



Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Kuwait is out of the GCC tourism openness trend

FIRST, I want to acknowledge the extensive steps taken to enhance Kuwait's openness. The new residency law undoubtedly has several positive aspects, but it is important to expedite the preparation of its executive regulations to ensure its implementation.

However, there are still some drawbacks that prevent the openness from being fully realized. I present these observations to His Excellency the Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Youssef Al-Sabah, whose commendable efforts in various fields are widely recognized. His leadership is essential for completing Kuwait's civilized image and ensuring that it keeps pace with its GCC

counterparts. The GCC countries have taken steady steps towards openness and economic revitalization through the enactment of modern residency laws.

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Justice Minister heads to
Geneva for rights review



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait will be presenting Kuwait's report at the 49th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, said a statement on Monday.

The Ministry of Justice revealed in a statement that Minister Al-Sumait left the country today, heading to Geneva, Switzerland, to brief the UPR on Kuwait's efforts to bolster human rights via highlighting the state's legislative and legal efforts within this regard.

Online posts trigger Salmiya sting

No papers, no stay as 23 expats face deportation

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The Residency Affairs Investigation General Department at the Interior Ministry continued its intensive security campaign against those who violated the Residency and Labor laws.

The recent campaign led to the arrest of 23 individuals proven to have violated the abovementioned laws.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed the campaign is part of the ongoing security efforts to arrest those who violated the Residency and Labor laws in various governorates, in addition to the close monitoring of social media posts.

Acting on a tip-off about the gathering of illegal workers in Salmiya, the Residency Affairs Investigation General Department immediately instructed the Violators Apprehension Unit in Hawally Governorate to deal with the report and head to the location; where 23 individuals were arrested -- 19 under Article 20 visa (domestic workers) and four under Article 18 (private sector workers).

A security source confirmed that expatriates proven to have violated the Residency and Labor laws are deported.



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

A toppled signboard lies in ruin as violent winds and a blinding dust storm tore through Kuwait Sunday evening, with sudden bursts of rain adding to the night's turbulent weather.

Weather madness to continue through
Friday as Sarayat keeps Kuwait on edge

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Kuwait is expected to be hit by strong northwesterly winds starting Monday evening, with gusts exceeding 60 km/h, according to the Meteorology Department.

Acting Director Dharar Al-Ali said the winds will reduce horizontal visibility in some areas and cause sea waves to rise above six feet. The blustery conditions are forecast to persist through Friday evening.

"This period, known as the 'Sarayat', is marked by unstable and rapidly changing weather," Al-Ali said.

On Sunday evening, winds reached over 70 km/h, with

gusts topping 100 km/h in northern regions. Visibility in some areas dropped to less than 1,000 meters and even to zero in places-he added.

Increased low and mid-level cloud cover, including intermittent cumulus clouds and scattered thunderstorms, was also reported. These conditions were attributed to an extension of a thermal low pressure system.

Al-Ali urged motorists to exercise caution on highways and advised seafarers to remain alert to rising waves, encouraging the public to follow updates via the department's official website, mobile app, and social media channels.

Kuwait, Bahrain discuss strategic
digital and maritime cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan met on Sunday with visiting Bahraini Minister of Communication and Transport Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, in the presence of Minister State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar and some government officials.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) said the meeting featured Director General of Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) Sheikh Khaled Al-Salem Al-Sabah, MPW Deputy Eid Al-Rasheedy and Director-General of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport Khaled Al-Osaimi touched upon means of enhancing cooperation in digital transformation, technical expertise exchange, and ports linkage.

The Bahraini side expressed its desire to sign a memorandum of understanding in maritime linkage, it added.

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KUNA photo

Kuwait's Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan meets with Bahraini Minister of Communication and Transport Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, in the presence of Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar.

Hope replaces fear in inclusive transition

New Syria prioritizes unity, dialogue
over revenge: spokesperson Al-Atassi

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Official spokesperson and member of the Syrian National Dialogue Committee Huda Al-Atassi hinted on what could be on the mind of every Syrian and Arab citizen regarding the fate of Syria under the new regime led by interim President Ahmed Al-Sharaa, who called for the formation of the committee that is composed of a select group of educated individuals in various fields, regardless of affiliation.

Al-Atassi explained that although 80 percent of the committee members are Sunnis; its primary concerns are dialogue and bringing together the views of all components of the Syrian people, citing the committee's meeting with the Alawites as evidence.

She revealed that the issue of Qatari gas pipelines passing through Syrian territory to Europe is on the negotiation table, indicating that the new regime believes the current period is best suited to the absence of a prime minister in Syria.

On rumors about a retaliatory response by the new regime against Bashar Al-Assad's supporters, Atassi categorically denied this; disclosing that the new regime demanded they surrender their weapons and gave them a month to sign pledges to cease violence. She stated that during the first two months of the conquest, Syria witnessed no problems or bloodshed.

She went on to say that she could hardly believe the position of the Druze minority, especially since more than 90 percent of them refuse to submit to the Druze of Israel, as some of them have been deceived. She pointed out there are hidden external hands working to incite instability and chaos in the country by Al-Assad and his men who plundered the Syrian people's wealth.

Following is an excerpt of the interview:

Question: To begin with, as a member and official spokesperson for the National Dialogue Committee, has the Syrian presidency communicated with the com-



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

Huda Al-Atassi, spokesperson for the Syrian National Dialogue Committee, shares insights on Syria's transitional phase during an exclusive interview.

mittee or was its formation merely a decorative gesture?

Answer: The committee was formed through a presidential decree issued by the President of the Republic on Feb 8, 2025. It comprises of seven members. Naturally, its presence is not merely decorative. Rather, the presidency is keen on maintaining constant communication with the committee, especially since the purpose its purpose is not luxury; as it was created due to the circumstances that Syria has been experiencing since the end of 2024.

Q: Was the inclusion of all components of Syrian society in the National Dialogue Committee taken into account, or was the selection of trustworthy individuals?

A: When forming the committee, consideration was given to including members with competence, experience and intellectual diversity; not sectarianism. Therefore, each member of the committee comes from a cultural background -- whether from civil society or from figures interested in interfaith dialogue. It includes writers, thinkers and scholars in Medicine, Law and Construction.

Q: Are there any Shia representative?

A: The Shias were not included in the committee, as the President did not intend for this committee to be comprised of various sects. He focused on the committee being composed of intellectually educated elites from various fields. We communicate with everyone.

Q: It seems that most of the members of the National Dialogue Committee are Sunnis?

A: Yes, most of them are Sunnis.

Q: What is their percentage, approximately?

A: Around 80 percent. Let me clarify that one of the committee's goals is to communicate with all segments and components of Syrian society. It was not formed from all components, lest it be described as a quota committee. Syria is for everyone and for all its components, based on competence; not religious, ideological or intellectual affiliations.

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DGCA secures leaner deal for
weather system maintenance

By Mohammed Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: According to informed sources, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) has approved the extension of a contract with a company to provide maintenance to ensure the continuous delivery of high-quality data from the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) at a cost of KD 216,700.

They explained that the extension of the current contract resulted in savings of over 80 percent compared to the original contract cost.

SAB requested that the Central Agen-

cy for Public Tenders (CAPT) be informed of the total value of the extension after the cost reduction. The original contract, previously approved by CAPT, was valued at KD 396,000, and the Ministry of Finance has also approved the revised cost for the contract extension.

After reviewing the contract documents and following up on previous inquiries, SAB raised no objection to extending the contract with the company for KD 216,700, down from the original amount, for a one-year period from January 2, 2025, to January 2026.

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Day by Day

IN countries around the world, ambassadors are carefully chosen based on the nature of the country's relationship with the host country. When relations are strained, the need for a highly intelligent and diplomatic ambassador becomes crucial, someone who knows how to communicate well and take thoughtful action to rebuild ties and restore cooperation between the two countries to the desired level.

An ambassador should not be lazy or divisive by creating more enemies than allies.

In developed nations, ambassadorial candidates undergo rigorous evaluation and multiple stages of scrutiny to ensure they possess the competence, insight, and skill to handle diplomatic challenges. Their role is to prevent crises and serve as a bridge between officials in both countries to strengthen mutual relations.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



2 Poland seeks
diversification of
multi-pronged ties
with Kuwait



8 Gulf Bank concludes
10th Edition of 'Ajal'
Talent Development
Program



10 Kuwait Finance
House receives
Banking Excellence
Award

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:36	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:03	Maghrib ..	18:26
Zohr	11:45	Isha	19:51

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-50 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Rather hot to mild with light to moderate northwest-

Weather					
erly wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.		Jahra	43	27	
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Failaka Island	35	31
			Salmiyah	35	28
			Ahmadi	36	24
			Jal Aliyah	41	22
			Nuwaisib	36	29
Kuwait Airport	40	30	Wafra	40	26
Abdaly	43	28			
Bubvan	36	30			

Kuwait chairs Arab Media Excellence Award jury meeting

Rise in use of social media by youths tops agenda

CAIRO, May 5, (KUNA): The Arab Media Excellence Award jury meeting, organized by the Arab League's Media and Communications Sector and chaired by Kuwait (the award's sponsor), kicked off on Monday in Cairo.

In a speech, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Media and Communications Sector, Ambassador Ahmad Rashid Khatatbi, said that this meeting would examine nominations received from member states and organizations performing media functions, and select the most distinguished nominations following the stipulated criteria and conditions and the principles of transparency and integrity.

This session, held under the theme "Arab Youth and New Media," reflected the widespread use of social media and its diverse applications in various productive, professional, service, and media sectors, particularly among young people, Khatatbi added.



KUNA photo

The meeting in progress.

He also noted that this year's Arab Media Excellence Award came in light of the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, which has claimed the lives of thousands, in addition to the

wounded, disabled, and missing, and has caused a catastrophic humanitarian situation due to the destruction, starvation, and sabotage of essential facilities, especially health, educational, and social in-

stitutions.

Khatatbi pointed out the total number of nominations received by the General Secretariat of the Arab League reached approximately (145) works, including television, radio, newspaper and digital works, where the number of nominated works in the television category reached (30), (37) radio works, (43) newspaper works and (31) digital works.

In turn, the meeting's chair, the head of Al-Arabiya TV in Kuwait, Talal Al-Haifi, expressed his gratitude to all contributors to the success of this award, presented by Kuwait under the auspices of the League of Arab States.

The Arab Media Excellence Award was launched in 2015 under Resolution No. (409) of the Council of Arab Information Ministers issued in its (46) session. It aims to highlight distinguished media models in the Arab world and their contributions to dealing with issues of concern to the Arab nation.



Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Top and above: Pictures taken at the event

'Audit liberty basic pillar of democracy, anti-graft fight'

Seminar seeks transparency in accountability: Al-Mazrouei

AMMAN, May 5, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Kuwait State Audit Bureau (SAB) Yousef Al-Mazrouei affirmed on Monday that the independence of supreme audit institutions is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring that public oversight efforts provide meaningful value to both citizens and society.

This came in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the sidelines of the 3rd annual seminar on the independence of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI).

The two-day event, which kicked off earlier today in Amman, Jordan, is organized by the Jordan Audit Bureau and brings together around 40 participants, including heads of Arab audit institutions and parliamentarians from Jordan and other Arab countries.

In his statement, Al-Mazrouei underlined the importance of institutional independence for the effective functioning of oversight bodies.

He noted that the opening statements by the officials at the seminar emphasized the vital role of supreme audit institutions in Arab states and the importance of ensuring they carry out their mandates with full authority.

He pointed out that this is the third consecutive year the seminar is being held, underscoring continued efforts to strengthen the independence of audit

institutions and promote effective cooperation with parliaments in member countries of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI).

He said the seminar's agenda includes in-depth discussions on the independence of supreme audit institutions and is expected to produce recommendations that reaffirm their autonomy in accordance with the legal, regulatory, and parliamentary frameworks of each country.

Al-Mazrouei mentioned that the seminar also aims to explore informal factors that may impact institutional independence across the region, facilitate the exchange of experiences, and review initiatives by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Development Initiative related to audit body independence.



Al-Mazrouei

He pointed out that the seminar will also feature presentations on the global project on informal influences, as well as the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on public trust and its connection to institutional independence. It will further address the identification of informal factors in the INTOSAI context.

He added that participants will discuss mechanisms for rapid advocacy in support of independence, cooperation between audit institutions and

civil society organizations, and support for legal units within supreme audit bodies.

Al-Mazrouei praised the Jordanian Audit Bureau for its warm hospitality, well-organized event, and facilitation of all necessary arrangements for participants.

Kuwait participated in the 3rd annual seminar on the independence of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) in the Arab Region, organized by the Jordanian Audit Bureau in cooperation with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), Monday.

During his opening speech, Jordanian Senate President Faisal Al-Fayez pointed out the importance of SAIs as the backbone of good governance to ensure compliance with laws and administrative standards.

He added that there are many challenges that may weaken their effectiveness, including political or executive interference in their work which limits their ability to make impartial decisions.

For his part, Jordanian Audit Bureau President Dr. Radhi Al-Hamadeen said in a similar speech that the independence of SAIs is a basic pillar of a good democracy and a guarantee for combatting corruption on all levels.

About 40 officials from Arab countries and Arab SAIs will discuss and exchange ideas to support the independence and empowerment of SAIs in their work, in addition to what has been presented.

Participating in the meeting from Kuwait was Undersecretary of the Kuwait State Audit Bureau (SAB) Yousef Al-Mazrouei.

Ideal destination: AACC President

Kuwait seeks to ramp up investments in Austria: KCCI

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) held talks on Monday with a visiting Austrian business delegation, in which opportunities to ramp up Kuwaiti investments in Vienna was the core matter discussed.

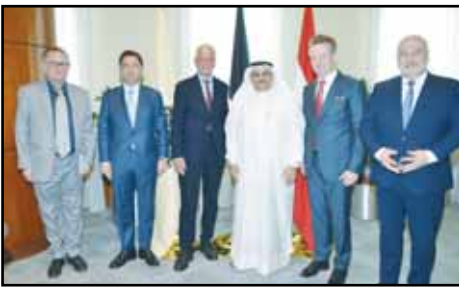
The talks with the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC), led by its president Dr. Werner Fasslabend, highlighted the growing opportunities for investment in Austria, a KCCI statement underlined, citing Vienna as the "ideal destination" for investment.

It went on to highlight the rapid progress seen in Kuwait's relations with Austria, where a spate of re-

cent high-profile visits exchanged between both sides had helped propel ties to greater levels, it added.

The statement mentioned the meteoric advancements Kuwait has witnessed across a plethora of fields, running the gamut from healthcare and education to finance technology, all of which are integral components of Kuwait's 2035 development vision, it said.

On bilateral ties, the AACC chief agreed that relations have grown in proximity as of late, saying that Austria's "strategic location" has allowed it to morph into a technological and industrial hub, added the statement.



Visiting Austrian delegation with KCCI officials

Other Voices

Citizenship, speed bumps, and Supreme Council role

By Ahmad alsarraf

Despite the recent toughening of penalties, the traffic situation in Kuwait continues to suffer from chronic chaos, a problem deeply rooted in years of neglect.

At its core, the issue is ethical, and its solution must start with education from a young age. Financial penalties and imprisonment alone cannot address the root cause. Beyond the anxiety we experience on the roads, particularly on highways, due to reckless drivers committing violations such as wrongful overtaking, speeding, sudden lane changes, and failing to signal before turning left or right, there is the ongoing presence of dilapidated vehicles lacking proper tail lights.

This situation highlights the lack of professionalism in the vehicle inspection department, as well as the failure to enforce international inspection standards. These requirements should extend beyond simple checks on a vehicle's chassis number, tail lights, and exhaust emissions. They must also include assessments of the vehicle's overall condition based on a num-



alsarraf

ber of factors such as ensuring it is free of dents, checking its road-worthiness, testing brake performance, and evaluating tire quality, all of which are well understood by traffic experts.

Meanwhile, when visiting any public sector hospital or park, we are immediately confronted by the extent of negligence and the widespread parking violations, with little attention paid to the issue despite its serious consequences.

Many people irresponsibly park their cars behind others, blocking entrances and exits. This is often due to reluctance to use multi-level parking facilities or the lack of police officers assigned to issue fines in these areas.

To address this, it is essential to seriously consider the establishment of companies specifically tasked with issuing traffic violation tickets in various locations. Priority should be given to employing Kuwaiti retirees, offering them a fair commission or wage for their work. These companies could not only provide a valuable source of revenue for the state treasury but also significantly reduce the number of parking violations, especially in disabled parking spaces. This would free up police officers to focus on more important security matters.

It may also be appropriate to grant these companies the authority to issue tickets to street vendors, given the potential danger their activities pose to public health and the obstruction they cause to traffic.

In another matter, I would like to once again inquire about the role of the so-called "Supreme Traffic Council," which we often hear about but know little about its actual involvement in controlling traffic, improving road conditions, or reducing accidents. The only update we receive is that it meets every three months.

It may be time to consider dissolving the Supreme Traffic Council, with full respect for its members, or granting them more authority and restructuring its responsibilities to allow it to play a more effective role.

Finally, the decisions of the Nationality Verification Committee have revealed that many individuals obtained citizenship through connections, such as the intervention of a Member of Parliament or others, without meeting any of the legal requirements.

This situation is similar to the issue of unnecessary speed bumps. In some residential areas, we find streets without schools or shops, yet an excessive number of speed bumps are installed. The reason? Homeowners often contact a traffic officer or a friend at the Ministry of Public Works to have speed bumps installed in front of their homes. We hope the General Traffic Department will consider removing these unnecessary speed bumps, which are disproportionately abundant compared to any other country.

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Poland seeks diversification of multi-pronged ties with Kuwait

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Polish Ambassador to Kuwait Michał Cholewa praised the depth of Polish-Kuwaiti relations, stressing that his country values the strong friendship with the State of Kuwait and aspires to expand areas of cooperation; particularly in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, which opens up broad horizons for partnership in different fields like agriculture, technology, construction and medicine.

Cholewa made the statement during the celebration that the Polish Embassy organized recently on the occasion of Poland's National Day and Constitution Day.

Present at the event were Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Dr. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, and a number of senior officials, diplomats and friends of Poland.

In his speech, Cholewa lauded the growing relationship between the two countries; as manifested in Kuwait's recent hosting of important political consultations, and the high-level meeting between Polish President Andrzej Sebastian Duda and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

He affirmed the convergence of views between the two sides on many international issues, particularly in terms of respecting sovereignty and international law.

He also announced the resumption of

direct flights between Kuwait and Krakow in June -- three weekly flights, as well as the resumption of student and cultural exchange programs, including the return of Polish students to study Arabic at Kuwait University and the launch of a new training program for Kuwaiti professionals at the Polish Naval Academy.

During the celebration, he highlighted the significance of May 3 in Polish history as the date of the adoption of the first modern constitution in Europe in 1791 and the second in the world after the American Constitution. He said this event established the values of freedom, human rights and the modern political system that Poland has been proud of up to this day. He also cited the one thousandth anniversary of the coronation of the first Polish king, Boleslaw the Brave, marking the birth of the internationally recognized state of Poland.

He added "despite global challenges, we believe that true friendship -- as the Arab proverb goes -- is priceless. Thus, we cherish our deep-rooted relations with the State of Kuwait."

Concluding his speech, he affirmed that he is proud of the political and economic growth of Poland; emphasizing that international cooperation is the cornerstone of his country's stability and prosperity. He reiterated his commitment to work with partners like Kuwait for a more secure and stable world.

The celebration featured traditional Polish musical performances, while all those who attended the event enjoyed a variety of dishes like dumplings and fudge, and learned about Polish products.

Capital Governorate panel nods allocation of plots for 'entities'

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The Capital Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, held its 15th meeting for the third legislative term on Monday.

During the meeting, the committee approved the following:

■ Renewal of the decision to allocate land for the Family Court building in the Capital Governorate -- Granada, Block Three -- measuring 5,000 square meters;

■ Allocate 4,150 square meters for parking space and amendment of boundaries to ensure it does not conflict with the Jahra Road right-of-way;

■ Request of the Interior Ministry to allocate a portion of the ministry's site in

Block 1G measuring 3,000 square meters for the main transformer station of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy;

■ Amendment of the decision of the Municipal Council to accept a donation from a real estate company for the construction of a multi-storey parking building and to beautify the adjacent public squares in Sharq, Block Seven.

Meanwhile, the committee retained on its agenda the proposal of member Abdullatif Al-Da'i to temporarily allocate a walkway in Kaifan, Block Seven until the Ministry of Public Works invites the Maintenance Engineering Sector, Ministry of Interior, Organization and Infrastructure Department at the Municipality and the Capital Governorate Municipality branch to a meeting in order to take a decision in this regard.

Iran, Khor Abdullah and the 'Al-Durra' field of oil

"PRECISE in his analysis, eloquent in his reasoning, yet fiercely direct on the X platform - this is how former parliamentarian Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali has chosen his political approach and media style. He is known for his frankness and use of his popular Iraqi dialect", columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"After the media battles of the 1990s, which culminated in the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Al-Sheikh Ali shifted his focus to the X space (formerly Twitter), where he now shares controversial and attention-grabbing posts. These posts reflect his firm convictions, solid positions, and bold opinions.

"On April 25, 2025, Al-Sheikh Ali posted on his X account: "Disaster! (Not everything that is known should be said)!"

"Some people, believing themselves to be patriotic and concerned for Iraq, ask me about the Federal Court's decision to annul the Khor Abdullah Agreement.

"This misguided individual, influenced by media narratives, does not realize that the decision was written by Iran and dictated to our Federal Court as an act of retaliation against Kuwait, linked to the ongoing dispute over the Durra gas field!"

"Brother Faiq is a seasoned politician who is sharp in his posts and even sharper in his comments. We must pause to consider his statement about Khor Abdullah and the Durra field, analyze the timing of the post, and reflect on Iran's role in the ongoing discourse between Iraq and Kuwait.

"Since returning to Iraq and entering the parliamentary arena, Sheikh Ali has been relentless in his battle against Iran, confronting Tehran's schemes in Baghdad and the Arab region.

"US President Kennedy once said, "Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan."

"For Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali, victory against Saddam Hussein belongs to Iraq, its people, and the nation as a whole; he does not claim it for himself.

"As for defeat, he refuses to acknowledge it before Tehran. He shares with the Iraqi people, and with the young men and women of the October Revolution, the responsibility for securing a new victory over Iran after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. This victory was crucial in resisting the Iranian mullahs' efforts to infiltrate and dominate Iraq's political circles.

"Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali is deeply and sincerely pained by his voluntary exile, which came after the announcement by the mullahs' Iranian regime that his blood was permissible to be shed in Iraq. He is now mobilizing his intellectual, political, and media resources to expose Tehran's hegemony in the Arab region. This has made him sharp-minded and ready for any confrontation in the X space, using his popular Iraqi dialect to counter the allegations of the Iranian regime. He also uses various media platforms, including television, to amplify his message.

"As a lawyer, Sheikh Ali views Iran with a clear and realistic perspective, perhaps the most accurate description of the Iranian scene: a group of wolves with human faces that see Iraq as political prey and its people subjected to countless violations, hunted, oppressed, and exploited repeatedly.

"What is certain is that Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali bases his information and analyses on Khor Abdullah and the Durra oil field on well-sourced data that deserves careful consideration, scrutiny, and explanation. He is not speaking recklessly when he highlights these issues with such political depth.

"While we may not fully grasp the impact and significance of his sharp post and its implications for Iran today, it undoubtedly exposed Tehran's plot against both Iraq and his second homeland, Kuwait. This post has undeniably enhanced Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali's political credentials, far exceeding anything Iran had anticipated.

"Faiq Al-Sheikh Ali is not interested in spreading illusions or leading the Iraqi people into becoming victims. He is a politician who can distinguish between a difficult present, a promising future, and the dangers of empty flattery."

Also:

"The Kuwaiti government appears to have two faces. In the regular weekly Cabinet meetings, ministers sit next to each other as though they are at a casual gathering, rather than a formal working session where important issues, decisions, reports, discussions, and differing opinions are supposed to take place", Kuwaiti Journalist **Hasan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"So, are decisions made through voting, or do ministers simply agree, saying "Yes, Your Excellency"? After the decisions to revoke citizenship, does anything meaningful follow?"

"On the governmental side, this is the situation, but on the press side, the story is different. The headlines the following day about the Cabinet meeting have no relation to what actually transpired in the meeting. Newspapers publish "manchettes" that are completely disconnected from the previ-

ous day's Cabinet session. Does Kuwait have two governments? One that drafts projects and laws, and another that holds weekly meetings where ministers exchange greetings, smiles, and polite laughter?"

"Based on this, I see no reason to waste ministers' time in weekly meetings that do not produce decisions, announce final accounts, or provide reports on the state's financial status. Perhaps in some countries, there are two governments, one of which is the "hidden government" that is made up of technical and professional officials who conduct studies, prepare projects and laws, draft decisions, and refer them to the Cabinet for approval, postponement, or rejection.

"We therefore do not see any real outcomes from Cabinet sessions. Most decisions are pre-made and, in many cases, not suitable for implementation, as they are supposed to have been thoroughly reviewed, examined, and studied, taking into account their financial, legal, political, and social implications, as well as their impact on the citizens.

"We read in the newspapers about projects like railway, tourism, new housing areas, and more, but we never hear such topics being discussed in Cabinet meetings. This leads citizens to believe that the Cabinet holds its meetings on a distant island, far removed from the borders of Kuwait.

"It is fine if ministers spend time by the poolside or on an island beach, reading reports prepared by technical committees, but citizens should not be kept in the dark about what is happening in their country. Transparency is essential.

"Citizens are partners in the state, and there should be no secrecy in a country that operates under a constitution and rule of law. They will bear the consequences of those decisions. Again, citizens are partners, and transparency is essential."

□ □ □

"The cooperative community is anticipating the release of the new Cooperative Law with a mix of both concern and hope. The hope is that it will deliver long-awaited reforms, particularly in the process of electing cooperative society boards, a topic that has sparked widespread public debate given its direct influence on the future of the co-operative sector", Financial Auditor at the Cooperative Sector of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies **Yousef Saif** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Since the inception of cooperative work, the election system has been based on selecting nine board members for each cooperative society. Imagine that ... Nine members, yet voters are now limited to casting just a single vote. Experience has shown that this model no longer suits the current stage, let alone the future.

"Nine members mean nine different directions, nine opinions, and often nine conflicting interests. The outcome? Disagreements over decisions, internal conflicts, media battles, defamation campaigns, and factional mobilization that benefit neither the shareholders, who simply want quality services and fair prices, nor the oversight bodies working to implement sound policies and procedures for the public good.

"This multiplicity has become a liability rather than an asset, and is not at all in the interest of the cooperative society.

It has weakened the administrative structure, sidelined the roles of general managers, deputies, and department heads, and allowed the board to dominate every detail,

even the smallest operational matters, creating a chaotic environment where opportunists can easily thrive.

"Here, I present my clear opinion: the better alternative is a system in which a single president is elected to lead the cooperative society. This president would carry full and direct responsibility for management, wield comprehensive authority, and be held accountable by both the general assembly and the relevant oversight bodies.

"The benefits of this system include clarity in decision-making, increased agility, and faster execution. It would restore the proper role of the administrative staff, enabling them to work effectively without interference from board committees or internal conflicts. Most importantly, it would establish a clear single point of contact", someone who can be engaged with, evaluated, and held directly accountable.

"Adopting this model would not only lead to improved administrative outcomes but also significantly reduce costs. The current system with nine board members costs each cooperative society around KD 81,000 annually (KD 9,000 per member). With 79 co-operatives and unions involving more than 700 board members, the financial burden is enormous. In contrast, under a single-president model, even if the compensation were increased to KD 40,000 or KD 50,000, it would still be more economical and far more efficient than maintaining a nine-member board."

Compiled by **Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty**



Khaled Al-Tarrah



Yousef Saif

Lawyer's arrest leads to seizure of various drugs

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced on Sunday foiling an attempt to smuggle a big narcotic shipment coming from the UK.

In a statement, the ministry added that the shipping containing 50,000 capsules of prohibited Lyrica, three kg of hashish and four kg of suspected narcotic substance has been seized.

The seizure done in joint coordination with the General Administration for Drug and the General Administration of Customs came in completion of the current investigations in the Case No. 905/2025, which earlier led to the arrest of the accused, a lawyer, with two persons, it stated.

The accused, the lawyer, provided the General Administration for Drug staff with the waybill seized belonging to a fugitive Kuwaiti, the main accused in the case, who sent the shipment to the country and is now staying in the UK, it noted.

There are three arrest warrants issued against this fugitive accused, in addition to a five-year absentia sentence, it pointed out.

The fugitive was planning to distribute these drugs among youths inside the country,



Al-Seyassah photo

Drug pills neatly packed in plastic bags.

in cooperation with some people, it revealed. The Ministry affirmed that security men continue their efforts to arrest the rest

of those accused and pursue the fugitive through accredited international legal channels, it affirmed.



KFF photo

Damage caused by the fire.

No casualties in Hawally residential building fire

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Fire broke out inside an apartment in a residential building located in Hawally on Sunday afternoon. No casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Hawally and Salmiya fire stations rushed to the location after receiving information about the fire, and extinguished the fire before it spread further.

Selling stolen diesel

Hi-tech traffic radars trap speeding Jahra motorists

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: A recent traffic campaign conducted by the Jahra Traffic Patrol Department led to the issuance of 136 speeding citations and the arrest of eight juveniles for driving without a license, reports Al-Anba daily.

Modern radar technology was utilized in this campaign to accurately detect and document speeding violations.

According to a security source, the campaign covered Saad Al-Abdullah, Taima and Naem; as well as the external roads. He said this is part of the strategy of the General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry to instill traffic discipline and reduce road accidents.

"The use of modern radar systems is vital in accurately identifying speeding violations and enhancing road safety," the source stated; adding that similar surprise and intensified campaigns will continue in different parts of the country.

The source urged all motorists to strictly comply with the Traffic Law, including the speed limits; stressing that road safety is a collective responsibility to protect lives.

□ □ □

Diesel thieves gang held: Jahra detectives arrested a gang involved in stealing diesel and selling it illegally through a black market operation, reports Al-Anba daily.

The arrests took place in Abdally, where the stolen diesel was recovered.

According to a security source, North Jahra detectives acted on a tip regarding an expatriate who was illegally filling and supplying diesel to various companies.

The suspect was apprehended and confessed during interrogation that he was diverting half of the diesel shipment intended for official fuel stations and selling it for profit. He also provided details about his accomplices, who were later identified and arrested.

Authorities confirmed that legal measures are being taken against all those involved, affirming that intensified security campaigns will continue to apprehend those exploiting public resources and violating the law.

□ □ □

Kuwaitis in judiciary: Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait recently issued Decision No. 271/2025 to appoint 103 Kuwaitis to the position of "Public Prosecutor (Class C)" in the Public Prosecution Office. Following the issuance of the decision, the Public Prosecution announced that the oath-taking ceremony will be held at 10:30am on Tuesday, May 6 at the theater of the new Palace of Justice, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Justice, the candidates were appointed after verifying that they met all necessary conditions and requirements. The decision is in line with the ministry's efforts to strengthen national legal teams and support the Public Prosecution in fulfilling its judicial responsibilities, in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the affairs of the members of the Public Prosecution Office.

The statement noted that the appointments were based on recommendations of the Personnel Affairs Committee, after coordinating with the relevant authorities and in compliance with approved regulations governing the judicial structure.

Grocer assaulted, robbed

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Jahra detectives are looking for an unidentified individual who assaulted an expatriate worker at a mobile grocery store and deliberately destroyed food supplies, reports Al-Anba daily.

The victim told police that the suspect was driving a black van without a plate number.

The incident, filed as significant assault and intentional destruction case classified as a misdemeanor, occurred when the suspect stopped at the store and requested several items. Due to other customers being served, there was a brief delay. When the worker brought the requested goods, the suspect exited the vehicle, violently attacked him, then entered the store and damaged food supplies.

The complainant submitted a medical report confirming injuries sustained during the assault.

Wife-killer detention to continue – lawyer

Drunkards found sleeping on road

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The detention renewal judge decided to extend until May 18 the detention of the citizen accused of the premeditated murder of his wife in the Mutla'a desert.

In the last hearing, the accused appeared at the court, facing charges of premeditated murder by deliberate running over, kidnapping the victim through deception, and possession of intoxicants.

Lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, representing the victim's heirs, requested civil compensation of KD 5,001 from the accused and urged that his detention be continued without release.

According to the Public Prosecution, the accused committed the premeditated murder of his wife on March 30, 2025, at the Mutlaa Police Station in Jahra Governorate. Investigations revealed that the accused forcibly entered the victim's vehicle, drove her to an unknown location, and deliberately ran her over with the intent to kill her.

□ □ □

Drunkards sleep on road: Hawally detectives referred two expatriates to the Public Prosecution on the charge of public drunkenness, reports Al-Anba daily.

This step was taken after an investigation, during which the two expatriates confessed to consuming a well-known brand of alcoholic beverage; indicating they lost consciousness and fell asleep on the street. Security personnel and passersby later found them in this state.



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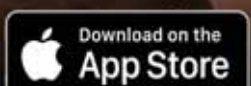
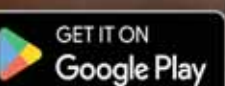
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‘Bhutan perfect place to visit for Kuwaitis’

Direct flights to be introduced in future: Ambassador Tenzin

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Kuwait Chitim Tenzin said his country, which is located in the heart of the Himalayas, celebrated in 2024 the 50th anniversary of its official opening to tourism in 1974.

This celebration is part of a solid development vision based on the concept of ‘sustainable tourism’ under the slogan “High Value, Low Volume.”

Tenzin made this statement to the press during the visit of a Bhutanese tourism delegation to Kuwait in order to promote Bhutan as a distinctive tourist destination suitable for Kuwaiti visitors. The delegation consists of 25 officials representing the tourism, hotel and airport sectors. This visit followed the participation of the delegation in a similar event held in Dubai recently, during which the launching of two new direct flights between Dubai and Bhutan was

announced. He affirmed that Bhutan is a year-round tourist destination, owing to its diverse and moderate climate -- whether in its lush green summers or its cold, pure winters. He pointed out that visiting Bhutan does not require official invitations or complicated procedures. “Flights can be booked through accredited local travel companies. Visa fees can be paid electronically at \$100 per person per night, with discounts available for children. Visas can also be obtained within 24 hours for an additional fee,” he disclosed.

He said the Kingdom offers special benefits for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) groups; such as exemption from sustainable development fees for several days, provided that at least two days are allocated for official events within the visit program.

He revealed that the Bhutanese Embassy in Kuwait is his country’s first embassy in the Gulf, indicating that his country has only three embassies -- one of which is in Kuwait.

On the other hand, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Royal Bhutan Airlines Tandi Wangchuk unveiled a future opportunity to operate direct flights between Kuwait and Bhutan,

following the signing of an air services agreement between the two countries’ governments last year. He explained that the agreement technically allows any Bhutanese or Kuwaiti airline to operate direct flights.

Wangchuk stated “we are currently in the commercial feasibility study phase of this direct route with Kuwait. No final decision has been made yet, but we are seriously evaluating this approach as part of our fleet expansion plans.”

Regarding tourism, he asserted that Bhutan, thanks to its mountainous location and temperate climate, is a suitable haven for Gulf residents during the summer months. He is hoping that Bhutan will become a favorite destination for Kuwaiti tourists.

“We see a promising potential, especially with the presence of a large Bhutanese community in Kuwait -- estimated at about 8,000 people; in addition to the growing interest of Gulf investors in Bhutan as a tourist and investment destination,” he concluded.

Representative of Bhutan Tourism Authority Kyi Zang confirmed that English is widely spoken in the Kingdom and is used alongside the official language, Dzongkha, in the educational system, making communication with foreign visitors easier.



Bhutanese ambassador to Kuwait with the visiting tourism delegation.

One hurt as blast causes power outage in Salmiya

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Fatima Hayat, the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, stated that a minor explosion occurred in one of the equipment units during maintenance work at the main transformer station (Ras M) on Sunday at 6:11 pm.

She explained that the incident resulted in a loss of electrical loads estimated at 25 megawatts, and a subsequent power outage in parts of Salmiya. The ministry’s emergency teams responded immediately, and implemented all necessary

technical and occupational safety measures to ensure the safety of both workers and facilities.

An engineer from the Main Transformer Station Maintenance Department sustained minor injuries and received first aid at the site before he was transferred to Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital for further medical care.

The ministry’s Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel visited the injured engineer at the hospital and wished him a speedy recovery.

Leave by June 30: Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Al-Mailem has formally requested that all faculty members and staff residing in the university housing at Shuwaikh campus vacate their units by June 30, reports Al-Anba daily.

The housing units are to be handed over to Abdullah Al-Salem University in compliance with Article 105 of Public Universities Law No. 1/1/1910.

According to the law, “all buildings, land and facilities belonging to Kuwait University existing prior to the implementation of this law shall be allocated to Abdullah Al-Salem University.”

Al-Mailem stressed that the June 30 deadline is final and non-extendable. She advised the residents to contact the Furnishing and Housing Department to complete the required procedures for vacating their units.

She also confirmed that housing allowance will be granted to visiting professors in accordance with Kuwait University’s housing welfare regulations.

Maritime navigation resumes at Shuwaikh & Shuaiba ports



A view of the ships docked at the Shuwaikh Port.

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): The Kuwait Ports Authority announced on Monday the resumption of maritime navigation at the Shuwaikh and Shuaiba ports since 9:00 a.m. local-time, following a gradual improvement in weather conditions.

The authority confirmed its readiness to ensure the safety of maritime traffic, its crews, and facilities in the event of any change in weather conditions or emergencies.

The Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) had earlier announced a temporary suspension of operation at Shuwaikh and Shuaiba ports amid unstable weather. In a press statement late Sunday, the KPA said it decided to temporarily suspend operation at the two ports to ensure the safety of workers and facilities after a steep drop in the visibility and

sharp increase in wind speed to over 82 kilometers per hour.

Earlier, Acting Director of the Meteorology Department Dharar Al-Ali told the KUNA that satellite images and weather radar indicate that most areas of the country will be affected a dust storm leading to reduced horizontal visibility, reaching zero visibility in some areas.

“Some automatic monitoring stations recorded active winds exceeding 70 kilometers per hour, with gusts exceeding 100 kilometers per hour, which reduced visibility to less than 1,000 meters and resulted in zero visibility in some areas.”

He predicted a gradual improvement in the weather over the next few hours, with dust and the chance of scattered light rain continuing until Monday.

Municipality gives nod to expand existing sidewalk next to school

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Kuwait Municipality has approved the proposal of Municipal Council member Abdullatif Al-Da’i to allocate a three-meter-wide section of the existing sidewalk adjacent to Fahad Al-Askar Elementary School, between Ishbilila Girls Elementary School and Andalus Park in Block Seven in Kaifan, to be used as a temporary walking path.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the technical opinion of the Municipality, which was approved by acting Director General Manal Al-Asfour.

The Municipality stressed the need to comply with the requirements stated in the responses of the members of the Subcommittee for Public Facilities and Services at its meeting held on Nov 5, 2024; in addition to the need to coordinate with them prior to the implementation of the project.

One of the requirements is for the General Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry to put barriers every 50 meters to prevent vehicles from passing, taking into account the existing entrances and exits.

In addition, the Ministry of Public Works is authorized to determine the dimensions and width of the walkway; such

that its width does not exceed three meters and does not fall below two meters under any circumstances.

The Municipality is also authorized to move or modify the dimensions or width of the walkway if it conflicts with any services in the area or for regulatory reasons.

On the other hand, the Municipality approved the request of the Ministry of Interior to deduct a site measuring 50 meters by 60 meters, with a total area of 3,000 square meters, from the boundaries of the Capital Governorate Traffic Department site in Area G1, which was allocated as part of the Municipal Council’s decision issued on June 28, 2010. The deducted site will be 9,718.3 square meters.

The Municipality re-allocated the deducted site with the same dimensions and coordinates approved by the Ministry of Interior to become the site of a main transformer station, to be handed over to the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy; provided that the site dimensions and coordinates approved by the Ministry of Interior are adhered to.

The concerned departments are authorized to move and modify the site’s dimensions and area by not more than the designated areas, to resolve conflict with existing infrastructure services or for regulatory reasons.

Info OKs bonus; 12 top staff sacked

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The Ministry of Information announced that the disbursement of the excellent performance bonus for eligible employees in 2024 will be completed within two weeks, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry has also decided to refer 12 employees, including those in supervisory positions, to retirement in accordance with the relevant conditions and regulations of the Council of Ministers and the Public Institution for Social Security.

According to informed sources, the list of those referred to retirement includes employees, supervisors, department heads, and managers from various sectors. The referrals were based on two main criteria: age and length of service.

The sources revealed that decisions have been issued to second certain employees to fill some of the resulting vacancies at the supervisory and department head levels.



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LOCAL

Kuwait's young innovators dazzle at science expo

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nasser praises young scientists

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Al-Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, former foreign minister, inaugurated Sunday the 11th Kuwait Science and Engineering Competition exhibition.

The competition and its exhibition are organized by Kuwait Science Club (KSC) with support from Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Al-Nasser toured the exhibition's various pavilions accompanied by the Chairman of KSC, Talal Jassem Al-Kharafi, and members of the Board of Directors, during which he talked with the participating students about their scientific projects.

He also met with the chairman and members of the competition's jury panel, which comprises around 60 academic specialists from Kuwait's universities and scientific institutes, and took commemorative photographs with the jury, students, and KSC board members.

Vice Chairperson of KSC and Head of the competition's higher committee Sheikha Sheikhah Mohammad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said in a press statement that the competition represents a comprehensive national project aimed at nurturing a new generation of creative talents in research and innovation.

She added that the competition has evolved beyond being a mere contest into an educational and professional experience that spans an entire academic year.

Sheikha Sheikhah highlighted that in its 11th edition, the competition has proven to be a solid scientific platform attracting students from both public and private schools across Kuwait, noting that the continuous support from governmental and private sectors as well as civil society has ensured its sustainability since inception and strengthened



Photos during the exhibition.

KUNA photos

its credibility and position, allowing it to represent Kuwait in international forums.

She expressed appreciation for the exceptional efforts exerted by professors and specialists across

various scientific disciplines who have continuously supported the students since the competition's inception, emphasizing that their commitment enhances the competition's scientific credibility and en-

sures fair and precise project evaluation.

KSC Board Member and Deputy Head of the competition's higher committee Asrar Al-Ansari stated in a similar press statement that the

competition serves as a comprehensive national program dedicated to fostering young researchers and innovators in Kuwait.

Al-Ansari said that the Science Club has the capabilities to attract

students from all governorates and schools across Kuwait, expressing KSC's full readiness to embrace and nurture promising scientific projects.

She noted that the competition comprises 22 diverse scientific fields, notably including the field of social and behavioral sciences, which is rarely represented in similar contests, reflecting the organizing committee's keenness on scientific diversity and providing opportunities for all participants regardless of their varied interests.

Al-Ansari reaffirmed the Club's ongoing commitment to enhancing a culture of scientific research and innovation among youth, enabling them to present distinctive projects contributing to Kuwait's scientific future, calling on all intermediate and secondary-level students to participate actively and showcase their talents and innovations.

For his part, head of the KSC's Development and Competitive Programs Sector Dr. Mohammad Al-Saffar said the competition aims to spread a culture of research and innovation among pre-university students and provide a competitive environment conducive to discovering talents and developing young people's capabilities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Al-Saffar described the competition as a scientific forum for exchanging research experiences and establishing sustainable communication networks, opening future opportunities for research collaboration.

He praised the efforts of key partners such as the Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), which provide academic support to the participating students.

He also highlighted the essential role played by KFAS in supporting the competition, promoting scientific culture, and encouraging students' engagement in scientific research.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait is

One of the drawbacks is the requirement that visitors to Kuwait must hold a university degree. If a person is visiting to assess investment opportunities or has specific expertise needed by a company for a limited time, should their ability to accomplish the task depend on their academic qualifications or their practical experience?

On this occasion, I recall that the U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order during his first term to emphasize "skills over academic certificates."

He explained, "We seek candidates with competence and knowledge, rather than simply recruiting based on academic credentials."

In advanced countries like Germany, France, and the UK, experience and skills are prioritized over academic qualifications, as they contribute more directly to national development.

Another observation: Why is a resident or citizen prevented from obtaining a visit visa for a family member if they are capable of supporting them and providing return plane tickets? Why is it necessary to purchase the ticket from a domestic airline, while many foreign airlines are closing their offices in Kuwait?

During the years of closure, due to the shortsighted vision of some officials, Kuwait lost a great deal of expertise. The decision that restricted the renewal of work permits only to highly qualified individuals led to many skilled workers leaving the country. Meanwhile, the Gulf states opened their doors to these professionals, welcomed them, and benefited from their expertise and knowledge of local customs.

Here, I am reminded of the saying: "Kuwait educates and trains, then exports skilled labor to other countries."

As a result, Kuwait has regressed in many areas, and its economy continues to suffer. Socially, these flawed decisions, often influenced by residency traders, have turned Kuwait into a community of bachelors.

In contrast, GCC countries have worked to resolve this issue by allowing business and family visits. In some cases, individuals can travel multiple times on the same visit visa. Gulf countries have also made it easier for expatriates to bring their families without complications. Other countries have addressed the problem of "loose labor" (freelancers) by sponsoring workers and collecting fees that would otherwise go to residency traffickers.

We must capitalize on the success of the 26th Gulf Cup, when Kuwait welcomed thousands of Iraqis in a wonderful experience. They stayed in hotels, purchased goods, and returned home without a single violation. These visits strengthened friendship and ties among nations.

In the past, some GCC countries adopted strict measures for visit visas. Today, many allow visas to be issued electronically. For instance, Saudi Arabia now issues a visit visa in just three minutes. As a result, Saudi Arabia has millions of visitors who con-

tribute significantly to its economy.

Finally, when a Kuwaiti company applies for a temporary business visit, why is it required that the visitor holds a university degree? They are coming to Kuwait for a fixed time period for a specific business assignment, not for personal reasons like marrying the company owner's daughter.

I reiterate that I present these observations to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, in the hope that Kuwait can stay in line with the GCC's trend of openness.

DGCA secures

SAB emphasized the importance of the financial offer submitted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) being accurate, particularly after achieving savings of KD 179,300. These savings resulted from the cancellation of modernization work costs originally included in the original contract, a reduction in labor wages and other line items, and the cancellation of preventive and corrective maintenance charges, which the company is obligated to provide free of charge for one year under the terms of the contract.

SAB stressed the need for DGCA to exercise due professional diligence in guiding relevant stakeholders when reviewing contracts and extensions, to prevent awarding contracts at costs exceeding actual requirements.

Kuwait, Bahrain

Al-Mashaan reviewed the projects supervised by the ministry that include the GCC member states, and the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait rail linkages, the statement pointed out.

Al-Omar also showed Kuwait's experiment in digital transformation, extolling the key role of "Sahl" application, which facilitates more than 400 services to both expats and nationals, it stated.

This is part of the policy towards full digital integration among governmental agencies, in accordance with Kuwait's vision, the statement said, citing Al-Omar.

Al-Omar reviewed Kuwait's leading step in communication and advanced indicators globally as well as efforts to develop communication, it said.

New Syria

Q: Any group that did not participate in the committee might feel that the new Syrian regime has excluded them, even though they are part of society.

A: The committee's goal and what it cares about is to hold dialogues and discussions with all segments of society. Therefore, the committee members were not chosen based on quotas.

Q: When did the committee begin dialogues with all segments?

A: The dialogues began five days after the committee's formation. The committee visited all 16 Syrian governorates.

We met with all components of the governorates. We requested the attendance of 50 individuals at a single meeting, but we were surprised by the attendance of hundreds. The meeting was open for opinions to be expressed. We listened to all their problems, concerns, suggestions and recommendations.

Q: Did the Alawites participate in these dialogues?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: Was their participation enthusiastic or disgruntled?

A: Naturally, the Syrian people -- from all walks of life -- welcomed the new regime, while some had reservations. This was true for all groups, without specifying a certain topic.

Q: Why the reservations on the part of some?

A: Because some were asking, "Who are these newcomers who liberated Syria from the former regime?" And how would the new regime deal with them? Would it respond to them? Or would it dictate opinions and directions?

Q: What are the most important points agreed on in the dialogues you held in the 16 governorates?

A: Everyone agreed on transitional justice, redressing grievances and granting rights to those who lost their fathers, brothers, and others. Security and safety were among the most important demands, as all components of society underscored the importance of stability in Syria.

Q: What did you, as members of the committee, sense from the Syrian people?

A: We sensed from the Syrian people that they want to live and forget the wounds of the past 14 years. We sensed that 100 percent of the Syrian people want to open a new page and turn the page on the past.

Q: What about the recent events and the situation of the Druze, who were involved in them?

A: We visited Sweida, which has the largest Druze community. It was one of the best governorates we have visited, and their reception of us was very good, especially since the people of Sweida are highly cultured and educated. They are the people of Al-Karamah Square. Before the fall of Al-Assad's regime, they were demonstrating against him, and as a sect they believe in justice.

Q: How do you explain what happened recently?

A: I still can't believe what happened. **Q:** Who is behind this strife? Are foreign hands the cause?

A: Do you mean Israel? Israel took a small portion of the weak-willed Druze and tempted them with certain things, but 90 percent of our Druze people are not like these weak-willed people.

Q: Do you mean the Druze of Israel tempted the weak-willed Druze of Syria?

A: Yes, since the few weak-willed ones -- and I confirm they are a small minority -- have succumbed to the Israeli Druze.

Q: Do you expect what happened to happen again with other groups?

A: Thank Allah, we are confronting the remnants and they are being controlled. We already anticipated more problems, as it happened with the coastal problems, because hidden hands are still

at work.

Q: Do you expect that the former regime, or more precisely, Bashar Al-Assad, is inciting internal strife in Syria?

A: Bashar is inciting. He is certainly trying with all his might to undermine Syrian cohesion to achieve his own goals. The countries that supported him are certainly behind this, but he will not succeed. We trust the awareness of the Syrian people, because the vast majority supports the new Syrian regime.

Q: Are Bashar's men, who benefited from his presence, are also playing behind the scenes to destabilize Syria?

A: Of course, because they believe their plunder of the Syrian people has stopped, as they were the primary beneficiaries of Bashar Al-Assad, especially since they forced the Syrian people to live below the poverty line, while Bashar's gang was stealing the people's livelihood.

Q: It was said that after the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad's regime, the new leadership committed the same persecution of opponents like Bashar Al-Assad, using the same logic.

A: Quite the opposite. Syria was liberated at the end of December 2024. For two months after the liberation, no problems arose. The new regime entered as conquerors and negotiators. The Military Operations Command entered to ask them to hand over their weapons and leave peacefully. They opened up areas for the exit of anyone who wished to surrender their weapons. The goal of the new regime was to prevent Syrians from fighting each other and to prevent bloodshed. Therefore, power was transferred smoothly. If the current government had intended to fight, it would have done so in the first months. If it had been confronted with force, it would have dealt with it violently.

Q: There are videos showing the torture of supporters of the former president, and some saw it as a retaliatory response.

A: Every action has a reaction. For the first two months, everyone was treated equally, without exception. After the Army was dissolved, all Syrian individuals carrying weapons were asked to go to designated centers to surrender their weapons. We asked those who committed crimes against the Syrian people to express their regret, so that they could be dealt with according to the logic of 'May God forgive what happened by now.' Therefore, settlement centers were opened for everyone carrying weapons and anyone with a problem in the area in which they live. When they settle and sign a declaration that they will not return to that approach again, they are given a chance. They were given a month to settle their differences. This is what happened. However, when some rebel movements began in certain areas, they intended to destabilize security and create chaos. It is only natural that the security forces dealt with them as a reaction to maintain Syria's security.

Q: What are the mechanisms used by the current Syrian president to stop the bloodshed of the Syrian people?

A: The president and the new administration insist on and strive to preserve the blood of the Syrian people and reject

violence in all its forms. There are clear and strongly worded instructions to the General Security and the Army to deal with Syrians without retaliation.

Q: Do you have statistics on the people killed as a result of what has happened in Syria since its liberation until now?

A: They do not exceed hundreds, which is a very small number for a country with a history like Syria.

Q: Some betting on a change in the current Syrian landscape in the future, as it happened with the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt. What is your opinion on this?

A: I think this will happen because the current transitional Syrian government is accepted by all segments of the population. If elections were held today, President Al-Sharaa would win.

Q: But transparent elections are not common in most Arab countries.

A: I assure you that if we held elections today, and they were naturally transparent and fair, 80 percent of the Syrian people would vote for President Al-Sharaa.

Q: Why?

A: Because he will ensure Syria's stability. He is the only person who can unite all components of the Syrian people, as evidenced by his previous convening of all armed factions under his leadership.

Q: Why is there no prime minister in Syria?

A: Because the current regime is a presidential system and this system is used in many countries.

Q: Will Syria have a prime minister in the future so that the burdens and tasks do not fall on the head of State?

A: What has been agreed upon is the appropriate thing for Syria currently.

Q: Did former Prime Minister Bashar cause some embarrassment to the new regime when he quoted the statements of the late Muslim Brotherhood leader Hassan al-Banna in his conferences?

A: He has not been ruled out. The ruling system is not dependent on individuals. Mr. Bashir is currently part of the government, as he holds the position of Minister of Energy and Oil. He has not been ruled out, but the new regime preferred not to have a prime minister, regardless of the individual.

Q: What is the news about the new constitution?

A: Work has begun on drafting the new constitution.

Q: How many years will it take to complete the drafting of the constitution?

A: At least two years, especially since drafting the constitutions of countries requires scrutiny and precision.

Q: Have you noticed that the leaders of the Arab and Gulf countries welcome President Al-Sharaa or have you noticed some reservations?

A: Praise Allah, there is a very high level of acceptance of Syrian President Al-Sharaa. He has very strong relations with all heads of states. Thus, he is welcomed with great enthusiasm whenever he visits any country and holds meetings with Arab leaders, particularly since Syria was isolated for many years during the rule of Bashar Al-Assad. Thank Allah, it has returned to the Arab fold. Syria has returned to its normal position among its Arab brothers, especially given its geo-

graphical position in the middle of the Arab region. Syria will rebuild its people and country and heal the wounds of the past years.

Q: It has been said, or is being said that Qatar's support for the new regime in Syria is due to the permission for gas pipelines from Qatar to pass through Syrian territory to European countries. What is your response to this?

A: Qatar has never stopped supporting Syria, whether before or after the gas pipeline issue.

Q: Will the gas pipeline issue be addressed soon?

A: This is one of the topics on the negotiation table. As Syrians, our relationship with our Arab brothers has not ceased, whether with the Qataris or other Gulf and Arab states, especially since the new Syrian regime, led by President Al-Sharaa, seeks to lift the international sanctions imposed by Bashar Al-Assad.

Q: Do you mean economic sanctions?

A: Yes, economic and banking sanctions, because lifting these sanctions will speed up Syria's recovery. Economic and social activities will strongly recover after all international sanctions are lifted.

Q: Since the current regime lacks any financial solvency, given that the previous regime plundered Syria's wealth, how are its financial affairs managed? Is there support from some countries?

A: Yes, support comes from some sisterly countries. Whatever the previous regime left in the Central Bank before its escape was small. There are also some revenues, such as customs and tax collections, but the State remains faltering. However, plans are currently being put in place to help Syria emerge from these financial crises.

Q: When will the reconstruction of Syria begin?

A: Provincial administrations are currently conducting studies on reconstruction, rubble removal and the beginning of reconstruction.

Q: During Bashar Al-Assad's departure from Syria, did he actually carry Syrian money in his luggage?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: How much?

A: More than \$40 billion.

Q: What about the new Syrian regime's continuous demand for Russia to hand over Bashar Al-Assad?

A: Yes, Russia has been asked to hand over Bashar Al-Assad. President Al-Sharaa's administration is insisting on this.

Q: Why this insistence?

A: Because this is the right of the Syrian people.

Q: As a final question, what is the ranking of Syrian sects?

A: Sunnis have the highest percentage, around 50 percent.

Q: What about the percentages of other sects?

A: Unfortunately, Syria has no census authority now. President Al-Sharaa's administration will create a database to list all sects by age, so that we can assist everyone through plans developed based on accurate information.

Q: What is the purpose of the visit to Kuwait?

A: Renew the bonds of cooperation and friendship with the State of Kuwait.

Federal judges raise due process concerns in several cases

Visa crackdown leads international students in US to reconsider summer travel

WASHINGTON, May 5, (AP): On summer break from a Ph.D. program, an international student at University of California, San Diego, was planning a trip with a few friends to Hawaii. But after seeing international students across the United States stripped of their legal status, the student decided against it.

Any travel, even inside the US, just didn't seem worth the risk.

"I probably am going to skip that to ... have as few interactions with governments as possible," said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of being targeted.

International students weighing travel to see family, take a vacation or conduct research are thinking twice because of the Trump administration's crackdown, which has added to a sense of vulnerability.

Even before students suddenly began losing permission to study in the US, some colleges were encouraging international students and faculty to postpone travel, citing government efforts to deport students involved in activism. As the scale of the status terminations emerged in recent weeks, more schools have cautioned against non-essential travel abroad for international students.

University of California, Berkeley, for one, issued an advisory last week saying upcoming international travel was risky due to "strict vetting and enforcement."

At least 1,220 students at 187 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records.

The number of affected students appears far higher, though. At least 4,736 international students' visa records were terminated in a government database that maintains their legal status, according to an April 10 Immigration and Customs Enforcement response to inquiries from Congress.

Suddenly at risk for deportation, some students went into hiding while others left the country on their own. Many of the students said they had only minor infractions on their records or didn't know why their records were removed.



A group of Florida International University students protest against cuts in federal funding and an agreement by campus police to partner with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, on the FIU campus on a day of protests around the country in support of higher education on April 17 in Miami. (AP)

After federal judges raised due process concerns in several students' cases, the US government reversed the terminations but then issued new guidance expanding the reasons inter-

national students can lose their legal status in the future.

Under the new policy, valid reasons for status termination include the revocation of the visas students

used to enter the US. In the past, if a student's visa was revoked, they generally could stay in the U.S. to finish school. They simply would not be able to reenter if they left the country.

The fast-evolving situation has left colleges struggling to advise students.

A Michigan college employee who helps international students navigate the visa process said they are inquiring more than ever about summer travel. The employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said he often has been unable to give sufficient answers.

Last year, the US hosted around 1.1 million international students, a source of essential tuition revenue at many schools. Advocates say that number is likely to shrink as the crackdown hurts America's appeal.

Over the past few weeks, Rishi Oza's immigration law firm in North Carolina has received calls about travel risks almost daily from people of varied immigration status, including international students.

"You kind of shake your head and say, 'Is this the character of the country we want?'" Oza said. "It just seems

that it's a bit out of whack that people are fearful of leaving and whether they'll be able to come back."

Students in the US with a visa need to decide if their travels are critical, Oza said.

When attempting reentry after leaving the country, they should bring immigration documents, school transcripts and even court documents if they were charged with a crime and the court dismissed the case. Ultimately, lawyers can't foretell what will happen at the airport, he said.

The unpredictability has put one international student at the University of Illinois in distress. The student, who requested anonymity to avoid being targeted, has laid low since one of his classmates left the country after their legal status was terminated.

The student's plan to travel to his home country in Asia this summer causes feelings of panic, but he has nowhere else to stay. He bought his plane ticket and is committed to the trip. His anxiety over what could happen when he returns, however, is still there.

"Right now," he said, "I'm afraid I might not be able to come back."

'Symbol of law and order'

Trump to reopen, expand Alcatraz prison

NEW YORK, May 5, (AP): US President Donald Trump says he is directing his government to reopen and expand Alcatraz, the notorious former prison on a hard-to-reach California island off San Francisco that has been closed for more than 60 years.

In a post on his Truth Social site Sunday evening, Trump wrote that, "For too long, America has been plagued by vicious, violent, and repeat Criminal Offenders, the dregs of society, who will never contribute anything other than Misery and Suffering. When we were a more serious Nation, in times past, we did not hesitate to lock up the most dangerous criminals, and keep them far away from anyone they could harm. That's the way it's supposed to be."

"That is why, today," he said, "I am directing the Bureau of Prisons, together with the Department of Justice, FBI, and Homeland Security, to reopen a substantially enlarged and rebuilt ALCATRAZ, to house America's most ruthless and violent Offenders."

Trump's directive to rebuild and reopen the long-shuttered penitentiary was the latest salvo in his effort to overhaul how and where federal prisoners and immigration detainees are locked up. But such a move would likely be an expensive and challenging proposition. The prison was closed in 1963 due to crumbling infrastructure and the high costs of repairing and supplying the island facility, because everything from fuel to food had to be brought by boat.

Bringing the facility up to modern-day standards would require massive investments at a time when the Bureau of Prisons has been shuttering prisons for similar infrastructure issues.

The prison - infamously inescapable due to the strong ocean currents and cold Pacific waters that surround it - was known as the "The Rock" and housed some of the nation's most notorious criminals, including gangster Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly.

It has long been part of the cultural imagination and has been the subject of numerous movies, including "The Rock" starring Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage.

Still in the 29 years it was open, 36 men attempted 14 separate escapes, according to the FBI. Nearly all were caught or didn't survive the attempt.

The fate of three particular inmates - John Anglin, his brother Clarence and Frank Morris - is of some debate and was dramatized in the 1979 film

"Escape from Alcatraz" starring Clint Eastwood.

Alcatraz Island is now a major tourist site that is operate by the National Park Service and is a designated National Historic Landmark.

Trump, returning to the White House on Sunday night after a weekend in Florida, said he'd come up with the idea because of frustrations with "radicalized judges" who have insisted those being deported receive due process. Alcatraz, he said, has long been a "symbol of law and order. You know, it's got quite a history."

A spokesperson for the Bureau of Prisons said in a statement that the agency "will comply with all Presidential Orders." The spokesperson did not immediately answer questions from The Associated Press regarding the practicality and feasibility of reopening Alcatraz or the agency's role in the future of the former prison given the National Park Service's control of the island.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat whose district includes the island, questioned the feasibility of reopening the prison after so many years. "It is now a very popular national park and major tourist attraction. The President's proposal is not a serious one," she wrote on X.



A bird flies above Alcatraz Island on May 4 in the San Francisco Bay, Calif. (AP)

Germany's AfD party sues after spy agency labels it an extremist party

BERLIN, May 5, (AP): The anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party on Monday sued the domestic intelligence service for classifying it as a right-wing extremist organization in a move that subjects it to greater surveillance from authorities.

The party, known as AfD, which placed second in national elections in February, took legal action at an administrative court in the western city of Cologne where the domestic intelligence service has its headquarters, Daniel Tapp, a spokesman for party leader Alice Weidel, said.

A court spokesperson confirmed that the party filed a suit and an urgent motion, according to the DPA news agency. AfD has rejected the classification and called it unlawful.

The move by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution - the formal name of the domestic intelligence service - means its officials can now use informants and other tools such as audio and video recordings to monitor the party's activities nationwide.

The office warned of a threat to the country's democratic order, saying the anti-immigration party "disregards human dignity," in particular by what it called "ongoing agitation" against refugees and migrants.

Far-right parties have been gaining



Alice Weidel, co-leader of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), speaks during the election party at the party's headquarters in Berlin Germany on Feb 23. (AP)

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

Some top Trump administration officials have criticized the decision, prompting a retort from the German Foreign Ministry.

In a social media post on Friday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called on Germany to undo the classification, saying the move to give new powers to

the spy agency to surveil the opposition amounted to "tyranny in disguise."

In its own social media post responding directly to Rubio, the Foreign Ministry wrote "this is democracy" and said the decision was "the result of a thorough & independent investigation to protect our Constitution & the rule of law."

The ministry added that "independent courts that will have the final say. We have learnt from our history that right-wing extremism needs to be stopped."



The Red Arrows the Royal Airforce display team, fly over the Mall and Buckingham Palace during the V-E Day 80th anniversary parade in London on May 5. Inset: Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla with The Prince and Princess of Wales and their children Prince George, Prince Louis, and Princess Charlotte as they appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to watch the flypast during the V-E Day 80th anniversary parade in London. (AP)

Thousands gather near Buckingham to mark 80th 'versary of V-E Day

Thousands of people lined the roads around the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace on Monday as British and allied troops paraded past at the start of four days of pageantry to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe.

After Big Ben tolled at the stroke of noon, actor Timothy Spall recited the victory speech that Winston Churchill delivered to a roaring crowd in central London on May 8, 1945. Britain started its commemorations of V-E Day three days early, because Monday is a public holiday in the UK.

The Cenotaph, the nation's war memorial, was covered with Union

Jack flags. It was the first time that the memorial had been draped in the flags since it was unveiled by King George V in 1920, two years after the end of World War I.

About 1,300 members of the British armed forces are being joined by troops from the United Kingdom's NATO allies and Ukraine - a nod to the present war in Europe. The procession started in Parliament Square and swept past Buckingham Palace, where King Charles III took the salute.

Also:
WAGENINGEN, Netherlands: Pol-

ish Prime Minister Donald Tusk made an impassioned plea for European and transatlantic unity Monday in a speech marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from World War II German occupation.

"The experience gained 80 years ago tells us that only when (we) stand together can we overcome," Tusk said.

He added that "in the face of the threat posed by (President Vladimir) Putin's Russia we need to deepen our European and transatlantic life, and we need genuine solidarity." (AP)

Europe

Simion to face pro-EU reformist: After decisively winning the most votes in Romania's first-round presidential election redo, hard-right nationalist **George Simion** will face a pro-Western reformist in a pivotal runoff in two weeks that could reshape the European Union and NATO member country's geopolitical direction.

Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, far outpaced all other candidates in the polls with 40.96% of the vote, according to official electoral data, after all votes were counted from Sunday's election. In second place was reformist Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan with 20.99%.

The runoff will be held on May 18 between the two staunchly anti-establishment candidates but ideological opposites, who have made their political careers railing



Simion

against Romania's old political class.

Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician and former anti-corruption activist who founded the Save Romania Union party (USR) in 2016, ran on a pro-EU ticket, told the media early Monday that "a difficult second round lies ahead, against an isolationist candidate." (AP)

□ □ □

Cryptocurrency hostage freed: Fearful that the kidnappers might sever another finger from their hostage or worse, the French police commander ordered his officers - with a radioed "Go" command - to raid the house where he suspected that the father of a wealthy cryptocurrency entrepreneur was being held.

Fabrice Gardon, director of Paris' judicial police, then waited anxiously in his unit's headquarters in the north of the French capital for the code word they use to signal that a hostage has been freed.

Finally, it came: "Jackpot!"

With seven suspects in custody, the police commander detailed in radio interviews Monday 58 hours of drama, mutilation and finally relief that marked the latest kidnapping in France of people working in the cryptocurrency business.

The victim was the father of a man who made his fortune in cryptocurrencies, the prosecutor's office said. (AP)

Cable theft in Spain delays thousands of high-speed rail passengers: authorities

MADRID, May 5, (AP): Thousands of rail passengers in Spain were hit with delays after the cable used in the signaling system of the high-speed line between Madrid and Seville was stolen at four locations, Spanish rail authorities said Monday.

The theft, which happened late Sunday, affected dozens of trains traveling between Madrid and Andalusia, just as many people were returning home to the capital after a holiday weekend.

Spain's railway infrastructure company ADIF said on X that the high-speed train connecting Madrid and cities in the South was expected to resume service around 9:30 a.m. from Madrid and in Seville, Malaga and Granada.

Álvaro Heredia, president of Spain's state-owned rail operator Renfe, said it expected a resumption of normal schedules by mid morning in an interview with Spanish national radio broadcaster RNE.

Droves of travelers crowded Madrid's Atocha station Monday seeking



Trains are photographed on their platforms at the Madrid train station, Spain on May 5. (AP)

information about their trains from rail employees and screens with updated departure times. Renfe advised passengers to not arrive too early to avoid further crowding.

By 9 a.m, Alberto Valero and his

family had spent hours at the station due to train delays between Madrid and Seville, where they were headed. Valero was on vacation in Spain from Mexico, and expressed frustration about the lack of information.



This photo released by Xinhua News Agency shows rescuers carrying out search and rescue operation at the site showing the two passenger boats capsized in Qianxi City, southwest China's Guizhou Province on May 5. (AP)

Tourist boats capsize in China’s sudden storm, leaving 10 dead

Four boats capsized in a sudden storm at a tourist spot in southwestern China, killing 10 people, state media said Monday.

More than 80 people fell into a river when strong winds hit the scenic area in Guizhou province late Sunday afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The boats capsized after a sudden rain and hail storm on the upper reaches of the Wu River, a tributary of the Yangtze, China's longest river. In one video shared by state media, a man could be seen performing CPR on another person, while one of the vessels drifted upside down.

Initial reports said two tourist boats had capsized, but state media said on Monday that four boats were involved. The other two boats had no passengers, and the seven crew members were able to save themselves, CCTV said.

Guizhou's mountains and rivers are a major tourism draw, and many Chinese were traveling during a five-day national holiday that ended Monday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for all-out efforts to find the missing and care for the injured, the official Xinhua News Agency said on Sunday. Seventy people were sent to a hospital, most with minor injuries. (AP)

Cambodian court convicts politician of incitement in move to stifle opponents

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, May 5, (AP): A Cambodian court on Monday convicted a prominent opposition politician of incitement and sentenced him to four years in prison, in the latest legal move to stifle criticism of the government of Prime Minister Hun Manet.

Rong Chhun, a top advisor to the newly formed Nation Power Party, was found guilty of inciting social unrest related to his political activity for meeting with villagers displaced by government construction projects, including the new Phnom Penh International Airport. In addition to the prison term, he was barred from running for office and from voting.

The 56-year-old had denied the incitement charge, saying all he did was post photos of himself with the villagers and comments on Facebook.

“This is not a law enforcement issue,” Rong Chhun told reporters after the verdict. “It’s about politics.”

He remains free for a month with the opportunity to file an appeal during that time and said he would do so.

The US Embassy, which has been critical of Cambodia’s human rights record, had an observer at the hearing but did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Incitement allegations are frequently used by authorities in Cambodia against opponents. Rong Chhun was already sentenced to two years for incitement in 2021, on accusations he spread false information about Cambodia’s border with Vietnam after meeting with farmers in the area. He was released later the same year by an appeals court.

Cambodia’s government has long been accused of using the judicial system to persecute critics and political opponents. It insists it promotes the rule of law under an electoral democracy, but political parties seen as mounting strong challenges to the ruling Cambodian People’s Party have been dissolved by the courts or had their leaders jailed or harassed.

Under almost four decades of autocratic former Prime Minister Hun Sen, Cambodia was widely criticized for human rights abuses that included suppression of freedom of



Cambodian prominent opposition politician Rong Chhun, (foreground), gestures as he talks to media members near the Phnom Penh Municipal Court in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on May 5. (AP)

speech and association. He was succeeded in August 2023 by his American-educated son, Hun Manet, but there have been few signs of political liberalization.

Late last year, the president of the Nation Power Party, Sun Chanthly, was himself convicted of inciting social disorder and sentenced to two years. Sun Chanthly had been a top leader of the former Cambodia National Rescue Party, which had been expected to present a strong challenge to Hun Sen’s ruling party in 2018 elections, but was dissolved by the high court as part of a sweeping crackdown on opposition.

Sun Chanthly then joined the Candlelight Party, the successor to the Cambodia National Rescue Party, but it in turn was barred from competing in the 2023 general election on a technicality. He then helped form the Nation Power Party at the end of 2023, along with Rong Chhun and others.

‘It wasn’t able to withstand the rough seas’

US, Philippine forces cancel ship-sinking drill after WWII-era target prematurely sinks

MANILA, Philippines, May 5, (AP): A World War II-era Philippine navy ship to be used as a target in a combat exercise by American and the Philippine forces accidentally sank Monday hours before the mock assault, prompting the drill to be cancelled, US and Philippine military officials said.

The BRP Miguel Malvar, which was decommissioned by the Philippine navy in 2021, took on water while being towed in rough waters facing the disputed South China Sea and sank about 30 nautical miles (55 kilometers) off the western Philippine province of Zambales. Nobody was onboard when the ship listed then sank, the Philippine military said.

American and Philippine forces would proceed with other live-fire maneuvers off Zambales on Monday despite the premature sinking of the Malvar. The ship was built as a patrol vessel for the US Navy in the 1940s and was transferred to Vietnam’s navy before the Philippine military acquired it, Philippine navy Capt. John Percie Alcos said.

“It’s an 80-year-old dilapidated ship and it wasn’t able to withstand the rough seas,” Philippine Lt Col John Paul Salgado told The Associated Press.

The ship-sinking exercise was planned in an offshore area facing the hotly disputed Scarborough Shoal, which has been closely guarded by the Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships.

The Philippines also claims the fishing atoll, which lies about 220 kilometers (137 miles) west of Zambales. Chinese and the Philippine forces have had increasingly hostile confrontations in the waters and airspace of Scarborough in recent years.

The cancelled ship-sinking drill would have been the third to be staged by the treaty allies in recent years. It was supposed to be one of the highlights of large scale annual military exercises by the United States and the Philippines from April 21 to May 9 with about 14,000 US and Filipino forces



In this handout photo, provided by the Armed Forces of the Philippines Public Affairs Office (PAO), the decommissioned Philippine Navy BRP Miguel Malvar (PS-19) takes on water before sinking while being positioned as vessel target prompting the cancellation of a live-fire drill as part of a joint US-Philippines military exercises called Balikatan or ‘shoulder to shoulder’ approximately 30 nautical miles west of San Antonio, Zambales, Philippines on May 5. (AP)

participants.

Called Balikatan, Tagalog for shoulder-to-shoulder, the combat drills have increasingly focused on the defense of Philippine sovereignty in the face of

China’s growing aggression in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety.

Mock battle scenes which have been staged so far, including the retaking of an island from hostile forces, have reflected assurances by the Trump administration, including by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, that the US would abide by its treaty commitment to defend the Philippines in case Filipino forces come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

On Sunday, US, Australian and Philippine forces practiced retaking an island from hostile forces in the coastal town of Balabac in western Palawan province, which faces the South China Sea.

Japanese forces and British marines joined as observers of the combat exercise, which “showcased the growing interoperability and cohesion among partner nations in maintaining regional security,” Salgado said.

“What we have seen since Trump returned to the White House is a remarkable level of continuity in the US-Philippines alliance not only in joint military drills, but also on American statements that the alliance is ‘ironclad,’ said Derek Grossman, a senior defense analyst at RAND Corporation.

“The Trump administration is trying to keep the pressure on China through its support to the Philippines,” Grossman said, but added that it’s unclear “just how sustainable this commitment will be given that the Trump administration seems less hawkish on China than its predecessors.”

China has vehemently opposed such exercises involving US forces in or near the South China Sea or Taiwan, the island democracy, which Beijing claims as a province and has threatened to annex by force if necessary.

US and Philippine military officials, however, have insisted that the combat exercises were not designed with China in mind but serve as a deterrence to acts of aggression in the region.

Iran’s top diplomat in Pakistan to mediate in escalation with India over Kashmir attack

ISLAMABAD, May 5, (AP): Iran’s foreign minister was in Pakistan on Monday to try and mediate in the escalation between Islamabad and New Delhi after last month’s deadly attack on tourists in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir.

Abbas Araghchi’s visit was the first by a foreign dignitary since tensions flared in the wake of the April 22 massacre of 26 tourists, which India blames on Pakistan. Tehran has offered to help ease tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

Pakistan’s military has been on high alert after Cabinet Minister Attaullah Tarar cited credible intelligence indicating that India could attack. Pakistan has denied any role in the massacre of mostly Indian tourists, and offered to cooperate with a credible international investigation. India has so far not accepted the offer and several world leaders have urged both sides to exercise restraint and avoid further escalation.

Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who is due to meet with Araghchi, welcomed mediation to defuse the tensions with India. Since last week, Dar said he’d spoken to over a dozen foreign dignitaries, including US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.



Villagers walk on a dusty track during a government's organized trip for media to Bella Noor Shah, a mountainous village near Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan administered Kashmir on May 5. (AP)

“We will not be the first to take any escalatory step,” Dar said in Islamabad, but added that he had warned the international community that should there be “any act of aggression by India, Pakistan will resolutely defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

He accused the Indian air force of attempting to breach Pakistani airspace on April 28. Pakistan scrambled

aircraft and forced Indian jets to turn back, he said. There was no immediate comment from India on those claims.

Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal wrote on X that Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday and “strongly condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam.”

Trump blasts Mexico leader

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., May 5, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Sunday said Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum rejected his proposal to send US troops to Mexico to help thwart the illegal drug trade because she is fearful of the country’s powerful cartels.

The comments by Trump came a day after Sheinbaum confirmed that Trump pressed her in a call last month to accept a bigger role for the US. military in combating drug cartels in Mexico.

Trump said it was “true” that he proposed sending the troops to Mexico and lashed into Sheinbaum for dismissing the idea.

“Well she’s so afraid of the cartels she can’t walk, so you know that’s the reason,” Trump said in comments to reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday. “And I think she’s a lovely woman. The president of Mexico is a lovely woman, but she is so afraid of the cartels that she can’t even think straight.”

The US military presence along the southern border with Mexico has increased steadily in recent months, following Trump’s order in January to increase the army’s role in stemming the flow of migrants. The US Northern Command has surged troops and equipment to the border, increased manned surveillance flights to monitor fentanyl trafficking along the border and sought expanded authority for US Special Forces to work closely with Mexican forces conducting operations against cartels.



Former Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro, (center), talks to the press as he leaves the hospital after a weeks-long surgical stay, in Brasilia, Brazil on May 4. (AP)

Bolsonaro leaves hospital

Brazilian ex-President Jair Bolsonaro was discharged from the hospital Sunday three weeks after undergoing surgery for a bowel obstruction.

The medical team at the DF Star Hospital in Brasilia, the country’s capital, said that he left intensive care on Wednesday but spent the past days recovering before being released Sunday. His health condition is stable and he started on a liquid diet, his doctors said.

Bolsonaro appeared stiff and solemn as he walked outside. But his face brightened as he greeted a cheering crowd of supporters waving Brazilian flags and filming with their phones.

“This cap goes to our President,” said Ronaldo de Barretos, a supporter outside the hospital.

Bolsonaro was admitted with severe abdominal pain to a hospital in

Santa Cruz, a small city in Rio Grande do Norte, on April 11 and transferred to a hospital in the state’s capital, Natal. His family later requested his transfer to Brasilia.

The right-wing leader’s intestinal obstruction is related to a stabbing injury he suffered in September 2018 as he campaigned for president. He has been in and out of hospitals since the attack and underwent multiple surgeries during his presidency, from 2019-2022.

Doctors described this latest surgery last month, his sixth, as the most difficult.

Before undergoing surgery, Bolsonaro had been preparing for a trip across northeast Brazil to promote his Liberal Party’s right-wing agenda, eyeing next year’s presidential election in Brazil, though he himself is barred from running. (AP)

Haiti protesters demand new govt, more security as anger over gangs spreads

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, May 5, (AP): Dozens of protesters marched up the hills of Haiti’s capital on Sunday demanding an end to persistent gang violence as they called on the country’s prime minister and transitional presidential council to resign.

It’s the latest protest to reflect growing anger and frustration over a surge in violence as gangs try to seize full control of Port-au-Prince.

“The only thing the Haitian people are asking for is security,” said Eric Jean, a 42-year-old bus driver with a large Haitian flag tied around his neck. “We’re losing more neighborhoods, more people are dying, more people are fleeing their homes.”

Also joining the protest was Marc Etienne, who blamed gangs for raiding his small business and leaving him homeless. The 39-year-old now lives in a squalid, makeshift camp like tens of thousands of others forced to flee their homes after gangs razed their communities.

Etienne called for a new government



A soldier carries out an anti-gang operation in the Kenscoff neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Feb 3. (AP)

as he blamed the current leaders for the ongoing violence and an increase in the number of children joining gangs.

“Haiti cannot be run among friends,” he said. “The city is dying because the (council) is not doing anything to make it better.”

Sunday’s demonstration comes a day after hundreds of people gathered in Port-au-Prince to honor several community leaders killed in recent clashes with gangs.

“Freedom or death!” the mourners shouted on Saturday as the leaders of the Canapé-Vert neighborhood entered a small stadium where the memorial was held.

Videos posted on social media showed the leaders carrying automatic weapons and wearing black T-shirts emblazoned with pictures of those killed. Many wore balaclavas to cover their faces and protect themselves from possible retaliation by gangs.

Clad in white, the mourners raised their fists and clutched hands in the air as a man on stage roared in Haitian Creole. “The blood is not going to be shed in vain! The fight is what?”

OIC condemns attacks on vital facilities in Port Sudan, Kassala

JEDDAH, May 5, (KUNA): The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) firmly denounced the recent assaults on critical infrastructure in Port Sudan and Kassala, saying these acts clearly violated international law and humanitarian principles, undermining regional security and stability.

A statement by the OIC General Secretariat reiterated its condemnation of these violations and emphasized the imperative of adhering to the obligations for civilian protection in Sudan as outlined in the Jeddah Declaration of May 11, 2023.

It called for the cessation of hostilities and advocates for a comprehensive Sudanese-led dialogue aimed at achieving a durable resolution that upholds Sudan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Such measures were essential for resolving the ongoing crisis, alleviating the humanitarian plight of the Sudanese population, and fulfilling their aspirations for lasting security, peace, and stability.



Sudanese army officers inspect a recently discovered weapons storage site belonging to the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Khartoum, Sudan on May 3. (AP)

CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

Business

‘Ajjal’ Program fosters national talent for ‘Holistic Banking’ careers

Gulf Bank concludes 10th Edition of ‘Ajjal’ Talent Development Program



Group photo of graduates with HR staff.



A graduate presents her graduation project in the presence of a number of senior bank management officials.

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: As part of its ongoing commitment to growing and nurturing national talent within the banking and financial sectors, Gulf Bank has successfully concluded the 10th edition of its “Ajjal” program. Spanning several months, the program aimed to develop and enhance employees’ skills while supporting their professional and personal growth, preparing each of them to become a “Holistic Banker.”

The closing ceremony featured impressive final project presentations across various fields, including finance, banking operations, data and innovation, marketing, and human resources. Senior Gulf Bank executives attended the event and commended the creativity, professionalism, and dedication demonstrated by the participants.

Gulf Bank’s senior executives highlighted that the “Ajjal” program is crucial in enhancing participants’ understanding of the banking industry, while fostering a performance-driven culture centered on excellence. By addressing real-world challenges, participants were able to apply their knowledge in practical situations and gain valuable hands-on experience. It is worth mentioning that the selection of participants for the program

was based on strict criteria, including interviews and skill assessments. The chosen individuals embarked on a comprehensive educational journey designed to prepare them to become well-rounded banking professionals who support the Bank’s long-term growth strategy. During the program, participants undergo a job rotation period aimed at providing them with a broader understanding of the Bank’s various departments. They are then asked to express their preferences for transitioning to new roles or returning to their previous positions.

This program is one of the initiatives that contribute to the development of employees’ skills, which directly enhances the customer experience and elevates the level of service provided. This aligns with the bank’s vision of offering exceptional customer service. The HR team is dedicated to identifying talent and nurturing young professionals to enhance various departments with skilled individuals who can help strengthen the bank’s position as a leading institution.

The Bank places great importance on empowering youth and developing their skills to meet the highest global banking standards, while taking pride

in the success stories of the program’s graduates over the years.

The “Ajjal” program is an integral part of the bank’s ongoing efforts to promote community sustainability by investing in national talent and preparing them for successful careers in the banking sector, thereby supporting the bank’s long-term sustainable practices.

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 externally.

Oil sector reduces gas flaring

Tareq Al-Roumi inaugurates Kuwait’s First Environmental Engineers Forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Oil Minister Tareq Al-Roumi affirmed on Monday that the First Forum and Exhibition of Environmental Engineers was a pioneering event that reflected Kuwait’s interest in environmental sectors and their pivotal role in shaping the future.

This statement came during his inauguration of the First Forum and Exhibition of Kuwaiti Environmental Engineers, organized by the Kuwait Environment Protection Society under the patronage of His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and continuing until tomorrow, Tuesday.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the Prime Minister, Al-Roumi said that His Highness’s patronage of this forum reflects the wise leadership’s interest in this field, especially in light of the rapid global transformations and in alignment with international efforts in this regard.

He added that the sector is working with the Environment Public Authority and civil cooperation institutions on projects and initiatives aimed at greening, most notably the planting of mangrove trees in the Jahra Reserve, to build a sustainable and environmentally friendly economy.

He explained that the oil sector has achieved success in reducing gas flaring operations, having managed to significantly cut emissions from such processes. The flaring rate was reduced from 17.2 percent in 2005-2006 to 0.51 percent, reflecting the sector’s practical commitment to environmental sustainability.

He affirmed the oil sector’s environmental responsibility to reduce emissions and adopt best practices and modern technologies that help minimize the environmental impact of oil sector activities, in a way that achieves both environmental and economic sustainability.

He also noted that the sector has a strategy for energy transition by 2050 and aims to achieve carbon neutrality in Kuwait by 2060.

He further emphasized the oil sector’s interest in clean and alternative



Oil Minister Tareq Al-Roumi

energy, which is evident in its local initiatives and projects, as well as in its entry into strategic partnerships with leading international companies in the production of biofuels diversifying energy sources and fostering innovation in the field of sustainable energy.

For her part, Dr. Wijdan Al-Oqab, head of Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) and Head of the Supreme Organizing Committee of the forum, stated in her speech that the Society has a long history of contributions and has adopted a non-traditional environmental approach in addressing and engaging with environmental activities.

This approach has been reflected in its programs and community initiatives.

Dr. Al-Oqab added that for the past ten years, the Society has worked to encourage and guide high school students to pursue studies in environmental science and environmental engineering at the university level, given the interconnectedness of the environmental scientific and research future with all sectors, and its alignment with both global and national sustainable development plans.

She explained that the Society has been a pioneer in many proposals, issues, and events, as demonstrated by its organization of the first Forum and Exhibition for Kuwaiti Environmental Engineers. She noted that the number of students pursuing

environmental engineering studies is increasing year after year, and the Society is celebrating them today during this inauguration.

In her speech, Engineer Sara Al-Ramzi, Chairwoman and Founder of the Kuwaiti Environmental Engineers Team, stated that the wise leadership’s patronage of this event reflects their commitment to supporting national talents across various fields particularly environmental specializations and serves as a major incentive for environmental engineers in Kuwait to continue excelling and innovating in diverse environmental work sectors.

Al-Ramzi added that the forum highlights the importance of nationally qualified professionals in environmental engineering and their contributions to sustainable development. It also offers environmental engineers the opportunity to display their personal projects in an annual public exhibition, thereby enhancing recognition of environmental engineers in both the private and public sectors in Kuwait and emphasizing their vital role in advancing sustainability.

For his part, the team’s Vice President and official spokesperson, Engineer Yousef Al-Ramzi, affirmed that the forum provides a platform for environmental engineers to present their innovations, improve how the job market views their capabilities, and gain acknowledgment of their wide-ranging skills. He also noted that the event opens up more job opportunities and encourages the broader adoption of sustainable practices across both government and private sectors, announcing the launch of the Environmental Engineers Platform.

He added that this event enables emerging environmental engineers to exchange knowledge, collaborate, and inspire more students to pursue environmental engineering.

The forum includes five scientific sessions featuring 25 lectures presented by experts and specialists in various relevant fields, alongside an exhibition containing 21 booths representing multiple participating entities.

Revolutionizing AI decision intelligence

ZAINIAC invests in Actly, an AI startup led by Zain employee Ahmad AlObaid

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: ZAINIAC, Zain’s internal innovation program, has made a strategic investment in Actly, an AI startup founded by Zain Kuwait employee Ahmad AlObaid, who will also serve as the entity’s CEO. This groundbreaking development reflects ZAINIAC’s ongoing interest in redefining what is possible when employees are empowered to dream, build, and lead.

At its core, Actly provides actionable decision intelligence, combining real-time insights, behavior analytics, and predictive reporting to elevate business decision-making. With the capability to automate over 20,000 monthly conversations, Actly empowers organizations to scale effortlessly and meet growing customer expectations with precision.

Ahmad’s transition from an innovator within Zain to a startup CEO embodies the very essence of ZAINIAC’s mission: to spark, support, and scale game-changing ideas from within. ZAINIAC is dedicated to nurturing homegrown ideas and empowering employees to become industry-shaping entrepreneurs. With a laser focus on AI and real-world applications, Actly represents the future of delivering meaningful, personalized customer experiences through Alagents.

This investment aligns with Zain’s ‘4WARD – Progress with Purpose’ strategy, which emphasizes meaningful innovation, inclusive growth, and digital transformation with real societal impact. By backing employee-led ventures like Actly, ZAINIAC reinforces its commitment to building a future where progress is fueled by purpose and innovation is driven from within.

Malek Hammoud, Zain Group Chief Digital and Investment Officer, said, “We don’t just talk about innovation—we invest in it, especially when it comes from our own people. This strategic deal is a reflection of belief in our employees’ potential to become the region’s next tech pioneers.”

Ahmad AlObaid, CEO of Actly



Left-right: Aysha Al-Mudhaf, ZAINIAC Senior Manager; Malek Hammoud, Zain Group Chief Digital and Investment Officer; and Ahmad Al-Obaid, CEO of Actly

- AI powered platform founded by Zain Kuwait employee Ahmad AlObaid
- ZAINIAC is dedicated to nurturing homegrown ideas and empowering employees to become industry-shaping entrepreneurs.
- ACTLY is a success story that will inspire more internal innovation across the organization

commented, “History is witnessing a tectonic shift with the emergence of AI, and the region is rapidly adapting and exploiting it. With Zain’s continuous support and belief in emerging talents, the opportunities are immense, and the future for Actly is bright.”

Actly’s progress has seen the platform recently engage a select group of enterprise customers to test the innovative solution who provided conducive feedback to enhance the AI-powered service, also indicating their eagerness to adopt it. Actly is in

the final stages of development and plans are underway to integrate the platform into Zain Kuwait soon, as well as other Zain operations in due course.

Through ZAINIAC, employees are encouraged to build boldly. This milestone transaction represents a new chapter in Zain’s ongoing commitment to foster entrepreneurship, transform ideas into impact, and champion the future of digital innovation in the region and beyond.

Energy experts gather in Oman

Oman hosts ERRA conference on energy regulation

MUSCAT, May 5, (KUNA): The annual Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA) two-day conference kicked off Monday in Oman, bringing together more than 280 specialists representing 50 policymakers and academics from around the world.

In his speech, Chairman of the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) Dr. Mansour Al-Hinai, said that hosting the conference represents an opportunity to highlight Oman’s efforts to develop the energy sector, enhance its efficiency, and diversify its sources within the Oman Vision 2040 framework and plans to achieve zero neutrality (net-zero) by 2050.

Al-Hinai added that this event, being held in the Middle East for the first time, is a high-level international platform for exchanging expertise and discussing developments in energy regulatory policies. It contributes to enhancing integration among mem-

ber states and highlighting Oman’s role as a leading country striving to build a sustainable economy based on innovation and modern technology.

For her part, ERRA’s Chair Andriana Nelkova Chuchuk, praised Oman’s efforts in implementing innovative energy solutions, emphasizing that Oman’s experience represents a unique model in its ability to achieve a balance between market efficiency and environmental sustainability, economic competitiveness, and climate responsibility.

In a similar speech, she stated that Oman is a strategic partner capable of influencing the global energy governance system, particularly with market management, regulating interoperability, and stimulating and attracting investments in energy projects.

The conference will discuss a number of vital issues that keep pace with global challenges, including im-

proving the efficiency of regulatory systems, promoting investments in renewable energy, and anticipating the impact of technological developments on the future of energy. It will also feature a number of specialized dialogue sessions and interactive workshops with the participation of leading experts and policymakers from around the world, bilateral meetings will be held to discuss opportunities for joint cooperation and explore partnership prospects in various energy sectors.

The association is one of the most prominent international regulatory groups in the energy sector, with 47 member organizations from 43 countries, it enables regulatory bodies to exchange expertise, build effective policies, and develop legislative frameworks to ensure a balance between production efficiency, resource sustainability, market fairness, and the achievement of sustainable development goals.



Energy Regulators Regional Association conference in Oman.



During the press conference for the launch of 12th intake and 3rd batch of inspireU.

Empowering startups with insights and mentorship through accelerator programs

stc hosts press conference for inspireU intake 12 activities in collaboration with key partners

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, held a press conference to mark the launch of the activities of the 12th intake and 3rd batch of the inspireU startup accelerator in Kuwait.

The event brought together key partners collaborating in this intake which include Faith Capital, KIB Mubader Center, Zad Fintech, Al Hamra Mall and Tower, and Rasameel. Each partner will play an essential role in supporting and guiding participants in the program throughout their entrepreneurial journey as part of the inspire intake 12 incubator.

The press conference witnessed the presence of senior representatives from the collaborating entities, who hold extensive experience and industry insights when it comes to entrepreneurial growth and the startup ecosystem. Ahmed Al Nowaibet, Director of Public Relations and Social Media at stc, represented stc at the press conference, where he emphasized the strategic role that the partners will play in the program.

Following the official announcement during the press conference, the partners will contribute

Al Nowaibet:

■ The inspireU program continues to evolve with every new intake, introducing new partners to assist participants in their unique journeys

ute their expertise and insights to assist startups within the incubator to reach new heights in innovation and growth.

Commenting on the press conference, Al Nowaibet said, “At stc, we believe that enabling innovation is more than a business objective, it is a responsibility that supports the long-term growth and diversification of Kuwait’s economy. Through the inspireU incubator, we aim to empower ambitious entrepreneurs by offering them access to a comprehensive support ecosystem that includes training, funding, and strategic exposure. The partnerships announced during the press conference align with our commitment to creating opportunities that allow startups to grow and scale their operations sustainably.”

He added, “The inspireU program continues to evolve with every new intake, introducing new partners to assist participants in their unique journeys. Having said that, we are confident that this year’s participants will gain valuable insights and mentorship to guide their projects from concept to market. This initiative is a reflection of stc’s strategic direction to act as a key enabler of digital transformation, while supporting Kuwait’s Vision 2035 and advancing the role of youth-led innovation within our society.”

Initially launched by stc Group and adopted by stc Kuwait, inspireU has become an essential component of the Company’s CSR and sustainability strategy.

Now in its 12th intake, the program provides participants with access to professional training, legal and commercial advisory, workspaces in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and financial support.

In addition to local resources, startups also benefit from international networking opportunities through global tech events such as MWC, LEAP, and Silicon Valley summits. Past graduates of inspireU have gone on to secure investment, expand their offerings, and play influential roles in the market.

Ghorbal to boost research standards

NBK’s Majed Ghorbal assigned as ESOMAR representative in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research “ESOMAR” selected Mr. **Majed Ghorbal**, Head of Insight at the National Bank of Kuwait as its representative in Kuwait.

“ESOMAR” is a pioneering global community for the data, research, and insight that puts great efforts into enhancing the value of market research and surveys around the world.

Mr. Ghorbal will serve as a vital connecting link between “ESOMAR” and the research and insight community in Kuwait with the aim of enhancing the best and high-quality research practices across the different sectors.



Majed Ghorbal

Moreover, Mr. Ghorbal will play a key role in organizing local events, communicating with industry experts, and promoting continued development of research standards in Kuwait.

The selection of NBK to represent “ESOMAR” reflects its leadership and commitment to innovation and decision-making based on data, and it highlights the bank’s essential role as well in developing the professional market research community in Kuwait and the region.

In this light, Mr. Ghorbal said: “I am pleased to represent “ESOMAR” in Kuwait and to have the chance to contribute to enhancing the insight and market research community, and to work closely with the members and institutions of “ESOMAR” to support the big role data and insights play in making the best decisions.

Mr. Ghorbal also added that NBK prioritizes benefiting from the most recent data-based research and insights into developing the products and services it provides for its customers to achieve the highest level of satisfaction.

He also indicated that NBK’s Insight department is central to this task, as it plays a pivotal role in understanding the customers’ needs, preferences, and behaviors through methodological research and evaluation tools.

Moreover, he said: “The customers are the focus of the bank in its endeavors to develop its services, by listening to them through many channels that include surveys about customer satisfaction, obtaining quick opinion on digital platforms, in addition to in-depth interviews and market analyses.

This data is turned into applicable strategies, further guaranteeing NBK’s flexibility for the changing customer needs and incorporating innovation with banking services.”

NBK’s Insight department has a professional team that provides thorough analyses essential for decision making in a way that enriches the customer experience through data and information that help develop products and enhance services, as well as produce long-term strategic planning that is based on data analysis and deep understanding of local and regional market dynamics.

The “ESOMAR” was established in 1947, and has more than 4 thousand members and 94 representatives, and it encompasses a massive base of international companies specializing in research and development in more than 130 countries around the world, which contribute to supporting and analyzing data and research globally, as well as issuing regulations that ensure members adhere to high standards in conducting their research to present high quality information and reports.

■ This comes as a remarkable connecting link for the research and insight community in Kuwait aimed at continuing to develop industry standards.

■ The selection highlights the bank’s vital role in research and insight development in Kuwait and the region.

■ NBK’s Insight plays a pivotal role in understanding the customers’ needs and preferences through data-based research and insights.

Boursa Kuwait ends mixed

General index up 0.10%

KUWAIT CITY, May 5, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Monday’s trading session with mixed performance across its indices, as the general index edged up 8.03 points, or 0.10 percent, to settle at 7,974.57 points.

Market activity saw a total of 332.4 million shares exchanged in 18,627 cash transactions, with a combined value of KD 79.6 million (approximately \$243.5 million).

The Premier Market Index recorded gains, rising 15.89 points, or 0.18 percent,

to close at 8,611.46 points. It saw 146.4 million shares traded through 8,501 transactions worth KD 52 million (around \$159.12 million).

In contrast, the Main Market Index declined by 21.83 points, or 0.31 percent, ending at 7,001.19 points. Trading in this segment involved 185.9 million shares across 10,126 deals, with a total turnover of KD 27.5 million (about \$84.15 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index slipped 11.64 points, or 0.16 percent, to reach 7,062.33 points. A total of 154.7 million shares were traded via 7,722 transactions, generating a value of KD 23.8 million (approximately \$72.8 million).

Driven by non-oil expansion

Saudi GDP to grow 3.4% in 2025-26

By National Bank of Kuwait

Economic growth is expected to rise to even stronger levels of 3.4% on average in 2025-26 as still-solid non-oil expansion is met with a recovery in oil sector output. The fiscal deficit is set to widen on a projected decline in oil revenues due to lower oil prices and reduced Aramco dividends, which will outweigh the sustained increase in non-oil income driven both by fiscal reforms and the expanding tax base. Downside risks to the outlook stem mainly from prolonged oil market and global trade disruptions which could exacerbate fiscal pressures and possibly lead to a slowdown in investment, while one upside risk is the potential for a rebound in FDI inflows, helped by recent upgrades to the regulatory climate.

Sustained non-oil growth on robust domestic demand

We expect Saudi non-oil GDP to expand at a healthy rate of 3.4% on average in 2025-26, underpinned by growth-conducive conditions in the private sector. Investment levels will remain solid as the Vision 2030 push for economic diversification proceeds, while record-low unemployment (7% in 4Q24), coupled with rising tourism is supportive of sustained private spending growth. Additional support should come from gradually looser monetary policy, as the Saudi Central Bank lowers benchmark rates in line with the US Fed. Recent monthly indicators suggest that conditions in the non-oil economy remain upbeat, with private sector-led credit growth in double digits (14.9% y/y in March) and business activity as measured by the PMI expanding at a strong if moderating pace (56 in April). Continued regulatory reform progress drove a notable rise in commercial license registration in 2024; reforms included amendments to the commercial law to promote investment, streamlining the business setup process, special economic zones, the ongoing digitization of services and the introduction of a VAT rebate for tourists to enhance competitiveness. The steps could also support FDI inflows, which fell by 19% to a below target \$21 billion in 2024

Oil output to gradually recover on OPEC unwinding

We expect oil output to gradually recover in line with the scheduled unwinding of previous OPEC oil production cuts. In our baseline scenario, oil production will increase by a marginal 0.2 mb/d to an average of 9.18 mb/d in 2025 before a larger rise to 9.81 mb/d in 2026. Therefore, we see oil GDP growing by 1.0% in 2025, accelerating to 5.3% in 2026. Overall GDP is projected to grow by 2.9% and 4.0% in 2025 and 2026, respectively.

Inflation to edge up, but remain relatively low

Inflation is expected to rise modestly in 2025-26 on

easing but still elevated housing and utilities inflation (just over 8% in March) and slower deflation in other categories as input prices continue to rise. Moreover, food inflation is trending upwards. Further, a potentially softer dollar could push up import prices of non-dollar denominated goods given the riyal-dollar peg, while some input costs could also be affected by higher tariffs. We forecast an inflation average of 2.3% over the forecast period from 1.8% in 2024 – though still low relative to the robust economic growth climate.

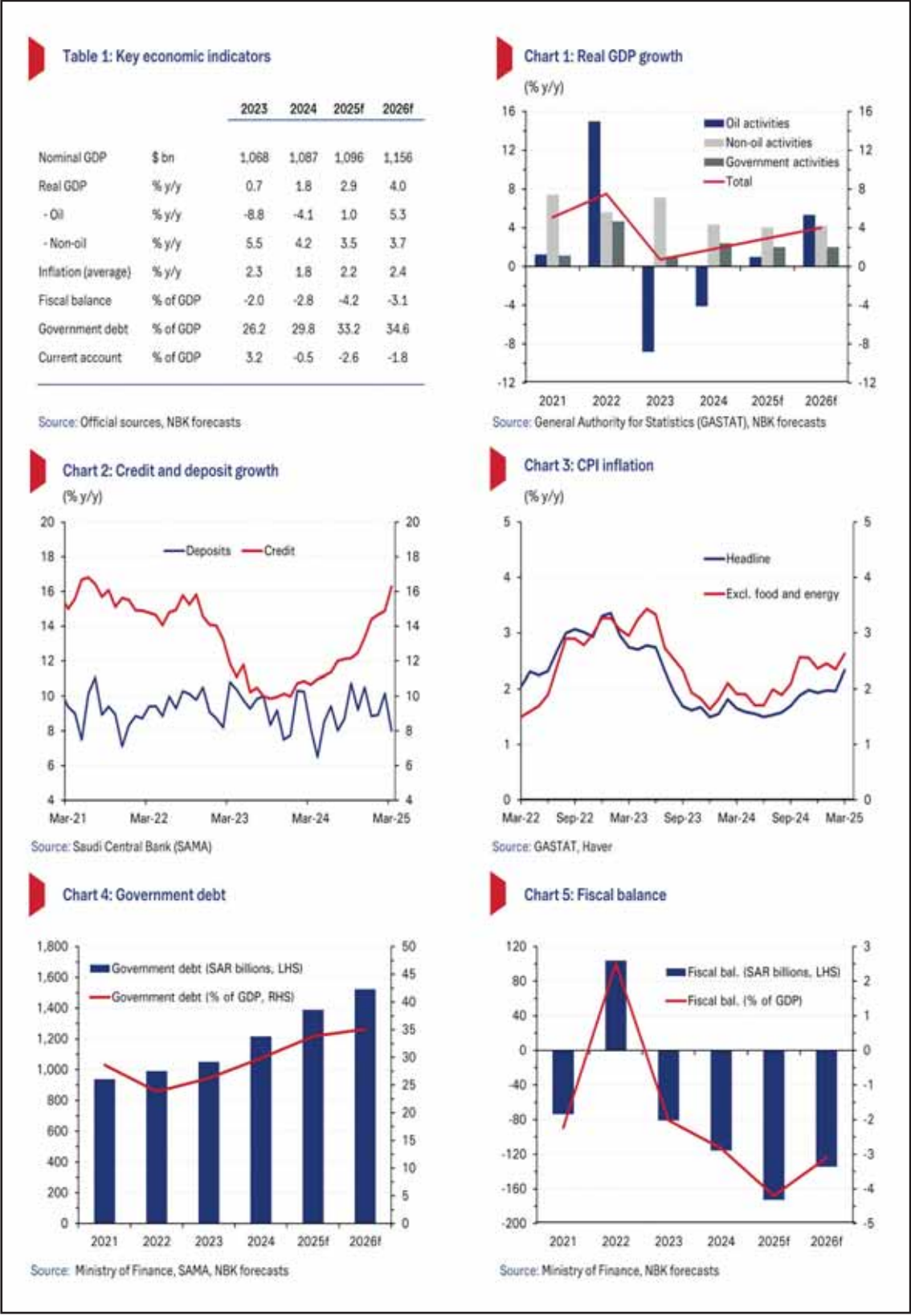
Fiscal deficit to widen despite higher non-oil income

The fiscal deficit is forecast to widen to 4.2% of GDP in 2025 from 2.8% in 2024 primarily on the back of lower oil revenues due to a combination of lower oil prices and reduced Aramco dividends (dividend policy has been normalized after the exceptional payout of 2024). Partly offsetting the decline is the steady rise in non-oil income (taxes on goods and services, corporate income tax, etc.) reflecting proceeds from fiscal reforms and the ongoing expansion of the non-oil economy. Amid increasing fiscal pressures, the 2025 budget estimates a fiscal deficit of 2.6% of GDP on average in 2025 and 2026 and calls for more restrained expenditure growth via a modest increase in current spending (3.7% b/b) and a reprioritization of capex (-2.6% b/b). This is enabled via a partial shifting to off-budget funding channels, mostly the Public Investment Fund. The authorities may continue to overspend but to a much lesser degree compared to recent years as an effort is made to balance spending restraint with development goals. We see the breakeven oil price declining to \$84 by 2026 from \$92 in 2024 thanks to the above mentioned efforts.

Debt issuance will continue to be the primary mode of deficit financing and public debt is projected to rise to 35% of GDP by 2026 from 30% in 2024. In February, S&P upgraded the sovereign credit rating to A+ from A, on par with Japan and China, citing economic diversification and reform progress.

Downside risks mainly from trade and geopolitics

We expect the Saudi economy to broadly withstand current external pressures as trade disputes weigh down on the global economic outlook, supported by continued momentum in the domestic non-oil economy with solid consumer sentiment and sustained vision-linked investment and reform progress. Downside risks include the potential for investment levels to disappoint amid fiscal constraints (especially if oil prices fall steeply) in addition to the possibility of severe geopolitical events. On the upside, a renewed pick-up in FDI in response to recent business-friendly reforms would be supportive of faster non-oil growth, while a swift resolution of global trade tensions and a subsequent recovery in oil demand could prompt a faster oil sector recovery.



Confab featured a number of panel discussions

ABK sponsors the 11th Al Amiri Hospital Diabetes Conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its sponsorship of the 11th Al Amiri Hospital Diabetes Conference, which was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel with the participation of a large number of doctors, experts, and representatives from pharmaceutical companies. The conference featured numerous panel discussions focusing on the latest advancements in diabetes treatment and effective strategies for adopting a healthy lifestyle to prevent the disease.

ABK's participation in the accompanying exhibition provided the opportunity to engage with doctors and attendees, gaining insights into their key needs to better serve them in the future. The Bank's booth attracted considerable interest from the public, who were keen to learn more about ABK's wide range of banking and financial solutions tailored to meet the needs of all customer segments in Kuwait.

Commenting on the occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, stated, "Our sponsorship of this conference reflects our strong partnership with Al Amiri Hospital and our ongoing commitment to supporting the healthcare sector and ensuring the success of related events. This aligns with our corporate social responsibility program, through which we respond to



Mr. Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer

Sager Albenali:

- Through our social responsibility program, we address the needs of our community in the best possible way in collaboration with our partners.

the evolving needs of Kuwaiti society and strengthen our competitive position within the banking sector in Kuwait."

Albenali added that ABK is keen to collaborate with hospitals and healthcare centres across Kuwait and to



Group shot in the bank's booth.

raise awareness among all age groups about the latest medical developments and healthy practices that help prevent disease and promote well-being. Such efforts contribute to improving Kuwait's ranking on global health development indicators.

He concluded by expressing pride in ABK's various sponsorships and initiatives, carried out in partnership with key stakeholders across health, education, sports, and public awareness sectors. He affirmed the Bank's ongoing commitment to participating in more events across Kuwait, fur-

ther enhancing its impact and success within the community.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking



Part of the conference activities.

and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 46 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to pro-

mote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk.kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Bank recognized at Kuwait Builders Summit 2025

Kuwait Finance House receives Banking Excellence Award

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) received the Banking Excellence Award as part of its participation in the Kuwait Builders Summit 2025 (KBS). The summit was held under the patronage and in the presence of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdul Latif Al Mashari.

The award was based on specific criteria including quality, financial solvency, innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility. These criteria were determined for selecting the winners by an independent jury comprising a distinguished panel of academics, professionals, and consultants from various sectors.

KFH Head of Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh received the award from Minister Abdul Latif Al Mashari, who commended KFH's excellence, noting that the award is a well-deserved recognition for its developmental contributions, significant economic role, and well-established reputation.

KFH's participation in the Kuwait Builders Summit 2025 reflects its prominent economic position and pivotal role in financing and financially empowering construction

projects, as well as its standing in promoting green economy. It also underscores KFH's commitment to participating in events that highlight Kuwait's position as a leading destination for development and an attractive investment environment.

The summit promotes sustainable construction sectors, such as green buildings, renewable energy, digital transformation, and public-private partnerships. It also contributes to enhancing the private sector's competitiveness and raising standards of quality and efficiency.

Green finance product

KFH's participation has also granted the Bank the opportunity to showcase its innovative financing solutions in the construction sector, including its Green Finance Product, launched to support sustainable building efforts, and aligning with the summit's theme.

The green finance product offers financing of consumer and housing products (green products) that contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the harnessing of renewable energy. The product is offered in collaboration with leading companies in this field, providing customers with a comprehen-



Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh receiving the award from Minister Abdul Latif Al Mashari in the presence of Dr. Khaled Mahdi.

sive, reliable, and environmentally responsible service throughout all construction phases. It also reflects KFH's ongoing efforts to integrate sustainability into its financial transactions.

Global recognition

In recognition of its excellence in sustainability, KFH received various global awards. These include the GSAS – Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto building. This certificate is normally granted to projects compliant with strict environment sustainability standards. KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to receive this certification. KFH has also been awarded an "A" rating by MSCI ESG index and has been included in the FTSE-4Good Index Series.

The first-of-its kind in Kuwait

It serves to note that the Kuwait Builders Summit 2025 is the first of its kind in Kuwait, bringing together decision makers to exchange expertise and highlight mega construction and infrastructure projects, in addition to showcasing the latest developments in the building industry. The summit also highlights Kuwait's outlook for major development initiatives in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Fed likely to defy Trump, keep rates unchanged this week

Agency's independence under threat

WASHINGTON, May 5, (AP): The Federal Reserve will likely keep its key short-term interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, despite weeks of harsh criticism and demands from President Donald Trump that the Fed reduce borrowing costs.

After causing a sharp drop in financial markets two weeks ago by saying he could fire Fed Chair Jerome Powell, Trump subsequently backed off and said he had no intention of doing so. Still, he and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent have said the Fed should cut rates.

They argue that inflation has steadily cooled and high borrowing costs are no longer needed to restrain price increases. The Fed sharply ramped up its short-term rate in 2022 and 2023 as pandemic-era inflation spiked.

Separately, Elon Musk, the head of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency, last Wednesday suggested that DOGE should look more closely at the Fed's spending on its facilities.

The heightened scrutiny shows that even as the Trump administration backs off its threats to fire Powell, the Fed is still subject to unusually sharp political pressures, despite its status as an independent agency.

Even so, the Fed will almost certainly leave its key rate unchanged at about 4.3% when it meets Tuesday and Wednesday. Powell and many of the other 18 officials that sit on the Fed's rate-setting committee have said they want to see how Trump's tariffs affect

the economy before making any moves.

Trump, however, on Friday said on the social media platform Truth Social that there is "NO INFLATION" and claimed that grocery and egg prices have fallen, and that gas has dropped to \$1.98 a gallon.

That's not entirely true: Grocery prices have jumped 0.5% in two of the past three months and are up 2.4% from a year ago. Gas and oil prices have declined - gas costs are down 10% from a year ago - continuing a longer-running trend that has continued in part because of fears the economy will weaken. Still, AAA says gas prices nationwide average \$3.18 a gallon.

Inflation did drop noticeably in March, an encouraging sign, though in the first three months of the year it was 3.6%, according to the Fed's preferred gauge, well above its 2% target.

Without tariffs, economists say it's possible the Fed would soon reduce its benchmark rate, because it is currently at a level intended to slow borrowing and spending and cool inflation. Yet the Fed can't now cut rates with Trump's broad tariffs likely to raise prices in the coming months.

Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at BNY, said that the Fed is "scarred" by what happened in 2021, when prices rose amid supply snarls and Powell and other Fed officials said the increase would likely be "transitory." Instead, inflation soared to a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

This time they will be more cautious, he said.

"That's a Fed that is going to have to wait for evidence and be slow to adjust on that evidence," Reinhart said.

Plus, Trump's badgering of Powell makes it harder for the Fed chair to cut rates because doing so any-

time soon would be seen as knuckling under to the White House, said Preston Mui, an economist at Employ America.

"You could imagine a world where there isn't pressure from the Trump administration and they cut rates ... sooner, because they feel comfortable making the argument that they're doing so because of the data," he said.

For his part, Powell said last month that tariffs would likely push up inflation and slow the economy, a tricky combination for the Fed. The central bank would typically raise rates - or at least keep them elevated - to fight inflation, while it would cut them to spur the economy if unemployment rose.

Powell has said that the impact of the tariffs on inflation could be temporary - a one-time price increase - but most recently said it "could also be more persistent." That suggests that Powell will want to wait, potentially for months, to ensure tariffs don't sustainably raise inflation before considering a rate cut.

Some economists forecast the Fed won't cut rates until its September meeting, or even later.

Yet Fed officials could move sooner if the tariffs hit the economy hard enough to cause layoffs and push up unemployment. Wall Street investors appear to expect such an outcome - they project that the first cut will occur in July, according to futures pricing.

Separately, Musk criticized the Fed Wednesday for spending \$2.5 billion on an extensive renovation of two of its buildings in Washington, D.C.

"Since at the end of the day, this is all taxpayer money, we should certainly look to see if indeed the Federal Reserve is spending \$2.5 billion on their interior designer," Musk said. "That's an eyebrow raiser."

Abel takes over as CEO in '26

Warren Buffett will remain chairman at Berkshire

WASHINGTON, May 5, (AP): Billionaire Warren Buffett will remain chairman of Berkshire Hathaway when vice chairman Greg Abel takes over as CEO to begin 2026.

The board of directors at the cash-rich conglomerate voted Sunday to keep the legendary 94-year-old investor as head of the board, a decision likely to relieve investors worried about Berkshire's remarkable winning streak as the U.S. and global economies are beset by tariff shocks, financial turmoil and a growing risk of recession.

The board in the same meeting also approved Buffett's chosen successor as CEO, veteran Berkshire executive Greg Abel, 62. In a surprise announcement Saturday, Buffett said he would step down from that top spot by the end of the year.

Berkshire shares fell more than 2% before the opening bell Monday.

In six decades at the helm, Buffett turned a Massachusetts textile company into a sprawling but nimble conglomerate that owns everything from Daily Queen and See's Candies to BNSF Railway and giant insurers. As the company grew, Warren's reputation grew with it as shares of Berkshire Hathaway climbed steadily, exceeding major indexes by wide margins and returning an average 19.9% each year versus 10.4% for the Standard & Poor's 500.



Warren Buffett, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, smiles as he plays bridge following the annual Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting in Omaha, Neb., May 5, 2019. (AP)

Trump's trade demands go beyond tariffs to target perceived unfair practices

FRANKFURT, Germany, May 5, (AP): The Trump administration says the sweeping tariffs it unveiled April 2, then postponed for 90 days, have a simple goal: Force other countries to drop their trade barriers to U.S. goods.

Yet President Donald Trump's definition of trade barriers includes a slew of issues well beyond the tariffs other countries impose on the U.S., including some areas not normally associated with trade disputes. Those include agricultural safety requirements, tax systems, currency exchange rates, product standards, legal requirements, and red tape at the border.

Here are several non-tariff areas the administration is targeting:

Currency exchange rates

Trump has accused Germany, China and Japan of "global freefloating" by - in his view - devaluing their currencies to make their exports cheaper.

The European Central bank has been cutting interest rates to support growth. That could also weaken the euro, which has strengthened sharply against the dollar since Trump took office. The ECB says it doesn't target the exchange rate.

Farm products

Agricultural safeguards against importing pests or health hazards have been a sticking point with U.S. trade partners for years. They include Japan's restrictions on rice and potato imports, the EU's ban on hormone-treated beef or chlorine-disinfected chickens and Korea's ban on beef from

cows more than 30 months old.

Yet changes face stiff political resistance from voters and farm lobbies in those countries.

Taxation

Trump has railed against value-added tax as a burden to U.S. companies, although economists say this kind of tax is trade-neutral because it applies equally to imports and exports. Value-added tax, or VAT, is paid by the end purchaser at the cash register but differs from sales taxes in that it is calculated at each stage of the production process.

Product standards

U.S. officials have complained about Japan's non-recognition of U.S. vehicle safety standards and its different test-

ing procedures for car equipment.

Japan also provides subsidies for the Japanese-designed ChaDeMo plug standard for electric cars, requiring foreign makers to use an outdated technology if they want the subsidy.

Bureaucracy

Concerns about excessive or baffling bureaucratic procedures to get goods into a country are mentioned repeatedly in the administration's latest trade assessment. The U.S. has complained about expensive delays getting permission to export seafood to Japan. Meanwhile, Japan requires wheat imports to be sold to a government entity and has "highly regulated and intransparent" quota system that keeps rice imports from the U.S. to a minimum.

‘The movie industry in the US is dying’

Trump threatens a 100% tariff on foreign-made films

NEW YORK, May 5, (AP): President Donald Trump is opening a new salvo in his tariff war, targeting films made outside the US.

In a post Sunday night on his Truth Social platform, Trump said he has authorized the Department of Commerce and the Office of the US Trade Representative to slap a 100% tariff “on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands.”

“The Movie Industry in America is Dying a very fast death,” he wrote, complaining that other countries “are offering all sorts of incentives to draw” filmmakers and studios away from the US. “This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda!”

It wasn’t immediately clear how any such tariff on international productions could be implemented. It’s common for both large and small films to include production in the US and in other countries. Big-budget movies like the upcoming “Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning,” for instance, are shot around the world.

Incentive programs for years have influenced where movies are shot, increasingly driving film production out of California and to other states and countries with favorable tax incentives, like Canada and the United Kingdom.

Yet Trump’s tariffs are designed to lead consumers toward American products. And in movie theaters, American-produced movies overwhelmingly dominate the domestic marketplace.

China has ramped up its domestic movie production, culminating in the animated blockbuster “Ne Zha 2” grossing more than \$2 billion this year. But even then, its sales came almost entirely from mainland China. In North America, it earned just \$20.9 million.

In New Zealand, where successive governments have offered rebates and incentives in recent years to draw Hollywood films to the country, the film industry has generated billions of dollars in tourism revenue driven by the “Lord of the Rings” and “Hobbit” films, which featured the country’s pristine and scenic vistas.

More recently, the blockbuster “Minecraft” movie was filmed entirely in New Zealand, and U.S. productions in 2023 delivered \$1.3 billion New Zealand dollars (\$777 million) to the country in return for NZ\$200 million in subsidies, according to government figures.

Measures

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said he was awaiting more details of Trump’s measures before commenting on them but would continue to pitch to filmmakers abroad, including in India’s Bollywood.

“We’ve got an absolutely world class industry,” he said. “This is the best place to make movies, period, in the world.”

The Motion Picture Association, which represents major US film studios and streaming services, didn’t immediately respond to messages Sunday evening.

The MPA’s data shows how much Hollywood exports have dominated cinemas. According to the MPA, the American movies produced \$22.6 billion in exports and \$15.3 billion in trade surplus in 2023.

Trump, a Republican, has made good on the “tariff man” label he gave himself years ago, slapping new taxes on goods made in countries around the globe.

That includes a 145% tariff on Chinese goods and



President Donald Trump arrives on Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Sunday, May 4. (AP)

a 10% baseline tariff on goods from other countries, with even higher levies threatened.

By unilaterally imposing tariffs, Trump has exerted extraordinary influence over the flow of commerce, creating political risks and pulling the market in different directions. There are tariffs on autos, steel and aluminum, with more imports, including pharmaceutical drugs, set to be subject to new tariffs in the weeks ahead.

Trump has long voiced concern about movie production moving overseas.

Shortly before he took office, he announced that he had tapped actors Mel Gibson, Jon Voight and Sylvester Stallone to serve as “special ambassadors” to Hollywood to bring it “Back - Bigger, Better, and Stronger than Ever Before!”

US film and television production has been ham-

pered in recent years, with setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood guild strikes of 2023 and the recent wildfires in the Los Angeles area.

Overall production in the US was down 26% last year compared with 2021, according to data from ProdPro, which tracks production.

The group’s annual survey of executives, which asked about preferred filming locations, found no location in the US made the top five, according to the Hollywood Reporter.

Toronto, the UK, Vancouver, Central Europe and Australia came out on top, with California placing sixth, Georgia seventh, New Jersey eighth and New York ninth.

The problem is especially acute in California. In the greater Los Angeles area, production last year was down 5.6% from 2023 according to FilmLA, second only to 2020, during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Last, October, Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, proposed expanding California’s Film & Television Tax Credit program to \$750 million annually, up from \$330 million.

Other US cities like Atlanta, New York, Chicago and San Francisco have also used aggressive tax incentives to lure film and TV productions.

Those programs can take the form of cash grants, as in Texas, or tax credits, which Georgia and New Mexico offer.

“Other nations have been stealing the movie-making capabilities from the United States,” Trump told reporters at the White House on Sunday night after returning from a weekend in Florida.

“If they’re not willing to make a movie inside the United States we should have a tariff on movies that come in.”

Jury selection

Combs’ trial set to open

NEW YORK, May 5, (AP): Sean “Diddy” Combs, the hip-hop entrepreneur whose wildly successful career has been dotted by allegations of violence, will be brought to a New York courthouse Monday to be tried on charges that he used the influence



Combs

and resources of his business empire to sexually abuse women.

Jury selection is scheduled to begin in the morning and potentially take several days. Opening statements by the lawyers and the start of testimony is expected next week.

The 17-page indictment against Combs reads like a charging document filed against a Mafia leader or the head of a drug gang, accusing him of engaging in sex trafficking and presiding over a racketeering conspiracy.

The indictment says that with the help of people in his entourage and employees from his network of businesses, Combs engaged in a two-decade pattern of abusive behavior against women and others.

Women were manipulated into participating in drug-fueled performances with male workers that Combs called “Freak Offs,” prosecutors say.

To keep women in line, prosecutors say Combs used a mix of influence and violence: He offered to boost their entertainment careers if they did what he asked - or cut them off if they didn’t. And when he wasn’t getting what he wanted, the indictment says Combs and his associates resorted to violent acts including beatings, kidnapping and arson. Once, the indictment alleges, he even dangled someone from a balcony.

Combs and his lawyers say he is innocent.

Any group activity was consensual, they say. There was no effort to coerce people into things they didn’t want to do, and nothing that happened amounted to a criminal racket, they said.

The trial is expected to take at least eight weeks.

Combs, 55, has acknowledged one episode of violence that is likely to be featured in the trial. In 2016, a security camera recorded him beating up his former girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, in the hallway of a Los Angeles hotel. Cassie filed a lawsuit in late 2023 saying Combs had subjected her to years of abuse, including beatings and rape.

Film



This image released by Falling Forward Films shows Alec Baldwin, (left), and Patrick Scott McDermott in a scene from ‘Rust.’ (AP)

Baldwin’s performance overshadowed by real-life tragedy

‘Rust,’ a Western burdened by tragic history

LOS ANGELES, May 5, (AP): Surely, bringing an audience to tears with a poignant ending is something every filmmaker dreams of.

And yet the moment that inspires a genuine, unambiguous tear in “Rust” is born of a true nightmare.

“...for Halyna,” the screen reads as the film comes to a close. Halyna Hutchins’ name also appears in Ukrainian. And we’re given a favored quote from the late cinematographer: “What can we do to make this better?”

Just as there’s no way to make this film’s offscreen history any better, there’s no way to write a normal review of a movie that is anything but. “Rust” has inevitably and inexorably become synonymous with tragedy: Hutchins’ shocking death during an on-set rehearsal, when producer-star Alec Baldwin pointed a pistol at her that somehow contained a live round. It discharged, killing her and wounding director Joel Souza.

An involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin was dismissed. The movie’s weapons supervisor is serving an 18-month prison sentence. And eventually, the film was finished, with Souza returning and cinematographer Bianca Cline replacing Hutchins.

Souza said at the film’s premiere in Poland that the family wanted Hutchins’ work to be seen. The movie’s terse publicity materials note that the original producers will not gain financially from it, and that although terms of a settlement were sealed, “it has been confirmed that (husband Matthew) Hutchins and son Andros will receive profits from the film.”

In any case, the movie is here. It is not, as many surely expect, a uniformly shoddy effort. The plot is basic and the dialogue merely serviceable, but there are lovely scenery shots throughout, the vast-

ness, gentle light and deep colors of the American West illustrated carefully and evocatively by Hutchins’ - and Cline’s - camera work. Yes, the cinematography is what stands out here.

There are also several compelling performances, though Baldwin’s somewhat halting, somber turn is not among them.

Most of all, though, there’s not a moment in “Rust” in which one loses awareness of the tragedy. While the scene we’ve all read about does not appear, there is constant gunfire, this being a Western. It’s hard to forget about a shooting while watching so much shooting.

In fact, we begin with an accidental shooting.

Orphaned

The unfortunate perpetrator is Lucas Hollister, a teenager in 1880s Wyoming who’s recently been orphaned, along with his little brother. We learn later that their father shot himself a year after their mother died. So Lucas (Patrick Scott McDermott, in an accomplished performance) has become the parent.

On a trip into town, Lucas gets into a scuffle with another boy who’s insulting their late mother, hurting him. The rancher father demands that Lucas come work for him to pay off his debt. And when he comes to the desolate farm where the boys live to get him, Lucas accidentally shoots and kills him, while aiming at a wolf.

A judge decides the crime was premeditated and sentences the boy to the gallows. His little brother comes each night to the prison to sleep next to him.

Things look bleak - until a shadowy character with a white beard comes to break him out of the jailhouse, killing whoever gets in

the way.

“You tell any SOB who comes after me that he will shake hands with the devil himself,” says the mystery man. It’s Harlan Rust (Baldwin), a notorious outlaw who hasn’t been seen for years.

He is also Lucas’ estranged grandfather, having been alerted to the boy’s plight by his sister (Frances Fisher, excellent).

Thus begins the great chase. Rust and Lucas flee towards Mexico, the only place they can be safe. On their tail are a plethora of pursuers: Sheriff Wood Helm (Josh Hopkins) and various bounty hunters, chief among them the brutal Fenton “Preacher” Lang (Travis Fimmel, appropriately fearsome).

The two don’t get along at first - they never do, in such stories - and Lucas aches to get back to his brother.

But Rust convinces him it’s better to stay alive. Eventually, luck runs out for the pair, and someone will have to pay.

But for its unique circumstances, one can imagine “Rust” coming and going without much of a ripple. The question now is, who is going to be seeing this movie? Certainly many people will come - or watch at home - out of morbid curiosity.

What they will find is a movie better in some aspects - especially, and poignantly, the cinematography - than they may have suspected. But it is one that will always be defined, and reflected in every frame, by its tragic history. And there’s no real way to make that better.

“Rust,” a Falling Forward release, is unrated by the Motion Picture Association. Running time: 139 minutes. One and half stars out of four.

Singer expresses gratitude for the huge crowd

Two arrested in Rio for plot against Lady Gaga concert

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 5, (AP): Police in Brazil said on Sunday that two people have been arrested in connection with an alleged plot to detonate explosives at a free Lady Gaga concert in Rio de Janeiro.

The Rio event on Saturday was the biggest show of the pop star’s career that attracted an estimated 2.5 million fans to Copacabana Beach and had crowds screaming and dancing along.

Felipe Cury, secretary of the Rio police, said authorities believed the suspects sought to target Brazil’s special community.

“They were clearly saying that they were planning an attack at Lady Gaga’s concert motivated by sexual orientation,” Cury told a press conference on Sunday.

Rio Police chief Luiz Lima said the group disseminated hate speech and violent content online “aimed at gaining notoriety in order to attract more viewers, more participants - most of them teenagers, many of

them children.”

Even as Brazilian authorities said they arrested suspects in the hours before Lady Gaga’s show, the event went ahead without disruption - leading some to question the seriousness of the threat. Serious security concerns typically lead organizers to cancel such massive events - as happened with Taylor Swift’s concerts in Vienna last year.

Police said nothing about the alleged plot at the time in an effort to “avoid panic” and “the distortion of information.”

A spokesperson for Lady Gaga said the pop star and her team “learned about this alleged threat via media reports this morning. Prior to and during the show, there were no known safety concerns, nor any communication from the police or authorities to Lady Gaga regarding any potential risks.”

The statement added: “Her team worked closely with law enforcement throughout

the planning and execution of the concert and all parties were confident in the safety measures in place.”

Security was tight at Saturday’s concert, with 5,200 military and police officers deployed to the beach where fans were reveling in the pop singer’s classic hits like “Born This Way,” which became something of an LGBTQ anthem after its 2011 release.

Authorities arrested two people in connection with the alleged plot - a man described as the group’s leader in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul on illegal weapons possession charges, and a teenager in Rio on child pornography charges. Police did not elaborate on their exact roles in the plot or on how the group came to target Lady Gaga’s free concert.

“Those involved were recruiting participants, including teenagers, to carry out integrated attacks using improvised explosives and Molotov cocktails,” police said.

The Justice Ministry said that it determined the group posed a “risk to public order.” It said the group falsely presented themselves online as “Little Monsters” - Lady Gaga’s nickname for her fans - in order to lure teenagers into “networks with violent and self-destructive content.”

During a series of raids on the homes of 15 suspects across several Brazilian states, authorities confiscated phones and other electronic devices. Although police said they believed homemade bombs were intended for use in the planned attack, there was no mention of the raids turning up any weapons or explosive material.

Cury said one of the suspects whose home was raided in the city of Macaé, near Rio, “had a religious motivation” and “claimed the singer (Lady Gaga) was a Satanist.”

Lady Gaga has expressed gratitude for the enormous crowd in an Instagram post that said nothing of the alleged plot.



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

Marvel faces new challenges

‘Thunderbolts’ opens summer season with strong debut

NEW YORK, May 5, (AP): Marvel Studios’ “Thunderbolts” opened with \$76 million in domestic ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday, kicking off the summer box office with a solid No. 1 debut that fell shy of Marvel’s more spectacular launches.

All eyes had been on whether “Thunderbolts” - a team-up of antihero rejects similar to “Avengers” - could restore the Walt Disney Co. superhero factory to the kind of box office performance the studio once enjoyed so regularly. The results - similar to the debuts of “The Eternals” (\$71 million) and “Ant-Man and the Wasp” (\$75 million) - suggested Marvel’s malaise won’t be so easy to snap out of.

Some had expected a bigger opening for “Thunderbolts” because of the film’s good word-of-mouth. Unlike most recent MCU entries, reviews (88% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) have been excellent for “Thunderbolts,” directed by Jake Schreier and starring Florence Pugh, David Harbour and Sebastian Stan. Audi-

ences gave it an “A-” CinemaScore.

That kind of response should power the movie to strong business in the coming weeks. Though bigger MCU films - including 2024’s “Deadpool vs. Wolverine” (with a \$211 million opening on the way to \$1.34 billion worldwide) - have monopolized movie screens immediately, “Thunderbolts” could gather steam more steadily. Or, it could go down as another example of Marvel struggling to rekindle its golden touch.

Marvel spent about \$180 million to produced the movie, which added \$86.1 million in overseas sales. The film also teases the next MCU chapter, “The Fantastic Four: First Steps,” due out July 25.

“Marvel set the bar so high for so many years that a \$76 million opening may seem to some like it should have done \$100 million or something like that,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. “This is a great reset. They’re hitting the re-

set with ‘Thunderbolts.’” The great reviews and the word-of-mouth should hold it (in) good stead.”

The Walt Disney Co. also might not have expected such stout competition from Ryan Coogler’s “Sinners.” The Warner Bros. release, which had led the box office the last two weeks, continued to hold remarkably well. In its third week, it grossed \$33 million, a dip of only 28%.

“Sinners,” a 1932-set vampire movie about bootlegging brothers (both played by Michael B. Jordan) who open a juke joint in their Mississippi hometown, has proven a spring sensation in theaters. It has collected \$179.7 million domestically and \$236.7 million globally thus far.

Warner Bros. also nabbed third place with “A Minecraft Movie,” the smash-hit video game adaptation. In its fifth weekend, it rung up another \$13.7 million to bring its North American gross to nearly \$400 million.



This image released by Marvel Studios shows, (from left), Wyatt Russell, Sebastian Stan, David Harbour and Florence Pugh in a scene from ‘Thunderbolts.’ (AP)

Variety

WELLINGTON, New Zealand:

For more than a decade, passengers at New Zealand’s Wellington Airport have boarded flights below the figures of two giant, hovering eagles from the Hobbit films, one bearing a bellowing wizard Gandalf.

With 50-foot (15-meter) wingspans and weighing 2,600 pounds (1.1 ton) each, the sculptures that hover in the terminal have delighted tourists and scared children since 2013. Their tenure was eventful - one became unmoored from its fixings during a severe earthquake in 2016, and plummeted onto the terminal floor below. No one was hurt.

But this month the majestic creatures, which underscore the capital city’s connection to **Peter Jackson**’s “Lord of the Rings” and Hobbit films, will depart the terminal for good, Wellington Airport announced Monday.

“It’s been quite a Lord of the Rings-heavy storytelling theme in here,” said airport chief executive Matt Clarke. “Now we’re looking to change that to something new.”

“It breaks my heart,” said one traveler, Verity Johnson, who sat



Jackson

“Taking them away is un-New Zealand,” joked another airport visitor, Michael Parks.. (AP)

AUSTIN, Texas: Cinco de Mayo festivities are taking place across the US with music, tacos, tequila and colorful displays of Mexican culture - even if they’re not always the most authentic.

The day falls on a Monday this year, meaning the bulk of the celebrations took place over the weekend. In California, a state with a large Mexican American population, there was a mix of art displays, classic car shows, parades and food truck offerings.

In Austin, Texas, events included an opportunity for children to get their photo taken with characters from the Disney animated musical “Encanto,” which is itself a celebration of Mexican culture. A luncheon with speakers talking about the significance of the Mexican holiday and Mexican Americans in Austin was planned for Monday.

Here’s a look at the celebration and its roots:

Cinco de Mayo marks the anniversary of the 1862 victory by Mexican troops over invading French forces at the Battle of Puebla. The triumph over the better-equipped and much larger French troops was an enormous emotional boost for Mexican soldiers led by Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza.

In Mexico, historical reenactments are held annually in the central city of Puebla to commemorate the victory. Participants dress as Mexican and French troops, and as Zacapoxtlas - the Indigenous and farmer contingent that helped Mexican troops win.

In the United States the date is seen as a celebration of Mexican American culture, stretching back to the 1800s in California. Festivities typically include parades, street food, block parties, mariachi competitions and baile folklórico, or folkloric ballet. (AP)

NEW YORK: Sean Ono Lennon and his fellow creators of the Oscar-winning animated short film “War Is Over!” Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko” are releasing a picture book edition.

Viking Children’s Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, announced Wednesday that “War Is Over!” will be published Nov. 4. Like the movie, which came out in 2023, the book tells of a wartime carrier pigeon who inspires soldiers on both sides of the battlefield.

The film and book were based on the holiday-anti-war classic, “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” that Ono’s parents released in 1971. Sean was born to John Lennon and Yoko Ono four years later.

“The tale of our pigeon felt like it needed to be put into an illustrated book,” Sean Lennon said in a statement. “Our wish is that parents will be able to share this story with their kids. War is a difficult subject, and we hope this book will serve as a conversation starter for families and friends.”

The book is written by Sean Lennon, “War Is Over!” writer-director Dave Mullins and producer Brad Booker. The illustrations are by Max Narciso. (AP)

Film



Julia Schlaepfer arrives at an FYC screening of ‘1923’ on Sunday, May 4, at Linwood Dunn Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Actor discusses ‘pie in the sky’ dream role

Meet Corenswet, cinema’s new Superman

LOS ANGELES, May 5, (AP): In true Clark Kent form, the new Superman would like to correct the record.

David Corenswet gave an interview to Entertainment Weekly in 2019 where he said his “pie in the sky ambition” was to play Superman.

At that point, the role was not on the market. And Corenswet, a Julliard graduate and Philadelphia native, was just making a name for himself in the industry, with plum breakout roles in two Ryan Murphy Netflix series: “The Politician” and “Hollywood.” Tall, dark, and you know, handsome, people had told him that he looked like Superman for a long time. He did not, he told The Associated Press in a recent interview, think that he was going to get the chance to play him.

But a few years later he was actually cast to lead James Gunn’s “Superman” which will begin a new, hopefully high-flying, era for the DC universe of films when it hits theaters on July 11. And that once innocent quote took on a life of its own. Many headlines and stories misinterpreted the phrase and wrote that he said it was his dream role, as though he’d manifested it into existence.

Impossible

“I said it was my pie in the sky ambition, which I meant to mean that there was no (expletive) way it was ever going to happen,” Corenswet, 31, said. “I sort of was thinking of it as, ‘Oh, who wouldn’t love to get to play an iconic role like that? Wouldn’t it be amazing and impossible if we lived in a universe where that could even be considered?’”

Right around the time when Gunn was starting to think about casting his new Superman movie, he decided to watch his friend Ti West’s movie “Pearl.” In that darkly comedic horror, Corenswet stood out to him as an interesting and charismatic presence. He played a projectionist at a local movie theater who catches Pearl’s attention (and, later, faces her wrath). West had nice things to say about him too.

“David was one of the very first auditions that I got,” Gunn said. “Instantly, it was a relief because he had a playful charm about him that was not evident in ‘Pearl.’ He had a sense of humor. That made me go, ‘Ooh, this might be a really good match.’”

That was just the beginning of the

long casting process. Even Nicholas Hoult, who was ultimately cast as Lex Luthor, was up for the part. And though it was “extensive,” Corenswet said it was one of the most “satisfying audition processes” he’s ever gone through - not because he booked the role, but because he felt he got the opportunity to show them what he had to offer.

Square

Gunn laughed that Corenswet actually has a lot of Superman in him.

“Superman is a square and David is a square,” Gunn said. “He listens like Superman for a long time. He did not, he told The Associated Press in a recent interview, think that he was going to get the chance to play him.

When Gunn called him with the good news, the first person he told was his wife. The second was his sister, who couldn’t pick up the phone because she was on a golf course.

“She texted, ‘Is it possible that was a phone call with super good news?’” he said. “I said, ‘Yes. Super good news.’”

It may be something of a Superman tradition to try on predecessor’s costume during a screen test. Henry Cavill did it with Christopher Reeve’s, and Corenswet did it with Cavill’s, which he called a “marvel of engineering.”

But the first time Corenswet put on his own Superman costume was not some magical, transportive moment. In fact, he said, it was “wonderfully

mundane.” The suit was still in its beginning stages, not totally put together and even a little small, as he’d already started putting on weight for the role.

“I remember the feeling of kind of growing into the suit and the suit growing around me fitting by fitting,” Corenswet said. “We had such an amazing costume team and they built the suit around me over the course of many weeks and months and it started to feel just a little bit like home for me.”

The first time he felt the impact of it was through the eyes of other people. To him, it was old hat, but when he walked onto set the first time in the suit he noticed something different from the cast and crew.

“I saw their faces sort of light up and I went, ‘Wait a minute, these people aren’t that fond of me,’” he laughed. “That’s when it hits you.”

Symbol

There are almost three roles involved in playing Superman. There’s the person he is with his parents and the people he grew up with. There’s Clark Kent of the Daily Planet. And then there’s Superman.

“He’s a public facing character, he’s a symbol,” Corenswet said. “There’s a presentational element to it, because he does want to present an image of calm and authority. While he doesn’t always feel that way, he always wants to make other people feel that way as Superman.”

To prepare for Clark Kent, Coren-

wet looked at the All-Star Superman comic and how Christopher Reeve changed his posture when Lois left the room, but he also drew inspiration for the voice and demeanor way outside of the canon: His brother-in-law, who is 6’8” and 270 pounds, but is the “quietest, most wonderful man.”

“That’s where I sort of took the spirit of Clark,” Corenswet said. “He’s this big presence, but he’s desperately trying to be as small as possible and as quiet as possible.”

Gunn has promised that the film is “a personal journey for Superman that’s entirely new.” He’s a character who is “pretty damn good, but flawed.” And anyone who has seen the trailer knows there will be romance with Rachel Brosnahan’s Lois Lane - but there’s even a different spin on that.

“He’s in love with her,” Gunn said. “She’s the one that needs the convincing in the relationship. It’s not him. You really see where he needs her in his life.”

Corenswet said that in addition to the action and thrills, the movie also has a Preston Sturges quality to it with “longing romance and witty comedy.” Fitting for their reporter characters, “His Girl Friday” was also a big reference with “the rhythm, the patter and the feeling of two people in love who really are an equal match for the other.”

The movie is the start of a new era for DC films, and will raise Corenswet’s profile immeasurably. He’s been in big movies before, including “Twisters.” But being Superman is different.

“The thing that it changed about my life immediately was that I had this amazing mission that I got to go on of playing the part and getting to be a piece of making this awesome film,” he said. “I have so many new friends now. James brings together such a familial cast and crew. And shooting the film is sort of like an extended summer camp.”

Adding to the summer camp vibes: On the last day they even gathered to watch a little blooper reel that Gunn had put together. But what will happen come release is not really something he can fathom at this point.

“I expect some things will change when the film comes out,” he said. “But you know, one still has to wake up and eat breakfast.”

Fashion

‘It’s our turn’

Met Gala honors Black designers

NEW YORK, May 5, (AP): **Pharrell Williams** has high hopes for the Met Gala, the first to focus exclusively on Black designers, and the first in more than 20 years to have a menswear theme.

“I want it to feel like the most epic night of power, a reflection of Black resiliency in a world that continues to be colonized, by which I mean policies and legislation that are nothing short of that,” he recently told Vogue.

“It’s our turn.”

Indeed. And welcome to the first Monday in May.

Vogue will livestream the gala starting at 6 p.m. Eastern on Vogue.com, its YouTube channel

and across its other digital platforms. Teyana Taylor, La La Anthony and Ego Nwodim will host the stream. Emma Chamberlain will also do interviews on the carpet.

The Associated Press will livestream celebrity departures from the Mark Hotel beginning at 5 p.m. Eastern and will stream the gala carpet on delay beginning at 6:30 p.m. The feeds will be available on YouTube and APNews.com.

E! will begin live coverage at 6 p.m. on TV. The livestream will be available on Peacock, E! Online and YouTube, along with the network’s other social media feeds.

This year, the fundraising gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is hosted by a group of Black male celebrities, including Williams, the musical artist and Louis Vuitton menswear director, and Lewis Hamilton, Colman Domingo, and ASAP Rocky, with NBA superstar LeBron James as honorary chair. They’re joined by Vogue’s Anna Wintour, the mastermind behind the gala, considered the year’s biggest and starriest party.

Guaranteed

Also guaranteed to show up is a second tier of hosts from a variety of worlds: athletes Simone Biles and husband Jonathan Owens; Angel Reese and Sha’Carri Richardson; filmmakers Spike Lee, Tonya Lewis Lee and Regina King; actors Ayo Edebiri, Audra McDonald and Jeremy Pope; musicians Doechi, Usher, Tyla, Janelle Monáe and André 3000; author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; artists Jordan Casteel, Rashid Johnson and Kara Walker; playwrights Jeremy O. Harris and Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins; and fashion figures Grace Wales Bonner, Edward Enninful, Dapper Dan and Olivier Rousteing.

The gala raises the bulk of the curation budget for the museum’s Costume Institute.

It’s more like a firm suggestion. From Wintour. This year, it’s about tailoring and suiting as interpreted through the history and meaning of Black dandyism across the Atlantic diaspora. The theme is inspired by the annual spring exhibition, which this year is based in large part on “Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity,” a book written by Monica L. Miller. She is guest curator of the exhibit.

“Historical manifestations of dandyism range from absolute precision in dress and tailoring to flamboyance and fabulousness in dress and style,” Miller writes in the exhibit catalog. “Whether a dandy is subtle or spectacular, we recognize and respect the deliberateness of the dress, the self-conscious display, the reach for tailored perfection, and the sometimes subversive self-expression.”

How the dress code goes, in terms of taste and style, is anyone’s guess. Wintour has a hand in virtually all things gala, so the presumption is things can’t go too far off the rails. She recently knocked down the rumor that she approves all looks, telling “Good Morning America” she’ll weigh in if asked.



Williams

Kuwait leads with RSV vaccine for newborns in Mideast

MoH hosts workshop to mark World Immunization Day

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: On the occasion of World Immunization Week, held this year under the theme “We Can Immunize Everyone,” the Ministry of Health organized a training workshop for healthcare workers, along with public awareness activities in all health zones.

Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi affirmed that Kuwait is committed to keeping pace with global advancements in

immunization and is constantly working to update the national immunization program in line with the latest scientific and medical recommendations.

He explained that Kuwait is the first country in the Middle East to offer the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine to all newborns. It made significant progress towards eliminating measles, rubella, and congenital rubella syndrome, an achievement the Ministry aims to realize in the near future.

Stressing that preventive health workers serve as the first line of defense against infectious diseases, he expressed his gratitude for their vital role in preserv-

ing public health.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hamad Al-Bastaki, Head of the Communicable Disease Control Department at the Public Health Department, stated that World Immunization Week is an important occasion to highlight the health achievements made possible through immunization.

He stressed that such programs have saved at least 154 million lives worldwide over the past 50 years, an average of six lives every minute, and have contributed to a 40 percent improvement in infant survival rates.

UAE field hospital treats 51,000 cases in Gaza

UAE’s health sector leads global humanitarian response in 2025

ABU DHABI, May 5, (KUNA): In 2025, the UAE’s Health Sector solidified its presence regionally and globally, particularly in countries and communities facing severe humanitarian crises.

The sector demonstrated full readiness to respond to global emergencies through initiatives and efforts that supported and strengthened healthcare systems in numerous friendly and brotherly nations experiencing exceptional circumstances.

These efforts included sending medical aid and supplies, providing medical, diagnostic, and therapeutic services through field hospitals, transporting patients and the injured to the UAE for treatment, and launching initiatives to build medical facilities around the world.

Operation

Through the “Gallant Knight 3” operation, the UAE has continued to implement comprehensive health initiatives that reflect its enduring commitment to providing medical care, especially in areas affected by the Gaza Strip conflict.

As of April 8, more than 51,000 cases had been treated at the UAE field hospital in Gaza, with a focus on critical injuries and complex surgical procedures.

The UAE also launched a unique humanitarian initiative to fit prosthetic limbs for amputees, aiming to support their rehabilitation and enable them to return to normal life.

Additionally, the UAE provided comprehensive medical support to hospitals in Gaza, delivering over 750 tons of medical supplies and medications, including medical equipment and electricity generators to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services.

A widespread polio vaccination campaign was also carried out, reaching over 640,000 children as a preven-



Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Monday, May 5. (AP)

tative measure to protect future generations from serious diseases.

To address critical cases, the UAE evacuated several patients and injured individuals from Gaza to the UAE for treatment.

Over 1,000 children and 1,000 cancer patients benefited from specialized medical care, including surgeries, rehabilitation, and psychological support.

The UAE’s floating field hospital in Arish, Egypt, received more than 10,000 patients arriving through the Rafah crossing, providing emergency care and performing complex surgeries in a fully equipped environment adhering to high healthcare and safety standards.

UAE humanitarian aid convoys delivered hundreds of tons of medical supplies to the Palestinian people via the Rafah crossing, including dialysis machines, ultrasound devices, ventilators, wheelchairs, respiratory masks, and various medical consumables

and medications. Since January 2025, “Dubai Humanitarian” has dispatched three relief shipments to Egypt’s Arish Airport, carrying approximately 256 metric tons of World Health Organization (WHO) medical supplies destined for Gaza.

The UAE allocated a financial grant of USD 64.5 million to Al-Maqased Hospital in East Jerusalem to support operational costs, medical staff, and facility upgrades.

In March, the UAE opened the Madol Field Hospital in Northern Bahr Al-Ghazal State, South Sudan, with an initial capacity of 100 beds and several specialized clinics to serve nearly two million people, including the host community, returning South Sudanese, and Sudanese refugees. This hospital is the third established by the UAE to provide medical services to Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries, previously, it built two field hospitals in Am-Djarass and Abeche, Chad, which have treated a total of 90,889 patients.

AI identifies patients at risk of severe pain

AI tool helps doctors manage knee surgery pain

ORLANDO, Fla., May 5, (AP): A study using artificial intelligence to classify patient pain archetypes and identify risk for severe pain after knee replacement has earned a Best of Meeting award at the 50th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (ASRA). The honor, which recognizes excellence in scientific research, is awarded to three of the top 10 highest-scoring abstracts chosen by the ASRA Research Committee.

“It is an honor to have one of the top professional organizations in the field of regional anesthesia and pain medicine highlight the collaborative work of our department’s Pain Preven-

tion Research Center,” said Alexandra Sideris, PhD, director of the Pain Prevention Research Center at HSS. “The award reflects our dedication to innovations in patient care and underscores the greater scientific community’s acknowledgement of our efforts.”

More than one million people undergo knee replacement surgery each year in the United States, and those numbers continue to rise, Dr. Sideris notes. “There is a need to better understand patients’ individual pain trajectories, and one of the most exciting approaches is to leverage artificial intelligence. With our huge patient database at HSS, machine learning can analyze factors such as age, gen-

der, BMI, and presurgical pain levels to predict which patients are at greater risk of severe pain after surgery,” she said. Armed with this information, the care team can tailor personalized pain management plans to meet patients’ needs.

The HSS researchers had several goals: utilize machine learning to identify pain archetypes following total knee replacement; determine important features for predicting pain outcomes; and classify patients at risk of severe pain in the immediate postoperative period. The retrospective study included 17,200 patients who had total knee replacements at HSS from April 1, 2021, to October 31, 2024.

‘Super Grant’

EU unveils bid to lure experts

PARIS, May 5, (AP): The European Union launched a drive on Monday to attract scientists and researchers to Europe with offers of grants and new policy plans, after the Trump administration froze US government funding linked to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

“A few years ago, no one would have imagined that one of the biggest democracies in the world would cancel research programs under the pretext that the word diversity was in this program,” French President Emmanuel Macron said at the “Choose Europe for Science” event in Paris.

“No one would have thought that one of the biggest democracies in the world would delete with a stroke the ability of one researcher or another to obtain visas,” Macron said. “But here we are.”

Taking the same stage at the Sorbonne University, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that the EU’s executive branch would set up a “super grant” program aimed at offering “a longer-term perspective to the very best” in the field.

Forward

She said that 500 million euros (\$566 million) will be put forward in 2025-2027 “to make Europe a magnet for researchers.” It would be injected into the European Research Council, which already has a budget of more than 16 billion euros (\$18 billion) for 2021-2027.

Von der Leyen said that the 27-nation EU intends “to enshrine freedom of scientific research into law” with a new legal act. As “the threats rise across the world, Europe will not compromise on its principles,” she said.

Macron said that the French government would also soon make new proposals to beef up investment in science and research.

Last month, hundreds of university researchers in the United States had National Science Foundation funding canceled to comply with US President Donald Trump’s order to end support to research on diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as the study of misinformation.

More than 380 grant projects have been cut so far, including work to combat internet censorship in China and Iran and a project consulting with Indigenous communities to understand environmental changes in Alaska’s Arctic region.

Some terminated grants that sought to broaden the diversity of people studying science, technology and engineering. Scientists, researchers and doctors have taken to the streets in protest.

While not mentioning the Trump administration by name, von der Leyen said that it was “a gigantic miscalculation” to undermine free and open research.

“We can all agree that science has no passport, no gender, no ethnicity, no political party,” she said. “We believe that diversity is an asset of humanity and the lifeblood of science. It is one of the most valuable global assets and it must be protected.”

Regular mammograms urged

Breast cancer workshop sees 28 reconstructive procedures

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Surgical Oncologist Consultant and Head of the Breast Oncology and Reconstructive Surgery Unit at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) Dr. Majida Al-Saleh has announced that the Reconstructive and Cosmetic Surgery for Breast Cancer workshop included 28 reconstructive breast surgeries.

The workshop was under the sponsorship of Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, with the participation of international reconstructive surgery experts.

The four-day workshop included contributions from British specialists Dr. Dimitri Hajimissian and Dr. Peter Parry who performed complex surgeries and examined complicated cases.

Al-Saleh explained that due to the high number of breast cancer cases, reconstructive surgeries are typically scheduled during such workshops. She also confirmed the increasing rate of breast cancer among younger individuals -- aged 20 to 30.

Meanwhile, Consultant Oncologist Dr. Salah Fayaz emphasized the importance of annual workshops to be updated with advancements in breast reconstruction and cosmetic surgery, as well as the critical nature of early and regular breast cancer screening, particularly for those with a familial history.

Despite the national screening program of the ministry, many women are at advanced disease stages. Mammography screening is recommended from age 40 or earlier for those with prior diagnosis or family history of the disease.



A bee searches for pollen on a flower during a sunny day in Belgrade, Serbia, Sunday, April 20, 2025. (AP)

Allergy season worsens

Spring storms fuel rise of severe allergy symptoms

By Christine Cairns Fortuin
Mississippi State University

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

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Evolution has fostered many reproductive strategies across the spectrum of life. From dandelions to giraffes, nature finds a way.

One of those ways creates quite a bit of suffering for humans: pollen, the infamous male gametophyte of the plant kingdom.

In the Southeastern US, where I live, you know it’s spring when your car has turned yellow and pollen blankets your patio furniture and anything else left outside. Suddenly there are long lines at every car wash in town.

Irritate

Even people who aren’t allergic to pollen – clearly an advantage for a pollination ecologist like me – can experience sneezing and watery eyes during the release of tree pollen each spring. Enough particulate matter in the air will irritate just about anyone, even if your immune system does not launch an all-out attack.

So, why is there so much pollen? And why does it seem to be getting worse?

Trees don’t have an easy time in the reproductive game. As a tree, you have two options to disperse your pollen.

Option 1: Employ an agent, such as a butterfly or bee, that can carry your

pollen to another plant of the same species.

The downside of this option is that you must invest in a showy flower display and a sweet scent to advertise yourself, and sugary nectar to pay your agent for its services.

Option 2, the budget option, is much less precise: Get a free ride on the wind.

Pollinator

Wind was the original pollinator, evolving long before animal-mediated pollination. Wind doesn’t require a showy flower nor a nectar reward. What it does require for pollination to succeed is ample amounts of lightweight, small-diameter pollen.

Wind is not an efficient pollinator, however. The probability of one pollen grain landing in the right location – the stigma or ovule of another plant of the same species – is infinitesimally small.

Therefore, wind-pollinated trees must compensate for this inefficiency by producing copious amounts of pollen, and it must be light enough to be carried. For allergy sufferers, that can mean air filled with microscopic pollen grains that can get into your eyes, throat and lungs, sneak in through window screens and convince your immune system that you’ve inhaled a dangerous intruder.

Plants relying on animal-mediated pollination, by contrast, can produce heavier and stickier pollen to adhere to the body of an insect. So don’t blame the bees for your allergies – it’s really the wind. (AP)

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Kolkata stays in top-four contention

Kings defeat Super Giants by 37 runs to go second in IPL

DHARAMSALA, India, May 5, (AP): Prabhsimran Singh led the way with 91 off 48 balls as Punjab Kings beat Lucknow Super Giants by 37 runs to go second in the Indian Premier League.

Singh's fourth half-century of the season included seven sixes and six fours as Punjab scored 236-5 in 20 overs. Skipper Shreyas Iyer contributed 45 off 25 balls, hitting two sixes.

Lucknow's chase finished at 199-7 despite Ayush Badoni's 74 off 40 balls, and the Super Giants took a blow in its bid for a top-four place. Lucknow is now seventh after 11 games - with five wins and six losses. Punjab has 15 points from 11 games and sits between leader Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Mumbai Indians. Gujarat Titans completes the top four.

Earlier, Kolkata Knight Riders beat Rajasthan Royals by one run to keep its top-four bid alive.

Stand-in skipper Riyan Parag smashed five sixes in one over but still

finished on the losing team as Rajasthan's chase fell agonizingly short.

Parag hit eight sixes overall in his 45-ball 95. Rajasthan finished on 205-8 in its 20 overs with Varun Chakravathy (2-32), Harshit Rana (2-41) and Moeen Ali (2-43) taking six wickets between them. This was after Andre Russell's 57 not out off 25 balls propelled Kolkata to a total of 206-4.

Kolkata is now sixth in the points' table, with five wins in 11 games, and can still make the top four. Rajasthan is eighth with its ninth loss in 12 games, and was already eliminated along with Chennai Super Kings.

Punjab batters lit up its second home despite losing hard-hitting opener Priyansh Arya for one.

Singh raced to 50 off 30 balls, adding 48 off 22 with Josh Inglis (30) and then another 78 off 47 balls with skipper Iyer. It was the second partnership that really fueled Punjab's score - Singh and Iyer hit nine sixes overall

between them.

Iyer fell against the run of play - out caught off Digvesh Rathi's leg spin - but Singh carried Punjab past 200.

It was Singh's highest score of the season and he fell nine short of a second IPL hundred. Shashank Singh hit 33 not out off 15 balls as Lucknow faced a challenging target.

The Super Giants lost both openers cheaply - Arshdeep Singh bowled Aiden Markram for 13, while Mitchell Marsh was caught for a five-ball duck.

Arshdeep trapped Nicholas Pooran lbw for six and Lucknow was down to 27-3 in 4.2 overs.

Rishabh Pant fell for 18 off 17 balls - another indifferent innings - but Badoni's half-century revived Lucknow.

Abdul Samad hit 45 off 24 balls later in the innings.

Opting to bat first, Kolkata lost Sunil Narine for 11. Rahmanullah Gurbaz made an early impact with 35 off 25, including four fours and a six.

He added 56 off 33 balls with Ajinkya Rahane, who scored 30 off 24 before he was caught behind off Parag in the 13th over.

Kolkata was well placed at 111-3 in the 13th over. Russell added 61 off 33 balls with Angkrish Raghuvanshi (44 off 31). Their partnership allowed Kolkata to get within sniffing distance of 200. Russell hit 50 off 22 balls with six sixes and four fours - his first half-century of the season. He also added 34 off 11 balls with Rinku Singh (19 not out), who hit two sixes.

In reply, Rajasthan lost teenage batter Vaibhav Suryavanshi (4) early. It became a double blow as Kunal Rathore fell for a five-ball duck to leave the team at 8-2 in the second over.

Yashasvi Jaiswal struck a calm 34 off 21 balls, with five fours and a six, to revive the innings. He added 58 off 31 balls with stand-in skipper Parag, who took charge after the opener fell in the seventh over to Moeen Ali.



Kolkata Knight Riders' Rahmanullah Gurbaz bats during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India. (AP)

Victor overcomes early knockdown

Inoue handles Cardenas to remain undefeated

LAS VEGAS, May 5, (AP): Naoya Inoue remained undefeated after retaining the undisputed junior featherweight title with an eighth-round technical knockout of Ramon Cardenas on Sunday night in front of a packed house inside T-Mobile Arena and a nationally televised audience on ESPN.

Inoue (30-0, 27 KOs), who was knocked down in the second round, played the aggressor much of the fight by using precision and power to carve his way through Cardenas (26-2), frequently sending the announced 8,474 gathering into a frenzy.

"By watching tonight's fight, everyone is well aware that I like to brawl!" Inoue said. "I was very surprised (at the knockdown), but I took things calmly and put myself together. ... From then on, I made sure to not take that punch again."

The Japanese icon, affectionately known as "Monster," landed 57 of 103 power punches (55%) in the sixth and seventh rounds alone, per CompuBox.

Inoue, fighting in Las Vegas for the first time in four years, was ahead by identical scores of 68-63 on all three judges' scorecards at the time of stoppage.

"The fans here were supportive and great," said Inoue, 32. "And I hope I was able to entertain them."

Inoue opened the fight with confidence by landing several shots.

But in charging forward in the second round, Inoue walked directly into Cardenas' right-handed counter, dropping the undefeated champion.

It wouldn't take long for Inoue to shake off the miscue, as he continued to dominate by picking his spots, going from the body to the head, wearing down his challenger. By the end of the fourth round, Inoue had landed 48 of the 90 punches thrown, including 33 power shots.

Cardenas, though, appeared to absorb everything, while countering when he could.

Inoue caught Cardenas near the halfway point of the sixth round and drove him into the corner while landing several combos. With Cardenas throwing counters, Inoue used the final 18 seconds to pulverize the 29-year-old challenger.

Inoue scored his first knockdown of the fight in the seventh round, catching Cardenas in the corner and dropping him after landing four consecutive rights.

Knowing he had his opponent defeated, Inoue was relentless in the eighth round, eventually prompting referee Thomas Taylor to step in.

"He's pound-for-pound one of the greatest fighters on the planet," Cardenas said.

Inoue is scheduled to fight a mandatory bout against Murodjon Akhmadaliev in September, in what could be his toughest challenge to date.

The co-main event saw Mexico's Rafael Espinoza (27-0, 23 KOs) retain his WBO featherweight belt with a TKO of Edward Vazquez (17-3) at 1:47 of the seventh round. Espinoza dominated in all seven rounds, pouring it on with a bevy of punches from the fourth round until referee Harvey Dock stepped in to stop the fight.

Rohan Polanco dropped Fabian Maidana with a thunderous body shot in the 10th round and went on to win by unanimous decision. With the win, Polanco (16-0, 10 KOs) retained his minor welterweight title. Maidana fell to 24-4.

Emiliano Vargas (14-0, 12 KOs) used a vicious combination that finished with a left uppercut to the face of Juan Leon (11-3-1) for a second-round technical knockout at 1:40. Vargas is the son of former two-time light middleweight champion, Fernando Vargas.



Haeran Ryu, of South Korea, holds the trophy after winning the LPGA Black Desert Championship golf tournament Sunday, May 4, 2025, in Ivins, Utah. (AP)

DeChambeau wins in LIV golf

McKINNEY, Texas, May 5, (AP): Scottie Scheffler matched the PGA Tour's 72-hole scoring record on Sunday, finishing at 253 and running away for an eight-shot victory at his hometown CJ Cup Byron Nelson.

Scheffler closed with an 8-under 63 to finish at 31 under par, tying the mark set by Justin Thomas at the 2017 Sony Open and equaled six years later by Ludvig Aberg at the RSM Classic.

He was poised to break the record before a flubbed chip that led to bogey on the par-3 17th hole and a par from a greenside bunker on the par-5 closing hole. His 8-foot putt for birdie and the record slid by the left side of the cup.

Scheffler tied the 54-hole Nelson record with an eight-shot lead, and nobody got closer than six during the final round. Erik van Rooyen of South Africa matched Scheffler's 63 to finish at 23 under, three shots ahead of Sam Stevens (64) and four ahead of another hometown favorite, Jordan Spieth (62).

It was the first victory this year for Scheffler after he won a total of 10 times before May in the previous three years combined, including two Masters victories.



Scottie Scheffler hits onto the sixth green during the final round of the CJ Cup Byron Nelson golf tournament in McKinney, Texas. (AP)

Bryson DeChambeau held off a big charge from Charles Howell III with birdies on his last two holes for a 6-under 66 on Sunday for a two-shot victory at LIV Golf Korea, his first title since winning the U.S. Open last summer.

DeChambeau, who played in the final group at the Masters and lost a 36-hole lead at LIV Golf Mexico City last week, started the third and final round at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club with a four-shot lead and was even par for the round through nine holes.

Howell, his Crushers teammate, closed with a 63. They were tied un-

til Howell made a bogey on the 16th hole, and DeChambeau rolled in a long birdie putt at the 17th for a two-shot cushion going to the par-5 18th. They both birdied.

DeChambeau finished at 19-under 197 and won \$4 million for his first LIV Golf League title since September 2023 and his third overall.

Haeran Ryu made an 8-foot eagle putt during a flawless back nine that allowed her to pull away Sunday with an 8-under 64, giving her a five-shot victory at the inaugural Black Desert Championship.

Ryu had a one-shot lead going to the

back nine and shot 31 to win by five shots over Esther Henseleit (66) and Ruoning Yin (67).

Ryu made a 15-foot birdie putt at the 11th, and her eagle at the 13th put her ahead by four shots. She led by at least three the rest of the way and finished at 26-under 262.

The 24-year-old South Korean is the 10th winner in 10 tournaments on the LPGA this year.

Stewart Cink made a late birdie for a 4-under 68 that got him into a playoff and then won the Inseperity Invitational with a birdie on the first extra hole against Retief Goosen for his first PGA Tour Champions title of the year.

Goosen, who also closed with a 68, made it easy on Cink in the playoff by fanning a 6-iron into the water on the par-4 18th hole. Cink followed with a shot into 8 feet at The Woodlands Country Club. He needed two putts for the win and holed it.

Goosen missed a 10-foot birdie putt on the 18th in regulation with a chance to win. They finished regulation at 11-under 205.

The final round at one point featured a six-way tie for the lead. Miguel Angel Jimenez was tied for the lead at 11 under until getting in trouble off the tee at the 18th and three-putting from long range for bogey to finish alone in third.

Bryson Nimmer closed with a 4-under 68 and defeated Stuart Macdonald of England with a par on the second playoff hole Sunday to win the Tulum Championship at PGA Riviera Maya.



Naoya Inoue hits Ramon Cardenas in a junior featherweight title boxing match in Las Vegas. (AP)

Reigning Cup champ Logano gets 1st win this season in OT at Texas

FORT WORTH, Texas, May 5, (AP): Reigning NASCAR Cup champion Joey Logano overcame a lot to finally get his first victory this season.

It came a week after Team Penske teammate Austin Cindric's win at Talladega, where Logano had a fifth-place finish that became 39th after a post-race inspection found an issue with the spoiler on his No. 22 Ford. There was also Logano's expletive-laden rant on the radio toward his teammate in the middle of that race that the two smoothed out during the week. Oh, and he started 27th at Texas after a bad qualifying effort on the 1 1/2-mile track.

But Logano surged ahead on the restart in overtime Sunday to win in the 11th race this year. He led only seven of the 271 laps, four more than scheduled.

"After what happened last week, to be able to rebound and come right back, it's a total '22' way of doing things. So proud of the team," Logano said.

On the final restart after the 12th caution, Logano was on the inside of his other teammate, Ryan Blaney. But Logano pulled away on the backstretch and stayed easily in front the final 1 1/2 laps, while Ross Chastain then passed Blaney to finish second ahead of him.

"Just slowly, methodically," Logano said of his progression to the front. "Just kept grinding, a couple here and

a couple there and eventually get a win here."

Logano got his 37th career victory, getting the lead for the first time on lap 264. He went low to complete a pass of Michael McDowell.

"I mean there's always a story next week, right," Logano said. "So I told my wife last week before we left, I said watch me go win this one. It's just how we do stuff."

On a caution with 47 laps left, McDowell took only two tires and moved up 15 spots to second. He ended up leading 19 laps, but got loose a few laps after getting passed by Logano and crashed to bring out the caution that sent the race to overtime. He finished 26th.

"We were giving it everything we had there to try to keep track position," McDowell said. "Joey got a run there, and I tried to block it. I went as far as I think you could probably go. When Blaney slid in front of me, it just took the air off of it and I just lost the back of it. I still had the fight in me, but I probably should have conceded at that point."

William Byron, Kyle Larson, Denny Hamlin and Chase Elliott remained the top four in season points. ... Elliott left Texas last spring with his first victory after 42 races and 18 months without one. He hasn't won since, and now has another long winless drought - this one 38 races and now nearly 13 months after finishing 16th.

Race for remaining Champs League spots in France remains wide open

PARIS, May 5, (AP): The race for the remaining Champions League places behind Paris Saint-Germain remains wide open in the French league after Marseille drew 1-1 at Lille. With two rounds of matches left, and PSG already crowned champion, second-placed Marseille missed the chance to open up a three-point gap on Monaco after goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli's blunder in the 74th minute.

The top three teams qualify for the group stage of the Champions League, with the fourth team getting a spot in the qualifying rounds. Marseille has a one-point lead over Monaco, which won 3-1 at Saint-Etienne on Saturday, with a trio of chasing teams - Nice, Lille and Strasbourg - lagging one point further back.

Lille striker Jonathan David intercepted Rulli's attempted pass inside the box and headed the ball toward Matias Fernandez Pardo, who shot past the goalkeeper into the back of the net. Amine Gouiri had put Marseille in front in the 57th minute from Adrien Rabiot's assist at the conclusion of a fine collective move.

PSG secured the French league title last month with six matches to spare but the fight for the Champions League places has not been lacking suspense. Just five points separate second-placed Marseille from seventh-placed Lyon.

Lyon's hopes of European soccer next season took a blow as the seven-time French champions lost 2-1

against Lens.

Anass Zaroury scored the winner with a superb 30-meter strike into the top corner five minutes from time, soon after Georges Mikautadze leveled for the hosts with a header.

The result left Lyon outside of the European places, six points above eighth-placed Lens.

Lyon enjoyed much of the possession but lacked a cutting edge and went behind when Goduine Koyaliou scored following a corner in the 21st minute.

Substitute Jim Allevinah scored his first goal for Angers in the French league as his club won 1-0 at Nantes to leapfrog its rival and take a big step towards survival in the top division.

Over 220 players compete fiercely across seven categories

Indian Badminton Association – Kuwait hosts blockbuster IBAK Strike Out Tournament

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The Indian Badminton Association successfully concluded its second edition of IBAK Strike Out Badminton Tournament, on the 1st and 2nd of May 2025 at the IBAK Gym in Salwa. The tournament drew an impressive turnout, with over 220 players competing fiercely across seven categories: Beginners, Lower Intermediate, Higher Intermediate, Ladies Doubles (Above 20), Advance, Above 40 and Pro Team Combo.

The two-day sporting spectacle featured more than 200 matches, showcasing talent, passion, and sportsmanship at every level of play. The Pro Team Combo category, the tournament's

flagship event, was proudly sponsored by Yonex and Pro Sports, adding prestige and competitive edge to the top-tier games. Six teams participated in Pro Team Combo category – Team Ninjas, Team Elite, Team JB, Feather Force, Shuttle Strikers and Smash Squad. The Category was played in round robin format. In the end, Team Ninjas clinched the championship title.

Players of all skill levels were given the opportunity to test their mettle in a well-organized, inclusive, and high-energy environment. IBAK Strike Out 2025 not only celebrated badminton as a sport but also fostered community engagement and promoted healthy competition among diverse partici-



Some of the winners celebrate after the closing ceremony.

Following are the results of the tournament.	
Ladies Doubles (Above 20): Winner: Lampian Cheyene + Caballero Ronalie Runner-up: Gnanasekhar Rohini + Ajayakumar Shaina Semi-Finalist 1: Dias Angely + Phuttakoon Wanvisa Semi-Finalist 2: Pia Pia + Reem Reem	Above 40 Doubles: Winner: K Maggesvar + Mekala Pratap Kumar Runner-up: Farookhi Jabbar + G Srinivas Semi-Finalist 1: Dr.Manimara Chozhan + Varghese Subin Semi-Finalist 2: Contractor Faheem + Ezzy Hisham
Flight 2 - Advance Men's Doubles Winner: Rajan Dawre Farhaan + Sabu Joel Runner-up: Anil Adithya + Bobby Edwin	Flight 3 - Intermediate Doubles (Open to all): Winner: Jose Lijo + Misquith Reuben
Semi-Finalist 1: Abed Qusai + Salavemula Siraj Semi-Finalist 2: Varghese Ajay + Mathew Ajin Mammen	Runner-up: Sarasan Amal + Joseph Jobin Semi-Finalist 1: Rajan Jyothiraj + Sam Sajin Semi-Finalist 2: Jacob Jerrin + Thomas Sanjose
Flight 4 - Lower Intermediate (Open to All): Winner: Kumar Arun + Prasad Hari Runner-up: Meslin Hasim + Shajeer Mohammed Semi-Finalist 1: Deepak Deepak + Lateef Zahid Semi-Finalist 2: Krishnan Muthu + Devarajan Vibuvasan	Beginners Doubles: Winner: Brenda Brenda + Nhing Nhing Runner-up: Aftab Helal + Rubel Mehadi Semi-Finalist 1: Narayanan Chithy + Thameem Farook Semi-Finalist 2: Pathan Fayaz Khan + Kusume Suresh
Pro Team Combo: Winner: Team Ninjas – Captain : Dr. Manimara Chozhan Runner-up: Feather Force – Captain : K Maggesvar 3 rd Place: Shuttle Strikers – Captain : Abdul Jabbar 4 th Place: Smash Squad – Captain : Akbhar Syed	



Left-right: Winners display their prizes.



pants.

IBAK extends its heartfelt thanks to all the players, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters who made this event a

resounding success. With such an enthusiastic response and overwhelming participation, IBAK is excited to plan even bigger events in the near future.

IBAK has concluded first half of year 2025 by conducting various tournaments. IBAK will be conducting 10th edition of Kuwait Badminton

League 2025 in the month of October 2024. IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

Piastri dominates Miami Grand Prix for third straight win with McLaren

Verstappen fades to fourth

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla., May 5, (AP): The first time Oscar Piastri arrived at the Miami Grand Prix as a Formula 1 driver, he was in the slowest car in the field and only narrowly avoided finishing last.

Fast-forward two years, and Piastri and McLaren Racing have come full circle.

Piastri maintained his advantage in the F1 championship fight by winning at Miami on Sunday for his fourth win through six races this season. Piastri has won three consecutive F1 races for McLaren Racing, where he and teammate Lando Norris are trying to dethrone four-time defending champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull.

McLaren has won in Miami the last two years, with Norris on top last season for his first career F1 victory.

"It's just incredible, the hard work that's gone in," Piastri said of McLaren. "I remember two years ago here in Miami, we were genuinely the slowest team. I think we got lapped twice, and to now have won the Grand Prix by over 35 seconds to third is an unbelievable result of the hard work of every single person."

Piastri is the first McLaren driver to win three consecutive F1 races in 28 years; Mika Hakkinen did it with a win in the 1997 season finale and



McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia celebrates on the podium after winning the Formula One Miami Grand Prix auto race in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

then victories in the first two races of 1998.

He widened his lead over Norris in the driver standings to 16 points, while Verstappen trails Piastri by 32 points.

Norris' win at Miami last season snapped Verstappen's two-year winning streak at the course surrounding Hard Rock Stadium. Norris also won the sprint race on Saturday - Piastri dominated but a late safety car cost him the victory - but Verstappen won the pole in qualifying.

Verstappen, who announced the birth of his first child Friday morning, has been determined to disprove the myth that fatherhood would

make him a more conservative driver. It was evident as he darted away at the start and then aggressively held off Norris' challenge for the lead.

The Red Bull and McLaren were side-by-side, and Norris was trying to edge ahead of the Dutchman, but he ran off track and lost four spots. Norris said Verstappen forced him off track,k and there was nothing he could do but try to avoid running into a wall - but F1 took no action against Verstappen.

"What can I say? If I don't go for it, people complain. If I go for it, people complain," Norris said. "You can't win. But it really just is how

it is with Max - it's crash or their pass." Verstappen was unapologetic after fading to fourth and insisted he raced within the rules.

"I mean, I had nothing to lose, so I also wanted to have a bit of fun out there," Verstappen said, adding McLaren's strong start to the season is "not frustrating at all."

"We are here to win, and today we were miles off that, so it doesn't really matter," Verstappen said.

Norris recovered from the early incident and picked his way back toward the front, but not before Piastri took control away from Verstappen on the 14th of 57 laps. McLaren has decided it will allow Piastri and Norris to race each other cleanly without team orders, and Norris was cleared to challenge his Australian teammate for the victory.

In the waning laps, Norris was able to close the gap but could never catch Piastri and settled for second in a 1-2 finish for McLaren. The two held a nearly 40-second advantage over George Russell of Mercedes, who finished third.

Alex Albon of Williams was fifth, Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes was sixth, and Charles Leclerc was seventh after Ferrari ordered Lewis Hamilton to give his teammate the position in the closing laps. Hamilton was eighth.

Carlos Sainz Jr. was ninth for Williams, and Yuki Tsunoda was 10th for Red Bull. Jack Doohan ran into another car on the opening lap and then crashed on the second lap - a showing that won't quiet chatter the rookie is on the verge of being replaced at Alpine by Franco Colapinto.

Alexander-Arnold confirms departure from Liverpool amid Real Madrid link

LONDON, May 5, (AP):Trent Alexander-Arnold sat down, took a deep breath and uttered the words many Liverpool knew would be coming.

"After 20 years at Liverpool Football Club," he said into a camera, "I will be leaving at the end of the season."

Alexander-Arnold didn't mention his next destination when confirming his imminent departure from Liverpool on his social media accounts but the England right back is widely expected to move to Real Madrid on a free transfer.

The locally born Alexander-Arnold, who joined Liverpool at the age of 6 and has won every major honor with the club, said it was "easily the hardest decision I've ever made in my life."

He has announced it barely a week after clinching a second Premier League title with the Reds, pushing them onto 20 English top-flight championships - tied for the record with Manchester United.

"This club has been my whole life - my whole world - for 20 years," the 26-year-old Alexander-Arnold wrote. "From the academy right through until now, the support and love I have felt from everyone inside and outside of the club will stay with me forever. I will forever be in debt to you all."

"But, I have never known anything else and this decision is about experiencing a new challenge, taking myself out of my comfort zone and pushing myself both professionally and personally. I've given my all every single day I've been at this club, and I hope you feel like I've given back to you during my time here."

While Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk have recently signed new two-year deals with Liverpool, there was lingering uncertainty over the future of Alexander-Arnold, who was also out of



Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold celebrates after winning the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur and clinching the Premier League title at Anfield in Liverpool, England. (AP)

contract at the end of this season.

Some fans will be unhappy he has run down his contract and not allowed Liverpool to get any money for one of its star assets.

"I completely understand that the news will disappoint a lot of people, will anger people, it will make them upset," Alexander-Arnold told Liverpool's official website. "Obviously that went into the decision as well - it's something you don't want to do, you don't want to ever have these moments where you feel like you're letting a lot of people down, you're disappointing a lot of people."

"But I've had to make a decision for me, it's as simple as that. It's a difficult one, it's one that has played on my mind for a long time but being able now to get it off my chest will feel like a weight is lifted."

Lautaro could make surprise comeback

Inter and Barcelona evenly poised

PARIS, May 5, (AP): Scoring three away goals should make Inter Milan feel confident heading into the return leg of its Champions League semifinal against Barcelona.

Inter might not think so, considering Barcelona's ability to conjure goals out of nowhere with the world's best young player in the side.

Inter was 2-0 up after 21 minutes in the first leg, before 17-year-old Spain star Lamine Yamal scored a stunning goal and Barcelona fought back to draw 3-3 at home in a pulsating contest packed with spectacular goals.

Stopping Yamal is hard enough, but then there's Raphinha - who is merely Barcelona's other Ballon d'Or contender.

With his long-range shooting and speedy attacks through the middle or down the flanks, he is a permanent threat. The Brazilian has 12 goals in the competition, one more than strike partner Robert Lewandowski.

But for all of Barcelona's firepower, the defense remains vulnerable and coach Hansi Flick is under pressure to make the right calls.

He kept Wojciech Szczesny in goal, even though No. 1 Marc-An-

dré ter Stegen has recovered from a long-term knee injury and played in Saturday's 2-1 win at Valladolid.

Barcelona is looking to win the competition for the sixth time, while Inter seeks a fourth title. Inter won in 2010, beating Barca in a tense semifinal.

Players and coaches have been



Valladolid's goalkeeper Andre Ferreira, top left, clears the ball as Barcelona's Andreas Christensen, centre, challenges for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Valladolid and FC Barcelona at the Jose Zorrilla stadium in Valladolid, Spain. (AP)

warning about the damaging effects of a congested calendar.

Look no further than Barcelona and Inter for examples.

Barcelona defender Jules Koundé sustained a left hamstring injury in the first leg and the prolific Lewandowski has been nursing a minor left leg injury for two weeks.

Lewandowski has netted 40 goals this season and needs one more goal to hit 100 for Barcelona.

Marcus Thuram, who scored a superb back-heel flick in the first leg, only returned from a thigh injury last week.

Inter Milan captain Lautaro Martínez is hoping to emulate strike partner Thuram ahead of their team's Champions League semifinal against Barcelona on Tuesday.

In the buildup to the first leg last week, the focus was on whether Thuram would be fit in time even for a place on the bench after missing three matches with a thigh problem.

But Thuram surprisingly started and scored the opener just seconds after kickoff in a thrilling 3-3 draw that has set up a must-see sequel in Milan.

This time around it is Lautaro who is a doubt after having to come off at halftime against Barcelona last Wednesday with a thigh muscle injury.

Inter coach Simone Inzaghi admitted last week that it would be "very difficult" to have Lautaro back in time as that type of injury normally takes 10 days to two weeks to recover from.

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Indiana Pacers forward Pascal Siakam, center, is fouled by Cleveland Cavaliers guard Sam Merrill, right, in the first half during Game 1 in the Eastern Conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs in Cleveland. (AP)

Sports

Warriors send Rockets packing again

Pacers stun Cavs in Game 1

HOUSTON, May 5, (AP): Buddy Hield became an unlikely playoff hero for the Golden State Warriors, leading the team early in Game 7 against the Houston Rockets before Stephen Curry took over late.

Curry scored 14 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, Hield made nine 3-pointers and scored 33 points, and the Warriors advanced to the Western Conference semifinals with a 103-89 win over the Houston Rockets.

The Warriors will face the Timberwolves Tuesday night in Minnesota.

After not scoring in Game 6, Hield had a scorching first half with six 3-pointers and 22 points to carry the Warriors to a 12-point lead, with Curry scoring just three points before the break. Then Curry took over in the closing minutes and performed his signature “night night” gesture as the Warriors put the Rockets away.

The Warriors became the seventh No. 7 seed in NBA history to advance to the semifinals and eliminated Houston in the playoffs for a fifth time. They sent the James Harden-led Rockets packing four times between 2015 and 2019.

None of the players from those teams remain with Houston, leading Fred VanVleet to say before the series that “this ain’t that team.”

Draymond Green, who helped beat the Rockets in Game 7 in 2018 to advance to the NBA Finals, mentioned VanVleet’s quote before continuing.

Hield was 9 of 11 from 3-point range, setting an NBA record for a Game 7 and making more 3s than the Rockets, who were 6 of 18 from long range.

Curry added 10 rebounds and seven assists.

Amen Thompson scored 24 points to lead Houston, which forced Game 7 with two straight wins but couldn’t put away the experienced Warriors.

Tyrese Haliburton hardly resembled the player whose peers have deemed him overrated.

The dynamic Indiana point guard

scored 22 points - including a go-ahead 3-pointer midway through the fourth quarter - had 13 assists and made crucial defensive plays that propelled the Pacers to a 121-112 victory over the top-seeded Cleveland Cavaliers on Sunday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

“We’re definitely the heavy underdog, but we’re trying to control what we can,” said Haliburton, who was voted the NBA’s most overrated player in a recent anonymous player survey by The Athletic. “It gives us a lot of momentum for sure, but this is the best team in our conference. They don’t lose much.”

About the only thing Haliburton didn’t do well was shoot 3-pointers. On a night when the fourth-seeded Pacers were 19 of 36 from beyond the arc, Haliburton was 2 of 6. But the second one ended up being decisive.

The Cavs went ahead 102-101 on a free throw by Max Strus before Haliburton’s 3 ignited a 15-4 run.

Andrew Nembhard scored 23 points and made two of his five 3-pointers during the four-minute stretch when the Pacers pulled away.



Houston Rockets’ Alperen Sengun (28) goes up for a shot as Golden State Warriors’ Draymond Green (23) defends during the second half of Game 7 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series. (AP)

Al-Otaibi hails Kuwait’s success at Arab Shooting and Archery Championships



Kuwait honors shooters for their brilliance at the Arab Championships.

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: President of the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Duaij Al-Otaibi, praised the exceptional achievements of Kuwait’s male and female shooters at the recent Arab Shotgun and Air Rifle Championships in Egypt and the 14th Arab Archery Championship in Tunisia.

Speaking after an official ceremony honoring the national team, Al-Otaibi highlighted the athletes’ impressive haul: 13 medals in Egypt (7 gold and 6 bronze) and 5 medals in Tunisia (3 silver and 2 bronze).

He attributed the success to the unwavering support of Kuwait’s political leadership, noting that shooting in Kuwait proudly hosts prestigious events such as His Highness the Amir’s Grand International Championship and opens its season with the annual His Highness the Crown Prince Championship. He emphasized that such royal patronage has played a vital role in the remarkable progress of the sport.

Al-Otaibi also expressed gratitude for the continued backing from Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs,

Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and the Public Authority for Sports. He reaffirmed the Federation’s commitment to building on this momentum in future competitions.

What makes this achievement particularly special, he added, is the emergence of several young and promising shooters who contributed to the medal tally – an encouraging sign for the future of Kuwaiti shooting. He congratulated all the athletes who triumphed in the two tournaments.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Shooting Federation, Obaid Al-Osaimi, echoed these sentiments, stating that the recognition serves as motivation for shooters to push for greater success in upcoming events. He dedicated the victories to Kuwait’s leadership and the entire shooting community.

Al-Osaimi also noted that the Federation is diligently preparing the national team for future championships, crediting the efforts of the coaching, administrative, and technical staff in supporting athletes to excel on the international stage.

Egypt coach praises Kuwait’s organization of the Arab Cup

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: The tenth edition of the Arab Handball Cup, hosted by Kuwait until May 11, continues today with three exciting group stage matches in the second round.

Tunisia will face Qatar in Group B at 3:00 pm. At 5:00 pm, Morocco takes on the UAE in a Group C clash. The day concludes at 7:00 pm with Group A showdown between Egypt and Iraq.

Talal Al-Otaibi, member of the Kuwait Handball Association and the Executive Office of the Arab Handball Federation, praised the level of competition and the enthusiasm shown by all participating Arab nations.

Al-Otaibi noted that the technical performance is expected to rise in the second round, as teams intensify preparations for upcoming regional and international tournaments.

He expressed gratitude to Kuwait’s sports leadership, particularly Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Acting Director of the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah, for their commitment to supporting the tournament. He also thanked the Arab Handball Federation for entrusting Kuwait with hosting duties.

Yousef Al-Muallem, Director of National Teams at the Qatar Handball Federation, confirmed that Al-Annabi came with a balanced team of youth and experience, aiming to compete seriously for the championship title. He acknowledged the strength of the opposition and pledged that his players would



Talal Al-Otaibi

give their best.

Ahmed Al-Najem, administrator of the Bahraini national team, said the team is using the Arab Championship as key preparation for the Asian Cup. He noted the technical staff is closely monitoring player performance and readiness.

Magdy Abu Al-Majd, coach of the Egyptian team, praised Kuwait’s exceptional organization and hospitality, citing it as one of the reasons behind Egypt’s participation.

“Kuwait has the entire necessary infrastructure, and the tournament’s preparation is top-tier,” Abu Al-Majd said. “It feels like we’re participating in a World Cup-level event.”

Kuwait Club inches closer to title

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 5: Kuwait Club is just one win away from claiming the Premier Basketball League title after securing a 93-88 victory over Kazma in the second match of the final. The series follows a best-of-five playoff format, with the first team to win three matches crowned champions. Kuwait Club also triumphed in the first match, winning 80-61 last Wednesday. The two teams will meet again tomorrow for the third match, where Kuwait Club can clinch the title with a third consecutive win.

In his debut match with the team, new American professional Jamal Jones made an immediate impact, scoring 21 points and playing a key role in the Whites’ second victory in the final. Meanwhile, Kazma struggled to match the intensity of their opponents and faces an uphill battle to stay in contention, with Kuwait Club now on the brink of securing the title.

Kuwait Club took control early, dominating the first, second, and



Kuwait Club player drives past Kazma player.

third quarters thanks to stellar performances from star Hamad Adnan, who scored 23 points, along with Alexander Al-Ghais and Turki Hamoud. Despite a late push from Kazma in the final quarter, Kuwait Club held on to their lead and finished the game with a 5-point advantage, 93-88.

Ruud wins first Masters 1000 title at Madrid Open

MADRID, May 5, (AP): Casper Ruud became the first Norwegian to win a Masters 1000 title after beating Jack Draper 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 in the Madrid Open final.

The former second-ranked Ruud rallied from 5-3 down in the first set and sealed the victory after capitalizing on his lone break at 2-2 in the third.

The 26-year-old Ruud yelled and thrust both arms into the air after clinching the win on his first match point on the Caja Magica clay court.

“It’s been a long time coming,” Ruud said. “(This was) one of the really big goals I dreamed about when I was young, so it’s an incredible feeling to accomplish it. Also the way I did it today, it was a great match. I knew Jack had been playing unbelievable all year, and especially in this tournament, so I knew that if I didn’t bring my A-plus game, I was going to be whooped around the court.”

The 15th-ranked Ruud will return to the top 10 thanks to his campaign in Madrid, reaching No. 7 in the rankings on Monday.

“Luckily, I played really well,” Ruud said. “Jack has become such an

incredible player, on any surface now ... This is a really big boost for me, and I would like to keep it going.”

The 13-time tour champion is the first Norwegian to lift a Masters 1000 trophy since the series was introduced in 1990, according to the ATP. It was

Ruud’s third such final after losing to Stefanos Tsitsipas in Monte Carlo last year and to Carlo Alcaraz in Miami in 2022.

Ruud has more titles (12) on clay than any other player since the start of 2020, according to the ATP.



Norway’s Casper Ruud holds the trophy after winning the Madrid Open tennis final in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Draper won at Indian Wells in March. After his quarterfinal victory in Madrid, he secured a top-five debut in the rankings.

Draper said Ruud was “braver” than him in the key moments on Sunday.

“You deserve this,” he said. “You’ve obviously put in so much hard work and constantly had very good years on the tour ... This sport is brutal, but I think this loss is going to make me better, so I’ll keep trying.”

The tournament in Madrid was disrupted early last week because of a major blackout that brought Spain and Portugal to a standstill on Monday, prompting the postponement of 22 matches in total.

Ruud had needed to take a couple of painkillers during his semifinal win over Francisco Cerundolo after feeling a rib ailment during his warmup, but there were no signs of any injury on Sunday.

Draper, who like Ruud had not lost a set on his way to the final, served for the first set at 5-4 but couldn’t finish it. The 23-year-old British player was visibly upset, and kept talking to himself and to his staff for a while during the changeover.