can only watch.

After back-to-back emergency visits, the doctors decided to admit Khaled last weekend. For nearly a week, he was tube-fed and then given supplements and bottled milk, which is distributed every three hours or more. His mother, nervous and helpless, says that's not enough.

"I wish they would give it to us every hour. He waits for it impatiently ... but they too are short on supplies," Abdelaal says. "This border closure is destroying us."

The longer they stay in the hospital, the better Khaled will get. But Abdelaal is agonizing over her other children, back in their tent, with empty pots and nothing to eat as Israel's blockade of Gaza enters its third month, the longest since the war started.

Locked, sealed and devastated by Israeli bombings, Gaza is facing starvation. Thousands of children have already been treated for malnutrition. Exhausted, displaced and surviving on basics for over a year and half of war, parents like Abdelaal watch their children waste away and find there is little they can do.



Osama al-Raqab, 5, whose mother says his cystic fibrosis has worsened since the start of the war due to the lack of meat, fish and enzyme tablets to help him digest food, is being treated at the malnutrition clinic in Nasser hospital, Khan Younis, Gaza, on Thursday, May 1. (AP)

They are out of options. Hospitals are hanging by a thread, dealing with mass casualty attacks that prioritize deadly emergencies. Food stocks at U.N. warehouses have run out. Markets are emptying. What is still available is sold at exorbitant prices, unaffordable for most in Gaza where more than 80% are reliant on aid, according to the United Nations.

Community kitchens distributing meals for thousands are shuttering. Farmland is mostly inaccessible. Bakeries have closed. Water distribution is grinding to a halt, largely because of lack of fuel. In desperate scenes, thousands, many of them kids, crowd outside community kitchens, fighting over food. Warehouses with few supplies have been looted.

The longest blockade on Gaza has sparked a growing international outcry, but it has failed to persuade Israel to break open the borders. More groups accuse Israel of using starvation as a weapon of war. Residents and humanitarians warn that acute malnutrition among children is spiraling.

"We are breaking the bodies and minds of the children of Gaza," Michael Ryan, executive director of emergencies at the World Health Or-

ganization, told reporters in Geneva. "Because if we don't do something about it, we are complicit in what is happening before our very eyes. ... The children should not have to pay the price."

Israel imposed the blockade March 2, then ended a two-month ceasefire by resuming military operations on March 18, saying both steps were necessary to pressure Hamas into releasing the hostages. Before the ceasefire collapsed, Israel believed 59 hostages were still inside Gaza, 24 of them alive and still in captivity.

It hasn't responded to accusations that it uses starvation as a war tactic. But Israeli officials have previously said Gaza had enough aid after a surge in distribution during the ceasefire, and accused Hamas of diverting aid for its purposes. Humanitarian workers deny there is significant diversion, saying the U.N. monitors distribution strictly.

Khaled has suffered from malnutrition since he was 2 months old. His mother managed it through outpatient visits and supplements distributed at feeding centers. But for the past seven months, Abdelaal, 31, has been watching him slowly shrivel. She, too, is malnourished and has had hardly any protein in recent months.

After an exhausting pregnancy and two days of labor, Khaled was born - a low-weight baby at 4 1/2 pounds (2 kilos) but otherwise healthy. Abdelaal began nursing him. But because of lack of calcium, she is losing her teeth - and producing too little milk.

"Breastfeeding needs food, and I am not able to give him enough," she says.

Musk’s Starbase launch site approved in Texas

India successfully conducts stratospheric airship flight trial

NEW DELHI, May 4, (Agencies): Indian defense authorities said on Saturday that maiden flight-trials of Stratospheric Airship Platform was carried out successfully.

Indian Defence Ministry said in a statement that the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully carried out maiden flight-trials of Stratospheric Airship Platform from Sheopur Trial site in Madhya Pradesh.

The airship, developed by Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra, was launched carrying an instrumental payload to an altitude of around 17 kms and total duration of the flight was about 62 minutes.

"Data from onboard sensors was received and would be utilized for development of high-quality fidelity simulation models for future high-altitude airship flights," the statement said.

Chairman of DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat congratulated the team involved in design, development and trial of the system.

"The prototype flight is a milestone towards realization of lighter-than-air high-altitude platform systems that can remain airborne for very long endurance at stratospheric heights," he said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO for the successful maiden flight-trial of the system saying

this will uniquely enhance India's earth observation and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

With the successful flight-trials of the stratospheric airship platform, India will join one of the few countries in the world having such indigenous capabilities.

Also:

McAlLEN, Texas: The South Texas home of **Elon Musk's** SpaceX rocket company is now an official city with a galactic name: Starbase.

A vote Saturday to formally organize Starbase as a city was approved by a lopsided margin among the small group of voters who live there and are mostly Musk's employees

at SpaceX. With all the votes in, the tally was 212 in favor to 6 against, according to results published online by the Cameron County Elections Department.

Musk celebrated in a post on his social platform, X, saying it is "now a real city!"

Starbase is the facility and launch site for the SpaceX rocket program that is under contract with the Department of Defense and NASA that hopes to send astronauts back to the moon and someday to Mars.

Musk first floated the idea of Starbase in 2021 and approval of the new city was all but certain. Of the 283 eligible voters in the area, most are believed to be Starbase workers.

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Date set for Crawford

Alvarez beats Scull to become undisputed champion again

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, May 4, (AP): Moments after Canelo Alvarez fended off William Scull to become the undisputed super middleweight champion again, he was facing off against Terence Crawford in the same ring in Riyadh to promote a showdown in September.

Alvarez became an undisputed champion in the division for the second time when the judges scored his ho-hum bout early Sunday Saudi local time against Scull 115-113, 116-112, 119-109. The 34-year-old Mexican boxer improved to 63-2-2, with 39 knockouts, and is unbeaten in 10 fights in the super middleweight category.

The decision had barely been announced before Turki Alalshikh, head of the General Entertainment Authority of Saudi Arabia, stepped into the ring and ordered it cleared out so that he could bring four-division champion Crawford out of the crowd to face Alvarez, who was wearing one belt around his waist, another over his shoulder and holding one in each arm.

“Now we want to do the face off for the fight of the century,” Alalshikh told the crowd, “between the two great fighters in our generation.”

Alvarez is a four-weight world champion and entered the fight against Scull with the WBA, WBC and WBO titles at 168 pounds. The 37-year-old Crawford (41-0) has won titles in four divisions from lightweight to light middleweight.

Alvarez was stripped of the IBF belt last July when he declined to make a mandatory defense against Scull. He'd owned that title since November 2021 when he defeated Caleb Plant.

The fight against Scull didn't live up to the hype. The Cuba-born Scull entered unbeaten in 23 professional fights. He constantly moved around, dodging, shuffling and frustrating Alvarez, who later said he hated fighting that style of boxer.

Alvarez was fighting outside the U.S. or Mexico for the first time and had to make plenty of adjustments, including to the time zone. The fighters walked into the ring and the anthems started around 6:20 a.m. local time (11:20 p.m. ET Saturday) for the main bout in Riyadh, timed so it was in prime time on the U.S. West Coast.

The opening rounds were slow with both boxers feeling for range and the intensity gradually lifted

with Scull throwing many more punches but not landing enough. Alvarez, by contrast, stayed patient and was landing body shots. In the end, Alvarez threw almost half as many punches as Scull (152-293) but landed one more (56-55), predominantly power shots to the body.

“It's OK, we won. We're here with the title as the champion,” Alvarez said, adding that neither the timing of the bout nor the quality of the contest was a problem because he'd plenty of time to prepare. “I'm a champion. I'm a professional, so that's all, no excuse or anything.”

As for the Sept. 12 showdown against Crawford, who will be stepping up a weight to take on Alvarez?

“I feel great. Crawford is one of the best out there and, you know, I like to share the ring with that kind of fighter,” he said. “It's my pleasure.”

Crawford was in the crowd watching in the Saudi capital.

“I'm feeling great. I'm feeling blessed. Things happen for a reason, and there's a reason why I'm here,” he said. “In September I'm showing the world what greatness look like.”



Canelo Alvarez, center, celebrates after winning against William Scull during super middleweight World Boxing Championship at ANB Arena in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Minnesota Utd hands Austin 5th shutout

Inter Miami rebounds from defeat to Dallas

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., May 4, (AP): Lionel Messi had a goal and an assist, Fafa Picault scored a goal for the second consecutive game and Inter Miami beat the New York Red Bulls 4-1 on Saturday night.

Inter Miami (6-1-3) rebounded from a 4-3 loss to Dallas that snapped its eight-game unbeaten streak to open the season.

Messi capped the scoring in the 67th minute. After four consecutive to or from Messi and Telasco Segovia, Messi used his right hip to hold off defender Noah Eile and then calmly slammed home a left-footer from the center of the area.

Picault scored to give Miami a 1-0 lead in the ninth minute. After two failed clearances by the Red Bulls, Marcelo Weigandt played an arcing ball-in from the right side that was redirected near post when Luis Suárez flicked a headed to the back post and Picault put away a half-volley.

Weigandt scored in the 30th and Luis Suárez added a goal - his first since March 2 - in the 39th minute to give Miami a 3-0 lead.

Mohammed Sofo put away a corner kick for the Red Bulls (4-4-3) played in by Omar Valencia - going up high at the back post and somehow heading it back inside the front post - to make it 3-1 in the 43rd.

Weigandt, from point-blank range, tapped in the putback of his own shot to make it 2-0 in the 30th.

Anthony Markanich and Joaquín Pereyra each scored a goal and Minnesota United FC took advantage of an own goal and beat Austin FC 3-0. Austin has now been shut out five times in 11 games this season.

Austin midfielder Ilie Sánchez was credited with an own goal from left of the box at 22 minutes for a 1-0 Minnesota (5-2-4) lead. His mild deflection off a shot attempt by Pereyra created back spin on a ball that slowly rolled through the hands and legs of keeper Brad Stuver.

Christian Benteke and Hosei Kijima each scored a goal in first-half stoppage time to help D.C. United beat the Colorado Rapids 2-1.

D.C. United (3-5-3) won for just the second time since it beat Sporting Kansas City 2-1 on March 8.

David Schnegg played an arcing ball-in that was deflected before Benteke bounced a header off the ground and inside the back post in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time.

Mikael Uhre scored the go-ahead goal at the 84th minute and the Philadelphia Union pulled out a 2-1 win over winless CF Montreal.

Uhre took a through ball from Jovan Lukic and got it past closing keeper Jonathan Sirois to secure the goal.

Just two minutes in, Indiana Vassilev put the Union ahead 1-0 with a right-footed shot from the center outside the box. Giacomo Vriani's left footer at the third minute of extra time in the first half leveled it for Montreal.

Carles Gil and Leo Campana each scored a goal to help New England beat Toronto FC 2-0 and the Revolution extended their win streak to four games.

Aljaz Ivacic stopped two shots for the Revolution and has four consecutive shutouts. The 31-year-old has not allowed a goal in 385 minutes, dating to a goal by Sergio Santos in the 65th minute of a 1-0 loss to Cincinnati on April 5.

Hirving Lozano scored two goals and two assists and Onni Valakari scored a goal and distributed a pair of assists and San Diego FC scored a season high five goals shutting out FC Dallas.

Anders Dreyer scored a goal and recorded an assist as San Diego ended a three-match losing streak.

Lozano scored at 20 minutes on a penalty after Alex Mighten drew a free kick following a foul by Ramiro Benetti. Lozano scored again at 27 minutes using the right boot from the right side of the box.

Danny Musovski scored a goal



CF Montreal's Samuel Piette (6) and Philadelphia Union's Bruno Damiani (20) challenge for the ball during second half of a MLS soccer action in Montreal. (AP)



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) battles New York Red Bulls defender Noah Eile during the second half of a MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

Bengaluru goes top after epic two-run victory over Chennai

Dayal holds his nerve for win in a last-ball IPL thriller

BENGALURU, India, May 4, (AP): Fast bowler Yash Dayal held his nerve to give table-topping Royal Challengers Bengaluru a sensational two-run win over Chennai Super Kings in a last-ball Indian Premier League thriller.

Chennai, already eliminated from playoffs contention, needed 15 off the last over to prevent Bengaluru from notching its eighth win and topping the table.

Dayal faced Ravindra Jadeja, Mahendra Singh Dhoni and impact player Shivam Dube and used full tosses and yorkers to dismiss Dhoni off the third ball and concede three singles off the last three balls.

Chennai was stranded on 211-5 after nearly chasing down Bengaluru's 213-5.

“I felt I should have converted a couple of more shots, and eased the pressure, so I will take the blame for it,” Dhoni said.

The 17-year-old opener Ayush Mhatre kept Chennai in the hunt with a scintillating 94 off 48 balls, supported by Jadeja's unbeaten 77.

Mhatre and Jadeja stitched a rollicking 114-run partnership off 64 balls.

Both batters were dropped in Dayal's second spell.

South African fast bowler Lungi Ngidi, who replaced an injured Josh Hazlewood, the IPL's second leading wicket-taker, brought Bengaluru back in the game with two wickets in two balls in the 17th over.

Ngidi deceived Mhatre with a slower ball and had him caught at midwicket, and then Dewald Brevis was out leg before. But replays suggested the ball

would have missed leg stump.

Down to the last over, Dube swung the game back in Chennai's favor when he belted a six off a waist-high no-ball. But Dayal bowled three perfect yorkers to Dube and Jadeja for Bengaluru to snatch victory.

“He (Dayal) is the main bowler of our team, a death-overs specialist,” Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar said. “It was a clear-cut message to give him the last over. Last year as well, he did

the same thing for the team and he did it again (tonight).”

After half-centuries by Bengaluru openers Virat Kohli and Jacob Bethell, they slumped to 159-5 going into the 19th over.

But Romario Shepherd smacked 53 off 14 balls, tied for the second fastest half-century in IPL history, to give Bengaluru a total it could defend.

Kohli, who hit his fourth successive half-century to lead the run-scorers' list, and Bethell grafted a 97-run opening stand but then Chennai spinners Noor Ahmad (1-26) and Jadeja (0-26) squeezed the run-rate.

Chennai looked to contain Bengaluru until Shepherd shredded Khaleel Ahmed in the 19th over and Matheesha Pathirana in the 20th.

Shepherd struck four sixes and two boundaries in Ahmed's over, which went for 33 runs. The left-arm fast bowler finished with an expensive 0-65 off his three overs.

Shepherd then hit Pathirana for two fours and raised his electrifying half-century by lofting the Sri Lankan fast bowler for successive sixes off the last two balls.

“Shepherd in the death overs was excellent,” Dhoni said. “Whatever we were bowling, he was able to hit it for maximum runs. We need to practice more yorkers.”



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Yash Dayal, third left facing camera, celebrates with teammates after their win in the Indian Premier League cricket match against Chennai Super Kings at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

Weeks after fall, jockey Alvarado rebounds to win muddy Kentucky Derby aboard Sovereignty

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 4, (AP): Temporarily sidelined by a hard fall, jockey Junior Alvarado put it behind him with the ride of a lifetime in the Kentucky Derby.

Most satisfying was guiding Sovereignty past other horses in the slop before drawing a bead on 3-1 favorite Journalism and chasing him down to win the 151st running at Churchill Downs by 1 1/2 lengths. The effort left Alvarado and his mount caked in mud, worn proudly along with the garland of red roses that were draped over the winner.

“Still sinking in, to be honest,” the 38-year-old Venezuelan rider said of his breakthrough in nine tries. “It means the world to me, for me and my family. Coming from my country where the only race we would be able to watch back there was just the Kentucky Derby.

“I said that would be nice to be in the United States and ride in the Kentucky Derby. Little by little I started to point that out to be, to make it come true. Today, we did just that.”

Alvarado's Derby win highlights a career of Grade 1 triumphs, many on some of horse racing's biggest stages. He earned a Triple Crown win in the 2021 Preakness on Rombauer, has a handful of Breeders' Cup Championships and won the \$3 million Pegasus World Cup Invitational two years ago aboard Mott-trained Art Collector at Gulfstream Park in Florida.



Sovereignty, ridden by Junior Alvarado, center, crosses the finish line to win the 151st running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky. (AP)



Part of the event attended by a group of influencers.



Abrar Zenkawi during the ASICS event.



SNKR Store during the event.

Japanese brand ASICS and SNKR, one of AAW brands, host creative workshops at The Avenues

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) hosted an exclusive two-day workshop in collaboration with the Japanese brand ASICS at the SNKR Store in Phase 4 (Electra) of The Avenues Mall. The first day was dedicated to influencers, while the second day was open to the public, giving everyone the opportunity to be part of this unique experience.

The workshop offered two immersive experiences: a hands-on sneaker cus-

tomization session led by artist Abrar Zenkawi, where guests had the chance to design their own pair in their unique style, followed by a Master the Art of Matcha session – an engaging activation where participants learned the craft of making matcha with the expert team at Match Matcha. These sessions were designed to encourage participants not just to move their bodies, but to “move their minds”– reflecting ASICS’ expanded mission of inspiring mental creativity alongside physical movement.

SNKR Store, operated by Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), has been a specialty sneaker destination in Kuwait since 2012. It is known for curating exclusive and limited-edition footwear from global brands. As a brand that thrives on blending fashion, functionality, and community, SNKR continues to push boundaries through unique brand collaborations which reflect its commitment to transforming retail spaces into hubs of creativity and personal expression.

Al-Kharafi wins equestrian league



Ali Al-Kharafi crowned the league champion.

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: Kuwait Club and national team rider Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi secured the championship of the fourth edition of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League for the 2024–2025 season, completing a remarkable “super hat-trick” of consecutive titles.

Al-Kharafi was awarded the championship shield during a crowning ceremony attended by key figures including the Federation’s Secretary-General and Olympic Committee member Ghazi Faisal Al-Jariwi, Secretary-General of Al-Masayel Equestrian Club Dr. Ibrahim Al-Hamoud, and jockey Sabah Ali Al-Sabah from the Sahara Equestrian Resort.

In the final round, held at Sahara Equestrian Resort in Subhan, Al-Kharafi claimed first place, ahead of Anaaz Al-Anaaz. With this result, Al-Kharafi’s total points rose to 570



Ghazi Al-Jariwi

in the overall standings. He was followed by Al-Masayel Club’s Abdullah Al-Awadhi with 457 points, while Kuwait Club’s Yara Al-Hunaidi came in third with 333 points.

Expressing his joy at clinching

his fourth straight league title, Al-Kharafi dedicated the victory to the Kuwait Equestrian Club and his family for their unwavering support. He reiterated his commitment to raising Kuwait’s name in international equestrian forums.

On the sidelines of the event, a press conference was held with participation from local clubs and sponsors. Secretary-General Ghazi Al-Jariwi announced that the 2025–2026 season will feature 13 major equestrian championships, supported by both public and private sectors.

Vice President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, Sheikh Yousef Mishal Al-Sabah, reaffirmed the federation’s commitment to supporting riders at all levels and highlighted the successful partnerships secured with private sector sponsors during the current season.

Young talent on display as Real Betis, Pro Football Academy clash in Kuwait



KUWAIT CITY, May 4: On Thursday evening, friendly football matches took place at the Hassan Abel Sports Center between the Pro Football

Academy and Real Betis for the 2013 and 2014 age groups, offering an enjoyable experience for all in attendance.



Top and above players preparing for the friendly matches.

Best of the Rest

Man United loses again: Manchester United slumped to a club record-extending 16th Premier League loss this season on Sunday, while Champions League-chasing Newcastle needed an 89th-minute penalty to salvage a 1-1 draw at Brighton.

United was beaten 4-3 at Brentford in a wild, end-to-end game played in between matches against Athletic Bilbao in the Europa League semifinals.

United manager Ruben Amorim fielded the club’s youngest ever Premier League lineup according to average age, with Europe clearly the priority this season ahead of improving his team’s woeful league position of 15th. United, on 39 points, is already certain to set its worst-ever total in the Premier League, as well as record its lowest finish.

More important for Amorim will be protecting the 3-0 lead over Bilbao from the first leg in Spain going into the return match at Old Trafford on Thursday.

One positive for United was the return from injury of winger Amad Diallo, who scored the third goal in stoppage time as the visitors came from 4-1 down but couldn’t find an equalizer.

A first-half goal by Brighton winger Yankuba Minteh - a former Newcastle player - looked like seeing off his old club, only for Alexander Isak to convert a late penalty.

Newcastle could have climbed to third place but now is in danger of being caught by teams below in the race for a top-five finish.

Newcastle is in fourth place and three points ahead of Chelsea, Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa.

Also Sunday, West Ham drew 1-1 with Tottenham, which is also in the Europa League semifinals and beat Norwegian team Bodø/Glimt 3-1 in the first leg on Thursday. (AP)

Nuggets dismantle Clippers in Game 7, move on to face OKC

Braun plays terrific defense on Harden

DENVER, May 4, (AP): Not this time.

Nikola Jokic got plenty of help from his teammates, and Denver’s scoring surge held up in a 120-101 blowout of the shellshocked Los Angeles Clippers in a Game 7 laughter on Saturday night.

The Nuggets led by as many as 35, and while the franchise’s biggest blowout in a win-or-go-home scenario won’t make up for last year when Denver blew a 20-point fourth-quarter lead over Minnesota at home in Game 7 of their Round 2 series, it certainly exorcised some of those demons.

“It feels good,” interim Nuggets coach David Adelman said, “but I also know we’re flying to O-K-C tomorrow.”

The No. 4 seed Nuggets advanced to take on the No. 1-seeded and well-rested Oklahoma City Thunder, which swept Memphis in the first round and has had a week off heading into the second-round series that begins Monday night.

When Adelman reminded a friend



Los Angeles Clippers forward Derrick Jones Jr., left, looks to pass the ball as Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, right, defends in the first half of Game 7 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Denver. (AP)

recently that the reward for surviving this gritty series with the Clippers was a date with the team that went an NBA-best 68-14, his buddy retored that what actually awaited the winner was a 72-14 team.

“OK, that’s right,” Adelman replied. “Appreciate that, bro.”

The Nuggets and Thunder split their season series 2-2, and if Denver can reproduce its effort from Saturday night, the next series could

be a tight one, too.

Jokic had 16 points, 10 rebounds, and eight assists in 33 minutes, but for a change, he was overshadowed by his teammates. Aaron Gordon led Denver with 22 points, Christian Braun had 21, Jamal Murray and Russell Westbrook chipped in 16 each, and Michael Porter Jr. scored 15.

“In playoffs, we know that everybody needs to step up, offensively, defensively, whatever, energy-wise. And everybody who plays needs to contribute something,” Jokic said. “It was special today, and the guys did that.”

Braun also played terrific defense on James Harden, who was held to 7 points on 2-of-8 shooting.

“Everybody behind me allowed me to guard him. But I think maybe the biggest part was Russ,” Braun said. “He’s played against James, he’s played with James, so he knows his game. ... The coaches trusted me tonight. We didn’t want to switch. They kept me on him all night. So, credit goes to those guys and the coaches.”

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 22 points, and Ivica Zubac had his quietest game of the series with

10 points.

“I don’t think this team was 30 points better than us,” Leonard said. “We saw that throughout the first six games of this series, but you’ve got to give them credit. They came out, ran hard in transition, got easy points, and made shots.”

Hanging over the Nuggets all season, one that included the firings of their head coach and their general manager, was their Game 7 fiasco in Round 2 last year just when it looked like they were primed to defend the franchise’s first NBA championship.

And after frittering away a 22-point fourth-quarter advantage in Game 4 of this series - only to be saved by the first buzzer-beating dunk in NBA playoff history, courtesy of Gordon - the Nuggets and Ball Arena crowd only grew more energized instead of anxious as the lead kept growing and the Clippers kept missing.

The Nuggets outscored LA 72-40 over the second and third quarters and blew this one open with a 17-0 run in the third quarter after Leonard started the second half with a 3-point-er to cut LA’s deficit to 58-50.

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NEWS



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus holds a trophy after winning the Madrid Open tennis final in Madrid, Spain. Sabalenka beat Coco Gauff 6-3, 7-6 to win her record-tying third Madrid Open and 20th career title. (AP)

Sports



Kuwait cricket women team.

A moment of pride for the team

Kuwait women’s team set to fly to Thailand for T20 World Cup Asia qualifiers

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The Kuwait Women’s National Cricket Team, led by captain Anna Sharif, is all set to depart for Thailand to participate in the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup Asia Qualifiers 2025. Before the main event, the team will compete in a Quadrangular Series from May 1st to 7th, featuring strong regional sides including UAE, Thailand, and Hong Kong, setting the stage for their qualifying campaign.

A heartfelt send-off ceremony was held at the Sulaibiya Cricket Ground, Kuwait’s home of cricket, where Kuwait Cricket Board President Haider Farman and Director General Sajid Ashraf shared messages of encouragement and belief in the squad’s talent and determination.

“It is a moment of pride for Kuwait Cricket to see our women’s team grow stronger with every international appearance. We believe in their potential and are confident they will make Kuwait proud,” said Kuwait Cricket Board

President Haider Farman.

He further added “Just like how the men’s team recently achieved success against higher-ranked opponents, we are equally optimistic about the women’s team’s preparation and spirit.”

Director General Kuwait Cricket Sajid Ashraf added “The entire cricketing fraternity in Kuwait stands behind our women’s team. Their dedication, discipline, and passion have brought them to this stage. Sometimes it takes ten years to reach that eleventh year of breakthrough success, and we believe the next 12 months belong to this remarkable team.”

Kuwait Women’s National Team Squad consists of Amna Sharif (Captain), Priyada Murali (Vice Captain), MariammaHyder, Khadija Khalil (WK), Zeefa Jilani, Shanti Balasubramanian, Maryam Omar, Siobhan Lee Gomez, Venora Shaina, Maria Jasvi, Bhavani, Suchitha D Sa (WK), Candice Jerica&Raelyn

Maria

The squad represents a blend of experience and emerging youth, embodying the spirit and resilience of Kuwait Cricket.

After a year of historic achievements with the men’s team, Head Coach Qasim Ali is now focused on replicating that success with the women’s side. He will be supported by Mohammad Aslam, Kuwait’s most successful men’s team captain, whose calm leadership and prior coaching experience with this squad bring significant value to the team’s preparations.

The team’s logistical and on-ground management will be led by Hasnain Arshad, a key figure in the development of women’s cricket in Kuwait.

Kuwait Cricket continues to push boundaries and inspire with its bold commitment to growing the game across all levels and genders.

Kuwait eyes glory, 10th Arab handball champ’ship begins

KUWAIT CITY, May 4: The 10th edition of the Arab Men’s Handball Championship officially begins today at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall in Sabah Al-Salem. The tournament, running through May 11, features nine participating teams divided into three groups:

Group A: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq
Group B: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia

Group C: Kuwait, UAE, Morocco
According to tournament regulations, the top team from each group and the best second-placed team will qualify for the semi-finals.

The championship opens with three first-round clashes:

Iraq vs. Bahrain at 3:00 pm
Qatar vs. Saudi Arabia at 5:00 pm
Kuwait vs. Morocco at 7:00 pm

The second and third rounds of the preliminary stage will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively.

Tournament Director and Secretary General of the Kuwait Handball Association, Qaid Al-Adwani, urged fans to rally behind the national team in its first match of the tournament.

“We are proud to host the 10th Arab Men’s Handball Championship on Kuwaiti soil once again,” Al-Adwani said. “This event reflects the unwavering support of our political leadership, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Public Authority for Sports.”

He emphasized the national team’s recent achievements and the importance of fan support ahead of the upcoming Asian Championship, which will serve as the qualifier for the 2027 World Cup, also to be hosted by Kuwait.

Al-Adwani also praised Kuwait’s long-standing legacy in organizing major regional and continental sports events. He thanked the organizing committees for their dedicated efforts over the past weeks and expressed his hope for a successful and well-run tournament.

This is the first Arab Men’s Handball Championship since 2002. Past



Tournament Director and Secretary General of the Kuwait Handball Association, Qaid Al-Adwani.



Kuwaiti players gearing up for the championship.

winners include:

Egypt: 1975, 1977; Kuwait: 1979, 1988; Tunisia: 1986, 1993; Saudi Arabia: 1988; Algeria: 2000; Bahrain: 2002

Kuwait aims to recapture glory as the championship returns to the “Land of Friendship and Peace.”

Unbeaten Al-Ahli wins maiden Asian Champions League title

Jeddah team defeats Kawasaki at home

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, May 4, (AP): Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia won its first AFC Champions League Elite title after beating Kawasaki Frontale of Japan 2-0 in the final.

The star-studded Jeddah team, playing at home in front of 60,000 fans at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium, deserved what was a comfortable victory and completed an unbeaten tournament.

First-half goals from Galeno and Franck Kessie put the two-time beaten finalist in control against the five-time Japanese champion.

Al-Ahli was on top early and made the breakthrough after 35 minutes. Roberto Firmino fed Galeno outside the area and the Brazilian winger, signed from Porto in January for around \$55 million, curled a shot into the top corner.

Three minutes before the break, Firmino, who went on to be named as the tournament’s most valuable player, crossed from the right for Kessie, and the former AC Milan and Barcelona midfielder headed home from close range.

Kawasaki, which knocked out Cristiano Ronaldo’s Al-Nassr in the semifinals to reach its first final, pressured after the restart but struggled to create clear chances against a team full of big-game experience.

Firmino, signed from Liverpool in 2023, is a past UEFA Champions



Al-Ahli’s Roberto Firmino holds up the trophy as celebrate with his teammates at the end of the AFC Champions League Elite final soccer match between Kawasaki Frontale and Al-Ahli at Alinma Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

League winner, as are team-mates Riyadh Mahrez and Edouard Mendy, who lifted the trophy with Manchester City and Chelsea respectively.

Mahrez, with nine goals in the tournament, came close to adding a third late in the final, firing just wide. The home fans were already cel-

ebrating.

“We are so proud. Once we knew that the final eight would be in Jeddah, it was our goal to be champions in front of our fans,” Al-Ahli goalkeeper Mendy said.

“Since I came here 18 months ago, they have supported us so

much. As I said when I signed, it was to make history, to win trophies and to make this club as big as it was before.”

Al-Ahli is the third Saudi club to win the Champions League after Jeddah rival Al-Ittihad and Riyadh’s Al-Hilal.

Madrid wins again to trail Barcelona by 4 points ahead of ‘clasico’

MADRID, May 4, (AP): Kylian Mbappé scored in each half as Real Madrid held on to beat Celta Vigo 3-2 on Sunday to keep pace with Barcelona in the Spanish league title race.

Arda Güler also scored for Madrid, which opened a 3-0 lead early in the second half but saw Celta get back into the game toward the end of the match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

Celta had a couple of great chances to complete its comeback, including a shot by Pablo Durán that stopped just short of the goal line after a deflection by Madrid goal-

keeper Thibaut Courtois in the 78th minute. Courtois had to make a couple of saves near the end to secure the win.

The victory moved Madrid back within four points of leader Barcelona ahead of the teams’ last “clasico” of the season next Sunday in Barcelona.

The Catalan club came from behind to defeat last-placed Valladolid 2-1 on Saturday, when coach Hansi Flick rested most of the team’s regular starters ahead of its Champions League semifinal match at Inter Milan on Tuesday. Barcelona and Inter drew 3-3 in the first leg.

Güler put Madrid ahead with a shot into the top corner

in the 33rd, and Mbappé scored in the 39th - also finding the top corner - and in a breakaway in the 48th. The France star hadn’t scored in the league since March.

The match appeared under control until Javi Rodriguez pulled the visitors closer in the 69th and Williot Swedberg scored Celta’s second goal in the 76th.

A couple of minutes later, Durán’s shot agonizingly stopped just in front of the goal line after the ball picked up some backspin as it struck Courtois.

“It was a shame,” Celta striker Borja Iglesias said. “We had our chances. That shot by Pablo almost went in. It

wasn’t meant to be.”

Celta, which was coming off a 3-0 win over Villarreal, stayed in seventh place.

There were a few jeers from the Bernabeu crowd as Madrid struggled to hold on to its lead late in the game.

It was the fourth straight league win for Madrid, which last Saturday lost the Copa del Rey final to Barcelona and last month was eliminated by Arsenal in the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

Forward Rodrygo was not included in the squad because of illness.