



First American Pope takes the name Leo XIV

— Details Page 6 —

2025-2030 Strategic Plan reinforces military readiness

Kuwait launches visionary defense roadmap

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah has launched the 2025/2030 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Defense; stressing that it is a translation of the directives of Armed Forces Supreme Commander His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and that it is a pivotal pillar and turning point in the development of performance and capabilities at the ministry.

He affirmed the full support of the political leadership for the military institution to develop its capabilities, keep pace with future developments and overcome challenges; thereby, strengthening national security and stability.

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all the teams that contributed to the preparation of this plan; indicating that the efforts exerted reflect a high level of professionalism, planning and team spirit to realize the desired visions and goals, such as the highest level of excellence and professional readiness.

Meanwhile, Plan Preparation Team Leader and Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah gave a comprehensive presentation on the strategic plan; outlining its main themes, interim objectives, and implementation and

follow-up mechanisms.

He explained that the plan is considered a comprehensive roadmap that keeps pace with the accelerating challenges in the defense and security environment regionally and internationally. He said the plan contributes to the ongoing efforts to consolidate the foundations of institutional work and sustainability in military and administrative performance, while building an advanced defense system based on clear scientific and methodological foundations.

He disclosed the vision revolves around leadership in polishing the defense capabilities of the Kuwaiti Army; thus, preserving the security and territorial integrity of the State of Kuwait. He pointed out this is part of the commitment of the ministry to protect the sovereignty of Kuwait and its interests, while deterring any aggression. He confirmed this move reinforces a sense of security, belongingness and national pride through the development of an integrated defense system that encompasses human resources, capabilities and technical systems.

He said the plan is consistent with the general vision of the Kuwaiti government, indicating that it took several months to complete and it is regarded as a qualitative shift in the work of the ministry.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah arrives at the launch ceremony of the Ministry of Defense's 2025/2030 Strategic Plan, marking a pivotal step in strengthening Kuwait's defense capabilities.

Hiring halted for unvetted expats

Kuwait boosts security screening in labor entry rules

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has introduced a new regulation for issuing work permits for specific categories, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Workers requiring security screening must first obtain approval from PAM before seeking security clearance from the Ministry of Interior.

Meanwhile, informed sources said PAM will continue to accept work permits for doctors, engineers, and government

contract workers from Egypt, along with a few exceptional cases.

In other news, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah has issued Ministerial Circular No. 1/2025 to suspend changes to the academic qualifications or professions of expatriates recruited on work permits or transferred to the private sector, reports.

Continued on Page 5



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah and Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi engage in a forward-looking dialogue on strengthening Kuwait's media landscape and empowering the local press.



Editor-in-chief of Arab Times, Info Minister tackle media challenges

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah has stressed the need to provide the best mechanisms for supporting journalism, while enabling it to achieve further progress and development.

Al-Jarallah made the statement during his meeting with Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi at the Office of the Minister on Thursday.

They engaged in discussions on strengthening communication between the Ministry of Information and national press organizations, as well as the latest developments in the media sector.

They talked about a number of pressing media issues related to Kuwaiti affairs and ways to address the challenges that local press institutions are currently facing. These endeavors aim to ensure the media's role in supporting national development objectives and upholding the principles of freedom and expression, while maintaining professional responsibility and safeguarding the national interests.

They deliberated on mechanisms for strengthening cooperation between the ministry and Kuwaiti press institutions; thereby, fostering a robust local media environment and developing legislation to regulate media operations in line with the rapid evolution of the sector.

Al-Jarallah underscored the importance of the provision of optimal mechanisms to bolster journalism and facilitate its advancement; hence, the need for a conducive legislative framework, streamlined access to information, and support for journalistic institutions in terms of training and professional development. He believes these steps will improve the standard of media content and the proficiency of national manpower.

He also presented several concerns of the Kuwaiti press; stressing the need to address the obstacles that newspapers are facing and to cultivate a supportive environment for journalists, while protecting their rights and encouraging creative endeavors.

Continued on Page 5

35-year-old law updated to cut case backlog

Kuwait moves to fast-track minor lawsuits

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: In a move aimed at modernizing long standing legal procedures and dealing with the growing number of minor civil claims, the Council of Ministers recently approved a draft decree-law for amending certain provisions of Decree-Law No. 46/1989 concerning low-value lawsuits.

The explanatory memorandum for the draft decree-law confirmed that 35 years have passed since the law's initial implementation. At the time, the law included sufficient rules and provisions aimed at simplifying litigation procedures.

According to judicial statistics, lawsuits valued at less than KD 2,000 accounted for 75 percent of all cases heard by the courts over the past five years. In light of this, and considering

that some provisions of Decree-Law No. 46/1989, specifically Articles 1, 2, and 9, have already been amended, this new draft decree-law was prepared.

Article 1 of the draft decree proposes expanding the scope of application of the original law by replacing the phrase "KD 2,000" with "KD 1,000" in Article 1 of Decree-Law No. 46/1989.

Continued on Page 5

MoH announces 30% discount for Tirzepatide injections

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has issued a decision to reduce the price of Tirzepatide injections, which is an innovative treatment for type 2 diabetes that aids in weight loss and improves blood sugar control.

The Ministry of Health explained that this decision is aimed at easing the financial burden on patients and improving their access to affordable, cutting-edge treatments at fair prices. The 30 percent price reduction is expected to enhance patient adherence to treatment, reduce diabetes-related complications, and support overall healthcare quality.

The decision will be effective three months after its publication in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm".

Pay up ... or power down

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: The Cabinet's Legal Affairs Committee has made huge progress in studying amendments to the law concerning fees and costs related to the use of public utilities and services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to informed sources, the committee has completed a seven-article draft decree that covers all public utilities, including electricity, water,

roads, postal and telegraph services, healthcare, municipalities, telecommunications, public communications, customs, and traffic services.

The new law grants the state the authority to exert pressure on beneficiaries to ensure timely payment of their outstanding debts, specifically overdue usufruct fees.

Continued on Page 5

News watch

RAMALLAH: Israeli occupying forces' airstrikes on several areas in the Gaza Strip killed at least 106 Palestinians and injured 367 others in the last 24 hours, according to Gaza health authorities.

Thus, the death toll from the Israeli occupation's continued aggression on the enclave has surged to 52,760 martyrs, while 119,264 others have been injured since October 7, 2023, the authorities said in a press release.

However, the number of those killed or injured since March 18, 2025 has jumped to 2,651 and 7,223 respectively, it added. (KUNA)

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ANKARA: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani arrived in Turkey on Thursday for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as their two neighboring countries move forward with efforts to strengthen cooperation and repair previously tense ties.

The talks in Ankara are expected to focus on a new peace effort between Turkey and a Kurdish militant group that has a foothold in Iraq, as well as water supplies to Iraq.

Erdogan's office said that Turkish and Iraqi officials will ink a series of cooperation agreements during the visit. (AP)

Kuwait to sizzle this weekend with dust, dry heat



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
Vehicles cautiously navigate haze-covered roads on Thursday as whipping winds turn day into a blur of sand and silence.

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait Meteorological Department has forecast hot temperatures during the day and warm nights this weekend.

The acting Director of the department Dr. Dharar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country will be affected by an extension of a high-pressure system accompanied by a hot, dry air mass and light to moderate northwesterly winds. These winds are expected to become occasionally active, stirring up dust and reducing horizontal visibility, especially in open areas.

He explained that the weather conditions on Friday will be hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds occasionally becoming active at speeds between 15 and 45 km/h, raising dust in open areas.

Continued on Page 5



8 Zain Group's Data Office holds workshop on the enormous potential and deployment of AI strategies across the mobile and ICT industry



15 NBK supports Rafa Nadal's Junior Team during TenPro Global Tennis Tournament in Antalya

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:33	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	05:01	Maghrib ..	18:28
Zohr	11:44	Isha	19:54

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.
By Night: Rather hot with light

Weather			
to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	38	27	
Abdaly	40	22	
Bubyan	34	24	
Jahra	40	25	
Failaka Islana	35	26	
Salmiyah	35	27	
Ahmadi	34	23	
Jal Aliyah	38	23	
Nuwaisib	40	24	
Wafra	39	25	



HH the Amir

HH the Crown Prince

HH the PM

Amir, Crown Prince and Premier felicitate new German chancellor

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable of congratulation to newly elected German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir lauded distinguished relations between Kuwait and Germany and wished the new chancellor best of luck and good health, and Germany and its friendly people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulation to newly elected German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, wishing him best of luck, and Germany and its friendly people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulation to newly elected German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Kuwait’s humanitarian efforts win praise

Only one GCC can face current challenges: Al-Budaiwi

RIYADH, May 8, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi stressed on Wednesday the importance of strengthening joint Arab action in light of current challenges and unifying positions in a way that contributes to supporting security and stability in the region.

In a press release, the General Secretariat said that Al-Budaiwi participated in the periodic meeting of Arab Ambassadors at the Kuwait Embassy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, Al-Budaiwi reviewed the progress of the GCC, highlighting its most prominent achievements in various political, economic, and developmental fields, and its pivotal role in promoting regional and international stability, as well as consolidating cooperation and integration between member states, it said.

Views were exchanged on the latest regional and international developments and issues

of common interest, it pointed out.

From their side, their excellencies the Arab Ambassadors to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed their appreciation for the active role played by the Cooperation Council in supporting the paths of joint Gulf-Arab cooperation and coordination in a way that benefits their peoples, it noted.

Al-Budaiwi expressed his thanks and appreciation for this gracious invitation. He also thanked Kuwait’s Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Shaikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for hosting this meeting, noting that such meetings and gatherings contribute to the exchange of views and the strengthening of fraternal ties between the ambassadors, it added.

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs at the GCC General Secretariat, Khaled Al-Sunaidi praised Kuwait’s humanitarian and relief efforts worldwide during the 21st meeting of the Gulf Red Crescent Societies, held Thursday in Kuwait.

Al-Sunaidi expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, current President of the GCC Supreme Council, for his support

of joint Gulf initiatives aimed at advancing prosperity and development.

He also commended the work of Red Crescent societies in responding to humanitarian crises, noting the growing number of volunteers in the region, with 80 volunteers recently honored for their contributions.

The chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Board of Directors, Ambassador Khaled Al-Mughamis emphasized the meetings role in showcasing Gulf unity and solidarity in humanitarian work.

Al-Mughamis reaffirmed Kuwait’s commitment to rapid emergency relief efforts, citing ongoing campaigns for Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and other countries, and also acknowledged the GCC Secretariats role in facilitating collaboration among Red Crescent societies.

The meeting addressed key issues, including current and future partnership plans, humanitarian response strategies, volunteer recognition, and preparations for the annual Red Crescent Day.

The meeting also reflects the GCCs commitment to enhancing regional cooperation and supporting communities affected by crises and disasters.



Al-Budaiwi



Kuwaiti Army’s General Staff photo

Kuwaiti and French naval forces gather after the conclusion of the joint ‘Arab Breeze’ 2025 military exercise.

Kuwaiti-French naval drills chart course for deeper defense ties

The joint “Arab Breeze” 2025 military exercise involving Kuwaiti and French naval forces, which kicked off on April 20, concluded at Mohammad Al-Ahmad Naval Base on Thursday.

The military drills were aimed at upgrad-

ing the combat preparation of personnel and sharing expertise and operational concepts between both sides, as well as enhancing cooperation in maritime surveying and demining, the Kuwaiti Army’s General Staff said in

a statement.

They also came in the context of the scheduled plan for training cooperation between Kuwaiti naval forces and other brotherly and friendly countries’ navies, it added. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

Kuwait’s Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets Javier Colomina, NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood during his official visit to Kuwait.

Security, stability discussed

Kuwait’s Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Thursday with Javier Colomina, NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood during his official visit to Kuwait.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said the meeting reviewed the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and NATO, and discussed key regional and international developments, as well as issues of mutual interest.

The two sides also explored ways and joint efforts to promote regional security

and stability.

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Thursday with Javier Colomina, NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood.

The meeting discussed bilateral cooperation between Kuwait and NATO, a possible cooperation within the framework of Kuwait’s hosting of NATO’s Regional Center for the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). (KUNA)

‘Auctions tonic in land trade’

Workshop focuses on real estate modus operandi

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: In collaboration with Al-Enmaa Real Estate Company, the Real Estate Association conducted a specialized workshop entitled, “Introduction to Understanding Real Estate Auctions,” as part of its ongoing efforts to advance the real estate market culture and refine its operational frameworks.

Participants of the workshop included employees of real estate companies, real estate sector specialists, representatives of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), and academicians from Kuwait University.

Al-Enmaa Real Estate Company conducted the workshop to elucidate the concept of real estate auctions and their instrumental role in market stimulation, particularly in the context of the cur-

rent economic landscape and the transformations observed in the local real estate sector.

The workshop covered several critical topics, starting with “The Concept of Real Estate Auctions and their Importance at the Current Stage.”

Assistant Director of the Property and Real Estate Services Department at Al-Enmaa Real Estate Company Khaled Al-Hammadi pointed out that auctions have emerged as an effective means of expediting transactions and accurately determining property market value with enhanced transparency.

The workshop also addressed changes in the behavior of buyers and investors, who are increasingly leaning toward smart and rapid solutions, such as auctions, to secure viable investment opportunities.

The second topic, “The Role of Real Estate Auctions in Revitalizing the Kuwaiti Real Estate Market,” underscored the contribution of auctions in stimulating real estate trading and in narrowing the gap between supply and demand.

Furthermore, auctions provide a reliable legal platform for marketing all types of real estate assets -- residential, investment and commercial

properties.

Al-Hammadi cited the recent successful auctions in the Kuwaiti market, which resulted in property sales exceeding the estimated prices, reflecting considerable demand and confidence in this mechanism.

The third topic focused on “Requirements and Methods for Organizing a Real Estate Auction.”

The legal dimensions and requisite procedures for organizing auctions were reviewed, including approvals from the concerned authorities, setting general and specific participation conditions, and the delineation of guarantees and mechanisms to ensure transparency and integrity.

The workshop concluded with substantial participant engagement, featuring extensive discussions on the current situation of real estate auctions and strategies to refine and fortify investor confidence.

The Real Estate Association reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to serving and raising awareness in real estate sector, intensifying efforts to provide workshops and training programs that enlighten the sector, develop market professionalism, and propel developmental progress.

Death-linked suspect in custody

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Sulaibiya detectives arrested the main suspect in the Abdally Road case, which resulted in the death of his relative, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said the suspect was arrested following extensive efforts, as he had been hiding for more than a month after being implicated in a case of threatening emer-

gency personnel with a firearm. The source said the Sulaibiya detectives included the suspect in a lineup before the emergency personnel who recognized him as the one who brandished a firearm.

The concerned authorities are completing the procedures in preparation for the suspect’s referral to the Public Prosecution.



KUNA photo

Tents are handed over to the displaced Gaza residents.

IICO erects camp for displaced Gazans

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) has inaugurated its second camp in northern Gaza as part of efforts to relieve Gazans who have been relocated due to the continuing Israeli occupation’s aggression on the enclave.

The IICO said in a statement on Thursday that the camp, construction of which cost

USD 163,000 with contributions by good-doers from Kuwait, shelters 200 families that have lost their houses.

Various aid is provided to the displaced who use 200 tents, it said.

Up to 85 buildings in Gaza have been annihilated and the inhabitants have been deprived of necessities such as food, cleanliness and water.

Turkiye offers latest medical care for Kuwaiti citizens

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: A delegation from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Türkiye, including Dr. Aziz Biten, Director General of European Union and Foreign Relations, and Behlül Ünver, General Manager of International Health Services Inc. (USHAŞ), conducted a two-day visit to Kuwait on May 6-7, 2025.

During the visit, the health delegation met with Kuwait’s Minister of Health, H.E. Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Awadhi, to explore opportunities for cooperation in the health sector between the two countries. The discussions focused on enhancing health services and sharing experiences and expertise.

On May 6, an event hosted by the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait showcased Türkiye’s health services and facilities. The program, attended by hospital administrators, health sector representatives, and tourism agencies operating in Kuwait, featured speeches by Ambassador Tuba Nur Sönmez and Director General Aziz Biten, highlighting Türkiye’s health infrastructure and bilateral collaboration opportunities.

In her address at the event, Ambassador Sönmez emphasized Türkiye’s significant progress in its health system and its emergence as a key destination for health tourism. She underscored the importance of the health sector as a vital area of cooperation between the two countries and the significance of the delegation’s visit in advancing this collaboration.

USHAŞ General Manager Behlül Ünver also delivered a presentation on health tourism opportunities in Türkiye, followed by a Q&A session where the delegation addressed participants’ inquiries.

During meetings with officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, discussions centered on how Kuwaiti patients could more effectively access the high-quality health services offered in Türkiye. Discussions have focused on potential joint projects in education and research, as well as increasing knowledge and experience sharing between health professionals from both countries.



Sonmez

Other Voices

Studying in China opens gates to shining future for students

By Zhang Jianwei

Ambassador of People’s Republic of China

THERE is an old Arabic proverb: “Seek knowledge, even if it is in China.”

In that spirit, a growing number of Arab students have chosen to pursue their education in China in recent years. For instance, in 2023 alone, the number of Saudi students in China reached 783.

There is no doubt that Kuwaiti students who choose China as their study-abroad destination will find themselves stepping into a world of endless possibilities and opportunities.

China has experienced remarkable growth in the field of higher education, with many of its universities earning strong international recognition.

According to the 2025 QS World University Rankings, 33 Chinese universities are listed among the world’s top 500. Notably, five are ranked among the top 50 globally: Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Zhejiang University.

China is also a global leader in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, 5G communications, renewable energy, and e-commerce. Studying in China allows students to closely observe these global developments and engage directly in cutting-edge scientific research and business practices. They will become active participants at the forefront of modern innovation and progress.

Some students may worry about studying in China without proficiency in the Chinese language. I would like to reassure them that many Chinese universities offer degree programs taught in English. During their time in China, students can also study Chinese and gain fluency in one of the world’s most widely spoken languages.

Studying in China will strengthen your core competitiveness for future career development. As the world’s second-largest economy, China offers a vast and dynamic market with abundant job opportunities for international graduates. Many multinational corporations and Chinese-foreign joint ventures operate throughout the country, creating strong demand for professionals with

diverse cultural backgrounds and specialized expertise.

With the ongoing development of relations between China and Arab countries, including Kuwait, Kuwaiti students who gain a deep understanding of China will be well-positioned to serve as vital bridges for economic and cultural exchange between the two countries, and open up promising and wide-ranging prospects for their future careers.

China offers an excellent living environment for international students. The country is known for its stable policies, safe society, efficient transportation systems, vibrant economy, rich cultural scene, and diverse cuisine.

Thanks to the widespread use of mobile payment technologies, daily life in China has become remarkably convenient. With just a mobile phone, individuals can easily manage a wide range of everyday needs.

To attract international students, the Chinese government and universities offer a variety of scholarship programs that cover tuition fees, living expenses, accommodation, and more.

Each year, the Chinese government provides five to seven scholarships specifically for Kuwaiti students. The Chinese Embassy in Kuwait informs the Ministry of Higher Education of these opportunities every October.

Currently, only seven universities from China’s core program are included on Kuwait’s approved list. We hope that the Kuwaiti authorities will consider adding more Chinese universities to this list, thereby expanding opportunities and choices for Kuwaiti students.

For those interested in applying for a Chinese government scholarship, please follow the Chinese Embassy’s account on the X platform “@ChinaEmbKuwait”.

For those looking to join a short-term study program or self-funded programs in China, please visit the “Study in China” website: <https://apply.studyinchina.edu.cn>

Alternatively, you can visit the China Service Center for Scholarship Exchange (CSCSE) website: <https://www.cscse.cn> and select “Study in China” for more relevant information.

Dear Kuwaiti students, I invite you to make China your next educational destination and embark on an unforgettable academic journey. In China, you will not only gain knowledge but also build lasting friendships and progress. You will be on the path to development and prosperity, directly from the world’s leading sources of growth.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Syria at doorstep of civil war as groups want piece of cake

“After Bashar al-Assad fled and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) took control without resistance, the situation in Syria became similar to that in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of the Russian Army, with Afghan opposition factions assuming power”, columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Despite the efforts of Syria’s current President Ahmad al-Sharaa and his government to address the chaos caused by the war and prevent further conflict or division, and despite attempts by some Arab governments to support him politically and financially, the atmosphere created by the war, along with the dubious manner in which HTS came to power, suggest that international powers have ambitions in Syria and the region. These powers appear to be pursuing agendas that are at odds with those sought by al-Sharaa.

“The current situation in Syria mirrors the scenario in Afghanistan after the Russian army withdrew in 1989. At that time, Afghan Islamic factions, despite their ideological differences, varied methodologies, and conflicting interests, united to fight the Russians.

“Similarly, in Syria, Islamic factions came together to fight Bashar al-Assad’s Baathist regime, despite their diverse interests, approaches, and ideologies. In Syria, the Kurds are supported by Russia, the Druze by Israel, the Alawites by Iran, and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham consists of extremist groups with various affiliations, each backed by different external actors, including Islamist groups, parties, and countries.

“Signs of civil war are beginning to emerge, with external powers attempting to divide Syria or, at the very least, grant autonomous rule to some regions where certain sects are concentrated.

“Israel has warned the Syrian government against extending its control over the Druze, after their leader issued a statement calling for the protection of the sect and for self-rule. In response, Israel launched airstrikes against Syrian positions, citing security concerns. Meanwhile, the Kurds and Alawites have also issued statements demanding autonomy.

“Many Syrians are frustrated with the government’s handling of the remnants of Bashar al-Assad’s regime, especially those whose hands are stained with the blood of the Syrian people. To this day, no one involved in the killing of civilians has been held accountable. As a result, some Syrians have taken matters into their own hands, resorting to violence against those they blame for the atrocities. These unresolved issues are major factors in the growing tensions that could ignite a civil war.

“After Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham took power, Israel bombed all military airports, disabled the air fleet, destroyed numerous weapons depots, and expanded its occupation of the Golan Heights under the pretext of creating a security barrier.

“If a civil war were to break out in Syria, it would likely be protracted and devastating due to the lack of air cover, which would prevent the government from quickly quelling any rebellion. In addition, foreign interventions supporting warring sects to further their own interests would only exacerbate the conflict.”

Also:

“There is no doubt that God has bestowed blessings upon this region, especially over the past few decades, with oil being the most significant of these. The wealth generated has sparked an urban boom and driven developments, fueled by liquidity and the flow of money. This has led to the creation of plans and strategies aimed at advancing the region and improving the lives of its people. Skyscrapers and major companies have been established, and investment funds have flowed in from abroad. But of course, with success comes envy”. Saudi writer **Saleh bin Abdullah Al-Muslim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Since the Gulf War, we have suffered from several crises, disturbances, interference in our internal affairs, and attacks from armies that have exploited social media to destabilize the region and its people. Some of those leading these attacks are Arabs living among us.

“In recent years, the Russian-Ukrainian war erupted in a region, and this poses a threat to Europe, America, and Western interests in general. They do not want their region to become a zone of conflict, war, disintegration, and mounting debt. They do not want their countries to be destroyed, nor their wealth to be scattered. Their plans and strategies are designed to keep us dependent on them. We are the ones whose homelands are ravaged by wars, whose people suffer from poverty and insecurity. The West views us with contempt, not love and compassion. Their goal is to seize the wealth that God has bestowed upon this region. They fear that we will fully exploit our resources, so they devise plans and strategies to keep the region in a state of ignorance and darkness, ensuring that we remain reliant on their industries as importing consumers, not producers or exporters.

“From the time the U.S. President Donald Trump returned to the White House, the West planned to fully execute its agenda before eventually stepping away. Trump is seen as the ideal leader to carry out these plans, including the economic war, which was conceived five years ago and has now entered its implementation phases. As a result, our region is poised to become a focal point of tension, with 20 Gaza-like situations instead of one. Our region stands on the brink of



Hamad Al-Marri

a volcanic eruption unless we handle the situation, move beyond the past, and read between the lines.”

□ □ □

“The State of Kuwait submitted a draft law to the League of Arab States late last month to criminalize hate speech and contempt for others. It was discussed at a meeting of a committee of experts, along with representatives from the Ministries of Justice and Interior, and other relevant authorities from member states”, Syrian writer **Dr. Adnan Mehrez** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Kuwait’s submission of this important draft law reflects its commitment to consecrating peace, national unity, and rapprochement between peoples, as well as promoting the principles of brotherhood and humanity, among other values that Kuwait has embraced since its founding. These values were recently highlighted when Kuwait was honored with the title of “Center for Humanitarian Work” by the United Nations, and the late Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him) was awarded the title of “Humanitarian Leader.”

“The most prominent provision of the draft law defines hate speech as any statement or action that incites sedition, racism, defamation, or promotes ideas that encourage contempt, incitement, or discrimination between individuals and groups, or that harms others.

“Discrimination, as defined by the draft law, refers to any unlawful distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on gender, lineage, origin, language, color, religion, wealth, disability, health status, or affiliation that results in the deprivation of human rights or fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other area of public life. This clearly demonstrates that hate speech fosters division and hatred within a society, and spreads discord and social unrest, particularly in fragile societies where members suffer from ignorance and lack of awareness.

“Governments must be more vigilant in combating any form of hate speech. As media professionals, intellectuals, and influencers, we have a responsibility to explain the dangers of hate speech and encourage people to reject it. In today’s world, the means of disseminating hate speech have become increasingly diverse with the rise of the Internet. These platforms have made it easier for hate speech to spread through speech, writing, drawings, gestures, slogans, photography, singing, acting, and other forms of expression.

“Therefore, it is essential to enforce laws that combat these crimes and impose severe penalties on anyone who engages in such acts. Social media platforms must be monitored more closely, as studies have shown that hatred often has social and emotional causes, and can stem from psychological factors related to political, social, or economic conditions. We can prevent it by controlling feelings of anger and agitation, avoiding resentment, and reinforcing religious, behavioral, social, and moral values.

“We must also work on preventing injustice, as it breeds hatred, which in turn leads to resentment, violence, and aggression against others.”

□ □ □

“A common question often raised in diwanis and majlises is - What is the difference between white and brown eggs? Are brown eggs richer in nutrients and more beneficial to humans? From a purely scientific standpoint, there is no significant difference in the nutritional value or taste of the eggs.

Both types contain the same essential proteins, vitamins, and minerals. The only difference between them lies in their outer appearance and the color of their shells”, member of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources and former president of the Poultry Breeders Association **Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Furaih** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In the 1970s, we began experimenting with raising brown chickens in one of our poultry farms. We referred to them as “red wolves” due to their high activity levels and ferocity when feeding. During the experiment, we observed that this breed consumed more feed, had a lower mortality rate, and produced eggs more efficiently than their white counterparts. However, when it comes to taste and nutritional value, there was no obvious difference between the two.

“One reason some people prefer brown eggs is the perception that they are “natural” or “organic.” Certain markets take advantage of this perception, and price brown eggs higher based on demand and consumer beliefs.

“The truth is that the difference between white and brown eggs is primarily due to the breed of chicken. Brown chickens are typically larger and require more feed, which slightly increases their production costs but by no more than 10 to 15 percent of the feed cost. If eggs are labeled as organic, the source of certification and the quality seal must be clearly stated on the packaging, ensuring that the term is not used merely as a marketing tool without proper evidence.

“The color of the yolk is influenced by the chicken’s diet and can be adjusted by adding natural ingredients such as red pepper, paprika, and corn. Using the internationally recognized “Yolk Fan” scale, up to 15 different shades of yolk color can be selected, depending on the feed mix ratio.

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



KUNA photo

Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visits the KNG health center.

KNG Chief pledges health care for members

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirmed on Thursday his keenness on providing necessary health care services for KNG members.

In a press release after the opening of the new physiotherapy center in Al-Tahreer Camp, in the presence of several senior officers.

Al-Sabah said that the physiotherapy center contributes to improving and developing the services provided by the KNG to its members, and that the establishment of the center comes within the objectives of the 2030 strategic plan (Protecting the Nation) to support the health system in the KNG.

He pointed out that this comes in line with the direc-

tives of the country’s political leadership, represented by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Chief Mubarak Al-Sabah stressed the need to continue developing the level of medical services in all KNG clinics and keeping up with the latest equipment to provide comprehensive medical care to its members.

He conducted a tour in the physiotherapy center, where he was briefed with the available facilities, services provided by the center, and the latest and advanced equipment in the Middle East in the field of physical therapy.

2 dead bodies found on building rooftop

Maids scoot with booty

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: The Fast Track Court adjourned to May 28 a lawsuit filed by a Kuwaiti citizen who is seeking to suspend the permanent garnishment of a debtor’s salary, based on the decision of the General Department for Sentences Enforcement.

During the court session, the lawyer representing the government requested the postponement, explaining that the head of the General Department for Sentences Enforcement was about to issue a circular to correct the previous one, offering a solution acceptable to all parties.

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Two corpses found: Two unknown corpses were discovered on the rooftop of a building in Khaitan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to security sources, when the Ministry of Interior’s Operations Room received a report about the bodies on the

rooftop of the building, security personnel rushed to the location, examined the bodies, and transferred them to the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the cause of death. The sources indicated that the bodies likely belonged to Asian expatriates, adding that investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances of the incident and whether there is any criminal suspicion.

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Maids rob sponsor: A Kuwaiti woman, in her 40s, accused two domestic workers of stealing various items worth KD20,000 from her home in Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

As per the directive of the Office of the Public Prosecutor; the Ministry of Interior included the two domestic workers in the list of those banned from leaving the country and the wanted list.

A security source said the Kuwaiti woman lodged a complaint at Jahra Police Station, stating she was surprised when she found out the two domestic workers missing. She tried to contact them but their phones have been turned off. She then started checking the items at home and discovered that some designer handbags, a watch worth more than KD 3,000, bills of exchange and shoes were stolen; indicating the stolen items are worth KD20,000.



KFF photo

A trailer truck ramms into the rear of a stationary truck.

One dead as two trucks collide on 6th Ring Road

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Two trucks collided on the Sixth Ring Road on Tuesday afternoon, resulting in one fatality.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Al-Sumoud fire station responded to the report about the collision between two trucks. After dealing with the situation, the site was handed over to the relevant authorities.

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KFF conducts drill: In line with the ongoing cooperation between the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Ministry of Health, KFF conducted a practical drill at the Funaites Health Center on Wednesday morning.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the drill involved evacuating the center, rescuing the injured, and controlling a simulated fire.

KFF stated that these drills are aimed to enhance response capabilities, protect lives and property, and ensure community safety in Kuwait.

Indians top expats

Kuwaitis make up 31% of population – report

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Statistics issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) reveal that the number of Kuwaiti citizens reached 1,567,983 as of the end of December 2024, and the number of non-Kuwaitis totaled 3,419,843. This brings the overall population of Kuwait to 4,987,826, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Kuwaitis made up 31 percent of the total population with 773,060 Kuwaiti males and 794,923 females. The number of non-Kuwaiti males was 2,259,690, and non-Kuwaiti females 1,160,153.

In terms of employment, 78 percent of government workers were Kuwaiti, compared to 22 percent expatriates. In the private sector, Kuwaitis do not exceed four percent, while non-Kuwaitis make up 96 percent.

The total number of expatriate workers was 2,560,252, compared to 540,878 Kuwaiti workers. The number of domestic workers reached 780,930. The statistics revealed that the average Kuwaiti family consists of seven members, compared to an average of just two members in expatriate families.

The birth rate per thousand population is 21 for Kuwaitis and 4 for non-Kuwaitis.

The Indian community ranked first among foreign nationalities in terms of population, followed by Egyptians, Bangladeshis, Filipinos, Syrians, Sri Lankans, Saudis, Nepalese, Pakistanis, and Jordanians, respectively.

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329 expats deported: The Ministry of Interior has announced the deportation of 329 expatriates, reports Al-Anba daily quoting an official source.

The source disclosed that several expatriates were referred to the Public Security Deportation Department for violating the Residency Law, while others were referred to the Drug Control General Department for the possession of drugs and alcohol. He said the deportees include 173 women and 156 men of various nationalities.

He added that efforts are underway to contact the deportees’ sponsors. “If sponsors fail to provide flight tickets, the ministry will proceed with deportation at its own expense and then demand for reimbursement from the sponsors. Their future applications will be blocked until the outstanding costs are settled,” the source explained.

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GCC main supporter of humanitarian work: KRCS

Gaza, Sudan, Somalia need global help: Al-Mandil

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): The Secretary-General of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Fahad Al-Mandil, said on Wednesday, that the Red Crescent societies in GCC countries have proven to be among the most prominent forces supporting humanitarian work regionally and globally.

They have become a model to be emulated in generosity and relief efforts and have worked to make humanitarian work an integral part of their foreign policy and development visions.

Al-Mandil added in a speech at the opening of the senior officials' meeting of the Red Crescent bodies and societies in the GCC countries a two-day event held in Kuwait "We meet today amid growing humanitarian challenges such as displacement crises, natural disasters, and escalating conflicts, which make the role of our societies more vital and urgent than ever before."

He continued, "Strengthening cooperation and coordination among us is no longer optional, but a necessity. In this meeting, we look forward to discussing joint action plans, exchanging successful experiences, and setting priorities for the coming stage to ensure effective and flexible responses to the needs of the communities we serve."



Senior officials from the GCC Red Crescent bodies pose for a picture.

KUNA photo

Al-Mandil also recalled the dire humanitarian situations in regions such as Gaza, Sudan, Lebanon, So-

malia, and Syria, stressing that these crises require urgent international action to alleviate civilian suffering.

For his part, the Head of the Human and Environmental Affairs Sector at the GCC General Secretariat, Engineer Abdullah Al-Rubaie, emphasized in his speech the importance of coordination between Gulf societies and bodies and the GCC Secretariat with regard to relief aid and unifying positions.

Al-Rubaie stated that "the meeting will address a number of vital issues concerning the national societies in the Gulf region, their plans and future strategies, and areas of humanitarian cooperation and coordination among them. It will also focus on unifying their positions with regional and international organizations and developing mechanisms for humanitarian work on the international stage."

During the meeting, several agenda items were discussed, including strengthening existing partnerships and cooperation between the GCC and active regional and international organizations, reviewing the outcomes of joint action plans, and agreements made within the working groups and joint committees formed for this purpose.

Additionally, the participants discussed ways to develop and enhance mechanisms for joint action in the field of humanitarian and relief work.

The meeting concluded with a number of recommendations that will be submitted to the heads of the Red Crescent bodies and societies in the GCC countries during their scheduled meeting Thursday.

PAAET plans to raise vocational education and training standards: DG Al-Fajjam

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam has confirmed the authority's commitment to implement the directives of Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Abdullah Al-Jallal.

The minister called for raising vocational education and training standards, in addition to obtaining quality assurance and academic accreditation for all specializations offered by the colleges and institutes at PAAET in line with international standards and national development requirements.

Al-Fajjam affirmed that PAAET has obtained academic accreditation for a number of its training institutes and continues to exert tremendous efforts in this regard. "As per the directive of the minister, the authority has started implementing measures



Dr. Al-Fajjam

to cooperate with the US Council on Vocational Education (COE). This is part of its comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of educational outputs, raise the efficiency of national manpower, and prepare them to meet the needs of the changing labor market," he elaborated.

He then praised the unwavering support and commitment of the minister; stressing that this achievement reflects the fruitful cooperation between the minister and the PAAET management, as per its inclusive reform plan to modify the path of applied education and training and develop its academic and training programs in line with modern requirements.

He pointed out that COE is one of the most prominent international bodies concerned with setting accreditation standards in the field of vocational education and training. He said COE focuses on developing the quality of vocational education and providing accreditation to educational institutions that offer specialized programs in fields related to vocational education leading to a career path.

He stated that COE sets strict and specific standards and procedures for the accreditation process aimed at ensuring the quality and effectiveness of

educational institutions offering vocational training programs. He added this enhances institutional accountability and continuous improvement to guarantee high-quality education.

He revealed that COE also accredited more than 500 technical institutes and colleges in the United States, reflecting its commitment to improve the quality of vocational and technical education. He asserted that obtaining this accreditation is a national achievement, embodying the commitment of PAAET towards continuous improvement and the quality assurance of its programs.

He believes this reinforces the position of PAAET as a leading educational institution in the region and it is a pivotal step toward achieving the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035 by preparing a capable generation of professionals with the necessary skills to keep pace with developments in the labor market.

"Furthermore, the accreditation of the programs of PAAET by a prestigious body, such as the COE, boosts the confidence of employers and beneficiaries in the quality of its outputs, and supports its graduates' employment and competitiveness opportunities," he concluded.

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KUNA photo

The Arab League marks the World Intellectual Property Day.

Kuwait attends as Arab League marks intellectual property day

CAIRO, May 8, (KUNA): The Arab League affirmed recently significance of pan-Arab coordination at international quarters regarding intellectual property, amid rapid developments in this sector.

Athari Al-Hayef, the Director of the Composer's Rights Department at the Kuwait National Library, represented the State of Kuwait the celebration.

The organization's affirmation in this regard was made by Maha Bakhit, the Arab League's Director of the Legal Affairs Division marking the World Intellectual Property Day, celebrated by the League at its headquarters under the theme, "The Intellectual Property and Music ... Sensing Tempo of the Intellectual Property."

The Arab League has regularly, since 2006, organized this celebration as it is a platform for swapping visions, thoughts and expertise among the Arab States, experts and researchers in the field, Bakhit said.

The League, since signing a memorandum of understanding with the World Intel-

lectual Property Organization in 2000 and forming the Intellectual Property Division in 2001, has continued coordinating with the member states and later forming the Technical Committee for Intellectual Property in 2016.

The pan-Arab coordination commission, which comprises government officials from intellectual property offices in the Arab states, will hold its 14th meeting soon, Bakhit said.

Bakhit affirmed that music has been highlighted in the logo of year's celebration because it is a basic component of various types of intellectual activities and makes high proceeds for several persons involved in the production.

Seminars were held during the celebrations addressing challenges against artistic rights and future of the music in the digital era.

Government officials from intellectual property rights offices from the Arab states, legal experts, researchers and musicians took part in the activities.

News in Brief

Ex-artiste passes away: Fakhri Oudah, a former Kuwait TV presenter and director, passed away on Tuesday following a prolonged battle with illness, reports Al-Seyassah daily

Oudah had lately been active on social media, sharing messages about confronting his disease with resilience.

A graduate of the Kuwait Institute of Theatrical Arts in 1982, Oudah specialized in acting and directing. He began his acting career at the age of 21 and was also a writer of popular poetry and short stories. He starred in six plays and TV series, and appeared on the TV program 'Al-Usra' (The Family). After graduation, he



Fakhri Oudah

played a patriotic role in a documentary TV program.

Throughout his career, Oudah worked on producing and directing television and radio programs. He contributed to the establishment of a number of TV channels affiliated with Kuwait TV and held various administrative positions at the Ministry of Information.

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EPA gets new head: Minister of Oil and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environment Tariq Al-Roumi issued a decision appointing Nouf Behbehani as Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA), reports Al-Anba daily.

Behbehani obtained Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 2000. Over the course of her career at the authority, she has held several key positions, beginning as International Agreements Department Director before serving as International Relations Department Director.

Recognition highlights importance of Arabic language in modern world

\$100,000 Al-Babtain award honors Arabic language innovators

CAIRO, May 8, (KUNA): The Arab League’s Secretariat General on Wednesday hosted celebratory handover of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Award for Creativity in Serving the Arabic Language (the first edition).

Hassan Al-Nahas was awarded USD 40,000 for his project, “Wonders in the Arabic language computing,” and King Salman International Complex for the Arabic Language was granted USD 60,000 in the foundations’ category for its works in planning and linguistic policies.

Ahmad Al-Yamahi, the Arab Parliament President, affirmed in his keynote address to the activity, co-organized by the parliament and Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation, necessity of mapping out a unified Arab strategy for



Left: Ahmad Al-Yamahi, the Arab Parliament President, delivers his keynote address. Right: Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi.



KUNA photos

enhancing the Arabic language status at the global level. This award immortalizes the late Kuwaiti poet Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, one of the most prominent intellectuals, poetic and cultural personalities in “our Arab world,” Al-Yamahi said.

The Arabic language nowadays is encountering enormous challenges as its usage is declining, using foreign terms is increasing and foreign languages are dominating education and scientific research, he said, also alluding to failure of using Arabic in digital tasks, sufficiently, soundly and effectively.

Meanwhile, Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Chairperson of the foundation’s Board of trustees, Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, said in his statement at the event that the partnership with the Arab Parliament for launching the award came in line with the renewed pledge to maintain the language and boost its role and promotion globally.

The award was proclaimed on May 31, 2024. Nominations had been scheduled until November 15, 2024.

Fund reboots rebuild

President Aoun thanks Kuwait for fueling Lebanon’s recovery

BEIRUT, May 8, (KUNA): Lebanon’s President Joseph Aoun on Wednesday heaped praise on the role of a Kuwait-based fund towards reconstruction efforts in Beirut, saying such aid was instrumental in pushing forward a national recovery process.

Expressing his gratitude for the support of “friendly” Arab nations, singling out the aid given to Beirut by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), the Lebanese president told the visiting Kuwait-based fund’s chief Bader Al-Saad that AFESD has immensely contributed to reconstruction efforts in Lebanon.

In the face of the trying circumstances faced by Lebanon and the region as a whole, he said that he remained “optimistic” that with the aid provided by international bodies, coupled with a spate of national reforms his government has introduced, Beirut would be able to rise again, he underlined.

Describing Kuwait’s ties with Beirut as “deep-rooted,” the AFESD chief said his visit to Lebanon aims to serve as a catalyst towards propping up reconstruction efforts there after a “years-long” halt of such aid, citing the healthcare and education sectors as the ultimate beneficiaries of the renewed support.

He went on to say that the Kuwait-based fund hopes to be the leading aid



Lebanon’s President Joseph Aoun

body operating in Lebanon, saying that a number of development projects are in the works running the gamut from energy and healthcare to infrastructure.

Equally grateful for the Kuwaiti fund’s aid, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said AFESD was among Lebanon’s most integral partners when it comes to development aid, hoping that bilateral cooperation would continue to reach loftier levels.

Kuwait, Lisbon-based center unite for tolerance and peace

MADRID, May 8, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to Portugal Hamad Al-Hazeem and Acting Secretary-General of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) Ambassador Antonio de Almeida-Ribeiro, discussed cooperation between Kuwait and the center.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Hazeem said the meeting, held at KAICIID’s headquarters in Lisbon, focused on the center’s initiatives to promote global religious tolerance and dialogue.

He noted discussions included opportunities for collaboration between Kuwaiti institutions and KAICIID to support religious, social, and humani-

tarian causes.

Ambassador Ribeiro expressed readiness to strengthen cooperation with Kuwait and the Arab region to foster peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and dialogue.

KAICIID, founded in 2011 by Saudi Arabia, Austria, and Spain, with the Vatican as a founding observer, works to promote dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures to prevent conflict and build lasting peace.

Ribeiro, who assumed his post in January, has been honored with several awards from countries including Portugal, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Italy, France, Jordan, and Peru.



KUNA photo

Kuwait University honors Hatton Research Competition winners

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: The Faculty of Dentistry at Kuwait University recently honored the winners of the Hatton Research Competition in the student category for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The competition was organized by the Kuwait branch of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) in the presence of Deputy Director of Faculty of Medical Sciences Dr. Noura Al-Suwaihi, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Dr. Rashed Al-Azmi, Acting Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Dr. Ahmed Al-Sahli, and head of

the Kuwait branch of IADR, along with other faculty members, administrative staff, and participating students.

Dr. Al-Sahli explained that the competition involved several groups of 21 students. First place was secured by Rabab Mohsen, Noura Al-Asimi, and Abdulmohsen Redha, and the second place by Dima Al-Matar, Farah Al-Sabah, Fatima Al-Kandari, Najood Abdullah, and Dima Al-Awadhi.

The winners of the local competition will represent Kuwait at the upcoming International Association for Dental Research’s global competition, which will be held in San Diego, USA, next year.

Kuwait’s oil sector drives push for safer workplaces

Conference stresses cybersecurity urgency in industry

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Minister of Oil representative at the 12th International Conference on Occupational Safety, Health and Cybersecurity and acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Nouf Behbehani has affirmed the commitment of the ministry to provide all the necessary facilities to industrialists as part of the expansion of craft and industrial enterprises supporting the oil sector.

Speaking on the sidelines of the conference organized by the American Society of Occupational Safety and Health Professionals-Kuwait Branch on May 7-8, Behbehani pointed out that EPA Law No. 42/2014 and its amendment, Law No. 99/2015, require all parties to implement health and occupational regulations in newly established industrial facilities in order to obtain professional and preventative accreditation.

She stressed that the authority is striving to facilitate the process of obtaining approvals and accreditation for facilities in accordance with the regulations, indicating EPA has adopted an open-door policy for all professionals and industrialists.

She explained the accreditation for entities seeking to implement quality must take into account occupational health and preventive regulations, while emphasizing the need to provide awareness opportunities for the industrial and oil sectors and all sectors involved in hazardous work.

She praised the role of the conference organizers; considering this a crucial step in keeping up with developments in the fields of security, safety, and protection from fires and disasters.

Moreover, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Safety Professionals Fadel Al-Ali revealed the conference focused on the latest developments in health and safety



Minister of Oil representative Nouf Behbehani inaugurates the 12th International Conference on Occupational Safety, Health and Cybersecurity.

technology and policies, procedures and changes “that make us more determined and committed to implement them.”

He said the conference workshops included stakeholders from governmental and private entities; as well as specialists in health, safety and the environment, with the aim of improving performance and keeping pace with developments.

He added the oil and industrial sectors are the most impacted by security and safety operations. “Therefore, the society focuses on these entities and their participation. The Ministry of Oil and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation are the sponsors of the conference. Challenges are ongoing; hence, the need for joint action to overcome them,” he stressed.

He urged all stakeholders in the oil, industrial and contracting industries to be updated on global requirements and policies, as well as utilize and implement best practices. He said the conference tackled more than 20 working papers, including research on regional and global security and safety issues.

CEO of the American Society of Occupational Safety Professionals - Kuwait Branch Eng. Bader Al-Hadrami stated

that artificial intelligence currently provides valuable opportunities to develop the occupational safety and health systems, including modern mechanisms that help implement requirements quickly.

He added the 12th edition of the conference focuses on diverse experiences, with more than 200 participants, to achieve the greatest possible benefit for those who participate in the workshops and lectures.

He stated that the most difficult challenge is cybersecurity, which has prompted the society to focus on it, based on emerging solutions. He said the discussions set specific standards for measuring the risk index in protection and developing optimal solutions.

Conference Director General Ahmed Ismail said that after 25 years of conference work, this year’s conference seeks to achieve the greatest possible success by discussing the latest developments in the field of health and safety, with the aim of producing the best recommendations that serve participants locally and regionally.

He disclosed that the conference participants include ministries, government agencies, oil sector companies and the

private sector -- all of whom are interested in the fields of health, security, and safety.

He added that the cost of implementing international safety standards is estimated at tens of millions of dollars annually, with the amount varying from one entity to another; depending on the region, entity and surrounding risks. He pointed out that spending on security and safety has increased over the past 10 years, given the heightened focus on these areas.

Occupational Safety Consultant Mansour Fayeze Al-Maghamsi explained that his participation in the exhibition stems from his membership in the American Society of Occupational Safety Professionals.

He also presented a working paper on occupational safety and health management in petroleum refineries, as it is the main pillar for aircraft refueling and other industries.

He said the society boasts of extensive expertise in cybersecurity and other areas needed by many sectors, in addition to providing members and others with the latest developments in the field of occupational health and safety.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait launches

He clarified that the preparation of the plan was based on thorough study and extensive, realistic and scientific analysis that addressed future developments and challenges.

He added the plan was based on leading international practices and defense objectives are in line with national priorities; thereby, achieving integration and effectiveness at the security, defense and development levels.

Editor-in-chief

He pointed out this is a crucial move toward ensuring the sustained viability and competitiveness of Kuwaiti journalism amidst digital transformations and new media platforms.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Mutairi affirmed acknowledgment of the issues raised and commended Al-Jarallah’s contributions to the media landscape; while reaffirming the commitment of the ministry to exert collaborative efforts with media outlets in a bid to advance the contents of Kuwaiti media, strengthen its regional and international position, and build a responsible national media that supports the process of development and renaissance in the country.

Kuwait moves

Article 1 of the draft decree stipulated the replacement of Article 2, requiring the court clerk to notify the defendant of the date of the first hearing. This noti-

cation may be delivered in person, via email, or through any modern electronic means of communication that allows for storage and retrieval, as determined by a decision of the Minister of Justice.

The same article also replaces the text of Article 9. The revised first paragraph now stipulates that low-value lawsuits shall be resolved through a summary judicial ruling. This ruling must include a summary of the case proceedings, the claims made, and the sequence of hearings, while also clearly stating the legal and factual grounds for the ruling. The paragraph concludes by affirming the application of general legal principles, under which judgments in low-value lawsuits are deemed enforceable by nature, as they are final and not subject to appeal, in accordance with Article 192 of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law.

The second paragraph of the amended article introduces a new provision that simplifies the conditions specified in the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, specifically Article 115.

Under that article, a court judgment is not required to include reasoning if three conditions are met: the ruling is issued by the Court of First Instance, it grants all of the plaintiff’s claims, and the defendant, though properly notified, neither appears nor submits a defense memorandum.

Given that these conditions may also apply to low-value lawsuits, and to prevent any potential legal ambiguity, the same principle was incorporated into the second paragraph of Article 9. However, the conditions were eased to reflect the nature of such cases. The paragraph clarifies that providing reasons for the ruling is unnecessary when the case involves

no dispute between the parties and it is evident that the plaintiff is entitled to all requested relief.

Pay up

Under the proposed law, government creditors are required to temporarily suspend services to the debtor if payment is not made within 30 days after receiving a warning notice.

To encourage payment, the suspension will be automatically lifted once the debt is fully settled.

The draft law also allows creditors to offer debt repayment in installments to debtors who cannot pay in full. Service will be suspended by the relevant authority if the installment request is approved. If the debtor fails to pay any installment, the creditor can cancel the plan and initiate legal action to recover the debt.

In addition, the draft law stipulates that any lawsuit filed by the debtor regarding the temporary suspension of services or a dispute over the debt’s validity or amount will not be accepted unless the beneficiary first files a grievance with the relevant ministry, which must resolve it within 30 days of submission.

Hiring halted

In this regard, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) explained that the circular aims to regulate the labor market, ensure compatibility between academic specialization and job roles, and promote equal job opportunities.

The circular, which was published on the PAM’s X account, states that, in

line with procedures regulating academic qualifications and professions approved by PAM, amendments to the academic qualifications or job titles of expatriate workers recruited with work permits or transferred to the private sector are suspended in cases where the requested amendment involves a higher educational level that is not compatible with the nature of the profession for which they were originally hired or transferred.

Kuwait to

Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 39 and 41°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate, with wave heights between two and five feet.

On Friday night, the weather will be warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds ranging from 10 to 35 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to be between 28 and 30°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between two and five feet.

The weather on Saturday during daytime will be hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds occasionally becoming active at speeds between 15 and 50 km/h and raising dust. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 41 and 43°C, and sea conditions will be light to moderate, with wave heights between two and six feet.

Saturday night will be warm, with light to moderate winds shifting from northwesterly to variable directions, ranging between 8 and 32 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 27 and 29°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

Robert Prevost, first American Pope in history of the Catholic Church, will take the name Leo XIV



Newly elected Pope Leo XIV appears at the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, Thursday, May 8, 2025. (AP)

From Chicago roots to Vatican leadership

VATICAN CITY, May 8, (AP): Robert Prevost, a missionary who spent his career ministering in Peru and leads the Vatican’s powerful office of bishops, was elected the first American pope in the 2,000-year history of the Catholic Church.

Prevost, a 69 member of the Augustinian religious order, took the name Leo XIV. He appeared on the loggia of St. Peter’s Square wearing the traditional red cape of the papacy - a cape that Pope Francis had eschewed on his election in 2013.

Prevost had been a leading candidate except for his nationality. There had long been a taboo against a U.S. pope, given the geopolitical power already wielded by the United States in the secular sphere. But Prevost, a Chicago native, was seemingly eligible also because he’s a Peruvian citizen and lived for years in Peru, first as a missionary and then as an archbishop.

Francis clearly had his eye on Prevost and in many ways saw him as his heir apparent. He brought Prevost to the Vatican in 2023 to serve as the powerful head of the office that vets bishop nominations from around the world, one of the most important jobs in the Catholic Church. As a result, Prevost had a prominence going into the conclave that few other cardinals have.

The crowd in St. Peter’s Square erupted in cheers, priests made the sign of the cross and nuns wept as the crowd shouted “Viva il papa!” after the white smoke wafted into the late afternoon sky at 6:07 p.m. Waving flags from around the world, tens of thousands of people waited to learn who had won.

Earlier Thursday, large school groups joined the mix of humanity awaiting the outcome in St. Peter’s Square. They blended in with people participating in preplanned Holy Year pilgrimages and journalists from around the world

who have descended on Rome to document the election.

“The wait is marvelous!” said Priscilla Parlante, a Roman.

Pedro Deget, 22, a finance student from Argentina, said he and his family visited Rome during the Argentine pope’s pontificate and were hoping for a new pope in Francis’ image.

“Francis did well in opening the church to the outside world, but on other fronts maybe he didn’t do enough. We’ll see if the next one will be able to do more,” Deget said from the piazza.

The Rev. Jan Dominik Bogataj, a Slovene Franciscan friar, was more critical of Francis. He said if he were in the Sistine Chapel, he’d be voting for Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem who is on many papal contender lists.

“He has clear ideas, not much ideology. He’s a direct, intelligent and respectful man,” Bogataj said from the square. “Most of all, he’s agile.”

Some of the cardinals had said they expected a short conclave.

For much of the past century, the conclave has needed between three and 14 ballots to find a pope. John Paul I - the pope who reigned for 33 days in 1978 - was elected on the fourth ballot. His successor, John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

The cardinals opened the secretive, centuries-old ritual Wednesday afternoon, participating in a rite more theatrical than even Hollywood could create. Bright red cassocks, Swiss Guards standing at attention, ancient Latin chants and oaths preceded the slamming shut of the Sistine Chapel doors to seal the cardinals off from the outside world.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the 70-year-old secretary of state under Francis and a leading contender to succeed him as pope, assumed leadership of

the proceedings as the most senior cardinal under age 80 eligible to participate.

Parolin seemed to have received the blessings from none other than Re, the respected elder among the cardinals. During the traditional exchange of peace during the pre-conclave Mass on Wednesday, Re was caught on a hot mic telling Parolin “auguri doppio” or “double best wishes.” Italians debated whether it was just a customary gesture acknowledging Parolin’s role running conclave, or if it might have been an informal endorsement or even a premature congratulations.

The voting followed a strict choreography, dictated by church law.

Each cardinal writes his choice on a piece of paper inscribed with the words “Eligo in summen pontificem” - “I elect as supreme pontiff.” They approach the altar one by one and say: “I call as my witness, Christ the Lord who will be my judge, that my vote is given to the one who, before God, I think should be elected.”

The folded ballot is placed on a round plate and tipped into a silver and gold urn. Once cast, the ballots are opened one by one by three different “scrutineers,” cardinals selected at random who write down the names and read them aloud.

The scrutineers, whose work is checked by other cardinals called revisers, then add up the results of each round of balloting and write them on a separate sheet of paper, which is preserved in the papal archives.

As the scrutineer reads out each name, he pierces each ballot with a needle through the word “Eligo.” All the ballots are then bound together with thread, and the bundle is put aside and burned in the chapel stove along with a chemical to produce the smoke.



A mobile home park floods where rising waters of the Little Sugar Creek meet the Ohio River on April 7, in Napoleon, Ky. (AP)

April rainfall in US South, Midwest intensified by warming: scientists

Human-caused climate change intensified deadly rainfall in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and other states in early April and made those storms more likely to occur, according to an analysis released Thursday by the World Weather Attribution group of scientists.

The series of storms unleashed tornadoes, strong winds and extreme rainfall in the central Mississippi Valley region from April 3-6 and caused at least 24 deaths. Homes, roads and vehicles were inundated and 15 deaths were likely caused by catastrophic floods.

The WWA analysis found that climate change increased rainfall intensity in the storms by 9% and made them 40% more likely compared to probability of such events in the pre-industrial age climate.

Some of the moisture that fueled the storms came from the Gulf of Mexico, where water temperatures were abnormally warm by 1.2°C (2.2°F) compared to pre-industrial temperatures. That warming was made 14 times more likely due to climate change, according to the researchers from universities and meteorological agencies in the United States and Europe.

Rapid analyses from the WWA use peer-reviewed methods to study an extreme weather event and distill it down to the factors that caused it. This approach lets scientists analyze which contributing factors had the biggest influence and how the event could have played out in a

world without climate change.

The analysis found a rainfall event in April’s intensity could occur in the central Mississippi Valley region about once every 100 years. Even heavier downpours are expected to hit the region in the future unless the world rapidly slashes emissions of polluting gases such as carbon dioxide and methane that causes temperatures to rise, the study said.

“That one in 100 years ... is likely to go down to once every few decades,” said Ben Clarke, a researcher at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London and the study’s lead author. “If we continue to burn fossil fuels, events like this will not only continue to occur, but they’ll keep getting more dangerous.” (AP)

Trump designates Thursday as day for US to celebrate victory in World War II

WASHINGTON, May 8, (AP): US President Donald Trump has issued a proclamation designating Thursday as a day for the United States to celebrate victory in World War II as countries in Europe already do.

Cities from London to Moscow are holding parades, flyovers and memorials this week as the world observes Thursday’s 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, when Nazi Germany surrendered to Allied forces, including the US.

The Republican president is designating specific days for the US to celebrate being on the winning side in World War I and World War II. He complained in recent social media posts that Americans don’t spend enough time celebrating those achievements, which he said wouldn’t have been possible without the US.

“Many of our allies and friends are celebrating May 8th as Victory Day, but we did more than any other Country, by far, in producing a victorious result on World War II. I am hereby renaming May 8th as Victory Day for World War II and November 11th as Victory Day for World War I,” he said last week on social media. “We won both Wars, nobody was close to us in terms of strength, bravery, or military brilliance, but we never celebrate anything - That’s because we don’t have leaders anymore, that know how to do so! We are going to start celebrating our victories again!”

No. Nov. 11 is already Veterans Day, a federal holiday in the US, and only Congress can create, rename or take it back. That could explain why Trump backed away from his “renaming” plan and said he’d instead be “de-



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after David Perdue was sworn in as US Ambassador to China during a ceremony in the Oval Office of the White House on May 7, in Washington. (AP)

of World War I, where the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, and World War II, where the Victory date was May 8, 1945.”

He signed a proclamation on Wednesday that designates May 8, 2025, as a “day in celebration of Victory Day for World War II.” He’s expected to issue a similar proclamation for World War I later this year.

No, Thursday is not a federal holiday and therefore not a day off from work. Only Congress can create federal holidays, and Trump has complained that there already are too many of them.

It’s unclear. Trump didn’t say what he envisions happening, and the proclamation didn’t include any details. But he said during an unrelated appearance Wednesday in the Oval Office that he noticed France and other countries were “all getting ready for Victory Day.”

“We don’t celebrate it and I think that’s a great disservice,” Trump said.

On major anniversaries like this year’s 80th, Britain celebrates VE Day with parades, airplane flyovers and memorials. The British royal family traditionally watches the airplanes pass overhead from a balcony at Buckingham Palace.

Russia celebrates on Friday, and its Victory Day parades are a massive show of its armed forces, with thousands of troops, scores of heavy equipment rolling across Red Square and flyovers involving dozens of warplanes. Military parades, fireworks and other festivities are held in cities across the country.

Rob Couture, director of public affairs for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said they are encouraged by any steps that “bring attention to the service of veterans from that time.”

INTERNATIONAL

Australian PM to visit Indonesia in first overseas trip since re-election

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 8, (AP): Australia’s newly re-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Wednesday he would visit Indonesia next a week to underscore a key bilateral relationship.

Albanese said he would meet with President Prabowo Subianto on May 14, a day after his new government is sworn in.

“That is ... a signal to our region of the importance that we place on this region. We will in the fastest growing region of the world in human history,” Albanese said in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Albanese described Subianto as a “good friend of mine on a personal level as well as our countries being close.”

“We have no more important relationship than Indonesia. We have an important economic relationship with them. They will grow to be the fourth largest economy in the world. We have an important defense and security relationship with them as well,” Albanese said.

Albanese’s center-left Labor Party won a second three-year term in an emphatic election victory on Saturday.

Newly-elected Australian prime ministers typically make their first bilateral visit to Asia, usually Indonesia. But Albanese’s election rival Peter Dutton, leader of the conservative opposition, had proposed breaking from tradition by making his first overseas trip as prime minister to the United States to strike a better tariff deal with President Donald Trump.

Australia was hit during the election campaign with a global-minimum 10% tariff on exports to the U.S. despite trading with its bilateral free trade partner at a deficit for



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese walks from his office for a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia on May 5. (AP)

decades.

Media reports last month that Russia had told Jakarta it wanted to base long-range warplanes in Papua, the most eastern Indonesian province, were also raised as a security issue during the election campaign. Indonesia has told Australia that no such Russian base would be allowed.

Cementing Australia’s bilateral relationship with Indonesia is critical, according to Natalie Sambhi, a policy expert with the Sydney-based Asia Society Australia educational institute.

Taiwan marks 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day by highlighting threats from China

TAIPEI, Taiwan, May 8, (AP): Taiwan marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day on Thursday by making broad comparisons to threats from China, whose leader Xi Jinping was in Russia for commemorations as Moscow continues its invasion of Ukraine.

“Peace is priceless, and war has no winners. History has taught us that no matter the driving reason or ideology, military aggression against another country is an unjust crime that is bound to fail,” Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te told diplomats in Taipei.

“Authoritarianism and aggression lead only to slaughter, tragedy, and greater inequality,” he added.

Turning more directly to China’s threats, Lai said that both Taiwan and Europe were “now facing the threat of a new authoritarian bloc.”

“We are seeing our decades-old undersea cables, crucial for communications and cybersecurity, being sabotaged. We are seeing external interference in our elections, crucial for healthy democratic development, through the spread of misinformation and disinformation, sowing intentional division in society. We are seeing our fair, free and open international rules-based markets being tested by all manner of gray-zone activities, dumping, pressures and intrusions,” Lai said.

Lai’s remarks came during Taiwan’s first-ever official commemoration of VE Day and at a time when Taiwan is making a diplomatic push for closer ties with fellow democracies that nevertheless have no formal ties with the island in deference to Beijing. Former President Tsai Ing-wen is visiting Lithuania and Denmark from Friday, while Foreign Affairs Minister Lin Chia-lung is visiting Texas.



In this photo released by the Taiwan Presidential Office, Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te delivers a speech at the 80th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of Victory in Europe at Taipei Guest House, in Taipei on May 8. (AP)

China fought alongside the Allies in Asia during World War II and received some military assistance from the then-USSR.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory to be annexed by force if necessary and says it has no right to international recognition. Just 12 countries, mostly small island nations in the South Pacific and Caribbean, have official diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

Lai said that those who cherish peace “cannot sit idly by and allow aggression.”

Ex-ally calls Colombian prez drug ‘addict’

Petro warns of plot to remove him

BOGOTA, Colombia, May 8, (AP): Colombian President Gustavo Petro has said that an “international plot” to oust him from office is underway after his former foreign minister accused him of being a drug “addict” for the second time in three weeks.

Alvaro Leyva published a seven-page letter on the social platform X calling for Petro’s resignation and alleging that he is “dependent on substances that affect emotional and mental equilibrium.”

Petro, who was elected in 2022 and has a year left in office, vehemently denied the accusation during a speech in Bogota, saying he is a “revolutionary” who will not be “enslaved” by drugs.

Leyva, a seasoned politician and former presidential candidate, first leveled the accusation against Petro in a letter published April 22, in which he said the president “went missing” for two days during a state visit to Paris and attributed that to purported drug use. Petro replied that he had taken time off to visit relatives in France.

Leyva doubled down, saying Petro also failed to show up at meetings during a 2023 visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as well



Colombian President Gustavo Petro addresses supporters outside Congress in Bogotá, Colombia on May 1, before presenting questions for a referendum on his labor reform proposal to the Senate after two failed attempts in the legislature. (AP)

as a high-profile visit to Chile’s Supreme Court while on an official trip to that country.

“You must recognize, President,

that your disappearances and inexplicable behaviors are the result of your sickly condition” Leyva said in the new letter. “The president of Colombia, the country of coca, has fallen into the trap of vice.”

Petro’s unpredictable schedule and unexplained absences from official events have long been a source of debate, with the Colombian opposition accusing him of being erratic and unreliable.

On multiple occasions lawmakers have urged Petro, who once said in a televised Cabinet meeting that cocaine “is no worse than whiskey,” to undergo medical examination to prove he is not consuming illegal substances.

Also Tuesday, Sen. Miguel Uribe drafted a petition calling on the Senate to create a commission of three medical specialists who can investigate Petro’s health and help determine whether he “has a permanent physical incapacity,” a move that could eventually lead to his removal from office.

The petition has not been discussed on the Senate floor so far.

Petro said the opposition and Leyva, a former ally, are out to oust him and called it “an attempt to undermine Colombia’s sovereignty, its democracy and the freedom of Colombians.”



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)

financial aid has been suspended since the eruption of war between army and paramilitary forces.

The chief of the Sudanese National Mine Action Center (NMAC) said the center needs approximately USD 90 million in aid this year, while the donors have only pledged a total of USD 10 million.

He explained that though the center has no accurate statistics of mines and ERWs, its field teams have so far managed to detonate more than 13,000 OUX shells, prepared 4,000 others for detonation and handled over 37,000 small munitions, in Omdurman, the western part of the capital.

North Korea fires several missiles toward eastern waters, says South Korea



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea’s missile launch during a news program at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on May 8. (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea, May 8, (Agencies): North Korea on Thursday fired various types of short-range ballistic missiles into its eastern sea, South Korea’s military said, adding to a run in military displays that raised animosities in the region. South Korean military officials were analyzing whether the tests were linked to the North’s weapons exports to Russia during its war in Ukraine.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said multiple missiles were launched from the area around the eastern port city of Wonsan from about 8:10 to 9:20 am, with the farthest traveling about 800 kilometers (497 miles). It didn’t immediately confirm the exact number of the missiles it detected.

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs, said in a briefing the North Korean launches were possibly intended to test the performance of weapons it plans to export, as the country continues to send military equipment and troops to fuel Russia’s warfighting against Ukraine.

Lee said the tests likely involved a short-range ballistic missile system launched from vehicles - possibly modeled after Russia’s Iskander missile - and also larger-caliber rocket artillery systems, which experts say blur the line between traditional artillery and ballistic systems due to their self-propulsion and guided flight.

The Joint Chiefs said South Korea and US intelligence authorities detected the launch preparations in advance and tracked the missiles after they were launched. The countries were sharing the launch information with Japan, the Joint Chiefs said. It issued a statement denouncing the launches as a “clear act of provocation” that threatens peace and stability in the region.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani told reporters that none of the North Korean missiles reached Japan’s exclusive economic zone and there was no damage to vessels or aircraft in the area. Nakatani said Japan’s government “sternly protested and strongly condemned” the launches through the North Korean

embassy in Beijing.

It was the North’s first known ballistic activity since March 10, when it fired several ballistic missiles hours after US and South Korean troops began an annual combined military exercise, and the country’s sixth launch event of the year.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated in recent months as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un continues to accelerate the development of his nuclear and missile program and supply weapons and troops to support Russia’s war against Ukraine.

Thursday’s launch came a day after North Korean state media said Kim urged munition workers to boost the production of artillery shells amid his deepening alignment with Moscow.

After denying its war involvement for months, North Korea last month confirmed for the first time that it had sent combat troops to help Russia in recapturing parts of the Kursk region, which had fallen to a surprise Ukrainian incursion last year. Moscow also acknowledged the North Korean involvement, with Russian President Vladimir Putin issuing a statement thanking the North for sending troops to support his forces and promising not to forget their sacrifices.

Meanwhile, a UN official has warned that North Korea’s intensifying its nuclear and missile program was a blatant violation of the international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Khaled Khari, Assistant Secretary General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, expressed concern in a statement before the UNSC late Wednesday over North Korea’s growing nuclear ambition and its ballistic missile tests. He said Pyongyang was determined to develop nuclear and missile capabilities, including tactical nuclear warheads, military satellites and building nuclear-powered submarines. North Korea’s desire to acquire nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program was “undermining” international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, he said.



Paramilitary soldiers stand guard as investigators collect pieces of a suspected Indian drone at the site of a drone crash in Karachi, Pakistan on May 8. (AP)

Fears of wider military confrontation rise

India, Pakistan trade fire and accusations

LAHORE, Pakistan, May 8, (AP): India fired attack drones into Pakistan on Thursday, wounding four soldiers, the Pakistani military said. India, meanwhile, accused its neighbor of attempting its own attack, as tensions soared between the nuclear-armed rivals.

India acknowledged that it targeted Pakistan’s air defense system, and Islamabad said it shot down several of the drones. India said it “neutralized” Pakistan’s attempts to hit military targets. It was not possible to verify all of the claims.

The back and forth came a day after Indian missiles struck several locations in Pakistan, killing 31 civilians, according to Pakistani officials. New Delhi said it was retaliating after gunmen killed 26 people, mostly Hindu tourists, in India-controlled Kashmir last month. India accused Pakistan of

being behind the assault. Islamabad denies that.

The two sides have also traded heavy fire across their frontier in disputed Kashmir, and Pakistan claimed it killed scores of Indian soldiers. There was no confirmation from India.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed to avenge the deaths in India’s missile strikes, raising fears that the two countries could be headed toward another all-out conflict. Leaders from both nations face mounting public pressure to show strength and seek revenge, and the heated rhetoric and competing claims could be a response to that pressure.

The relationship between countries has been shaped by conflict and mutual suspicion, most notably in their dispute over Kashmir. They have fought two

of their three wars over the Himalayan region, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

With tensions high, India evacuated thousands of people from villages near the highly militarized frontier in the region. Tens of thousands of people slept in shelters overnight, officials and residents said Thursday. About 2,000 villagers also fled their homes in Pakistani-administered Kashmir.

Mohammad Itfikhkar boarded a vehicle with his family on Thursday as heavy rain lashed the region. “I am helplessly leaving my home for the safety of my children and wife,” he said.

India fired several Israeli-made Harop drones at Pakistan overnight and into Thursday afternoon, according to Pakistani army spokesman Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif.

Lat/Am

Puerto Rico governor under fire: Puerto Rico’s Governor **Jennifer González**,

came under fire as her pledge to support the investment of millions of federal dollars in solar projects across the US territory appeared to fade.

More than a week has passed since the US Department of Energy missed a deadline to finalize contracts worth \$365 million that would see battery-operated solar systems installed at health clinics and public housing units in Puerto Rico.

Since last month, the department has not been in communication with those awarded the



González

grants, including the nonprofit Hispanic Federation. “There’s been deathly silence,” said Javier Rúa Jovet, public policy director for Puerto Rico’s Solar and Energy Storage Association. (AP)

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Thousands march in Panama: Thousands of Panamanians marched in the capital in the largest protest yet against an agreement signed during last month’s visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth giving US troops access to strategic air and naval facilities in the Central American nation.

US President Donald Trump thrust Panama into the spotlight even before winning election last November by suggesting that his country should consider retaking control of the Panama Canal and accusing Panama of ceding influence to China. Panama has vehemently rejected those comments but also tried to pacify the new administration, which has slapped tariffs on many trade partners. (AP)

Kuwait oil up \$1.97 to \$64.05 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 8, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil rose USD 1.97 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 64.05 per barrel compared with USD 62.08 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures dropped USD 1.03 to USD 61.12 pb and West Texas Intermediate lost USD 1.02 to USD 58.07 pb.

Business

Workshop supports Zain's '4WARD' strategy for digital innovation and growth

Zain Group's Data Office holds workshop on the enormous potential and deployment of AI strategies across the mobile and ICT industry



The Datathon winning team.



Participants in a group picture.

AMMAN, May 8: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle services operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, concluded a captivating 'Data and AI' three-day workshop, organized by Zain Group Technology's Data Office team in partnership with Cloudera and ZainTECH, Zain's digital enterprise arm, held last week in Amman, Jordan.

A key element of Zain's Group Technology department, the Data Office team has firmly established itself as an AI and Digital Innovation leader by embedding world-class data governance practices and analytics to the heart of Zain's business across the organization.

The Forum represented a unique opportunity for Zain's data-focused talent groupwide to collaboratively discuss and elevate innovation and deployment issues related to digital data and AI capabilities, given the growing importance of these technological advancements across all industries, globally.

The intention of the workshop was to accelerate the adoption of data and AI in accordance with Zain's '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy, with a particular emphasis on the 'Customer Delight' and 'Digital Zain' pillars.

Participants interacted with industry experts and thought leaders, gaining valuable insights into current trends and best practices in data and AI implementation that enhance innovation and improve customer experiences throughout Zain's digital ecosystem. This is set to be achieved through the further development of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerg-

ing technologies, and building out digital infrastructure further.

Mohammad Al-Marshed, Zain Group Chief Technology Officer commented, "AI's ability to rapidly and accurately analyze massive amounts of data has resulted as the latest driving force in many industries, transforming and increasing efficiency on how tasks are undertaken, and decisions are made. This Forum provided our Data Office focused teams at Group and operations the opportunity to understand the true potential of AI across industries and jointly devise strategies with Cloudera and ZainTECH on how to best deploy and monetize it. Zain is serious on driving innovation, improving customer experience and helping business users make the right decisions."

The first day of the Forum focused on theoretical and strategic insights, featuring keynotes, industry trends, and platform overviews, notably learnings of Cloudera's latest advanced AI tools and models. The second day involved hands-on collaboration Datathon exercise, with teams working in breakout groups to develop real-world use cases. The third day was dedicated to showcasing outcomes, as teams presented their solutions to industrial challenges to a judging panel, reinforcing the forum's emphasis on practical application, innovation, and cross-regional synergy.

The winning team of the Datathon completed the entire process, from brainstorming a business use case to demonstrating its value and deploying it, incredibly under 48 hours, all while utilizing Cloudera Agent Studio.

The occasion also saw Zain Group Strategy executives present the

groupwide Data and AI strategy to attendees which forms a key pillar of the company's '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy.

Cloudera is the only truly hybrid platform for data, analytics, and AI, and is deployed across all Zain's operations. With 100x more data under management than other cloud-only vendors, Cloudera empowers global enterprises to transform data of all types, on any public or private cloud, into valuable, trusted insights. The company's open data lakehouse delivers scalable and secure data management with portable cloud-native analytics, enabling customers to bring GenAI models to their data while maintaining privacy and ensuring responsible, reliable AI deployments.

Within Zain, AI is being used to optimize network performance, personalize customer experiences, and predict equipment failures before they occur, among other things. This has led to higher service quality, less downtime, and overall cost savings for Zain, contributing to business growth and enhancing competitiveness in an ever-changing market.

Through its strategic partnership with Cloudera, Zain's Data Office in collaboration with ZainTECH, has been able to eliminate data silos and is taking a holistic approach to analysis across the organization. By standardizing a Data Management framework, facilitating data literacy initiatives, and enforcing data stewardship, Zain's Data Office team fosters a data culture throughout the company that effectively drives innovation, business efficiency and utilization of customer-centric services across Zain.

Boursa Kuwait ends Thurs on positive note, up 0.04%

Main 50 index rises 0.39%

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's trading session on a positive note, with the general index inching up 3.60 points, or 0.04 percent, to settle at 8,010.75 points.

Market activity saw a total of 375.2 million shares exchanged in 22,055 cash transactions, generating a turnover of KD 94.5 million (approximately \$289.17 million).

The Main Market Index recorded a stronger gain, climbing 14.55 points

(0.21 percent) to 6,967.83 points, driven by the trade of 222.4 million shares in 10,831 transactions valued at KD 33 million (\$100.9 million).

The Premier Market Index inched up by 1.05 points, or 0.01 percent, closing at 8,666.80 points, with 152.8 million shares changing hands through 11,224 deals, totaling KD 61.5 million (\$188.19 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index advanced 28 points, or 0.39 percent, to finish at 7,197.26 points. The index saw 200.7 million shares traded across 9,095 transactions worth KD 29.7 million (\$90.8 million).

'Mulim' program boosts financial literacy

GCC Chief emphasizes importance of smart investment at award ceremony

RIYADH, May 8, (KUNA): Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said that "Gulf Smart Investor Award" is a message to society that smart investment begins with knowledge, is enhanced through planning, and flourishes within a healthy and aware financial environment.

This statement was made on Wednesday during his patronage of the 3rd edition of the Gulf Smart Investor Award ceremony, which is one of the initiatives of the Gulf Investment Awareness Program "Mulim", which was attended by Chairman of the Board of the Saudi Capital Market Authority Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Kuwaiz, along with a number of officials from the GCC countries, in the city of Riyadh.

At the beginning of his address, Al-Budaiwi expressed his utmost gratitude, appreciation, and recognition to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and to the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's patronage of this award, and for the facilities and support extended to ensure the success of the Council's work.

Moreover, His Excellency acknowledged the support and attention given to joint Gulf efforts by them and the leaders of the GCC countries.

Furthermore, Al-Budaiwi expressed his pride and honor in the initiatives of the "Mulim" program for investment awareness in the GCC countries, recognizing its pivotal role in promoting financial literacy and raising investment awareness among individuals and Gulf societies.

"Instead, it has become a protective

shield and an essential necessity for anyone seeking financial security and sustainable growth. Anchoring the foundations of financial awareness in our society serves as the cornerstone for building a secure and stable financial future, not only at the individual level but for the entire societal structure," said Al-Budaiwi.

He affirmed that this awareness empowers individuals to make informed and conscious financial decisions, contributing to the efficient management of their resources and directing them towards optimal choices.

Additionally, he mentioned that the Gulf financial markets witnessed positive performance in the past year, reflecting the strength of the economic structures in the GCC countries.

"The total market value of the Gulf financial markets exceeded approximately USD 4.2 trillion by the end of 2024. The same year also saw an increase in both the number of shares traded and the value of trading; with 336.3 billion shares traded, an increase of 20.9 percent compared to the number of shares traded in 2023.

"The value of shares traded during 2024 amounted to approximately USD 682.2 billion, an increase of 28.4 percent compared to the previous year. This reflects the confidence of local and international investors in our countries' economies and underscores the importance of investing in spreading awareness and enhancing financial literacy to preserve the gains that have been achieved," he noted.

Al-Budaiwi concluded his speech by reiterating his thanks and appreciation to the Capital Market Authority in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its patronage and annual hosting of this award, and to its partners in this purposeful initiative.

Why most EMEA emerging markets are slow to adopt bank recovery and resolution plans

By S&P Global Ratings

S&P Global Ratings expects most emerging markets (EMs) in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) to continue to take a cautious approach in the adoption of resolution regimes for banks. As members of the G20, three EMs--Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Türkiye--have endorsed the resolution standards, and South Africa has already made the move.

Resolution planning considers what happens if a systemically important bank fails to recover--that is, if it becomes nonviable. At this stage, it consists of regulators identifying the best approach to stabilize the institution and how to avoid contagion to other parts of the financial system while winding down the unviable segments of the business.

However, some of the EMs that were among the first adopters of international regulations (such as Basel II and III, for example) are still dragging on implementation of a resolution regime, and in our view, the implications for their banking systems could be significant.

As part of South Africa's resolution planning, the Financial Laws Amendment Act was signed into law in 2021. The law enhanced the South Africa Reserve Bank's (SARB) power as the resolution authority, established the Corporation for Deposit Insurance (CODI), and introduced legal mechanisms for bail-ins, allowing creditors to bear losses, among other amendments. CODI went into effect in 2024 and provided retail insurance deposit coverage of up to South African rand (ZAR)100,000 (about \$5,500) per account. Subsequently, the SARB published the final prudential standard for first loss after capital (FLAC) instrument requirements for designated institutions, which comes into effect in January 2026.

Saudi Arabia has published its law for systemically important financial institutions in 2020, but the implementing acts are still being developed. The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) circulated a draft of the regulation in August 2023 for public consultation. To our knowledge, there was no significant progress since then.

In Türkiye, reforms are under development, but the timeline of adoption remains unclear. A few other countries have also looked at the standard for potential adoption. Oman has published its resolution framework but did not request banks to set aside an additional loss absorbing capital buffer.

Finally, Georgia is another country that decided to adopt a resolution regime. The country has already introduced legislation to create a resolution fund and introduced a minimum for own funds and eligible liabilities (MREL) for the three systemically important banks of the country. It has also dedicated resources to the Resolution and Liquidation Division within the central bank and is in the process of putting the resolution framework into effect.

Why Emerging Markets Are Proving Cautious

We see three main reasons behind the cautious approach of most EMs in adopting resolution regimes.

Financial stability concerns could arise

This is particularly true for countries with a strong track record of government support to prevent banking failure or systemic crises. If they were to move to resolution regimes, they would most likely close the door to such support, potentially providing scope for the emergence of financial stability concerns. In emerging markets in EMEA, we assess seven countries as either highly supportive or supportive of their banking systems.

Specifically, we assess four out of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as highly supportive toward their banking systems. In Oman and Bahrain, we consider the authorities' capacity to support their banking system as weaker than that of the other GCC countries and therefore we do not incorporate any rating uplift in our ratings of systemically important banks in these two countries.

For the four others, we believe any change in government support expectations might have some negative impact on depositors' and investors' perception of risks. For a long time, investors and depositors perceived government support as a stabilizing factor for banks' creditworthiness, given the strong balance sheets of some of these governments and the strong track record of support provision when it was needed.

The most recent demonstration of such support was when Qatar was boycotted by some of its neighbors, leading to external funding outflows for Qatar in excess of \$20 billion that were replaced by local funding from the government and its related entities in excess of \$40 billion. This also explains the significant external debt that the Qatari banking system maintains and its relative stability through episodes of increased capital market volatility.

Adopting resolution regimes could increase the volatility of a portion of this external debt, particularly if external creditors perceive that such a move would result in a lower likelihood of support from the government. Therefore, managing the narratives around the move will be important.

Capital market depth and costs

With resolution regimes, banks are typically required to build or maintain a substantial additional buffer of instruments that can be used to absorb losses or recapitalize the bank beyond their capital requirement. These are long-term debt instruments sourced from local or international capital markets.

In the broader context of emerging markets in EMEA, only South Africa has a broad and deep local capital market that could absorb such issuance. For all the other markets, the issuance of capital market instruments is either happening in foreign currency--for example, in the Gulf where local currencies are pegged to the U.S. dollar--or not happening at all. In our view, many EM banking systems have limited access to international capital markets. As such, even if regulators were to require additional loss-absorbing buffers, sourcing these instruments might prove challenging unless the authorities start by developing local capital markets.

The cost related to building the additional loss-absorbing buffer is also another key con-

sideration, particularly as EM banking systems are typically sufficiently funded by deposits. Finally, raising these instruments on the international capital markets may increase banks' exposure to foreign currency risk, particularly for countries with unstable currencies.

Evolving local regulation and standards

Most of the banking systems and business models in EMs in EMEA are generally simple. Banks remain at the heart of financial intermediation in most of these countries, raising deposits on the one hand and recycling the money in local lending and government paper on the other.

For many of them, we see significant weaknesses either in banking regulation and supervision or the quality of governance and transparency within the banking system. In fact, we assess the institutional framework of 35% of the 23 EMEA EM jurisdictions as extremely high risk.

However, some regulators are also relatively more advanced in their supervision frameworks and approaches. For example, in the GCC, all the banking systems have adopted Basel III with relatively stringent requirements on the capital side. South Africa is another country where the Prudential Authority (PA) has been an early adopter of global best practices.

Countries like Tunisia and Iraq, however, are lagging. For Tunisia, banks continue to report their capital adequacy ratios under outdated standards, and we view the system as significantly undercapitalized. To their credit, in their 2016 banking law, the authorities created a framework for bank resolution that was tested in 2022 with the resolution of Banque Franco Tunisienne, a very small institution that had financial difficulties for a long time. Iraq is another example where large banks are reportedly undercapitalized.

Some countries, such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, are implementing reforms to improve the quality of their regulation and supervision. For others, the lack of transparency, the volatile institutional landscape, and political interference are among the factors that shape our assessment. Therefore, we expect that for the majority of these countries and where no legal resolution framework exists, regulators will continue to use ad hoc solutions to face any banking crisis. In some countries, for example, banks are allowed to operate while in breach of the minimum capital adequacy requirements for a prolonged period. Also, in some countries, the legal framework that allows the regulators to intervene and take direct action for banks facing difficulties may need some strengthening.

Why Recovery Matters

Recovery planning's main goal is to enable banks to restore their creditworthiness through specific actions prior to the need of a bailout from the authorities. Recovery would typically take the form of recapitalization or other restructuring, such as asset sales. As such, it is relevant way for any bank to improve resilience.

Making a bank truly resolvable is a long process. Regulators use their authority to force banks to remedy any barriers to an effective resolution, such as obliging banks to enhance their bail-in buffers to facilitate recapitalization and organizational changes.

High-for-longer interest rates remain a damper on credit growth

Kuwait: Fastest business credit growth in three years drives credit expansion in Q1

By National Bank of Kuwait

In continuation of the trend seen in late 2024, domestic credit growth was solid in Q1 (+1.6%), driving up the y/y increase to 4.4%. Growth was mostly driven by business credit, which expanded by 2.6% q/q, the fastest quarterly growth in three years while household credit growth was uninspiring. Given the Fed’s wait-and-see approach, the high-for-longer interest rates remain a damper on credit growth, especially household, but a game changer will be the possible approval of a housing finance law. Business credit can continue benefiting from the overall improving trend in project awards as seen in 2023-2024 and expected for 2025 despite a relatively soft Q1. However, if the weakness in oil prices (Brent down by around 25% from a recent high) is sustained, that will be a headwind for credit growth going forward.

Within business lending, YTD growth has been broad-based with ‘trade’ (+5%) and ‘other services’ (+2.9%) in the lead. The heavyweight real estate sector continued its solid recovery, growing by the fastest quarterly rate in three years while the oil/gas sector displayed some early signs of a recovery after three consecutive annual drops. On the other hand, ‘construction’, after surging by a CAGR of 16% over 2022-2024, has taken a breather in the last two quarters, with y/y growth falling to 5%. For project awards, while Q1

Table 1: Credit growth						Table 2: Deposit growth					
Credit	Mar-2025	% growth				Deposits	Mar-2025	% growth			
	KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2024		KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2024
Business	24.7	2.6	2.6	4.9	4.0	Private sector	39.8	2.0	2.0	4.3	4.5
of which Real Estate	10.4	2.5	2.5	6.4	5.7	of which Time dep.	22.9	2.3	2.3	8.5	8.5
Household	19.4	0.4	0.4	3.1	3.0	of which CASA dep.	15.1	2.4	2.4	-0.3	-1.1
Securities	3.8	0.7	0.7	9.1	9.5	Public Institutions	6.6	0.2	0.2	-3.5	-2.3
Banks & financial instit.	2.3	3.7	3.7	2.6	-3.0	Government	4.7	-4.2	-4.2	0.8	5.7
Total domestic credit	50.2	1.6	1.6	4.4	3.6	Total resident dep.	51.1	1.1	1.1	2.9	3.6
Non-resident credit	7.8	0.1	0.1	21.0	31.9	Non-resident deposits	4.1	21.9	21.9	1.9	-22.2
Total credit	58.0	1.4	1.4	6.4	6.7	Total deposits	55.1	2.4	2.4	2.9	1.5

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

was much weaker sequentially, that followed two very strong quarters and is also partly due to seasonality with y/y growth very high, but from a low base. Meanwhile, household credit growth was lackluster, standing at 0.4% q/q. However, we note that in both 2023 and 2024, household credit was much stronger in the second half of the year than in the first half. For example, more than 70% of the 2024 growth occurred in the second half. The weakness has been more in loans for consumer durables, which have dropped for four straight months and are down 1.2% q/q while housing loans are up 0.6% q/q.

Private-sector deposits drive overall growth in Q1 as government deposits remain weak

Resident deposits inched up in Q1 with y/y growth at 2.9%. This was driven by private-sector deposits (78% of total deposits), which increased by 2% q/q (4.3% y/y). The weakness in government deposits continued, as they fell for the second straight quarter with y/y growth barely positive after being in double digits for most of the past three years. If the weakness in oil prices sustains, government deposits may come under further pressure. Within private-sector KD deposits, CASA trends continued to improve, and are up by 2.4% YTD, in line with growth in time deposits. We note that non-resident deposits (7% of total deposits), after falling for three straight years (down a sharp 22% in 2024), made a come-back surging by

22% (KD 728 million) q/q.

Fed in a wait-and-see mode; high-for-longer interest rates delivers softer-than-hoped boost to credit growth

The Central Bank of Kuwait, unsurprisingly, cut rates (25 bps) by less than the Fed (100 bps) since the start of the easing cycle in September. And while the futures market currently indicates a cumulative 75-100 basis points cut by the Fed by year-end, this looks aggressive to us. Given the high tariff-related uncertainty and the opposing forces on the Fed’s dual mandate, the latter remains in a wait-and-see mode, indicating a high-for-longer outlook for interest rates, and consequently softer-than-hoped support to credit growth.

US trade deficit hits record high

Businesses, consumers try to get ahead of Trump tariffs

NEW YORK, May 8, (AP): The U.S. trade deficit soared to a record \$140.5 billion in March as consumers and businesses alike tried to get ahead of President Donald Trump’s latest and most sweeping tariffs - with federal data showing an enormous stockpiling of pharmaceutical products.

The deficit - which measures the gap between the value of goods and services the U.S. sells abroad against what it buys - has roughly doubled over the last year. In March 2024, Commerce Department records show, that gap was just under \$68.6 billion.

According to federal data released on Tuesday, U.S. exports for goods and services totaled about \$278.5 billion in March, while imports climbed to nearly \$419 billion. That’s up \$500 million and \$17.8 billion, respectively, from February trade.

Consumer goods led the imports surge - increasing by \$22.5 billion in March. And pharmaceutical products in particular climbed \$20.9 billion, the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis noted, signaling that drug-makers sought to get ahead of Trump’s threats to slap tariffs on the sector.

“While we had known consumer goods accounted for the bulk of March’s rise, we can now see pharmaceutical products were \$20 billion higher - almost all of which were imported from Ireland,” analysts at Oxford Economics wrote in a Tuesday research note. “Uncertainty remains high, and broader signs of front-loading may be visible in coming months.”



Shipping containers are seen ready for transport at the Guangzhou Port in the Nansha district in southern China’s Guangdong province, April 17, 2025. (AP)

Because pharma accounted for so much of this surge, the big rise in imports doesn’t necessarily mean other sectors used March to stockpile in the same way. Retailers, for example, may not have bought as many clothes, toys and furniture from abroad - perhaps because they were already feeling the effects of previously-implemented levies, some analysts say, or because they decided to hold off on rushing in new inventory amid uncertainty.

Either way, this may signal supply challenges down the road - with shoppers potentially seeing barer shelves for products that run out of inventory in the coming months.

Still, imports of “capital goods,”

like computers, as well as automotive parts and cars, also increased in March. But industrial supplies and materials, such as metal and crude oil coming into the U.S., fell - notably as steel and aluminum tariffs and other levies impacting energy took effect. And service-based imports like travel also decreased.

Overall, imports are flooding into the U.S. for products that have - or rather, are feared to soon be - caught in the crosshairs of the ongoing trade wars. Since taking office in January, Trump has threatened and imposed a series of steep tariffs. Much of March, in particular, was filled with anticipation and uncertainty leading up to what

the president called “Liberation Day” on April 2, when he announced new import taxes on nearly all of America’s trading partners. With the exception of China, higher tariff rates for many countries have since been postponed - but other sweeping levies remain.

The White House insists that new tariffs will help close long-standing trade deficits (the U.S. hasn’t sold the rest of the world more than it’s bought since 1975), reinvigorate manufacturing in America and generate government revenue. But economists are warning of significant consequences for businesses, households and economies worldwide under the rates that Trump has proposed.

BoE cuts main interest rate by 0.25% to 4.25% in face of US tariff uncertainty

LONDON, May 8, (AP): The Bank of England cut its main interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point to 4.25% amid concerns over the potential shock to global growth emanating from the tariff policies of the Trump administration.

The decision Thursday was widely expected, though there was an array of opinion on the nine-member Monetary Policy Committee, with two voting for a bigger half-point cut to 4%, and two voting to hold rates.

Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey said inflationary pressures have continued to ease, paving the way for the rate cut.

“The past few weeks have shown how unpredictable the global economy can be,” he said. “That’s why we need to stick to a gradual and careful approach to further rate cuts. Ensuring low and stable inflation is our top priority.”

The decision comes ahead of a trade deal between the U.S. and the U.K., which will likely lower the burden of President Donald Trump’s sweeping tariffs.

Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that a deal due to be announced at 10 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT) will be a “full and comprehensive one that will cement the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom for many years to come.”

The imposition of U.S. tariffs on British goods, and the potential for a U.S.-China trade war in particular, has the potential to weigh on global growth.

Though most tariffs were paused for 90 days following the ensuing market turmoil, including the 10% baseline tariff applied to U.K. goods entering the U.S., the backdrop for the global economy remains highly uncertain.

The imposition of U.S. tariffs on British goods, and the potential for a U.S.-China trade war in particular, has the potential to weigh on growth as well as oil prices, which would consequently depress price pressures by lowering demand.

Though U.K. inflation stands at 2.6% and could well hit double the bank’s target rate of 2% in coming months as a result of a raft of price increases in April, such as domestic energy and water bills, economists

think rate-setters will opt for a cut, given the anticipated slowdown.

Unlike the Bank of England, and the European Central Bank, which last month cut interest rates too, the U.S. Federal Reserve kept rates unchanged Wednesday as its policymakers wait to see how Trump’s tariffs affect the U.S. economy before making any moves.

Inflation rates around the world are way down from levels seen a couple of years ago, partly because central banks dramatically increased borrowing costs from the near zero rates during the coronavirus pandemic. Prices then began to shoot up, first as a result of supply chain issues and later because of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which pushed energy costs higher.

As inflation rates have declined from multidecade highs, central banks, including the Fed, have started cutting interest rates, though few, if any, economists think that rates will fall back to the super-low levels that persisted in the years after the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 and during the pandemic.

Nikkei 225 edged up 0.4%

Asian shares trade higher after Wall St climbs slightly



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan’s Nikkei index at a securities firm Thursday, May 8, 2025, in Tokyo. (AP)

TOKYO, May 8, (AP): Asian shares rose moderately Thursday after a lackluster finish on Wall Street, with most shares ticking higher after the Federal Reserve left its main interest rate unchanged, as was widely expected.

Japan’s benchmark Nikkei 225 edged up 0.4% in afternoon trading to 36,943.30. Australia’s S&P/ASX 200 added 0.2% to 8,191.70. South Korea’s Kospi rose 0.3% to 2,582.07. Hong Kong’s Hang Seng surged 0.5% to 22,807.50, while the Shanghai Composite gained 0.3% to 3,353.81.

Investors continue to watch with trepidation President Donald Trump’s comments about the trade imbalance, as well as the reactions from various nations to appease the U.S. administration and the overall confusion over the long-term economic impact.

Geo-political tensions also weighed on market sentiments, centered around the standoff between India and Pakistan. Pakistan has said it will avenge those killed by India’s missile strikes, which New Delhi called retaliation for last month’s massacre of Indian tourists in India-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan called the strikes an act of war and claimed it downed several Indian fighter jets.

The missiles killed 31 people, including women and children, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and the country’s Punjab province, Pakistan’s military said. The strikes targeted at least nine sites “where terrorist attacks against India have been planned,” India’s Defense Ministry said. Two mosques were hit.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 gained 0.4%, coming off a two-day losing streak that had snapped its nine-day winning run. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 284 points, or 0.7%, and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.3%.

Indexes swiveled repeatedly through the day, and the Dow briefly climbed as many as 400 points on hopes that the United States and China may be making the first moves toward a trade deal that could protect the global economy. The world’s two largest economies have been placing ever-increasing tariffs on products coming from each other in an escalating trade war, and the fear is that they could cause a recession unless they allow trade to move more freely.

The announcement for high-level talks between U.S. and Chinese officials this weekend in Switzerland helped raise optimism, but some of that washed away after Trump said he would not reduce his 145% tariffs on Chinese goods as a condition for negotiations. China has made the de-escalation of the tariffs a requirement for trade negotiations, which the meetings are supposed to help establish.

Such on-and-off uncertainty surrounding tariffs has helped create sharp swings within the U.S. economy, including a rush of imports in the hopes of beating tariffs. Underneath those swings, as well as surveys showing U.S. households are growing much more pessimistic about the future, the Fed said it continues to see the economy running “at a solid pace” at the moment.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said that gives the central bank time to wait before making any potential moves on interest rates, even if Trump has been lobbying for quicker cuts to juice the economy.

“There’s so much that we don’t know,” Powell said. So like the rest of Wall Street and the world, the Fed is waiting to see what will actually end up happening in Trump’s trade war and whether his tariffs, which were much stiffer than expected, will hit as proposed.

Deal yet to be finalized

Trump agrees to cut tariffs on UK autos, steel and aluminum

WASHINGTON, May 8, (AP): President Donald Trump has agreed to cut tariffs on U.K. autos, steel and aluminum in a planned trade deal with Britain, which would buy more American beef and streamline its customs process for goods from the United States.

The symbolically resonant agreement still has yet to be finalized, but it suggested that Trump was still able to negotiate with other countries after his vast set of tariffs stoked fears around the world of an economic downturn and higher inflation.

The announcement provided a political victory for U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and offered a degree of validation for Trump’s claims that his turbulent approach on trade may be able to rebalance the global economy on his preferred terms.

The U.S. president talked up the agreement to reporters from the Oval Office, even as the fine print remains in flux.

“The final details are being written up,” Trump told reporters. “In the coming weeks, we’ll have it all very conclusive.”

The president said that the agreement would lead to more beef and ethanol exports to the U.K., which would also streamline the processing of U.S. goods through customs. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the baseline 10% tariffs would stay in place, while U.K. officials said that Trump’s auto tariffs would go from 27.5% to 10% on a quota of 100,000 vehicles and the import taxes on steel and aluminum would go from 25% to zero.

Trump cautioned that the agreement with its preservation of a 10% tariff was not a template for other countries pursuing possible trade deals with the U.S. He said he intends to charge higher rates on other countries as part of any agreement - a sign that the import taxes could stay in place in ways that economists warn would reduce economic growth.

“That’s a low number,” Trump said of his 10% tariff rate.

Starmer, speaking over the phone to Trump, stressed the importance of the relationship between the two countries as the anniversary of the World War II victory in Europe was being commemorated.

“To be able to announce this great deal on the same day 80 years forward, almost at the same hour and as we were 80 years ago with the U.K. and the U.S. standing side by side, I think is incredibly important,” Starmer said.

Starmer later spoke to workers at a Jaguar Land Rover plant and touted the deal, which he said would protect thousands of auto jobs. He told the workers that “this is just the start,” saying “we are hammering out further details to reduce barriers to trade with the United States and across the world.”

The planned deal was the first outlined since Trump began his stutter-step efforts to rewire the global economy by dramatically increasing import taxes in an attempt to increase domestic manufacturing. The Republican president quickly rolled out tariffs after returning to the White House, targeting traditional allies such as the U.K. with import taxes on steel, aluminum and autos. Trump announced near universal tariffs on April 2, then partially retreated a week later and announced that his administration would seek individual agreements with various countries over the next few months.

The U.S. already runs a trade surplus with the U.K., making it a bit easier to find common ground as Trump has staked his tariffs on specifically eliminating the annual trade deficits with multiple nations he says have taken advantage of the U.S.

No new deals have been reached with America’s largest trading partners, including Canada, Mexico and China. Trump has left the highest tariffs in place on China, sparking a confrontation between the world’s two biggest economies. Washington and Beijing are sending officials to Switzerland this weekend for an initial round of trade talks.

Trump promised on Thursday that there are “many other deals, which are in serious stages of negotiation, to follow!”

China rolls out more stimulus and agrees to trade talks with the US as tariffs hit economy

BEIJING, May 8, (AP): China announced a barrage of measures meant to counter the blow to its economy from U.S. President Donald Trump’s trade war, as the two sides prepared for talks later this week.

Beijing’s central bank governor and other top financial officials outlined plans Wednesday to cut interest rates and reduce bank reserve requirements to help free up more funding for lending. They also said the government would increase the amount of money available for factory upgrades and other innovation and for elder care and other service businesses. Trump’s tariffs, set as high as 145% on imports from

China, have begun to take a toll on its export-dependent economy at a time when it’s already under pressure from a prolonged downturn in the property sector. China has retaliated with tariff hikes of up to 125% on U.S. goods and stopped buying most American farm products.

Late Tuesday, China and the U.S. announced plans for talks between Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, U.S. Trade Representative Jameson Greer and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng later this week in Geneva, Switzerland.

The agreement to talk comes at a time when both sides have remained adamant, at least in public, about not com-

promising on the tariffs.

“The U.S. has recently expressed a desire to negotiate with China. This meeting is being held at the request of the U.S. side,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters in Beijing.

“Any form of pressure or coercion against China will not work,” Lin said. “China will firmly safeguard its legitimate interests and uphold international fairness and justice. Please stay tuned for the specific details of the dialogue.”

By easing credit, China’s leaders are providing a “policy buffer” for exporters as Beijing prepares for the talks, econo-

mists at ANZ Research said in a report.

“The authorities are prepared to have a protracted negotiation and hold a strong stance against protectionism,” the report said.

Both the U.S. and Chinese economies have been showing signs of strain, after a spurt of activity as companies and consumers rushed to beat the tariff hikes.

The meetings in Switzerland could offer an opportunity for both sides to dial down the current prohibitively high level of tariffs, which Bessent has described as unsustainable, while they work on a deal. But the process is likely to take time.

Americans face rising costs, falling confidence in economy

Building financial resilience through goal setting and debt management



This Oct. 24, 2016 file photo shows dollar bills in New York. (AP)

Smart financial decisions start with staying calm

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

By Jeffrey Anvari-Clark
University of North Dakota

American families are struggling to keep up with their bills. The cost of food soared by more than 23% from 2020 to 2024. Other price increases, which are especially steep for vehicles, insurance, child care and housing, come as nearly 40% more people are behind on their credit card payments than in 2022.

Now, uncertainty arising from zigzagging tariffs, firing of tens of thousands of federal workers and contractors, and massive cuts and freezes to federally funded programs means that more people are increasingly pessimistic about the economy.

As an assistant professor of social work, I have found through my research that differences in how people experience, behave toward and feel about their personal finances have as much of an

impact as do their age and gender on certain financial decisions. And those decisions, in turn, can affect their income and wealth moving forward.

Scholars like me use the term “financial efficacy” when we’re assessing whether someone has personal finance know-how and the ability to put it to good use. People with a high level of financial efficacy can be more able to weather bouts of financial hardship and build wealth.

Although everyone’s situation is unique and individual resources vary, there are still five broad areas that personal finance experts say are linked to good financial outcomes: emotional regulation, problem-solving skills, an ability to achieve goals, self-confidence and risk management.

Remaining calm in the face of a potential - or real - financial crisis tends to make it easier to think through important decisions. In contrast, reacting out of fear often leads to mistakes or quick fixes with costly long-term consequences. For example, rushing to fix a problem could lead you to take out a pay-day

loan with high interest rates and fees.

That’s why you should avoid making big financial decisions in a hurry.

Waiting until you feel calm, perhaps giving yourself 24 hours to think it over, can protect you from making a bad situation worse. But don’t wait too long - procrastination can lead to late fees and compound your problems.

Keeping your emotions under control depends on having healthy coping mechanisms for stressful situations. And having healthy habits helps to manage that stress.

Solving financial problems is an exercise in improvisation. This includes finding creative ways to increase your income through a new job or side hustles and to reduce your expenses. Or look for solutions that will buy you more time, such as negotiating a repayment plan for an outstanding bill.

This perseverance and resourcefulness often requires relying on skills you’ve used in the past. And it may help if you seek advice from people who you know have made good financial choices before.

When in doubt about how to solve a financial problem, go see a financial counselor or social worker who can help assess your situation and identify the next steps. But be wary of the so-called influencers - short for financial influencers - who are active on social media. Instead, learn from the experts who focus on consumer protection and unbiased education.

Achieving goals can be a short-term activity, like solving an immediate problem, or a longer-term process. It means keeping a clear outcome in mind and being able to tell when you’ve met a goal. More complex goals may need to be broken down into multiple milestones to stay on track.

Whenever you’re in deep financial trouble, try to closely monitor your income and expenses. Adapt your budget according to what’s important to you. This will increase your sense of control over the situation.

Tally up all your debt, including from credit cards, autos, student loans, medical or utility bills, and home mortgages. Figure out what you owe and to whom, and put to-

gether a plan to repay them. And if this feels overwhelming, that’s OK: A credit counseling nonprofit can help walk you through the process.

Listing all your debt on paper or in a spreadsheet helps reduce anxiety and fear of the unknown. Having the plan helps you see a real way toward a financially stronger future. Then, take action and start paying them down.

One possibility is to ask creditors for an extension or modified repayment schedule for a mortgage or car loan. Communicating with them up front shows them you are taking responsibility, and they will be more likely to work with you.

Americans now owe an average of \$6,455 in credit card debt. Paying in full during the grace period instead of later, with interest, can result in a substantial difference in what you owe.

It’s always easier to be confident that you can achieve something if you’ve done it before. This is how confidence builds on itself.

But what if you’re in a new situation? It can help reflecting back on your personal history, realizing that you’ve met challenges in the past, and being reasonably assured that you can do it again. Such confidence then helps you keep calm, think through some solutions and see that you can achieve your goals.

Improving your money management confidence and skills can reduce your anxiety and stress in the moment. It can show you those areas of your financial life that are within your control and illumine the way forward to a healthier financial future.

Even if your finances are OK today, I would advise you to plan ahead. It’s important to identify your own informal safety nets before you need them.

Let’s say you had to pay an unexpected \$400 bill. How would you handle it?

Would you call a friend or a relative? Have that amount saved up, ready and waiting for emergency use? Cover it with your income? According to the Federal Reserve, only 63% of Americans could cover a \$400 financial shock with the cash they have on hand.

By regularly setting aside some of the money you earn, you can simultaneously manage your risks better and develop the skills to achieve bigger goals.

Managing your own financial risks means doing your best to prevent a bad situation from getting worse. It also means you might be able to prevent a catastrophe in the future or be able to deal with it better.

Having insurance policies, such as life and disability, homeowners or renters, and health and auto, is part of this. But so are maintaining enough savings to cover an emergency or having multiple income streams.

The steps you take can also include something less tangible, such as caring for your health or tending to your relationships with friends and relatives so you can call on them when times are truly tough. Or better yet, they’ll be able to call on you. (AP)

GOP pushes to repeal estate tax with 2025 legislation

Wealthy Americans may face unintended consequences of estate tax repeal

The estate tax, often called the ‘death tax’

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

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Nothing is more certain than death and taxes. Benjamin Franklin famously declared. And, since 1916, the federal government has imposed an estate tax on the transfer of property owned at death.

But the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers may be on the verge of changing all that. GOP legislators are now considering a massive bill that includes major tax law changes and could pass by June or July 2025. Among the measures under consideration in both the House and Senate is the Death Tax Repeal Act, which would end the federal estate tax and reduce the tax rate on lifetime gifts.

If the Death Tax Repeal Act were to become law, it would happen at a pivotal moment. In the coming years, baby boomers are expected to leave an estimated US\$84 trillion to their heirs, in what’s been called the largest wealth transfer in human history.

As law professors who specialize in trusts and estates, we’re interested in what might happen next. Interestingly, while the long-term impact to the federal budget would be significant, repealing the estate tax would

complicate estate planning for the wealthy taxpayers who might not save all that much money. To understand why, let’s consider how the estate tax works now.

The estate tax - which opponents of the policy have long derided as “the death tax” - is imposed on property that is transferred at death. It is part of the federal gift and estate tax system, which imposes a 40% tax on gifts made during life or transferred at death. Supporters of the estate tax argue that it reduces inequality and encourages charitable giving.

But most Americans, even the very rich, will never pay any gift or estate tax. That’s because millions of dollars of assets transferred after death are completely exempt from it.

For 2025, the cumulative gift and estate tax exemption is \$13.99 million for individuals and \$27.98 million for married couples. The current exemption doubled under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which President Donald Trump signed into law in 2017. And it sunsets this year. Unless Congress passes new legislation, the exemption amount will go back to its 2017 base of \$5 million for individuals, plus an inflation adjustment. That would increase the number of estates on which it would be levied.

If the Death Tax Repeal Act passes, of course, then there will be no federal transfer tax imposed on estates.

The estate tax is a lightning rod on Capitol Hill, even though it doesn’t affect many Americans. In 2022, the

U.S. Treasury collected \$22.5 billion in estate tax revenues from 3,170 estates. More than 3 million people died, so only 0.1% of decedents left enough assets for their estates to pay the tax.

Beyond taking advantage of this generous exemption, wealthy taxpayers currently use several planning techniques to reduce or eliminate estate taxes.

A common strategy involves minimizing tax on assets that are likely to grow in value. Suppose, for example, a person owns property worth \$25 million, and they have already used up their exemption (currently \$13.99 million). If that \$25 million property appreciates in value to \$125 million, and the person waits until death to transfer it to the next generation, the entire investment - all \$125 million - would be subject to the 40% estate tax.

To reduce those taxes without entirely giving up control, sophisticated “estate freeze” planning techniques allow owners to keep some powers over the gifted property while transferring it for gift tax purposes before assets appreciate in value. In our example, if the \$25 million asset were transferred through a freeze device such as an intentionally defective grantor trust, then the only tax would be a 40% gift tax on the \$25 million. All of the appreciation - the other \$100 million - would incur no gift or estate tax.

Other estate planning techniques could further reduce the valuation for transfer tax purposes through minority

interest, lack of marketability and other discounts. It’s through techniques like this that wealthy Americans are able to pass along approximately \$200 billion each year in inherited assets without paying estate taxes.

The Death Tax Repeal Act would not directly affect the tax treatment of charitable giving at death - over \$40 billion - but it could alter incentives for philanthropic giving.

If Congress repeals the estate tax but keeps the gift tax as proposed, many estate freeze planning techniques previously used by the ultra rich would become obsolete. There would be no incentive to make a lifetime gift of property that would appreciate: Individuals who hold onto their property until death would avoid both federal transfer and capital gains taxes.

As a result, repealing the estate tax would turn existing estate plans on their head. Estate freeze strategies are premised on a calculated trade-off: To reduce or eliminate estate taxation at death, wealthy donors choose to make lifetime gifts even though doing so alters lifetime ownership rights, generates gift tax liability and sacrifices other tax benefits at death.

Without an estate tax, existing estate freeze plans lock in the costs of lifetime gifting without any payoff at death. What’s more, some estate freeze plans can’t be changed. For example, an intentionally defective grantor trust must be irrevocable to freeze valuation for gift tax purposes.

So while repealing the estate tax might seem appealing to wealthy Americans, the actual tax benefit could be modest at best for taxpayers who established estate plans under the current system. Financial advisers have also expressed concern about creating new estate plans designed to benefit from estate tax repeal because a future Congress could revive the tax.

Repealing the estate tax could also have macroeconomic implications. Tax incentives to retain ownership until death could tie up capital in ways that dampen economic growth. Individuals tend to become increasingly risk-averse with age, so the Death Tax Repeal Act could skew investments toward safer asset classes. That could deprive younger generations of access to capital for new ventures, such as startups.

The bottom line is that repealing the estate tax may hurt both taxpayers and the government. People with sufficient wealth to exhaust the high exemption are likely to have established estate plans that can’t be changed to benefit from estate tax repeal. Meanwhile, for new estate plans that seek to retain property ownership until death, the government will lose an important source of tax revenue - \$22.5 billion in 2022 - collected from a tiny number of very wealthy estates that can afford to pay the tax.

And, of course, repeal would also abandon the original purpose of the estate tax, which sought to reduce extreme concentrations of wealth. (AP)

What's On



Photos from the FAIPS UKG graduation ceremony.

‘Being Human’ theme shines at Kindergarten event

FAIPS-DPS marks UKG graduation with pride and enthusiasm

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS-DPS), Kuwait, joyously celebrated the UKG Graduation Ceremony for the academic year 2024–25 on April 16-17, in the school auditorium. The two-day event was marked by heartfelt enthusiasm and a sense of immense pride.

Kindergarten is often described as the foundation of a child’s lifelong learning journey, nurturing their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. At FAIPS, this journey is carefully sculpted through love, guidance, and opportunity. This year’s celebration was themed “Being Human: Celebrating the Best in Me,” a poignant reminder of the values that form the core of holistic education – kindness, courage, and empathy.

The ceremony began with the solemn recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the Kuwait National Anthem, setting the tone for the event. A traditional lamp-lighting ceremony ensued, symbolizing the dispelling of ignorance through the light of knowledge.

The school’s dynamic Principal, Ravi Ayanoli, delivered the inaugural address, warmly welcoming the dignitaries and parents. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between parents and educators in shaping the overall develop-

ment of children — not just in academics, but in life skills and emotional intelligence.

Distinguished guests graced the occasion on both days:

April 16: Chief Guest: Jafar Behbehani, Entrepreneur and Business Owner (Al Sallal International Group and Tristar Motorcycle Establishment); Guest of Honour: Ms. Fetouh Al Dalali, Founding Member, LOYAC

April 17: Chief Guest: Ms. Ghada Hatim Altahir, United Nations Resident Coordinator to Kuwait; Guest of Honour: Dr. Rajendra C. Mishra, Consultant Pediatrician and Neonatologist, Royale Hayat Hospital and Special Guest: Ms. Maha Ali, First Student Affairs Supervisor, Ministry of Education

The cultural programme was a vibrant showcase of talent, effort, and creative expression. Months of dedicated practice culminated in an enchanting series of performances by the graduating class.

The celebration began with a heartwarming Welcome Song, in which the children expressed their gratitude to their parents and teachers — a beautiful embodiment of the “Being Human” theme.

A dynamic dance performance by “The Land of Arabia” followed, where students mesmerized the audience with

their cultural rhythm and flair. The English Dance Troupe then took the stage, impersonating legendary performers in a burst of energy and color, their pom-poms adding sparkle to their synchrony.

A standout performance was the emotionally resonant concept dance-drama, Raise Me Up, portraying the deep bond between parent and child – a tender reflection on love, support, and emotional growth.

The momentum continued with a Bollywood Medley, where the students lit up the stage with vibrant costumes and electrifying moves.

The grand finale was a spectacular performance by the KG Theatre Group, who brought to life the timeless tale of Pinocchio. The young performers captivated the audience with their dramatic expressions, articulate dialogue delivery, and commendable stage presence, earning thunderous applause from all corners of the auditorium.

This was followed by the much-anticipated Graduation March. Dressed in their ceremonial gowns and caps, the young graduates walked across the stage with poise and pride, each receiving their scroll from the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour and Principal – a symbolic moment marking the

completion of their Kindergarten journey.

In their keynote addresses, the dignitaries shared inspiring messages:

Mr. Jafar Behbehani emphasized the importance of rejecting prejudice and embracing humanity in all its diversity, commending the school for nurturing such values in its young students.

Ms. Ghada Hatim Altahir highlighted the indispensable role of early education in building global citizens and encouraged children to not merely perform tasks but to find joy in what they do.

Dr. Rajendra C. Mishra underscored the significance of parental involvement, urging families to invest time and emotional support in their children’s growth.

The event concluded with a warm and gracious Vote of Thanks by Mrs. Bharti Tiwari, Headmistress of the Kindergarten. She extended heartfelt appreciation to the school management, staff, parents, and students for their collective efforts in making the event a resounding success.

In essence, the UKG Graduation Ceremony 2024–25 was more than a celebration – it was a tribute to the spirit of childhood, the power of education, and above all, the beauty of Being Human!

Academy empowers youth in communication

Rhetorics organizes second public speaking championship in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Rhetorics Public Speaking Academy, a division of Bright Planet Educational Consultancy company, dedicated to empowering children and teenagers in effective communication, commemorated its 2nd Championship in 2025 with an engaging Public Speaking Competition held on May 2 at the Indian English Academy School, new auditorium in Salmiya. The event attracted a vibrant crowd of 80 attendees, including parents, students, and well-wishers, who gathered to witness the remarkable talent and confidence demonstrated by young speakers.

The championship was divided into four main categories, each designed to suit various age groups and skill levels: Storytelling for children aged 6–7, Prepared Speeches for tweens aged 8–10, Prepared Speeches for teens aged 11 and above, and Impromptu Speaking. Additionally, a special showcase was introduced featuring Sonet& Debate, welcoming participants from mixed age groups. Many participants focused their presentations on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, along with a variety of well-chosen general topics relevant to students’ lives today.

Outstanding performances included Master Kavin Sarupriyan, who captivated the audience with his speech on the Democracy in the Teens category, and Miss Venba Sarupriyan, who addressed the Importance of Public Speaking in the Tweens category, securing first place in her division.

In the storytelling category, Master Marc Kenji captivated the audience with his compelling narrative. Master Arush Chowdary stood out in the Impromptu Speaking segment with his quick thinking and confident delivery. Demonstrating poetic flair, Master Aditya impressed in the Sonet Showcase. The Debate Competition concluded with a strong performance by Master Mohd Saalim and Master Jatin Chowdary Muruvakonda, who emerged as winners, highlighting their persuasive reasoning and teamwork.

MMs. Amreen Bano served as the Event Logistics Chair, uplifting the team with her energy and unwavering support. In keeping with tradition, Rhetorics Academy’s alumni – Sonith, Sohan, Avanish, and Hemant – graced the stage as emcees, reflecting the academy’s continued dedication to fostering leadership and confidence in its students.



Rhetorics Public Speaking Academy’s Public Speaking Competition participants with Academy officials.

Social workers and artists honored

Gandhi Smruthi Kuwait celebrates 4th annual day with ‘Sneha Sangamam ’25’

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Gandhi Smruthi Kuwait, a well-known social welfare and charitable organization in Kuwait, celebrated its 4th annual day “Sneha Sangamam 2025” on 2nd May 2025 at Indian Central School, Abbasiya. Gandhi Smruthi started its operations in Kuwait during the COVID-19 pandemic to help needy people in both Kuwait and India, functioning regardless of caste, creed, and politics, while sincerely following the principles and policies of Mahatma Gandhi. Over the last 4 years, Gandhi Smruthi has done a lot of charity work, and a detailed presentation was provided during the program.



A photo from the event.

also performed his masterpiece solo drama “Pen Nadan” for the first time in Kuwait, receiving memorable appreciation from the social community of Kuwait during the program.

Additionally, during the program, Gandhi Smruthi honored Smt. Mini Kurien for her lifelong contributions to society, particularly in the field of Autism Management. Smt. Akhila Anvi was also recognized for her prominent

work in acting and modeling, having won many awards.

Gandhi Smruthi family members and children performed a spectacular treat with their dances and other cultural activities during the program.

Metro Medical Group CEO and Chairman Shri Mustafa Hamsa and Loka Kerala Sabha Kuwait Representative Shri Babu Francis felicitated the program.



A photo of the Salmiya Indian Model School, Kuwait teachers and officials.

SIMS Kuwait hosts CBSE exams for the first time

In a significant milestone, Salmiya Indian Model School, (SIMS) Kuwait, was selected by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) as one of the centres for conducting the Grade X and XII Board Final Examinations in Kuwait for the very first time.

The school carried out this prestigious responsibility with utmost diligence and efficiency. Dr. Anis Ahmad, Principal of the school, was appointed as the Centre Su-

perintendent, with Ms. Sajitha Menon serving as the Assistant Superintendent. Anoop Sharma from NGIS was deputed as the CBSE Observer for the examinations.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Core Team, hand-picked by the Centre Superintendent, the examinations were conducted flawlessly and without any disruptions. Their meticulous planning and dedicated service were key to the success of this endeavor.



Experts share insights on mental health and parental guidance at IMWA event.

Seminar tackles family issues affecting child’s education

IMWA conducts family counseling seminar

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Indian Muslim Welfare Association in collaboration with Indian Community School Khaitan conducted its first “Healthy Family Healthy Children” seminar on Saturday, May 3 at ICSK auditorium. The main purpose was to address the parents from distressed families which reflected on their children’s poor academic performance. IMWA President Syed Hanif Ahmed in coordination with the school Principal K Gangadhar and his staff organized the event for the benefit of the school parents and for members of different Indian associations in Kuwait. Five distinguished counselors were invited to speak on different topics invited by IMWA President who would generate an impact on issues faced by families in their daily lives.

The meeting started with the anchor Mrs Lubna Asif requesting the audience to stand up for the national anthems of Kuwait and India followed by Quran recitation and then it’s translation from Surah Baqarah verse number 187. Mrs Asif then requested the Principal K. Gangadhar of ICSK Khaitan to address the gathering.

Gangadhar Shirsath emphasized the growing concerns about disturbed students due to unhealthy home environments wherein students lack self-confidence. Such seminars and counselling sessions are sure to create awareness, and they will provide proper measures to be adopted by parents to handle children in such situations. After his speech he facilitated the President of IMWA Syed Hanif Ahmed by presenting a memento on behalf of the school for organizing the event.

Mr. Syed Hanif Ahmed President of Indian Muslim Welfare Association



A photo from the event.

thanked the principal and his staff in co-hosting the event. He stated that we all start life with a family, whether that family is blood relatives, adopted parents, or a foster family. Our families influence almost every aspect of our lives, from our first moments to our last. Families go through lots of changes throughout life, so it’s normal to experience some problems. Counselling can help overcome these difficult times. He spoke about how family dynamics change considerably over the course of our lifetime, there are many types of transitions that families go through together. Each family is unique, even within its own culture. He welcomed the panel of guest speakers who featured on different topics such as communication problems, mental health impact, substance abuse, relationship conflicts and Guided parenting.

Mrs. Zubeida Shabbir Khajuriwala who is a Counselling Psychologist/Psychotherapist/Therapist for children with special needs and learning difficulties and an Academician spoke about Communication Problems. In her speech she narrated about the impact and influence

of communication in our lives and how people learn to communicate in different relationships. She highlighted communication as a key tool which governs all the other areas of our lives and the mental filters that are majorly responsible for the ways in which a person thinks, feels, behaves and communicates. She emphasized on the importance of acceptance and tolerance towards any individual especially in a marital relationship while communicating to strengthen and improve the relationship further.

Mrs. Rukaiya Mandasaurwala spoke about mental health’s impact on our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. She categorized thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as overt, covert, and social, and identified causes of behavioral problems such as genetics, mental health conditions, and trauma. She enabled parents with ways to handle behavior problem with active listening, setting clear rules, being positive role models, and respecting privacy to nurture healthy relationships.

Mrs Yamini Bhosale spoke about parental substance abuse whose affects causes divorce, separation, and changes in family structures like blended families deeply impact children’s emotional and academic well-being. These situations in a child’s life often leads to behavioral issues and declining academic performance. Children may be forced into adult roles too early, affecting their mental health and increasing the risk of future substance use. It can leave children feeling confused, rejected, or torn between parents. She urged parents to build a safe, stable environment through open communication, consistency, and unconditional love to help children cope and thrive.



With the city skyline in backdrop, people of different nationalities enjoy a good weather in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Jan. 14, 2015. (AP)

Disney to build its 7th theme park, this one in the UAE

Disney will build its seventh theme park, this one in the United Arab Emirates, the entertainment company said Wednesday.

The waterfront resort will be built on Yas Island on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, already home to Formula One's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the Ferrari and Warner Bros. amusement parks, SeaWorld and a waterpark. Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula. Home to 9 million people, it has leveraged its long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad

Airways to bring in more tourists over the years. A real-estate boom and the city's highest-ever tourism numbers have made Dubai a destination as well as a layover.

Disney and Miral, the Abu Dhabi developer overseeing the project, hope to capitalize on the 120 million airline passengers that travel through Abu Dhabi and Dubai each year.

While long viewed as more buttoned up than the beaches and raucous nightlife in neighboring Dubai, Abu Dhabi also is home to the Louvre Abu Dhabi and



People visit the Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., April 18, 2022. (AP)

there are more museums currently under construction.

The theme park announcement is being made ahead of a visit by U.S. President Donald Trump to the region next week. Trump has promised a series of business deals with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE.

The theme park will be built and operated by Miral, but Disney will handle the design and development. Disney will also license its intellectual property and provide development and management services, according to a regulatory filing.

The California company will not be providing any capital for the project. It will earn royalties based on the resort's revenues. It will also earn service fees.

Miral has been involved in the development of almost all of the entertainment complexes built on the island.

A projected opening date has not been announced. Shares of Disney, which also reported second-quarter financial results on Wednesday that beat Wall Street's expectations, jumped more than 9% in morning trading. (AP)

People

'Vile and false'

Robinson's lawyer denies rape claim

LOS ANGELES, May 8, (AP): **Smokey Robinson's** lawyer said allegations of rape and sexual assault against him in a lawsuit from four former housekeepers are "vile" and "false."



Robinson

Attorney Christopher Frost said in a statement Wednesday that the evidence "will show that this is simply an ugly method of trying to extract money from an 85-year-old American icon."

The suit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Tuesday against the Motown music luminary seeks at least \$50 million in damages over the alleged assaults, which the women say took place between 2007 and 2024. Robinson's wife, Frances Robinson, is also named as a defendant for allegedly enabling his behavior and creating an abusive work environment.

"We will be addressing the numerous aspects of the complaint that defy credulity as well as issues relating to purported timelines, inconsistencies, and relationships between the plaintiffs and others," Frost's statement said.

The four women each allege that Smokey Robinson would wait until he was alone with them in his Los Angeles house and then sexually assault and rape them over their objections, in some cases for many years.

"We believe that Mr. Robinson is a serial and sick rapist, and must be stopped," the women's attorney John Harris said at a news conference Tuesday.

The Associated Press doesn't identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they publicly identify themselves. The women, whose names are withheld in the lawsuit, appeared with their lawyers at the news conference. They didn't speak, and they covered their faces with masks.

Man charged with 'stalking' Aniston

LOS ANGELES, May 8, (AP): Prosecutors said Wednesday that a Mississippi man who harassed Jennifer Aniston for two years before crashing his vehicle through the front gate of the "Friends" star's Los Angeles home has been charged with felony stalking and vandalism.

Jimmy Wayne Carwyle, 48, of New Albany, Mississippi, also faces an aggravating circumstance of the threat of great bodily harm, Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said.

Carwyle, who has been held in jail since his arrest Monday, is set to be arraigned on Thursday. His bail has been set at \$150,000. It was not immediately clear if he has retained an attorney.

Carwyle is accused of repeatedly harassing Aniston - referred to by the district attorney only as Jennifer A. - by sending her unwanted voicemail, email and social media messages starting in 2023.

Then early Monday afternoon in LA's wealthy Bel Air neighborhood, Carwyle crashed his vehicle through her front gate, causing major damage, prosecutors said. A security guard stopped him in her driveway before police arrived and arrested him.

Police said Aniston was at home at the time. There were no reports of anyone being injured. Messages left with her representatives seeking comment were not immediately answered.



Jennifer Aniston arrives at the 76th Prime-time Emmy Awards on Sept. 15, 2024, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Film



This image released by Sideshow and Janus Films shows Zhao Tao in a scene from 'Caught By the Tides.' (AP)

Film chronicles 21 years of change in China

Jia's 'Tides' courses with history

LOS ANGELES, May 8, (AP): Jia Zhangke's "Caught by the Tides" is less than two hours long and yet contains nearly a quarter-century of time's relentless march forward.

Few films course with history the way it does in the Chinese master's latest, an epic collage that spans 21 years. Jia undertook the film during the pandemic, assembling a mix of fiction and documentary, including images from his earlier films as well as newly shot scenes.

That might sound like a mishmash kind of moviemaking. But for Jia, the preeminent cinematic chronicler of 21st century China, it's a remarkably cohesive, even profound vessel for capturing what has most interested him as a filmmaker: the tidal wave-sized currents of technological progress and social transmutation that wash over a lifetime.

The high-speed upheavals of modern China are, of course, a fitting setting for such interests. Jia's films are often most expressed in their surroundings - in vistas of infrastructure that dwarf his protagonists. Fans of Jia

will recognize some from his previous films. For me, there's never been a more moving backdrop from him than the rubble and mass displacement of the Three Gorges Dam project (seen here, as in his 2008 film "Still Life").

"Caught by the Tides" is ostensibly about Qiaoqiao (Zhao Tao, Jia's wife and muse) and her lover Bin (Li Zhubin), whom she searches for years after a row sent them in different directions. But in "Caught by the Tides," these characters are more like life rafts bobbing in expansive waters, making their way aimlessly.

The poetry of "Caught by the Tides" comes from a grander arc. In one of the film's opening scenes, shot on grainy digital film, women in a Datong city room laugh together, singing old, half-remembered songs. The film's final scenes, set more than two decades later in the southern city of Zhuhai, are more crisply photographed and depict a more impersonal world of smartphones, robots and QR codes. For a moment, Jia even

adopts the perspective of a surveillance camera.

Another moment: a shot, from pre-digital times, drifting down a street with men looking back at us, smoking and mildly curious. Cut then to what might be the same street years later, where a woman parades as a model in front of a sprawling shopping mall.

In "Caught by the Tides," these changes go unexplained and unspoken. But the evolutions they chart are deeply familiar to anyone who has lived through even some of these years, in China or elsewhere. We see how people once moved differently, spoke differently and sang differently. Progress and loss exist together as one. Zhao and Li age through the film, leaving them weathered, too, by time. A song late in the film goes: "I can't grasp the warmth we once shared."

"Caught by the Tides," a Sideshow and Janus Films release, is unrated by the Motion Picture Association. In Mandarin. Running time: 116 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Newcomer Langley leads the nominations

ACMs go big with star power, historic wins

NEW YORK, May 8, (AP): The 2025 Academy of Country Music Awards celebrate their 60th anniversary Thursday night. And by the looks of it, they're not planning on slowing down any time soon.

There's a lot to celebrate. Sixteen-time ACM Award winner Reba McEntire will once again host. Keith Urban will be awarded the coveted ACM Triple Crown Award, marking the first time an artist has received the trophy on stage since Carrie Underwood was honored in 2010.

And perhaps most exciting of all: the ACM Awards will open with a 14-minute "Songs of the Decades" performance highlight 60 years of country music and featuring McEntire, Clint Black, Dan + Shay, Wynonna Judd, LeAnn Rimes, Sugarland and more.

The ACM festivities actually began ahead of Thursday's event. Before the award show, first-time nominee Ella Langley won the title of female new artist; the male award went to Zach Top.

Here's what you need to know before the main ACMs attraction begins.



Ella Langley performs during Amazon Music Country Heat at Country Radio Seminar in Nashville, Tenn., on Feb. 28, 2024. (AP)

The ACM Awards will stream on Prime Video and the Amazon Music channel on Twitch Live beginning at 8 p.m. Eastern and 5 p.m. Pacific. No Prime membership is required to view

the livestream.

Langley leads the ACM Awards this year with eight nominations, six of which are from her smash hit "You Look Like You Love Me" with Riley Green.

Cody Johnson, Lainey Wilson and Morgan Wallen closely follow Langley's nominations with seven each. Chris Stapleton has six nominations; Green and Post Malone are tied with five.

Johnson, Wilson, Wallen and Stapleton are up for the night's top category, entertainer of the year. Kelsea Ballerini, Luke Combs and Jelly Roll are also nominated for the award.

In addition to the star-studded "Songs of the Decades" performance, Langley, Wilson, Top, Stapleton, Ballerini, Miranda Lambert, Megan Moroney, Blake Shelton and Alan Jackson will perform.

There will be a few star-studded duets as well. Backstreet Boys and Rascal Flatts will take the stage together, as will Jelly Roll and Shaboozey. Brooks & Dunn will perform with Johnson.

Variety

NEW YORK: A federal judge has warned a lawyer for music mogul **Sean "Diddy" Combs** to tame his public comments now that the rapper's sex trafficking trial is underway, saying it was "outrageous" that he referred to prosecutors during a podcast as a "six-pack of white women."

A transcript of a robing room meeting on Tuesday contained the conversation between Judge Arun Subramanian and attorney Mark Geragos.

Meanwhile, the judge on Wednesday said he will finish seating a jury on Friday. Opening statements are scheduled for Monday.

The trial in Manhattan federal court comes after the 55-year-old hip-hop promoter pleaded not guilty to racketeering and sex trafficking charges after his September arrest. He has remained jailed without bail since then.

On Tuesday, prosecutors asked the judge to instruct Geragos to follow local rules limiting what attorneys say about the case while the trial is proceeding. They noted that Geragos had not filed a "notice of appearance" to represent him in court during the trial, but a jury consultant and the defense team seemed to consult with him.

Later in the day, the judge asked in the robing room meeting if Geragos - whose high-profile clients have included Michael Jackson and the Menendez brothers - was advising Combs "in any way, shape or form?" (AP)



Combs

NEW YORK: Days into Harvey Weinstein's first sexual assault trial in 2020, prosecutors privately spoke for the first time with a former model who alleged that he had sexually assaulted her.

But that jury was never told about Kaja (KEYE'-ah) Sokola's claim. Prosecutors have said they still were investigating the allegation when Weinstein, a onetime movie tycoon-turned- #MeToo pariah, was convicted in February 2020 of charges based on other women's accusations.

On Wednesday, Sokola began to tell a new jury her story.

Sokola didn't look at Weinstein as she walked past him and onto the witness stand in a Manhattan courtroom where he's on trial again. An appeals court overturned his 2020 rape and assault conviction, sending those charges back for retrial, and prosecutors subsequently added another assault charge based on Sokola's allegations.

As she began testifying about her life before the alleged 2006 assault, Weinstein looked toward her, with his right hand across his mouth.

Weinstein, 73, has pleaded not guilty to all the charges. His lawyers argue that his accusers engaged with him in hopes of securing movie and TV opportunities, highlighting that the women continued to stay in contact with him after the alleged incidents.

The women, meanwhile, say the Oscar-winning producer used the prospect of show business work to prey on them.

The Polish-born Sokola, 39, is a psychotherapist and author and said she recently launched a film production company. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Actor Michael Pitt, known for his TV roles on "Boardwalk Empire" and "Dawson's Creek," is accused of sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend, choking her, and attacking her with a cinder block and a piece of lumber at his New York City home, according to a grand jury indictment.

Pitt, 44, whose lawyers denied the allegations, was arrested Friday on nine counts, including first-degree sexual abuse, criminal sexual acts, assault, attempted assault and strangulation. The indictment cites four incidents between April 2020 and August 2021 at Pitt's home in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn.

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office declined to comment Wednesday beyond the allegations listed in the indictment.

Pitt's lawyer, Jason Goldman, said he already had exonerating evidence and expected the case to be dismissed.

"Unfortunately, we live in a world where somebody like Mr. Pitt - an accomplished professional who would never so much as contemplate these crimes - can be arrested on the uncorroborated word of an unreliable individual," Goldman said in a text message to The Associated Press. (AP)

Experts want proof of disease protection

New flu-COVID combo shot shows strong immune response

NEW YORK, May 8, (AP): A combination shot for flu and COVID-19 using messenger RNA generated antibodies in a study, but US government regulators want to see data on whether the new vaccine protects people from getting sick.

Researchers from vaccine-maker Moderna reported in a study published Wednesday that the new combo shot generated a stronger immune response against COVID-19 and most strains of flu than existing standalone shots in people 50 and older. Side effects were injection site pain, fatigue and headaches. Moderna previously reported a summary of the results from the compa-

ny-sponsored trial in 8,000 people.

The mRNA technology is used in approved COVID-19 and RSV shots, but has not yet been approved for a flu shot. Moderna believes mRNA could speed up production of flu shots compared with traditional processes that use chicken eggs or giant vats of cells. A combo shot also might improve vaccination rates, the researchers wrote in the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Greg Poland, who studies vaccine response at Mayo Clinic and was not involved in the new study, said he's not convinced that a combo shot

would be popular. And while flu comes in seasonal waves, COVID-19 has been spreading throughout the year, Poland said, posing challenges for how to time the shots to keep protection strong.

He'd also like to see data on how well the new shot protected people from infection and hospitalization.

The findings are based on measuring antibodies in participants' blood after 29 days, an indication of short-term disease protection.

Last week, Moderna pushed its target date for the vaccine's approval to 2026 after the Food and Drug Administration requested a more direct measure:

how much the shot lowered the risk of disease.

"I agree in this case with FDA that efficacy data are important to see," Poland said.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has cast doubt on the safety of mRNA vaccines, but Moderna President Stephen Hoge told investors in an earnings call last week that talks with the FDA were productive and "business as usual."

Also last week, Novavax said the FDA was asking the company to run a new clinical trial of its protein-based COVID-19 vaccine after the agency grants full approval, sowing uncertainty about other vaccine updates.



A vial of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine rests on a table at an inoculation station in Jackson, Miss., on July 19, 2022. (AP)

Climate change blamed

Wildfire smoke linked to thousands of US deaths

NEW YORK, May 8, (AP): Wildfires driven by climate change contribute to as many as thousands of annual deaths and billions of dollars in economic costs from wildfire smoke in the United States, according to a new study.

The paper, published Friday in the journal Nature Communications Earth & Environment, found that from 2006 to 2020, climate change contributed to about 15,000 deaths from exposure to small particulate matter from wildfires and cost about \$160 billion. The annual range of deaths was 130 to 5,100, the study showed, with the highest in states such as Oregon and California.

"We're seeing a lot more of these wildfire smoke events," said Nicholas Nassikas, a study author and a physician and professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. So he and multidisciplinary team of researchers wanted to know: "What does it really mean in a changing environment for things like mortality, which is kind of the worst possible health outcome?"

Impact

Lisa Thompson, a professor at Emory University who studies air pollution and climate change and was not involved in the paper, said it is one of the first studies she has seen to isolate the effect of climate change on mortality. Looking at the impacts across time and space also made it unique, she said.

The paper's researchers focused on deaths linked to exposure to fine particulate matter, or PM2.5 - the main concern from wildfire smoke.

These particles can lodge deep into lungs and trigger coughing and itchy eyes with short-term exposure. But longer term they can make existing health problems worse and lead to a range of chronic and deadly health issues. Children, pregnant people, the elderly and outdoor workers are among the most vulnerable. The Health Effects Institute estimated the pollutant caused 4 million deaths worldwide.

Evidence is emerging that PM2.5 from wildfire smoke is more toxic than other pollution sources. When wildfires encroach into cities, burning cars

and other toxics-containing materials, it adds to the danger.

Numerous studies have tied human-caused climate change - caused by the burning of coal, oil and gas - to a growth in fires in North America. Global warming is increasing drought, especially in the West, and other extreme weather. Drier conditions suck moisture from plants, which act as fuel for fires. When drier vegetation and seasons are mixed with hotter temperatures, that increases the frequency, extent and severity of wildfires and the smoke they spew.

Burning

Jacob Bendix, professor emeritus of geography and environment at Syracuse University, said he was "dismayed" by the findings but not surprised.

"(T)hese numbers are really significant. I think there's a tendency for people outside of the areas actually burning to see increasing fires as a distant inconvenience ... This study drives home how far-reaching the impacts are," said Bendix in an email. He wasn't involved in the study.

The study's authors drew on modeled and existing data to reach their findings. First, they sought to understand how much area burned by wildfires was attributable to climate change. They did that by analyzing the real climate conditions - heat and rain, for instance - when wildfires erupted from 2006 to 2020, and compared that to a scenario where weather measurements would be different without climate change.

From there, they estimated the levels of PM2.5 from wildfire smoke tied to climate change using the same approach. Lastly, integrating the current understanding of how particulate matter affects mortality based on published research, they quantified the number of deaths related to PM2.5 from wildfires and calculated their economic impact.

This framework showed that of 164,000 deaths related to wildfire-PM2.5 exposure from 2006 to 2020, 10% were attributable to climate change. The mortalities were 30% to 50% higher in some western states and counties.



The Palisades Fire burns a beach front property Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025 in Malibu, Calif. (AP)

Malnutrition, medicine shortage deepen crisis

Burn patients in Gaza struggle as Israeli blockade limits medicine

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza, May 8, (AP): Hamza Abu Shabab cringed in pain as his mother pulled off his shirt and eased his bandaged head back onto his pillow so she could apply ointment to his small, burned body.

The 7-year-old suffered third degree burns across his head, neck and shoulders when, frightened by an Israeli airstrike, he spilled a hot plate of rice and lentils onto himself in his family's tent in southern Gaza last month.

His recovery has been slowed by Israel's blockade, now in its third month, that bars all medicine, food, fuel and other goods from entering Gaza. His burns have gotten infected - the boy's immune system is weakened by poor nutrition and supplies of antibiotics are limited, said his mother, Iman Abu Shabab.

"Had there not been a siege or it was a different country, he would have been treated and cured of his wounds," she said at her son's bedside in Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Israel's blockade, imposed since March 2, has forced hospitals and clinics across Gaza to stretch limited stocks of medicines even as needs increase. For burn patients, the lack of supplies is particularly excruciating.

Hygiene

Burns are painful and susceptible to infection, but hospitals, including Nasser are short on painkillers, anesthetics, dressings and hygiene materials, said Julie Faucon, the medical coordinator for Gaza and the occupied West Bank with Doctors Without Borders.

Since Israel resumed bombardment across Gaza in mid-March, the number of patients with strike-related burns coming into Nasser Hospital has increased fivefold, from five a day to 20, according to Doctors Without Borders, which supports the facility. The burns are also bigger, covering up to 40% of people's bodies, Faucon said.

Some patients have died because burns impacted their airways and



Hamza Abu Shabab, 7, sits in bed with third-degree burns caused when, frightened by an Israeli airstrike, he spilled a hot plate of rice and lentils on himself in the family's tent in southern Gaza last month, at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Sunday, May 4. (AP)

breathing or because they developed severe infections, she said.

While strikes are a main cause of burns, people also seek treatment for accidents, such as spilling hot liquids. That is in part due to the squalid living conditions, with hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians squeezed into tents and crowded shelters, often cooking over wood fires.

Hamza was one of more than 70 patients in Nasser Hospital's burns and orthopedic ward - as many as it could hold - with more streaming in for daily care.

His mother said Hamza has undergone nine surgeries, including four on his face. The hospital ran out of the liquid painkillers used for children, and he struggles to swallow the larger pills, she said.

In another room, 4-year-old Layan Ibrahim Sahloul sits despondently among her dolls, with second-degree burns across her face, foot and stomach. A week ago, a strike on her house in Khan Younis killed her pregnant

mother and two siblings, burying her under the rubble.

Layan has difficulty moving and has become withdrawn and in a constant state of fear, said her aunt, Raga Sahloul. She also suffers from malnutrition, she said.

Malnourished

"I am scared it will take her months instead of weeks to heal," said her aunt.

The number of malnourished children has swelled under Israel's ban on food to Gaza, with aid groups warning that people are starving. Without proper nutrition, patients' recovery is slowed and their bodies can't fight infection, say health professionals.

At the meeting of Netanyahu's security Cabinet this week, which decided to expand operations in Gaza, ministers were told that "at this point there is enough food in Gaza," without elaborating, according to two Israeli officials, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the meeting.

Experts meet

AHH promotes hearing health

AMMAN, Jordan, May 8, (AP): A Lübeck Campus Hearing Acoustics team of experts took part in the 11th Arab Hearing Health Conference (AHH 2025) organized by the Advanced Arab Academy of Audiovestibular, held in Amman, Jordan, from April 24 to 26, 2025.

With more than 25 member countries, the AHH expert conference is one of the most important meetings for hearing aid professionals, audiologists and ENT specialists in the Middle East and North Africa. As the world's biggest center of training and expertise in the hearing acoustic trade, the Lübeck Campus Hearing Acoustics has been an active partner in the exchange of hearing health expertise for years. Once again, a committed and experienced team of lecturers from the Lübeck campus offered workshops during this year's AHH in Amman about practical aspects of taking ear molds and cerumen management. These topics and the practice-relevant hands-on training by the Lübeck experts were met with great interest by the expert audience, which had travelled to the conference mainly from Arab and North African countries.

Rehabilitation

The Advanced Arab Academy of Audiovestibular (4A), organizer of the AHH, unites medical and audiological interests from the entire middle Eastern region in the field of hearing impairment rehabilitation. The five partners of 4A include the Jordanian Al-Ahliyya Amman University, the British Academy of Audiology, the Egyptian Audio-Vestibular Medicine Association Group, the American Salus University as well as the Academy of Hearing Acoustics on the Lübeck Campus. For years the Lübeck experts have been in a professional exchange with the 4A audiologists on training-relevant aspects and topics like clinical care, adjustment of cochlea implants (CI) and technical hearing system customization.

"The Arab Hearing Health Congress offers an indispensable platform for the global exchange of knowledge in hearing care. The expertise and high standards of the partners, including the Federal Guild of Hearing Aid Acousticians and the Academy of Hearing Acoustics in Germany, can provide valuable impetus for the further development of hearing care in the Arab region and lead to a sustainable improvement in the quality of life of many people," says Dr. Khalid A. Hadi, President of 4A and Chairman AHH.

"Networking and exchange of knowledge beyond national borders and continents, are crucial for us as WHO partners, in order to continue to improve the care for people with hearing defects world-wide," says Jakob Stephan Baschab, General Manager, German Federal Guild of Hearing Aid Acousticians (biha) and Director of Academy of Hearing Acoustics (afh). "The qualification of skilled workers is a deciding factor. Our concept of dual vocational training in hearing acoustics is internationally renowned."

Hope for pediatric cancer patients

AI predicts chemo-linked hearing loss in kids

LOS ANGELES, May 8, (AP): An international research team led by Etan Orgel, MD at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) has developed a novel machine learning model that can predict an individual child's risk of developing hearing loss from the chemotherapy drug cisplatin. The team, which includes researchers from the Keck School of Medicine of USC and other institutions across the US and Canada, is the first to develop and validate a novel machine learning model for this purpose. The tool, called Peds-HEAR, uses routine, readily available information to quickly predict this

risk—with 95% confidence. Results were published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, and the model is now available for public use.

Cisplatin has been used since the late 1970s to treat a variety of cancers and is highly effective against pediatric solid tumors in the brain and spinal cord, as well as neuroblastoma and rhabdomyosarcoma. Yet, cisplatin is well known to cause devastating side effects. In children, the most common side effect following therapy is debilitating, permanent hearing loss.

The study grew out of two decades

of efforts to prevent cisplatin-induced hearing loss in children. Investigators from CHLA led the pivotal phase 3 Children's Oncology Group trial of sodium thiosulfate (STS), and in 2022, the Food and Drug Administration approved STS as the first treatment to reduce the risk of hearing loss in children given cisplatin. But patients' treatment regimens are already highly complex, and some may not need STS to prevent hearing loss. For those who are not eligible for STS, it's critical for clinicians to understand each patient's risk and what options they have to protect that child's hearing.

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Stadium director Aguirre said they are thinking long term

Azteca Stadium to reopen 75 days before start of the 2026 World Cup

MEXICO CITY, May 8, (AP): The revamped Azteca Stadium is scheduled to reopen 75 days before the start of the 2026 World Cup with improved services around it, Mexico City mayor Clara Brugada announced.

The iconic venue closed last May for renovations ahead of next year's 48-team competition hosted by Mexico, the United States and Canada.

The 83,000-seat Azteca, which recently was renamed, will host five games including the tournament opener. It also hosted the first matches in the 1971 and 1986 World Cups.

Brugada did not reveal further details regarding the reopening of the stadium on March 28, 2026.

Stadium director Felix Aguirre said they are thinking long term.

"The stadium is moving ahead with its renovations so it can work for the next 40 or 50 years," he said. "We are respecting its legacy, but we also want to improve the fan experience."

The stadium owners, a company related to Televisa, Mexico's largest television network, have released images of work done on the pitch and the lower seats. The luxury boxes apparently haven't been touched because some owners refuse to release them to FIFA.

Brugada also said that for the 2026 World Cup, they are going to improve a light rail line that heads toward Azteca, will enhance outdoor

lighting and a pedestrian bridge around it among other things.

On game days, the Xochimilco Light Rail known as Tren Ligerio is one of the fastest ways to reach the stadium, located south of the city, but it currently has 20 trains and the city's government will purchase 17 more.

"We will have around 40 trains to attend a daily requirement of over 400,000 passengers," Brugada said.

The current capacity of the trains is 160,000 passengers per day and the ride from Taxqueña station, the closest metro line, to the stadium is around 15 minutes with trains departing every 10 minutes.

Brugada said that with more trains the departures time will be shorter.

The mayor said they will be upgrading the city's video surveillance camera system for the tournament and adding 40,000 to have a total of 123,000.

Mexico City's video surveillance system is called the Command, Control, Computing, Communications, and Citizen contact center known as C5. Besides the cameras, the system has 1,000 panic buttons to enhance public safety.

"The video surveillance system put us in the forefront, we are the most video-monitored city in Latin America," Brugada said.

Brugada also informed that Los Pinos, which until 2018 was the Mexican president's official office and residence, will serve as the media center.



In this file photo, a fan gets his temperature checked as he enters Azteca Stadium before a Mexican soccer league quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Cruz Azul and Toluca in Mexico City. (AP)

Annoucement ahead of England tour

India captain Rohit Sharma retires from test cricket

MUMBAI, India, May 8, (AP): India captain Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from test cricket Wednesday ahead of the squad's upcoming tour of England.

The 38-year-old Sharma added that he will continue representing India in one-day internationals.

"It's been an absolute honor to represent my country in whites," he wrote on Instagram. "Thank you for all the love and support over the years."

Sharma struggled during the 2024-25 season, averaging just 10.93 runs in 11 innings over eight tests.

Overall, he scored 4,301 runs in 67 tests, an average of 40.57, with 12 centuries for the national team.

Sharma replaced Virat Kohli as captain in March 2022 and guided India to 12 wins, nine losses and three draws, while scoring 1,254 runs during that time.

It was a captaincy that ended with back-to-back series losses - a record 3-0 home defeat to New Zealand and a 4-1 loss to Australia that knocked India out of the 2025 World Test Championship.

"Thank you, Captain ... End of an era in whites! ... We are proud of you, Hitman," India cricket said in a statement.

Most recently, Sharma captained India to victories at the 2025 ODI Champions Trophy and the 2024 T20 World Cup, after which he announced his retirement from that format.

India opens its five-test tour of England on June 20.



In this file photo, Mumbai Indians' Rohit Sharma plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, India. (AP)



Chennai Super Kings' Dewald Brevis plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India. (AP)

Chennai overcomes top-order batting collapse to beat Kolkata

Super Kings push Knight Riders to the brink of elimination

KOLKATA, India, May 8, (AP): Chennai Super Kings pushed defending champion Kolkata Knight Riders to the brink of elimination with a nervy two-wicket victory in the Indian Premier League.

Chennai, which is already out of the playoff race, overcame another top-order batting collapse to reach 183-8 for only its third win in 12 matches. Kolkata lies at No. 6 with 11 points and just two games in hand.

Wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad had earlier picked up 4-31 on a favorable wicket for spinners to restrict Kolkata at 179-6.

Dewald Brevis didn't hold back despite Chennai losing half the side inside the first six overs of the batting powerplay. Kolkata had Chennai on the mat at 60-5 inside the first six overs despite young IPL debutant Urvil Patel making a rapid 31 off 11 balls that featured four sixes.

With 87 needed of the last 10 overs, Brevis turned the game on its head with his wide range of shots and smashed fast bowler Vaibhav Arora for



Kolkata Knight Riders' Harshit Rana celebrates the dismissal of Chennai Super Kings' Urvil Patel during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India. (AP)

6-4-4-6-6-4 in one over as he raised his maiden IPL half-century off 22 balls.

Kolkata fought back when Brevis holed out at long-on in the 13th over, but impact player Shivam Dube (45) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni brought

Chennai closer to victory with 43-run partnership.

Arora picked up the wickets of Dube and Ahmad in the penultimate over but experienced Dhoni (17 not out) ensured Chennai doesn't slip up in the

last over as he lofted Andre Russell for six over mid-wicket and No. 10 batter Anshul Kamboj sealed the game with a boundary.

Noor Ahmad exploited perfect bowling conditions for spinners to restrict Kolkata as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja (1-34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (0-19) to restrict Kolkata.

The three spinners bowled 11 overs between them to finish with 5-84.

Kolkata lost Rahmanullah Gurbaz (11) in Kamboj's first over but Sunil Narine (26) and captain Ajinkya Rahane (48) hit a combined eight fours and two sixes to take it to 67-1 in first six overs.

But once the spinners were deployed from both ends, Kolkata struggled to keep up the momentum. Ahmad had two wickets in his first over when he had Narine stumped and then Angkrish Raghuvanshi edged the left-arm spinner to give Dhoni his 200th catch in the IPL.

Rahane and Manish Pandey, who replaced injured Venkatesh Iyer, added 32 runs before Rahane was caught by Devon Conway at backward point to give Jadeja his first wicket. Russell provided impetus by smashing three sixes and four boundaries in his 21-ball knock of 38 before Ahmad had him caught at long-off in the death overs and also dismissed Rinku Singh for 9.

Beckham and Neville part of new ownership group at Salford

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SALFORD, England, May 8, (AP): David Beckham and Gary Neville are part of a new consortium to have taken ownership of English fourth-tier soccer club Salford City.

The club was previously owned by Beckham, Neville and other former Manchester United teammates in its so-called "Class of '92" - Nicky Butt, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes and Phil Neville - along with Singapore businessman Peter Lim.

A new ownership group, containing Beckham, Gary Neville and other shareholders from the United States, India and England, has bought Salford and have committed to "invest significantly in the club, the team and its facilities," Salford said on Thursday.

Butt, Giggs, Scholes and Phil Neville are no longer shareholders but "will continue to contrib-

ute to the next step of this journey with roles in the club," Salford said.

Beckham grew up in Salford and said he had "such fond memories of my time living there and the place and its people played such an important part in my early life in football." "Salford City is at the heart of its community ... it has a rich history and I am delighted to be a part of the next chapter."

Beckham also is a co-owner of Major League Soccer club Inter Miami. Neville said the consortium contains "a diverse range of minds and expertise, held together by a love of football."

"Football will come first, however it's critical that we drive the club towards sustainability in the next four, five years," Neville said. "I can't wait for the next part of this journey." Salford finished in eighth place - outside the playoff spots - in League Two this season.



In this file photo, a general view of the closing ceremony before the World Cup final soccer match between Germany and Argentina at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. (AP)

As part of longstanding commitment to social responsibility and strong belief in supporting national talents

NBK supports Rafa Nadal’s Junior Team during TenPro Global Tennis Tournament in Antalya

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: In light of their strategic partnership, the National Bank of Kuwait supported the Junior Team at Rafa Nadal Academy during the TenPro Tennis Tournament held in Antalya, Turkey from 11 until 20 April.

At the tournament, 8 juniors under 14 years from the Rafa Nadal Academy’s team played fierce games in which they showed remarkable competitiveness and exceptional sportsmanship, as they played against opponents from different nationalities, which enabled them to gain international experience and explore diverse tennis practices in a professional and competitive atmosphere.

NBK’s support comes from its longstanding commitment to social responsibility and strong belief in sponsoring and supporting national talents, in addition to its noticeable efforts to achieve sustainable development by encouraging all society members to exercise and follow healthy lifestyles.

On this occasion, Mohammad Al-Sarraf, Public Relations and Event Management Officer said: “This participation is a great chance for juniors to gain more experience and learn

Al-Sarraf:

- The tournament is a great chance for juniors to gain more experience and learn new tennis techniques.
- We strive to build a unique generation of tennis champions and provide ideal platforms that contribute to upskilling players and achieving their athletic goals.
- NBK is committed to encouraging society members to follow and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

new techniques in tennis. We wish to develop and expand the level of tennis in Kuwait, build a unique generation of champions, and provide ideal platforms that contribute to upskilling junior athletes and achieving their goals.”

Al-Sarraf added: “The popularity of tennis in our society has driven NBK to support it by organizing relevant events and ultimately establishing this strategic partnership through which we

strive to build a legacy of excellence and guarantee a promising future of education and development for our youth.”

Al-Sarraf also emphasized that NBK prioritizes exercising and healthy lifestyles, and it has always taken the initiative to sponsor championships and tournaments to enable and encourage athletes. In this way, it wishes to achieve its social development objectives by encouraging people to follow healthy lifestyles and subsequently build a brighter future for the Kuwaiti youth.

The members of Rafa Nadal Academy have access to 15 open and closed tennis courts that have been designed as per international standards. The academy encompasses squash and padel courts, in addition to a closed swimming pool and segregated fitness centers.

It should be noted that NBK is committed to making various initiatives and programs that prioritize youth well-being, education, health, women empowerment, and environmental sustainability, as it strives to play a key role in making positive change and securing a brighter future for the upcoming generations.



Players pose with officials during the trip.

Sheikh Fahad: Hosting OCA GA reflects Kuwait’s prominent role in Asian sports

KUWAIT, May 8, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah, affirmed that Kuwait’s hosting of the 45th General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), set to kick off next Sunday under the slogan “One Asia,” reflects the country’s prominent position on the Asian Olympic sports map.

In a statement issued Thursday, Sheikh Fahad said the Kuwait Olympic Committee, in cooperation with the OCA, has completed all necessary preparations to



Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah.

welcome this major continental event, which unites

the Asian Olympic sports family.

The official General Assembly meeting will take place next Monday at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, with the participation of presidents and officials representing the National Olympic Committees of 45 Asian nations. The event will also be graced by the presence of International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Dr. Thomas Bach.

Sheikh Fahad highlighted that approximately 400 distinguished sports figures from across Asia and around the globe have been invited

to attend this significant gathering, which aims to further the development of the Olympic movement across the continent.

In a related event, Sheikh Fahad announced that the Kuwait Olympic Committee will also host the 37th meeting of the Council of Presidents of the Gulf Olympic Committees this Sunday at the Four Seasons Hotel.

He emphasized the importance of this meeting in strengthening regional cooperation and advancing the shared goals of Gulf sports development.

I will wake the team up: Flick

Barcelona must regroup after Inter loss to face Madrid in crucial clasico

BARCELONA, Spain, May 8, (AP): Barcelona must recover from its painful Champions League exit in time to face Real Madrid on Sunday with the La Liga title on the line.

Hansi Flick’s team was moments away from reaching its first European final in a decade when Inter Milan conjured a 4-3 extra-time comeback on Tuesday. The Italian side won 7-6 on aggregate in one of the most memorable knockout ties in recent soccer history.

Barcelona’s youthful team was left reeling from the loss, but Flick immediately tried to put the focus on the upcoming clasico with only four days separating the two crucial games.

“This game is over and now we have to pick ourselves up and look ahead as we have the clasico coming up,” Flick said after the defeat at San Siro. “I will wake the team up.”

Barcelona leads Madrid by four points and a victory would give it a comfortable cushion, but a Madrid win would throw open the title chase in the three remaining rounds.

Barcelona is seeking a double after having beaten Madrid 3-2 in extra time in the Copa del Rey final two weeks ago. A Barcelona triumph would also complete a sweep of all four clasicos this season; it beat Madrid 5-2 in the Spanish Super Cup in January after winning 4-0 at Madrid in the league in October.

Madrid, in contrast, is trying to salvage a disappointing season by successfully defending its La Liga title ahead of this summer’s expanded Club World Cup.

Lamine Yamal, who played superbly against Inter only to be denied a second-leg goal, pledged that Barcelona take another run at the Champions League title next season. But he ended that message with a rallying cry ahead of Madrid’s visit.

“Sunday is another final and we have to stick together. Go Barça!” Yamal wrote after the game.

The wear and tear of the season has taken its toll and left several players, especially in defense, on the injured list.

Madrid will be without its entire first-choice backline of Antonio Rudiger, Eder Militao, Dani Carvajal and Ferland Mendy. Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, who moonlights as a left back, is also out.

That means youth player Raül Asensio and midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni will likely anchor Madrid’s defense with Lucas Vázquez and Fran García as full backs.

Barcelona is hoping left back Alejandro Balde will recover from a left-thigh injury that ruled him out of the series against Inter.

Right back Jules Koundé, who netted the winner in the Copa del Rey final, has been ruled out by a left-thigh injury. Ronald Araújo, or perhaps Éric García, will take his place and face off against Madrid’s Vinícius Júnior.



Barcelona’s Lamine Yamal, right, fights for the ball with Real Madrid’s Vinicius Junior during the Spanish Copa del Rey final soccer match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at Estadio de La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain. (AP)

Flick will have to decide if Robert Lewandowski or Ferran Torres starts at striker. Lewandowski missed several matches before he came on as a late substitute against Inter this week but was unable to prove effective.

Watch out for the midfield battle between Barcelona’s Pedri González and Madrid’s Jude Bellingham. The playmakers are critical to directing their teams’ attacks.

All three prior clasicos have been high scoring - at least for Barcelona with 12 total goals to Madrid’s four, so expect more goals against the depleted defenses at the Olympic Stadium.

Led by Raphinha, Yamal and Lewandowski, Barcelona has a league-high 91 goals, compared to Madrid’s 69. Both sides have conceded 33 goals this campaign.

Lewandowski leads the league with 25 goals. Madrid’s Kylian Mbappé is right behind with 24. But while Yamal and Raphinha are having breakout seasons, Vinicius and Rodrigo have been inconsistent.

With Barcelona ruling the statistics and recent meetings, Madrid will have to capitalize on its extra days of rest and hope that Barcelona’s morale was damaged by Inter.

The vibe in Spain is that Sunday’s game will likely be the last big contest for Carlo Ancelotti as the Madrid coach.

He is under contract through the next campaign but is widely expected to leave the club after a rough season in which the team played worse despite adding Mbappé to its squad.

Brazil has been courting Ancelotti for over a year and it appears talks are still ongoing with the veteran manager. Ancelotti has repeatedly deflected questions regarding his future by saying he will announce his plans when the season ends.

Knicks shock Celtics with another late rally to take control of series

OKC rolls past Nuggets to tie series



New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns (32) takes a shot against the Boston Celtics during the first half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Boston. (AP)

BOSTON, May 8, (AP): For the second straight game, the New York Knicks found themselves in a hole the Boston Celtics have rarely let teams out of this season.

The Knicks again found a way-almost the same way, in fact - to pull off the improbable. And now they are two wins away from knocking the defending champions out of the playoffs.

Mikal Bridges sealed another 20-point comeback with his second straight game-ending steal, and the Knicks stunned the Celtics again Wednesday night, winning 91-90 for a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Jalen Brunson scored 17 points for New York and made two free throws with 12.7 seconds left for a 91-90 lead. Jayson Tatum then couldn’t get to the rim, and Bridges moved in to bat the ball away and recover it.

Bridges also scored all of his 14 points in the fourth quarter. Josh Hart had 23 points and Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 21 points and 17 rebounds for the Knicks, who will host Game 3 on Saturday.

“Going home, we realize the opportunity we have. We just have to stay locked in,” Brunson said.

Jaylen Brown and Derrick White scored 20 points apiece for the Cel-

tics, who were 10 for 40 from 3-point range after going 15 for 60 in Game 1.

Tatum was limited to 13 points on 5-for-19 shooting for the Celtics, who went more than eight minutes without a field goal in the fourth quarter. They missed 13 consecutive shots during the stretch.

Teams that win the first two games of a best-of-seven series on the road win the series 85.7% of the time. The Knicks took the opener when Bridges stole the ball away from Brown with a second left in overtime.

Kristaps Porzingis didn’t start after sitting out the second half of Game 1 with an illness. He came off the bench



Oklahoma City Thunder’s Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) works against Denver Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon, right, in the second half of Game 2 in the conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs in Oklahoma City. (AP)

for just the fifth time in his NBA career and finished with eight points and four rebounds in 14 minutes.

All eyes were on the Celtics’ offense after they missed an NBA playoff-record 45 3-pointers in their Game 1 loss. They went 24 for 54 from 2-point range on Wednesday.

Thunder 149, Nuggets 106

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points in three quarters, and the Oklahoma City Thunder set league and team records in a 149-106 win over the Denver Nuggets that tied the Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

Oklahoma City set an NBA playoff record for first-half points with 87, surpassing the 86 scored by the Cleveland Cavaliers against the Golden State Warriors in Game 4 of the NBA Finals on June 9, 2017. Chet Holmgren, who missed two critical free throws late in Game 1, made a pair with one second remaining in the second quarter to set the record and give the Thunder an 87-56 lead.

The Thunder tied the record for points in any half of a playoff game. Milwaukee had 87 in the second half against Denver on April 23, 1978.

Oklahoma City became the first home team to win a game in the second round. Game 3 is Friday in Denver.

Gilgeous-Alexander made 11 of 13 field goals, all 11 of his free throws and had eight assists. He led eight players who scored in double figures.

Russell Westbrook led the Nuggets with 19 points. Nikola Jokic, who had 42 points and 22 rebounds for Denver in a Game 1 win, had just 17 points and eight rebounds on Wednesday before fouling out late in the third quarter.

The crowd cheered for Westbrook, the ex-Thunder star, when he entered Game 1 as a reserve for Denver, but booed him shortly after he entered Game 2. Westbrook got called for a technical foul moments later, and Gilgeous-Alexander made the free throw to make it 34-13.

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Estevao of Brazil's Palmeiras, center, carries the ball between Matias Perez, left and Victor Velazquez of Paraguay's Cerro Porteno during a Copa Libertadores Group G soccer match at La Nueva Olla stadium in Asuncion, Paraguay. Palmeiras won 2-0. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait Club wins Futsal Federation Cup after thriller against Al-Qadsia

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Kuwait Club emerged victorious in the Futsal Federation Cup final, defeating Al-Qadsia 3-2 in a thrilling encounter held at Yousef Al-Shaheen Hall, hosted by Kazma Club.

From the opening whistle, Kuwait Club asserted control, dominating play and quickly establishing a three-goal lead. The scoring was opened by Abdulaziz Al-Hajri, followed by goals from Spanish international Borja Diaz and Italian star Guilherme Stringari.

Al-Qadsia responded with resilience, regrouping and narrowing the gap with goals from Brazilian forward Pedrinho and Nasser Al-Alban, setting the

stage for a tense finale.

The closing moments of the match were packed with excitement as Al-Qadsia pushed for an equalizer while Kuwait Club sought to seal the win with a fourth goal. Kuwait was forced to finish the match a player down after Abdulrahman Al-Masbahi received a red card, adding to the drama of the final minutes.

With this win, Kuwait Club secured its third title of the season, having previously lifted both the Cup and Super Cup.

The Secretary-General of the Kuwait Football Association, Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub, attended the final and presented the Cup to the champions, with Al-Qadsia officially finishing as runners-up.



Futsal Federation Cup winner, Kuwait Club celebrate on the podium.



Kuwaiti players celebrate their victory over UAE.

Egypt eyes redemption against Qatar

Kuwait seeks Arab Handball Cup final spot against Bahrain

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Kuwait's national handball team faces a pivotal challenge at 7:00 pm today when it meets Bahrain in the semi-finals of the 10th Arab Handball Cup, hosted at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The tournament runs through May 11.

Earlier in the day, the other semi-final will see a highly anticipated clash between Qatar and Egypt at 5:00 pm. As part of the classification rounds (5th-9th place), two matches are scheduled earlier in the day. Tunisia will take on Morocco at 1:00 pm, followed by Saudi Arabia against Iraq at 3:00 pm.

Kuwait enters the semi-final with momentum, aiming for a third consecutive victory to

secure a place in Sunday's final. Backed by home support and the advantage of playing on familiar turf, the Kuwaiti team hopes to overcome a tough and determined Bahraini side also eager to reach the final.

Bahrain, on its part, will rely on a quick transition game and solid teamwork under coach Predrag. Veteran players Hussein Al-Sayyad and goalkeeper Mohammed Abdul-Hussein are expected to lead the effort against the host.

In the second semi-final, Group B leader Qatar will count on a blend of youth and experience to push past Egypt and reach the final. Egypt, who advanced as the best second-placed team, is looking to bounce back from a group stage loss to Bahrain and chal-

lenge Qatar for a place in the championship match.

Qaid Al-Adwani, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Handball Federation and Director of the 10th Arab Cup, confirmed that the final will take place as scheduled on Sunday at 7:00 pm.

He explained that the tournament dates were selected to align with International Handball Federation Week and the calendar of the Arab Handball Federation. The final will coincide with the Premier League football title decider on the same day.

"There is coordination with the Kuwait Football Association," Al-Adwani noted. "However, due to schedule constraints on both sides, Sunday remained the only viable option

for the handball final."

Players of Kuwait's national team expressed joy following their win over the UAE in the final group stage match, which secured their top spot in Group C and a semi-final berth.

Star player Abdulaziz Al-Shammari remarked, "Winning two matches, topping the group, and reaching the semi-finals is the least we can offer Kuwait and its loyal fans. We are proud to host the Arab Handball Cup in Kuwait for the first time in 23 years — in the land of friendship and peace." Goalkeeper Hassan Safar added, "Our true joy lies in bringing happiness to our loyal fans who have supported us from the start. We call on them to fill the stands tonight and back us against Bahrain."

PSG holds off Arsenal to secure Champions League final berth

Inter looms on May 31 in Munich

PARIS, May 8, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain weathered one attack after another and showed remarkable adaptability to hold off and defeat an inspired Arsenal 2-1 to reach the Champions League final and have another shot at the title it craves.

Deprived of the ball possession it usually enjoys, PSG looked shaky early on but found answers by relying on counter-attacks and goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma to advance 3-1 on aggregate.

PSG reached the final of Europe's elite tournament for just the second time in club history - it was runner-up five years ago - and did so in the first season following superstar Kylian Mbappé's departure to Real Madrid.

The big hole left by Mbappé was not filled by yet another superstar. This was a major change at a club where owners had spent lavishly for more than a dec-

ade to attract big names such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Lionel Messi, and Neymar.

The club's new approach allowed coach Luis Enrique to build a rejuvenated, rock-solid side playing some of the best football in Europe.

"I said from the first day that our goal was to work hard enough to be in a position to make history - and that remains our goal," Enrique said. "To be the first to win the long-awaited trophy. This is a project that has evolved since last year, and I feel very comfortable here as a coach because I have the freedom and support from the president to build what we want, adapting to the market to put together a team that improves every day."

The French club will try again for its first Champions League title when it faces Inter Milan on May 31 in Munich.

"We believe in our coach and our players-in our talented, young, hungry players," PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi told CBS Sports. "They fight for the team, they die for the jersey, that's the most important, for the city, for the club."

"There's still one match to go. ... we are not done."

Three-time European champion Inter defeated Barcelona 7-6 on aggregate in one of the greatest semifinals in the competition's history.

PSG, which eliminated Aston Villa and Liverpool before sending Arsenal home, had lost to Borussia Dortmund at this stage last year and was beaten by Bayern Munich in the 2020 final.

PSG broke the deadlock in the 27th minute from a set piece after the Arsenal defense cleared a free kick toward the edge of the area. The ball bounced back into the path of Fabian Ruiz, who smashed a stunning half-volley into the back of the net.

Achraf Hakimi curled in a precise finish in the 72nd minute to make it 2-0 on the night before Bukayo Saka pulled one back for the Gunners.

Arsenal had struggled early on last week in London - unable to cope with PSG's intensity in midfield - and lost 1-0.

This time, boosted by the return of midfielder Thomas Partey, the Gunners mustered 61 attacks, compared to PSG's 26.

Battle for fourth intensifies

Kuwait Club & Al-Arabi finalize preparations for decisive clash



A file photo of players fighting for the ball during Zain Premier League match.

KUWAIT CITY, May 8: Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi will wrap up their preparations for the decisive clash scheduled for Sunday in the fifth and final round of the Zain Premier League championship group.

Both sides are vying for the coveted league title. Kuwait Club currently leads the standings with 57 points and requires just one point to be crowned champion for the fourth consecutive year and the 20th time in its history. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi, sitting on 55 points, must secure a win to claim the title for the 18th time in club history.

The two sides have faced off twice this season in the league — Kuwait Club won the first encounter 2-0, while the second ended in a goalless draw.

The fourth round wrapped up with a single match between Salmiya and Fahaheel at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium, ending in a 1-1 draw.

Salmiya now holds fourth place with 32 points, just ahead of Fahaheel, who sits fifth with 31 points.

In Sunday's final round, Salmiya will face Al-Tadamon (6th place, 20 points), while Fahaheel will go up against Al-Qadsia, who have locked in third place with 38 points.

Fahaheel's Syrian coach Firas Al-Khatib expressed disappointment over missed chances, stating, "The waste of easy opportunities continues." He commended his players for their determination and strong desire to clinch fourth place, emphasizing that the team still has a real chance to achieve that goal. Al-Khatib also praised Salmiya goalkeeper Yousef Al-Kandari for his exceptional performance.

Tomorrow also marks the final round of the relegation group, with Khaitan and Yarmouk set to bid farewell to the Zain Premier League. The two sides will face off at 7:10 PM at Al-Sadalaqa and Al-Salam Stadiums.

Meanwhile, Kazma (20 points) and Al-Nasr (18 points), both of whom have already secured their place in next season's Premier League, will clash at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium.

Best of the Rest

Wirtz open to playing elsewhere: Bayer Leverkusen star Florian Wirtz says he'd like to play for another club sometime.

"I'm definitely keen to leave my comfort zone at some point and experience something new," Wirtz said in a Sports Illustrated interview published on Thursday. "I know the football locker rooms well enough and am convinced I would quickly fit in anywhere."

The 22-year-old Wirtz has a contract with Leverkusen to 2027 but has been linked with a potential move to league rival Bayern Munich, Premier League side Manchester City, and Spanish giant Real Madrid. (AP)



PSG's Joao Neves, right, challenges Arsenal's Declan Rice during the Champions League semifinal, second leg soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal at the Parc des Princes in Paris. (AP)