



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear government, trust in Allah and tether the camel ... Kuwait is still blocked

'LAISSEZ-FAIRE et laissez-passer' (Let do and let pass) is a principle that France adopted in the second half of the 18th century. At the time, France was experiencing a major economic crisis, so the then Minister of Finance agreed with merchants not to interfere with the activities, properties or goods of the people. In less than three years, France became a major economic power in Europe.

This introduction is necessary to shed light on the decisions made in Kuwait over the past 15 years, which led to economic contraction and a decline in the gross domestic product (GDP). Behind these decisions were officials who were either incompetent or sought to quickly enrich themselves, even at the expense of the greater national interest.

Before this, Kuwait was closer to the principle of 'laissez-faire'; enjoying commercial, urban and social stability.

With the rise of the visa and human trafficking frenzy, we began to notice the issuance of decisions and legislation that paralyzed economic activity, including the prosecution of workers known as 'freelancers'.

Civilized countries, including some Gulf states, have taken steps to ensure that the government sponsors the workers. This opened doors to millions of workers from around the world and they allowed non-citizens to own properties. What was the result?

For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the first to allow this, which boosted its GDP,

reaching AED 1.322 trillion at the end of last year; while Kuwait recorded a GDP of KD9.73 billion in the same year -- a decline of 3.9 percent.

Saudi Arabia, which opened up to the world in recent years, has allowed foreign investment and granted real estate ownership rights to non-Saudis, significantly boosting its GDP; while Kuwait is still struggling to overcome its economic downturn, lacking modern legislative tools.

Nevertheless, I would like to thank Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah for the relentless efforts he exerted in this regard and for ratifying the new Foreigners Residency Law.

Unfortunately, until today, no executive regulations have been issued for this law; meaning, we remain in limbo while the old law is still in effect.

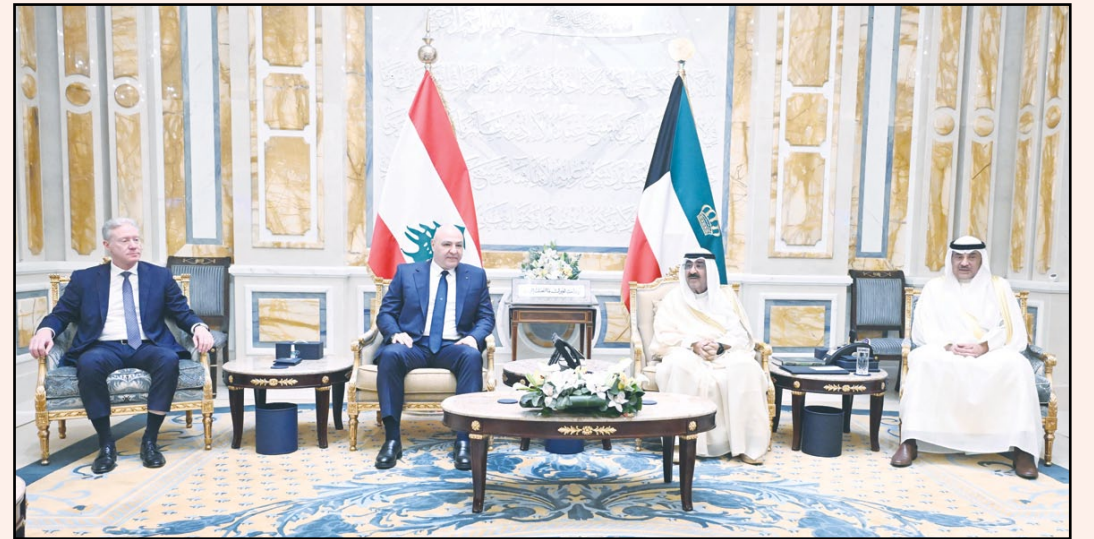
When unfair decisions were made against Kuwaitis and expatriates, particularly regarding the deportation campaigns; the workers' wages rose from KD5 to KD20 and the wage of a professional worker increased up to KD50 or KD60. This increased the cost of construction and all services; hence, the citizens and government were the worst hit by such decisions.

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Kuwait, Lebanon hold strategic talks



Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and visiting Lebanese President Joseph Aoun during the official rounds of talks between Kuwait and Lebanon at Bayan Palace.

HH Amir, President Aoun explore growth avenues

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and visiting Lebanese President Joseph Aoun headed on Monday the official rounds of talks between Kuwait and Lebanon at Bayan Palace.

The talks were held in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and senior officials from both countries.

In a statement, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said the talks focused on ties and means to develop them on all possible domains.

He added that the recent developments in Lebanon were also on the table of discussions, noting that the meeting affirmed that Lebanon had a historic chance to rebuild and develop as to achieve the aspirations of the Lebanese people.

Top issues of mutual concern, ways to boost Arab cooperation, and latest developments on the regional and international domains were also touched on, said the minister.

Following the talks, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosted a luncheon in honor of visiting Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and the accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on Monday extended

his gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the warm welcome and generous hospitality during his two-day visit to Kuwait.

In a farewell message delivered from Kuwait International Airport's control tower, President Aoun expressed deep appreciation for the reception he and his delegation received during the visit, noting it reflected Kuwait's genuine affection for Lebanon and its people.

He also praised the fruitful talks he held with His Highness the Amir, reaffirming Kuwait's enduring support for Lebanon and the shared commitment to strengthening bilateral relations across all sectors.

President Aoun concluded by wishing His Highness the Amir good health and success in leading Kuwait toward further progress and prosperity.

The Lebanese president was seen off by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shreedha Al-Musherji, Minister of Defence and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and state officials.

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Photo by Mohammad Morsi

The iconic Kuwait Towers rise majestically, cutting through Monday's scorching winds and dust-filled skies.

Kuwait residency sweep snares 440 illegal expats

Campaign targets employers, sponsors amid visa violations arrests

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): Some 440 individuals were arrested for violating residency visas and work permits between April 30 until May 9, said the Ministry of Interior on Monday.

The Interior Ministry's Public Relation Department indicated that the arrested were sent to competent legal authorities for due process.

It affirmed that such campaigns to seize violators of residency visas and work permits would continue, pointing out that legal procedures would be taken against employers and sponsors enabling such violations.

Kuwait targets inflation with new oversight body

Supply chain, price hikes in gov't crosshairs

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 33/2025 on the formation of the Central Committee for Price Studies, Inflation Monitoring, and Supply Chains.

The decision, which was published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", states the following:
Article 1:

A central committee shall be formed in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry under the name "Central Committee for Price Studies, Inflation Monitoring, and Supply Chains".
It will be chaired by the ministry's undersecretary,

and will include representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Family and Childhood Affairs Department, Kuwait University, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, the General Administration of Customs, the Kuwait Fire Force, Kuwait Supply Company, the Competition Protection Agency, the Consumer Protection Society, the Central Statistical Bureau, the Kuwait Poultry Producers Union, the Union of Distributors of Consumer Goods for Wholesale and Retail Trade, and the Kuwait Union of Food Traders and Manufacturers.

All members must hold a position no lower than director of a department or its equivalent.
The committee may also consult experienced and

specialized individuals when necessary, provided they do not have voting rights.

Article 2:
The Central Committee shall be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Monitoring and regulating prices in local markets, and establishing controls and mechanisms to ensure price stability.
2. Studying local inflation rates and proposing appropriate recommendations to address and mitigate their impact.
3. Monitoring supply chains to ensure their strength and efficiency, and submitting proposals that support the continuous flow of goods and services.

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\$7 bln lost in food waste

'Food insecurity' looms over GCC nations, says US expert

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: "Food security is one of the fundamental challenges that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are currently facing, given their heavy reliance on imports to meet their food needs due to limited natural resources, especially water and arable land," says Assistant Director for Program Development in the Office of International Programs in Agriculture at Purdue University Dr. Gary Burniske.

Burniske made the statement in a lecture organized by the Public Diplomacy Section at the US Embassy in Kuwait titled, "Strategic Considerations for Food Security in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries," held Monday at the College of Life Sciences in Kuwait University.

He pointed out that "in light of recurring global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and wars, it has be-

come imperative to develop strategic plans to achieve a certain degree of self-sufficiency and reduce dependence on external sources."

He said some Gulf countries have turned to investing in agricultural technology, such as vertical farming and water desalination for use in agriculture, in addition to establishing strategic reserves of basic food commodities.

He added partnerships with the private sector have also been strengthened, and investments in agricultural land outside the region have been heightened to ensure diversified food supply sources.

He reiterated that Gulf countries are facing numerous challenges related to food security in agricultural production, particularly water shortages; extreme temperatures; soil, air and water pollution; ecosystem degradation; post-harvest management and crop storage;

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Convicted ex-minister faces Cassation Court on May 26

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: The Court of Cassation will hold its first session on the trial of former Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled on May 26.

Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled was sentenced to 14 years in prison before the Ministerial Court in two cases of embez-

zling funds from the ministries of Defense and Interior. Till date, he has not surrendered since his conviction in January.

The Ministerial Court had earlier sentenced him to 14 years in prison in two cases of embezzling public funds from the two ministries, fined him KD10 million and ordered him to repay KD20 million.

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Don't accept all social media content, cautions academic 2



NBK is the diamond sponsor for 'Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week' conference 10



Newswatch

BAGHDAD: The senior officials' preparatory meeting of the Economic and Social committee began on Monday ahead of the 34th Arab Summit in Baghdad scheduled on May 17.

This is the first meeting in a series of preparatory gatherings, which is also held ahead of the fifth Development Summit, also scheduled in the Iraqi capital.

The meeting began with the work of the committee responsible for follow-up and preparation for the Development Summit, chaired by Lebanon, and comprising the Development Summit Troika (Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Iraq), the Economic and Social Council Troika (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Tunisia), as well as Egypt, Morocco, and the General Secretariat of the League.

The proceedings of the Economic and Social Council at the senior officials' level, preparatory to the Fifth Arab Development Summit, followed thereafter.

During this meeting, Iraq assumed the presidency from Lebanon, with the participation of Arab delegations, including Kuwait, which was represented by Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Finance, Talal Al-Namash. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:29 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise... 04:58 Maghrib .. 18:31
 Zohr 11:44 Isha 19:57

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-42 km/h and some high clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather hot and humid

Weather

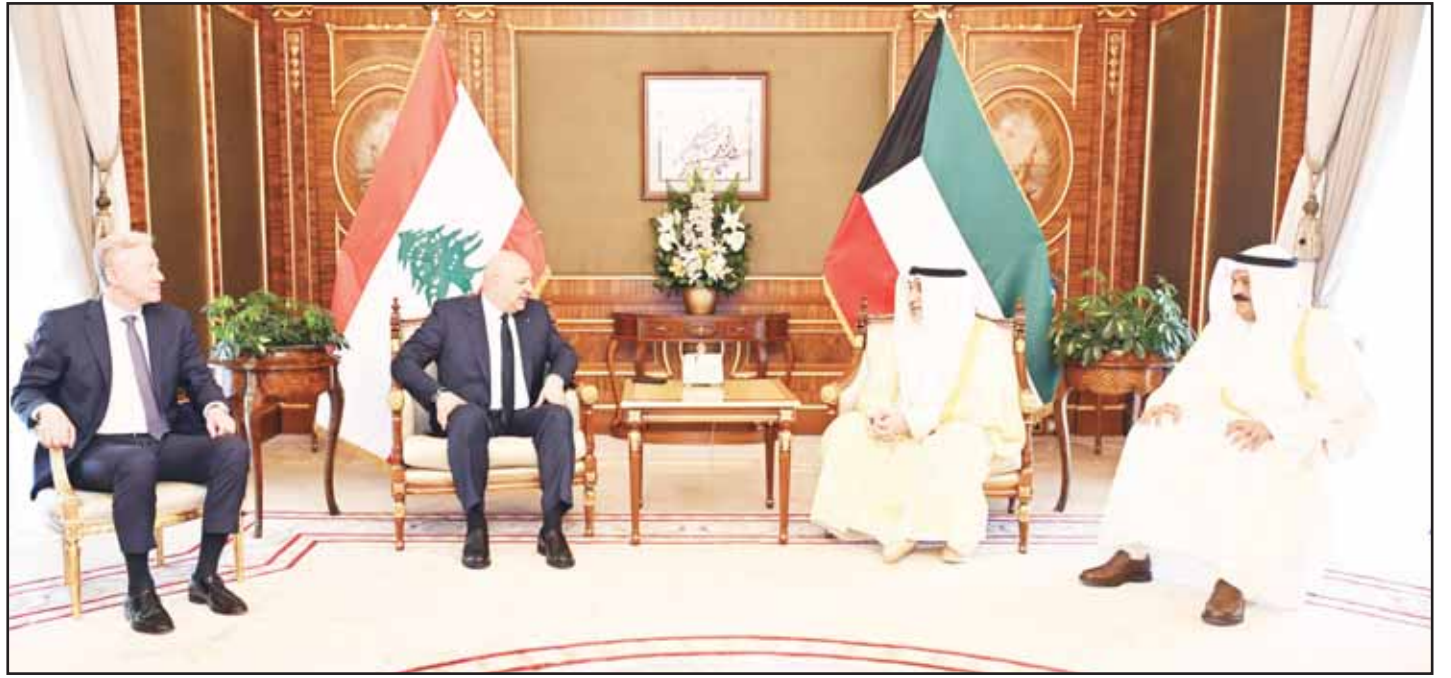
especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait Airport 43 25

Abdaly	45	27
Bubyan	39	26
Jahra	45	30
Failaka Islana	41	29
Salmiyah	35	28
Ahmadi	38	25
Jal Aliyah	44	27
Nuwaisib	43	23



Crown Prince Diwan photo
 His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Lebanese President.



PM Diwan photo
 President of Lebanon Joseph Aoun meets the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah.

Lebanese President meets Crown Prince, Acting PM

Visiting President of Lebanon Joseph Aoun met on Sunday at his residence in Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah. Present at the meeting was head of the honorary delegation and Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Mohammad

Abulhassan. President of Lebanon Joseph Aoun also met on Sunday at his residence in Bayan Palace Acting Prime Min-

ister Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah. Present at the meeting was head of the honorary delegation and Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Mohammad Abulhassan.



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah expressing his views.



Editor-in Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah with other guests at the forum.



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah (right) at the forum.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq
 Some of the journalists who won awards.



HH the Amir

HH the Crown Prince

HH the PM

Amir congratulates Singapore on parliamentary poll success

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to the President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam, congratulating him on the success of the 14th parliamentary election.

His Highness the Amir wished the President of Singapore well-being and his country further prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable to the President of

Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam, congratulating him on the success of the 14th parliamentary election.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president of Singapore well-being and his country further prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable to the President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam, congratulating him on the success of the 14th parliamentary election.

MoE nods foreign scholarship plan for '25/'26 academic year

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has approved the external scholarship plan for the 2025/2026 academic year.

This plan is for students who obtained their high school diplomas in the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic years.

This coincides with the launching of national campaign, "Guide Me", for the fourth consecutive year. It aims to provide comprehensive information to Kuwaiti high school graduates and their families regarding the registration procedures and scholarship requirements.

Furthermore, Al-Jalal has approved the addition of 15 new majors to the scholarship list for Harvard, UC Berkeley and

Carnegie Mellon universities in the United States. These majors include Engineering, Energy, Biology, Communication and Family Therapy.

Additional academic programs and majors were also incorporated into the list of higher education institutions in the United States offering admission to undergraduate and graduate programs.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalencies and Cultural Relations at the ministry Ghaidaa Madkour affirmed that the scholarship plan has been designed to meet the needs of the public and private sectors, as well as in line with the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

She disclosed that the plan emphasizes specialization diversity and geographical distribution to support the national development plan through the inclusion of several new specializations that meet the needs of the labor market.

She added that registration for the scholarship plan will start on June 11 and end at 12:00 noon on July 3 through the official website of the ministry.



Dr. Al-Jallal

Don't accept all social media content, cautions academic

Veteran journalist Al-Jarallah slams extremism

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: The Arab Media Forum concluded on Monday with four engaging dialogue sessions covering vital issues related to the media, technology, societal influence and legal frameworks, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The first session titled, "Psychological Behavior in the Media and Social Media," featured prominent Syrian media figure Mustafa Agha who emphasized the need for maintaining credibility in media practices, especially in the age of social media. He urged Arab media institutions to implement measures to protect the public from the psychological harms of digital media.

In a related context, Egyptian psychiatrist Dr. Mohab Mujahid warned about the potentially harmful effects of social media in all societies, stressing the importance of self-restraint in online engagement. He advised individuals to remain calm and avoid responding to negative comments on their personal posts.

In the second session titled, "Journalism is an Endless Profession," Editor-in-Chief of Bahrain's Al-Ayam newspaper Rashid Al-Hamad urged journalists to stay abreast of technological advancements such as artificial intelligence. He reassured those present at the forum that digital journalism will not replace print media entirely. He underscored the need to raise cultural awareness among journalists to support effective communication and longevity in the profession.

Editor-in-Chief of Egyptian website '24' Mahmoud Mamlouk acknowledged the dominance of digital journalism over print. He then highlighted the importance of integrating technology with journalistic skills, while maintaining the

irreplaceable role of human insight. He stressed the value of advanced training for aspiring media professionals, indicating that technological proficiency enhances job prospects in the modern media landscape.

The third session titled, "Women and the Media: Mental Image and Professional Skills," spotlighted the evolving role of women in the Arab media. Former Egyptian Minister of Information Dr. Doria Sharaf El-Din called for sustained contributions from Arab women; pointing out that despite historical marginalization, progress has been made. She credited the visual media, such as cinema and theater, for improving the portrayal of women and shifting societal perceptions.

Fadhila Al-Muaini, an Emirati writer, affirmed that communication is rooted in trust and emphasized that Arab women have become pioneers in media and other sectors.

Kuwaiti academic Dr. Samar Baqer Al-Jamour cautioned against blindly accepting all social media content, advocating instead for promoting content that fosters intellectual and cultural development.

Lebanese journalist Lana Madwar discussed the emotional impact of social media and reaffirmed her commitment to substance over style in journalism.

Session

The fourth session titled, "Laws and Legislation in the Media and Social Media," was held in collaboration with the Kuwait Lawyers Association. Renowned Egyptian lawyer Dr. Mohammad Abu Shaqqa explained that Article 36 of the Kuwaiti Constitution enshrines freedom of expression, and that Kuwait has long had traditions supporting free speech -- even before the drafting of the Constitution.

Dr. Hassan Al-Abdullah, a journalist and lawyer, stated that Kuwait has around eight specific media laws and highlighted the evolution of press legislation since 2006, which permitted the launch of new newspapers.

In the final dialogue session titled, "Media: Message and Rules," Islamic preacher Mustafa

Hosni asserted that words carry moral weight and urged religious figures to approach "fatwas" with careful consideration. He pointed out that media -- both traditional and social -- plays a vital role in countering atheism and must be grounded in truth and fairness.

Veteran journalist and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah presented a personal account of his extensive experience with media-related legal cases. He revealed that he had faced prosecution nearly 500 times since entering journalism in 1963. He said Kuwait has four press laws, including the Penal Code, stipulating prison sentences ranging from three to 15 years in addition to fines.

He pointed out that the authority in the Arab world will do whatever it wants despite the laws. He thinks justice often depends on wise judges and skilled lawyers. He said America itself has accusations, citing as an example the filing of 34 criminal charges against Trump and he was once sentenced to prison, but the Court of Cassation overturned the previous rulings.

He recounted an incident involving accusations related to Israel, during which the public prosecutor acknowledged the political sensitivity of the case. He said the prosecutor told him that the case caused uproar in public opinion and even within the Parliament. Due to this, the prosecutor stated he would be banned from traveling and would pay a fine. Three months later, the Public Prosecution submitted a wonderful memorandum, explaining that his words about Israel were "peace with it is its killer". He affirmed the merciful judiciary and the skilled lawyer played a crucial role in merciful justice, especially since most of the cases he was exposed to were for personal reasons. Ultimately, the judiciary ruled in his favor, highlighting the importance of judicial discretion and legal defense in politically charged cases.

Lawyer and media personality Dr. Hassan Al-Abdullah commented that these numerous cases reflect Al-Jarallah's influence and the inherent challenges of journalistic leadership.



KUNA photo
 Kuwaiti Ambassador in Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanim meets Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Dr. Badr Abdelatty in Cairo.

Kuwait committed to UN reforms

CAIRO, May 12, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador in Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanim said on Sunday his country is committed to pushing forward United Nations (UN) and UN Security Council (UNSC) reforms in a bid to consolidate their role in promoting international security and peace.

Al-Ghanim made the statement to KUNA following a meeting between Kuwait Permanent Representative at UN in New York and Head of the Governmental Negotiations for Security Council Reform, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai and Egyptian Minister of

Foreign Affairs and Immigration Dr. Badr Abdelatty.

The Kuwaiti ambassador said that during the meeting they had looked into Kuwait's efforts during governmental negotiations on UN and UNSC reforms as they are a core pillar of international multilateralism.

He underlined the significance of boosting the effectiveness of the UN system amid thorny world issues and rapid developments, thus contributing to settling conflicts by peaceful means and dialogue.

Leave the Constitution alone... mischief-mongers are at work

"AS Kuwait awaits the anticipated constitutional amendments, the outlines of which are still undefined following the dissolution of the 2024 Parliament and the suspension of several constitutional articles on May 10, the national press has increasingly become a platform not for constructive self-reflection, but for direct attacks on the Constitution itself," columnist **Dr Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Rather than presenting thoughtful critique, some voices have begun framing the moment as a justification for the drastic call for an "entirely new constitution."

"The current mobilization of public opinion against the Constitution, and the calls for its abolition by figures of mercurial credibility, leave little ambiguity about intent. Rather than inviting genuine debate, these efforts appear aimed at sowing confusion and public frustration, and rallying certain segments of society and political forces against the constitutional framework. It has become, worryingly, a fashionable political trend.

"What the moment truly demands is a clear and honest assessment of the Constitution's flaws, loopholes, and structural challenges, paired with a discussion about potential alternatives that best serve both the state and its citizens. What it does not warrant is the wholesale dismissal of the Constitution's legitimacy.

"It is entirely legitimate to critique past parliamentary performance and to call for a reassessment of the balance between the legislative and executive branches. However, this does not justify the spread of hasty, truncated, or ill-informed opinions about the Constitution, nor does it legitimize careless criticism of its provisions as a pretext for advocating its complete overhaul.

"What Kuwait truly needs is a calm, constructive initiative, either driven by government, civil society, or the media, that embarks on a comprehensive and thoughtful review. This process should focus on critically identifying and understanding the real barriers that have impeded the performance and effectiveness of successive governments and parliaments in recent years.

"Our recent parliamentary experience has laid bare a range of visible flaws and deficiencies, most notably, political and cultural setbacks and the rise of divisive sectarianism among certain MPs during the 2013-2020 period, when the legislative branch frequently overstepped its constitutional boundaries and encroached on executive authority.

"The deterioration continued through the 2022, 2023, and 2024 election cycles, with a sharp decline in the quality of parliamentary discourse, widespread misuse of constitutional tools, and frequent political targeting of the government. These issues were exacerbated by a weak executive, absence of ministerial cohesion, institutional discipline, and the capacity to assert a firm constitutional stance or resist legislative overreach.

"The growing discourse about replacing the Constitution only leads us in circles, generating more confusion than clarity. Instead of stoking opposition to the Constitution, we should focus on reassessing the democratic culture within both society and the state. The current constitutional framework cannot endure under inconsistent or opportunistic viewpoints, nor can it continue to overlook the single-vote electoral system.

"It is certainly unacceptable to question the patriotism of Members of Parliament. We must assume good intentions from all who belong to this nation, whether MPs or ordinary citizens, and even those who oppose constitutional democracy. No segment of society or its components should be undermined or devalued.

"As for those who are considered "constitutionally and legally educated," political logic, fair dialogue, and neutrality require that we assess the conduct of the former Speaker of Parliament and certain MPs during the period between 2013 and 2020.

"This evaluation should be conducted through constitutional, legal, intellectual, and cultural perspectives, particularly in terms of their adherence to Parliament's internal regulations. Only by doing so can we truly understand the meaning behind the proposed "need for a completely new constitution."

"Naturally, interest in the Constitution arises from various perspectives. Some advocate for preserving democratic principles and limiting legislative overreach, while others call for targeted amendments, such as modifying the title of the Amir or enhancing protections for freedom and equality, as allowed under Article 175 of the Constitution.

"One of the most balanced ways to assess the current Constitution is to consider one's stance on democracy, not only as a principle but also as a social contract between the ruler and the ruled. This should be done without overlooking the historical roots of consultative governance in Kuwait, which trace back to 1921.

"On February 22 of that year, a group of politically and culturally aware Kuwaitis signed the "Shura Document" in the diwaniya of Hajj Nasser Al-Badr. This document organized hereditary rule within the Al-Sabah family and sought to prevent internal disputes over succession.

"When it comes to development and the potential of Kuwaiti youth, the responsibility lies with the government.

It has failed to present a coherent vision or to demonstrate strength, consistency, and clarity in its development and political agendas, as well as in its executive programs. None of these failures can be attributed to the Constitution or its explanatory memorandum.

"The record of parliamentary, governmental, and journalistic events remains fresh in our minds. Perhaps now is the time to advise against covert attempts to exact revenge on the Constitution, driven by personal motives or grievances that are better left in the past."

Also:

"Despite the French regime's reservations about the ousted Bashar al-Assad, its failure to support the Syrian revolution since 2011, and its status as a country founded on the principles of law, constitution, and freedom, the "tiny faded red carpet" that greeted the Syrian president at the French airport revealed underlying negative political sentiments", Kuwaiti writer **Dr Hamoud Al-Hattab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"However, Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa commanded respect due to his inherent capabilities, which transcended human hypocrisy and racial discrimination. President al-Sharaa rose above the superficial trappings used to measure people's worth, such as the size or length of the red carpet.

"Al-Sharaa arrived to free Syria with a new vision, one imbued with the essence of Islam, a fragrance of freedom, courage, and power that no Parisian perfume could ever match.

"After receiving a lackluster welcome from a police officer at the French airport, with nothing more than a "tiny faded red carpet," Al-Sharaa left France with the world looking at him with pride and dignity. He stood tall, without the need for wooden steps to elevate him, steps often used to raise those who feel small when they step onto the podium.

"In addition to the awe he commands through his physical stature, there is the mental and moral awe he inspires. Al-Sharaa exudes the awe of a man of courage, a man who fought to secure freedom for his people from the tyranny of Bashar al-Assad. His religious beard symbolizes the values and principles he upholds.

"At the end of the press conference, French President Macron could do little more than shake Sharaa's hand and walk behind him, silently acknowledging his genuine respect for Sharaa's sovereignty.

"Al-Sharaa stepped lightly on a quarter of the red carpet, paying it no attention. What matters to him is that his country holds wealth that captures the attention of France and the world. This wealth compels even the richest nations to flatter those they may otherwise oppose, eager for a piece of the spoils in Syria's reconstruction efforts. But Sharaa's dignity is far greater than any empty reception or red carpet. After all, he who laughs last, laughs best."

□ □ □

"I have known Dr. Abdullah Al-Nafisi as a prominent social, academic, and media figure since the 1970s. I used to see him during his visits to the Kuwait Teachers' Association, as well as at the offices of "Al-Raed" magazine (now known as "Teachers Magazine"). I also regularly followed his weekly television program on Kuwait TV", Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"At the time, Abdullah Al-Nafisi was not considered an extraordinary phenomenon. Several intellectuals and academics of that era were equally prominent and influential on the social, cultural, and media fronts, such as Yousef Al-Jassim.

"What distinguished Al-Nafisi, however, were the articles he wrote for various daily newspapers, including "Al-Seyassah" and "Al-Watan", before eventually aligning himself with "Al-Mujtama" ("Society" magazine), which is affiliated with the Social Reform Society, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Al-Nafisi was not known for any affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, at least not to me personally. I saw him as a liberal, free-thinking individual who did not appear to belong to any political movement, including the "Independence Club," which at the time was a favored gathering place for educated leftist and liberal youth.

"In my personal library, I have one or two books authored by Al-Nafisi, one of which is his master's thesis on Shiism.

"The truth is, Al-Nafisi did not waste his life or time on leisure or idle socializing. Like many great intellectuals throughout history, he seemed to prefer spending most of his time behind closed doors in his library, deeply immersed in reading and critical analysis.

"During a televised interview with media figure Ammar Taqi on the program "The Black Box", Al-Nafisi revealed his true, unfiltered persona. Throughout the episodes, there was no indication of his affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafis, or any other radical or extremist movement. Despite his advanced age, Al-Nafisi continues to navigate the shifting tides of thought and politics."

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



Dr. Khaled Al-Tarrah



KFF vehicles at the site as fire rages in the Al-Salmi scrapyard.

KFF photo

5 fire stations prevent spread of scrapyard blaze

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: A massive fire erupted at the Na'im scrapyard in the Salmi area, prompting a swift response from five fire stations that successfully brought the blaze under control without any reported injuries.

Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Gharib, Director of Public Relations and Media at the General Fire Force, confirmed that teams from Al-Shaqaya,

Al-Istiqlal, Al-Jahraa Al-Harfi, Al-Isnad, and Al-Madinah fire stations responded promptly to the incident. Their quick and coordinated efforts prevented the flames from spreading to adjacent areas.

Speaking to Al-Seyassah, Brigadier General Al-Gharib said the fire, which engulfed an area of approximately 4,000 square meters and involved scrap vehicles and iron, was fought through the night and extinguished by dawn.

No casualties were reported, and authorities have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the fire.

Swindler acquitted of witchcraft

Kuwaitis robbed of cash by fraud

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: The Misdemeanor Section in the Appeals Court overturned the one-year prison sentence with hard labor imposed on a woman and re-examined her acquittal on charges of fraud and swindling through witchcraft and sorcery.

The Public Prosecution had earlier charged the woman with deceiving citizens into handing over their money. She allegedly used fraudulent methods to make others believe that she has the ability to predict the future

and practice witchcraft, through which she took cash from the victims.

According to the case files, the financial crimes officer testified that she received information from one of her confidential sources, stating that the accused engaged in fraud by deceiving citizens into believing she has the ability to predict the future and that she will reveal their future in exchange for money. She used her private residence for her fraudulent activities, including witchcraft and sorcery.

After obtaining permission from the chief investigator at the Criminal Investigations General Department at the Interior Ministry to search the suspect's residence and arrest her, a secret agent approached the suspect and asked her to predict the future. They agreed that this would take place at the residence of the suspect in exchange for KD300.

On the same day, the suspect met with the secret agent at her residence. An hour before the appointment, an entrapment was arranged at the meet-up point with the help of a witness.

The witness provided the secret agent with marked money. After the fortune-telling session and upon receiving the marked money, the secret agent gave the agreed signal and the suspect's residence was raided. This led to the discovery of items used in magic and sorcery, as well as the marked money.

Attorney Enaam Haider, who appeared on behalf of the accused at the Court of Appeals, argued that the arrest and search procedures were invalid, because they were based on frivolous investigations. She added the documents did not present any conclusive evidence to prove that her client committed the alleged crimes, stressing it is impossible to declare the incident as a criminal act.

Blogger jailed two years for insulting ruling entity

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which sentenced a blogger known as 'Salty Cheese' to two years in prison with hard labor, for publicly challenging the authority and rights of His Highness the Amir.

Case files indicate that the defendant was convicted of writing and publishing statements on the 'X' platform that defamed and insulted HH the Amir; thereby, undermining HH the Amir's position and authority.

This came after the Public Prosecution charged 'Salty Cheese' with challenging the rights and authority of His Highness the Amir in a public forum through the statements published on social media.

In another case, the Court of Cassation upheld the decision of the Court of Appeals to refrain from punishing the tweeter known as 'Al-Fankoush', who was charged with disseminating false news on the 'X' platform.

Earlier, the Criminal Court sentenced 'Al-

Fankoush' and another defendant residing in London to three years in prison. However, the Court of Appeals later reversed that decision, opting to refrain from imposing a sentence.

□ □ □

Release request rejected: The Court of Cassation has rejected a request to release two lawyers who were sentenced by the Court of Appeal to one year in prison for spreading rumors about Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan. The court has adjourned the case to May 22.



Ali Karam



KFF photo

The speeding car goes under the dump truck.


3 hurt in car & truck collision on highway

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: A vehicle and a truck collided on King Fahad Road on Sunday evening, resulting in injuries to three individuals.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Mina Abdullah Fire Station rushed to the location and dealt with the incident, after which the site was handed over to the concerned authorities.

□ □ □

Top tier face probe: The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has referred the chairman, vice chairman, member, former general manager, deputy general manager and treasurer of a cooperative society to the Public Prosecution on suspicion of squandering funds and harming the interests of the cooperative, reports Al-Rai daily.




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Municipal Council nods status of Dasman Palace as archaeological site



The Ministerial Meeting of the Ministers of Municipal Affairs in the GCC in progress.

Photo by Samer Shaqir

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, has approved the public benefit report on the acquisition of Dasman Palace, described as Plot No. 15 on the tourism plan located in Plot No. 2 in Dasman as well as its registration as an archaeological site and historic building in the National Register of Historic Buildings in Kuwait.

In its session on Monday, the council also approved the following:

- Request of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to amend the Schedule of Requirements and Specifications for the Establishment of Public Radio Stations No. 17 by revising Clause No. 8; stipulating that the distance between the nearest point from the station fence and the nearest point from private residences, schools, chalets and farms should not be less than 12 meters, instead of 20 meters. This step was taken after reviewing the technical study from the Kuwait Municipality and based on letters from CITRA.

- Request to allocate a portion of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's site -- measuring 10,000 square meters -- in the central region (North Subhan) for the headquarters of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- Request to accept the donation of a real estate company for the construction of a multi-storey parking building and beautify the adjacent public squares located in Sharq, Block Seven.

- Request of the Ministry of Interior to allocate a portion of its site in the G1 area -- measuring 3,000 square meters -- as the location of the main transformer for the Ministry of Electricity.

- Request of the Ministry of Justice to renew the decision to allocate land for the Family Court building in the Capital Gov-

ernorate (Granada, Block Three) -- measuring 5,000 square meters, and to amend the boundaries of the parking areas so as not to conflict with the Jahra Road right-of-way.

- Recommendation of the Technical Committee to reject the proposal of council member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the addition of some commercial activities to areas designated for warehouse use. This was due to the Structural Plan Department's statement that the increased commercial percentages in the designated locations are not consistent with the approved structural plan studies related to the needs of commercial uses, given the surplus of such uses in the urban area.

- Request of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to cancel the decision to allocate the site of the old Shuwaikh Police Station building in the Third Shuwaikh area to the authority.

- Final reorganization of the plots in the third phase of Sabah Al-Ahmad Coastal City - formerly Khiran Pearl City (A3), represented by plot numbers 4150, 1105 and 1106. The council approved the re-examination of the construction works regulation and the attached schedules in accordance with Schedule No. 8 regarding the requirements and specifications for chalet buildings, investment resorts and service centers in various regions of Kuwait, after the Executive Authority requested its withdrawal and amendment, and the letter submitted to reorganize plots 337 and 338) in Block Eight in Jabriya.

The council referred to the executive authority the proposal of member Fahad Al-Abdul Jader regarding the construction of the third road (the new Ahmadi corridor) and the proposal of member Munira Al-Amir on amending the current public markets regulation based on the proposed new classification of markets.

It retained in its agenda the proposal of member Waleed Al-Dagher regarding the creation of an entrance to Mutlaa City.

'Meningitis, influenza vaccinations must'

Health guidance provided for pilgrims of all ages

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Yarmouk Health Center organized an awareness day for pilgrims under the title, "Towards a Healthy and Safe Hajj," with the aim of providing comprehensive health guidance for pilgrims of all ages; focusing on promoting health and preventing potential health risks.

Yarmouk Health Center Vice President Dr. Tasneem Al-Jarki told the newspaper that the activities included key themes with the partici-

participation of several departments, including Family Medicine, Pharmacy, Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases, Nutrition and Preventive Health.

The event included the provision of guidance for pilgrims on providing an appropriate diet during Hajj and how to choose healthy foods to maintain energy and immunity. It also focused on providing the necessary guidance and tests for patients with chronic diseases.

Al-Jarki disclosed that the Pharmacy Department provided numerous tips on how to store medications in appropriate conditions and avoid exposing them to sunlight or humidity. "The

department also provided accurate information on how to take medications correctly, especially chronic medications and nutritional supplements. Lists of medications pilgrims may need were also distributed, along with detailed dosages and times of use," she confirmed.

She added that the awareness day included advice from the Preventive Health Department on the importance of vaccinations; stressing the importance of obtaining the necessary vaccinations before performing Hajj, such as meningitis and influenza vaccines, to ensure the pilgrims are protected from infectious diseases.

Fahd Al-Ahmad road repairs begin: MPW

Focus on Fahaheel Expressway

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has announced the commencement of major road maintenance work in Fahd Al-Ahmad.

This is one of 18 road maintenance projects throughout the country. It supports the New Kuwait 2035 vision, and a continuation of major maintenance works on internal and external roads.

In a press statement Sunday, Al-Mashaan explained that the above-mentioned road maintenance work is included in the comprehensive road maintenance plan of Ahmadi Governorate, which is currently under implementation.

She affirmed that the ministry is proceeding with its development plans according to the highest technical standards, ensuring the implementation of high-quality projects and improving the quality and efficiency of roads as part of a comprehensive national project to modernize and develop the road network of the country.

On the other hand, Eng. Mohammad Ra'i Al-Fahma, a member of the Contract 15 Supervision Team in Ahmadi Governorate (First Zone), stated that the concerned ministry teams are continuing their fieldwork to implement radical maintenance in Fahad Al-Ahmad, Block One -- part of the new contracts for the development of the road network.

He disclosed that the work includes lay-

ing Type Three asphalt in accordance with the approved technical standards.

Moreover, team member Eng. Abdullah Ahmad Al-Kandari confirmed that maintenance work is being carried out in several areas -- Mangaf (Blocks One and Four), and Street 245 and Mohammad Saif Al-Barak Street in Egaila.

He added the teams are also cleaning the infrastructure in Riqqa and Hadiya.

Meanwhile, as part of the ongoing road development efforts, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan announced the commencement of maintenance work on Fahaheel Expressway going towards Kuwait City, reports Al-Anba daily.

This project is one of 18 road rehabilitation projects being carried out in all governorates in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Al-Mashaan confirmed that the ministry remains committed to upholding the highest standard of quality and execution, indicating this project is part of a strategic plan to modernize the national road network.

Meanwhile, Deputy Supervisor of the Fahaheel Expressway and King Fahd Road Development Project Eng. Sultan Al-Otaibi stressed that the concerned ministry teams are actively monitoring the progress of work on Fahaheel Expressway as part of the newly implemented comprehensive road maintenance contracts. The current phase of work includes soil stabilization and the application of asphalt layers classified as Types One, Two and Three, he added.

Al-Otaibi urged the public to keep informed by monitoring the announcements of the General Traffic Department in the Ministry of Interior regarding upcoming road closures related to these maintenance projects in order to minimize traffic disruptions.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

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Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah in discussions with the delegation.

Governor discusses plan for road repairs in Farwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received a delegation from Al-Dar Engineering Company this morning, including General Manager of Development, Business, and Tenders Eng. Mohammed Al-Watyan, Business Development Manager Eng. Osama Hosni, and Director of Government Relations and Security Mohammad Al-Awadhi.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the delegation presented details of the operational plan for road maintenance in Farwaniya Governorate.

During the meeting, they discussed recent developments, key achievements by the company in maintaining internal roads, and its commitment to executing

the plan within the set schedule.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser affirmed the importance of continued cooperation between Al-Dar Engineering Company and the Ministry of Public Works.

He stressed the need to expedite the completion of the road maintenance project in the public interest.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Dar Engineering Company officials affirmed their commitment to implementing the operational plan within the project's specified timeframe.

They also expressed their appreciation to the Farwaniya Governor for his support and dedication to enhancing public services and infrastructure for the governorate's residents.



Dasman Diabetes Institute nurses mark International Nurses Day 2025 under the theme 'Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies'.

Dasman Diabetes Institute celebrates Nurses Day 2025

International Nurses Day 2025 was celebrated on May 12th at Dasman Diabetes Institute that was founded by Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences under the theme "Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies."

International Nurses Day is celebrated annually on the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale to commemorate the invaluable contributions of nurses to society.



DDI is honored to recognize the exceptional dedication and unwavering commitment of its nurses on a daily basis. This recognition is based on the positive impact they have on visitors, patients, and colleagues. Nurses play a pivotal role not only within their respective establishments but also within their communities. We wish all the nurses a happy nurses day.

Kuwait leads push to preserve Arab heritage

ALECSO chief hails Kuwait's cultural clout

TUNIS, May 12, (KUNA): Director General of Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) Mohammad Ould Omar lauded on Monday the outstanding role of the State of Kuwait within the organization, saying that relations with the Gulf country could be described as exceptional and sustainable.



KUNA photo
Director General of Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) Mohammad Ould Omar.

Speaking to KUNA, Ould Omar said that Kuwait's contributions to ALECSO were numerous and important and brought to attention Kuwait's recent support of the regional forum to protect Arab culture and cultural properties held in Beirut.

Kuwait hosted a variety of ALECSO meetings, indicated the director, pointing out that the organization was keen on the Kuwaiti leadership's initiative to host a donors conference to support education in Somalia.

He revealed that the organization would host a number of functions in Kuwait, adding upcoming events would include the launch of the Jerusalem forum, which coincided with Kuwait being chosen as capital of Arab culture.

He pointed out in this regard that Jerusalem and Kuwait city had a twinning agreement, making the former

city a partner in capital of Arab culture.

Ould Omar thanked the Kuwaiti leadership and people for their ongoing support to ALECSO, saying that the organization was keen on boosting cooperation with experts and officials

from Kuwait.

He commended the level of education in Kuwait, saying that the Gulf country was continuously improving the level of knowledge seeking and studying amid the recent digital revolutions and rapid changes.

He affirmed that the level of development was seen during his visit to Kuwait this year during the launch of the Kuwait capital of Arab culture 2025 celebrations.

In regards to ALECSO's interest in AI, the top official expressed desire to use digital tools to promote science, education and creativity, bringing into light ALECSO's AI ethics accord, the organization's attempt to use this revolutionary tool ethically and reasonably.

Ould Omar pointed to the Arab programming week, which attracted some three million Arab children to its sessions, revealing that the 2025 session of the program would address the use of programming and AI in service of Arab culture.

The session would be held in cooperation with Kuwait's Al-Saad Foundation for Knowledge and Scientific Research with Kuwait hosting the final ceremony by the end of this year.

Kuwait diplomacy pillar of peace since 1961: FM

Diplomatic Day marked with call for renewal

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya affirmed Monday that Kuwait's diplomatic journey since 1961, has embodied its position as a voice for peace and dialogue, upholding its' wise and moderate approach in dealing with various international issues.



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya

In a speech marking Kuwait Diplomatic Day, Al-Yahya expressed his deep appreciation for the efforts of the Foreign Ministry's first generation personnel and

all those working in the diplomatic corps locally and in foreign missions, who represent Kuwait and

uphold its message.

He stated that global changes require us to develop and strengthen diplomatic cadres to meet future challenges with confidence, achieve Kuwait's vision, and build a positive and bright image of the nation.

He emphasized the importance of developing the diplomatic work system to be more effective and proactive, enhancing Kuwait's diplomatic ability to deal with emerging challenges and protect national interests.

Al-Yahya added that this day is a renewed pledge of loyalty to diplomatic work and a firm commitment to the approach of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in carrying Kuwait's message.

Kuwait marks 30 years in WTO, pledges deeper engagement

MUSCAT, May 12, (KUNA): Kuwait plans to ratchet up cooperation with global bodies in a bid to enhance the region's economic growth and stability, a diplomat said on Monday.

Such a measure would lure greater foreign investments in the Gulf Arab region, which is imperative given the "geopolitical tensions"

gripping the international community, Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN and other international organizations Nasser Al-Heyn told a roundtable, co-held by the Chinese government and the World Trade Organization (WTO) over efforts to boost Arab integration within the global body.

The unrest could potentially hamper trade and investment in wider Middle East region, subsequently disrupting the flow of goods into the markets around the region, the diplomat warned, calling for more "dialogue and joint work" to safeguard national interests, he underlined.

Against the backdrop of the 30th anniversary of Kuwait's entry into the WTO, he said that his country's political leaders are eager to back the global organization given its crucial role towards a more "stable" grade system, added the diplomat.

He went on to reiterate the importance of Kuwait's vision 2035, a long-term development scheme aiming to diversify the national economy through curbing its reliance on oil exports as part of an economic transformation that follows global trends, chief among them the acceleration of a digital drive, the diplomat said.

Continued from Page 1

Dear government,

Today, whoever wishes to visit Kuwait is still required to hold a university degree, book a flight ticket through a domestic airline, and ensure his stay does not exceed one month.

Let us assume the visitor came to Kuwait in search of an investment opportunity or at the request of a company to benefit from his expertise despite his lack of a university degree, as we mentioned earlier. Does this justify denying him entry to Kuwait and causing the company to lose his expertise?

In such a situation, we must not forget the crises that resulted from the decision not to renew the work permits of expatriate workers aged above 60 and the accompanying extensive deportation campaigns.

One of the negative consequences of the decision was that 65,000 apartments became empty due to the departure of tens of thousands of expatriates who were welcomed by other Gulf countries that are now benefiting from them.

It is unwise to interfere in the relationship between the employee and the company, and oblige the latter to require higher qualifications for positions. The employment relationship is confidential, established through the contract signed by the employee and the employer. The State has nothing to do with it, except in terms of protecting the workers' rights.

Yes, the acting Prime Minister is trying to address this issue, but one hand cannot clap. Why are the expatriates not allowed to own properties and bring their family and relatives to stay with them in Kuwait, as long as they have the financial capability to support them? Why does the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) interfere in the relationship between the employee and the employer?

If the goal is to promote economic activities and social stability, why don't we adopt the measures taken by other Gulf states -- Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE? What prevents Kuwait from restoring the leading position it once occupied?

Gentlemen, through the adoption of the 'laissez-faire' principle then, Kuwait transformed into a vibrant business hub and it enjoyed stability. What prevents the return to that prosperous era, unless there are still visa and human traffickers who insist on putting a stick on the wheel of development?

'Food insecurity'

food waste and loss along the value chain; and food safety.

He revealed that reliance on food imports constitutes 85 percent of food needs, with the value of food imports in the Gulf countries reaching \$53.1 billion in 2020.

He said the total food waste in GCC countries reached around 1.3 million tons in 2022, equivalent to a loss ranging from \$4 billion to \$7 billion. He added studies have shown that Qatar's increasing reliance on food imports, driven by population growth and the development of the tourism sector, has led to a significant increase in food waste in the GCC countries.

Kuwait, Lebanon

Earlier, President Joseph Aoun said the Lebanese people did not seek conflicts and there was an understanding that weapons should solely be in the hands of the state.

"I have always repeated the word dialogue because I believe it is the only way to reach the objective, and I also reiterate that diplomacy is the way to restore our sovereignty," Aoun said in an exclusive interview with KUNA.

"There are some voices who want to end the weapons' file quickly, and I think that we can accomplish this objective but without rush and through preserving domestic peace," he said.

Asked about the internal disputes, Aoun said there were no major differences among the Lebanese people providing "we comply with the constitution along with dialogue and discussions over the sticky issues."

Aoun said reforms in the country would contribute to improving the living conditions as well as the relations with other countries, especially Arab and Gulf nations.

"This is the objective of my visits abroad, to restore relations and rebuild trust with other countries by explaining the reforms, the reconstruction of the state and its institutions, passing reforms, deployment of the army and security forces nationwide and keeping weapons in the hands of the Lebanese state," he said.

"These are gradual steps and I believe we have made many strides. It is a long path and there is no going back, and everyone will see the changes which need time, but they are in the right direction," he added.

"We need to join hands for the sake of Lebanon and its people in order to get the country out of the conflicts and restore functions of institutions that organize the state," he said.

Aoun arrived in Kuwait Sunday and was received by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

This will be the first meeting with

His Highness the Amir, said Aoun, to thank him for "Kuwait's historic" role in realizing solutions during crises even since before the Taif agreement, which ended the civil war in Lebanon, citing the first "positive initiative" by Kuwait was in 1973.

Aoun said he and His Highness the Amir would be discussing ways of further boosting bilateral relations. "We have a common concern which is the internal unity in our countries."

President Aoun had already visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and now Kuwait.

"Ever since my election I was keen on returning Lebanon to the Arab fold and the return of Arabs to Lebanon, which began to materialize. I will also embark on an Arab tour to iron out outstanding issues. I would like to express gratitude for all Arab countries for honoring Lebanon's demands.

"Lebanon cannot be a base or a pathway for any harm to any Arab country. The role of Lebanon is to carry a message of peace and neutrality and be a place and a pathway for dialogue, tolerance and co-existence," he said.

Asked about economic relations with the State of Kuwait, Aoun said the Arab Gulf country has been contributing to many development projects since the early 1960s.

"The first loan for Kuwait for Beirut municipality was few months after the independence of the State of Kuwait all the way to the building or the silos at Beirut port," he said.

Kuwait's assistance continued, he noted, and included in the reconstruction efforts after the Israeli occupation's aggression in 2006, rebuilding electricity, water and road infrastructures in southern Beirut and southern Lebanon, as well as schools.

Kuwait, he added, provided humanitarian assistance following the 2020 massive explosion of Beirut port. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) expressed readiness to rebuild the silos.

"I think Kuwait is ready to contribute to reconstruction of Lebanon as it has always been by its side," he said.

Lebanon also needs foreign investments, but this required multiple reforms.

"Investment needs reforms," affirmed Aoun, citing a recent law that boost independence of the judiciary which would provide stability thus encourage investment.

"I think security and judiciary are important and coupled with economic and financial reforms in addition to the restructuring of the banking sector. It is a huge workshop, and we want it to succeed," he said, and it was also one of the funding conditions of the Inter-

national Monetary Fund (IMF).

Aoun spoke about the Arab Summit and the Arab Economic and Social Summit, due in Baghdad on May 17, and said Lebanon sought a united Arab positions regarding the Palestinian cause.

President Aoun meanwhile called on Kuwaitis to come and invest in Kuwait.

He said Lebanon and Kuwait enjoyed solid bonds, citing the first Lebanese citizen to visit Kuwait was in 1915 and the first Middle East airlines landed in Kuwait in the 1940s.

Supply chain,

4. Promoting market competitiveness by recommending policies that encourage manufacturers and importers to provide goods in adequate quantities and at reasonable prices.

5. Combating commercial dumping and protecting national products, in accordance with relevant regulations, particularly Ministerial Resolution No. 222/2024 on construction materials.

6. Reviewing reports submitted by subcommittees, making appropriate decisions, and presenting periodic reports to the minister.

Article 3:

The Central Committee may, by its own decision, establish specialized subcommittees as it deems appropriate. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Price Monitoring Committee:
- This committee shall analyze and monitor price trends in the market and prepare periodic reports.
- It shall work on adjusting prices, introducing new products, and providing relevant recommendations to ensure market balance.

2. Inflation Rate Monitoring Committee:
- This committee shall monitor the effects of price changes to maintain stability and protect consumers from unjustified price hikes.
- It is also responsible for approving price increases for goods. No price increase may be implemented without a decision from this committee. Any unauthorized price increase will be considered illegal.

3. Strategic Stockpile Follow-up Committee:
- This committee shall be responsible for the following tasks:
- Monitoring the levels of strategic stockpiles for essential commodities to ensure their continued availability and meet consumer needs.
- Developing plans and procedures to strengthen the strategic stockpile.
- Coordinating with relevant authorities to ensure the uninterrupted supply of food and consumer goods during crises and emergencies.
- Tracking changes in demand for essential commodities and proposing measures to deal with potential market shortages.
- Preparing periodic reports on the status of the strategic stockpile and recommending actions to ensure its stability and adequacy.

4. Each subcommittee shall submit periodic reports to the Central Committee in accordance with its assigned responsibilities.
Article 6:
The minister shall issue a decision

evaluating their impact on import costs, and analyzing their implications for the local market.

3. Market and Supply Chain Regulatory Committee:

This committee shall be responsible for the following duties:

- Establishing controls and procedures to regulate supply and demand in the markets in order to prevent crises and maintain market balance.

- Proposing policies to enhance supply chain efficiency and minimize disruptions that could impact the flow of goods and services.

- Regularly evaluating supply chain performance and identifying challenges that may hinder smooth operations.

- Coordinating with relevant authorities to implement solutions that ensure the uninterrupted flow of goods and services.

- Making recommendations to develop logistics infrastructure and improve storage and distribution systems.

- Monitoring the compliance of suppliers and traders with market regulations and taking corrective measures when necessary.

4. Strategic Stockpile Follow-up Committee:

This committee shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- Monitoring the levels of strategic stockpiles for essential commodities to ensure their continued availability and meet consumer needs.

- Developing plans and procedures to strengthen the strategic stockpile.

- Coordinating with relevant authorities to ensure the uninterrupted supply of food and consumer goods during crises and emergencies.

- Tracking changes in demand for essential commodities and proposing measures to deal with potential market shortages.

- Preparing periodic reports on the status of the strategic stockpile and recommending actions to ensure its stability and adequacy.

Article 4:
The Central Committee shall follow up on the recommendations submitted by its subcommittees. It is authorized to assign additional responsibilities as required by work demands and developments. The committee may also form new subcommittees as needed, subject to the minister's approval.

Article 5:
Each subcommittee shall submit periodic reports to the Central Committee in accordance with its assigned responsibilities.

Article 6:
The minister shall issue a decision

to form a team for the Secretariat of the Central Committee and its subcommittees, which will be responsible for carrying out the following tasks:

- Recording the minutes of meetings held by the Central Committee and its subcommittees.

- Communicating with relevant institutions and following up on the implementation of decisions made by the Central Committee and its subcommittees.

- Submitting periodic reports (every three months) to the minister, highlighting the most important activities and decisions of the Central Committee and its subcommittees.

- The Secretariat shall carry out any other tasks assigned by a decision from the minister.

Article 7:
The minister shall issue a decision to form a Grievance Committee responsible for examining grievances submitted against executive decisions made by the Central Committee or its subcommittees.

Article 8:
No financial rewards shall be allocated to members of the Central Committee or its subcommittees for their participation in its work.

Article 9:
Decisions Nos. 62/2020, 67/2020, 75/2020, 79/2020, 96/2020, and 97/2020, as well as any provisions that conflict with this decision, shall be revoked.

Article 10:
This decision shall be effective from the date of its issuance and will be published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm". The relevant authorities shall implement the provisions of this decision within the scope of their jurisdiction.

Convicted

In the first case, the court sentenced him to seven years in prison for embezzling funds from the Ministry of Interior estimated at KD9.5 million. It ordered him to repay KD9.5 million, fined him double third amount (KD19 million) and dismissed him from his job.

In the second case, the court sentenced him to seven years in prison for embezzling KD500,000 from the Ministry of Defense. He was ordered to repay KD500,000; fined twice this amount and dismissed from his position.

The court also ordered the confiscation of his personal vehicles, which were obtained through the embezzlement of funds from the Interior Ministry.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump's reshaping of higher education tests America's appeal for int'l students

WASHINGTON, May 12, (AP): As he finishes college in China, computer science student Ma Tianyu has set his sights on graduate school in the United States. No country offers better programs for the career he wants as a game developer, he said.

He applied only to US schools and was accepted by some. But after the initial excitement, he began seeing reasons for doubt.

First, there was President Donald Trump's trade war with China. Then, China's Ministry of Education issued a warning about studying in America. When he saw the wave of legal status terminations for international students in the US, he realized he needed to consider how American politics could affect him.

The recent developments soured some of his classmates on studying in the US, but he plans to come anyway. He is ready "to adapt to whatever changes may come," he said.

American universities, home to many programs at the top of their fields, have long appealed to students around the world hoping to pursue research and get a foothold in the US job market. The durability of that demand faces a test under the Trump administration, which has taken actions that have left international students feeling vulnerable and considering alternate places to study.

"All of the Trump administration's activities have been sending a message that international students are not welcome in the US," said Clay Harmon, executive director



Students, faculty and members of the Harvard University community rally on April 17 in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

of AIRC, a professional association for international enrollment managers at colleges.

Around 1.1 million international students were in the US last year. A large decline in their ranks could cripple school budgets that rely on tuition from foreign students, who are ineligible for federal student aid and often pay full price to attend.

It's too early to quantify any impact from the administration's crackdown, which has included new scrutiny of student visas and efforts to deport foreign students for involvement in pro-Palestinian activism. But many fear the worst.

"Students and their families expect and need certainty," said Fanta Aw,

executive director and CEO of NAFSA, an association of international educators. "And they do not function well in a volatile environment like the one we have currently."

The US has been rebounding from a decline in international enrollment that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As top competitors such as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom rolled back recruiting efforts and made immigration policies less welcoming, the US appeared ready to bring in far more students.

Now, a few months into the Trump administration, industry experts say it's unlikely the US will be able to capitalize.

Dems warn millions of Americans will lose coverage

US House Republicans unveil Medicaid cuts

WASHINGTON, May 12, (AP): US House Republicans unveiled the cost-saving centerpiece of President Donald Trump's "big, beautiful bill" late Sunday, at least \$880 billion in cuts largely to Medicaid to help cover the cost of \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks.

Tallying hundreds of pages, the legislation is touching off the biggest political fight over health care since Republicans tried to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, during Trump's first term in 2017 - which ended in failure.

While Republicans insist they are simply rooting out "waste, fraud and abuse" to generate savings with new work and eligibility requirements, Democrats warn that millions of Americans will lose coverage. A preliminary estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the proposals would reduce the number of people with health care by 8.6 million over the decade.

"Savings like these allow us to use this bill to renew the Trump tax cuts and keep Republicans' promise to hardworking middle-class families," said Rep. Brett Guthrie of Kentucky, the GOP chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which handles health care spending.

But Democrats said the cuts are "shameful" and essentially amount to another attempt to repeal Obamacare.

"In no uncertain terms, millions of Americans will lose their health care coverage," said Rep. Frank Pallone of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the panel. He said "hospitals will close, seniors will not be able to access the



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., joined from left by House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., talks to reporters about his push for a House-Senate compromise budget resolution to advance President Donald Trump's agenda, even with opposition from hard-line conservative Republicans, at the Capitol in Washington, April 8. (AP)

care they need, and premiums will rise for millions of people if this bill passes."

As Republicans race toward House Speaker Mike Johnson's Memorial Day deadline to pass Trump's big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, they are preparing to flood the zone with round-the-clock public hearings this week on various sections before they are stitched together in what will become a massive package.

The politics ahead are uncertain. More than a dozen House Republicans

have told Johnson and GOP leaders they will not support cuts to the health care safety net programs that residents back home depend on. Trump himself has shied away from a repeat of his first term, vowing there will be no cuts to Medicaid. All told, 11 committees in the House have been compiling their sections of the package as Republicans seek at least \$1.5 trillion in savings to help cover the cost of preserving the 2017 tax breaks, which were approved during Trump's first term and are expiring at the end of the year.

This is his happy place: Alterman

US President Trump visiting Gulf Arab states while crises flare in Gaza, Iran

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, May 12, (AP): On his trip this week to the Middle East, US President Donald Trump will visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, though his most pressing regional challenges concern two other countries: Israel and Iran.

After ending a ceasefire two months ago, Israel is intensifying the war in the Gaza Strip, where a blockade on food, medicine and other supplies is worsening a humanitarian crisis. And Iran stands on the cusp of being able to develop nuclear weapons.

Yet Trump will focus his attention on three energy-rich nations home to existing or planned Trump-branded real estate projects - places where he aims to leverage American economic interests to do what he personally revels in: making business deals.

"This is his happy place," said Jon B. Alterman, a senior vice president at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "His hosts will be generous and hospitable. They'll be keen to make deals. They'll flatter him and not criticize him. And they'll treat his family members as past and future business partners."

But Trump won't be able to avoid altogether diplomacy on Gaza or Iran: The Gulf countries hosting him are also interested in easing the regional tensions that emanate from these two places.

"Trump can easily score a win by reassuring them of America's strategic commitment to the region, demonstrating consistent messaging and generally rising above the fray," analysts Elizabeth Dent and Simon Henderson of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy wrote Friday.

By not scheduling a trip to Israel during his first trip to the region during his second term as president, Trump is reinforcing a feeling in Israel that its interests may not be top of mind for him.

That sense intensified last week, when Trump announced that the US would halt its strikes on the Houthis, an Iran-backed rebel group in Yemen that agreed to stop its attacks on American vessels in the Red Sea.

The Houthis' attacks on Israel did not appear to be covered by that deal, which came as a surprise to Israel, according to an Israeli official who spoke on condition



US President Donald Trump, (right), shakes hands with Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman during a bilateral meeting, in Riyadh, May 20, 2017. (AP)

of anonymity to discuss a sensitive diplomatic issue. Days after the deal between the US and the Houthis - and despite a two-day Israeli assault on Houthi targets - a missile from Yemen again set off air raid sirens in Israel. Then Israel's military warned Sunday that Houthi-controlled ports in Yemen could be targeted again.

Trump's move to launch negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program also jarred Israel, which fears a deal that would not be strict enough to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon or rein in its support for regional militant groups.

Israel had hoped that Trump might provide military assistance in any strike it carried out on the country's nuclear facilities - an action that is unrealistic so long as there are negotiations, or if they reach a deal.

That has raised questions in Israel over Trump's reliability on other major issues, like a long-sought normalization deal with Saudi Arabia as part of any defense pact the administration may reach with the kingdom. Saudi Arabia has said it would only normalize ties with Israel in exchange for significant concessions from the Palestinians toward statehood, something the current Israeli government is unlikely to agree to.

Israel has said it will hold off on expanding the war in Gaza until after Trump's visit, leaving the window open for a new ceasefire deal to materialize. And while Hamas and Trump announced that the last living American hostage in Gaza, Edan Alexander, will be freed as part of efforts to establish a ceasefire, it is not clear what involvement Israel had in that deal.

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee played down any significance to Trump's decision not to visit the country, saying in interviews with Israeli media that his visit to the region was focused on economic issues.

For Iran, much depends on the talks it is having with the U.S. over its rapidly advancing nuclear program. A reported two-month deadline to reach a deal likely has passed as US officials signal America may push for Iran to give up enrichment entirely - something Tehran has insisted is a red line.

Although four rounds of talks mediated by Oman have not led to a major breakthrough, they have gone into the so-called "expert level" - meaning specifics about any possible accord likely have been discussed.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi traveled over the weekend to both Saudi Arabia and Qatar ahead of Trump's trip. Iran likely is trying to pass messages to the US while signaling its interest in continuing the talks. Iranian officials increasingly threaten to pursue a nuclear weapon, while Trump and Israel have both threatened to strike Iranian nuclear sites if a deal isn't reached.

The Islamic Republic is running out of options. Its economy has cratered since Trump in 2018 unilaterally pulled America out of their initial nuclear deal with world powers.

UK government vows to 'take back control', cut immigration numbers

LONDON, May 12, (AP): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged Monday to cut immigration numbers and make it harder to settle in the U.K., confronting an issue that has bedeviled successive governments and fueled the rise of a new anti-immigrant party that could threaten the country's political establishment.

Starmer, whose center-left Labour Party won a landslide victory last July, is facing pressure from voters who are increasingly frustrated by high levels of immigration that many believe have strained public services and inflamed ethnic tensions in some parts of the country.

Starmer said he would end "Britain's failed experiment in open borders," less than two weeks after Reform UK, the hard-right party led by Nigel Farage, scored big victories in local elections. Labour and the center-right Conservatives, long the dominant parties in British politics, both saw their support crater in the contests for local government councils and mayors.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks during a press conference, ahead of the publication of the government's Immigration White Paper, in London on May 12. (AP)

"Every area of the immigration system - work, family, and study - will be tightened up so we have more control," Starmer said during a speech in Downing Street. "We will create a system

that is controlled, selective and fair." Immigration has been a potent issue in Britain for decades - especially since 2004, when the European Union expanded to Eastern Europe. While most EU countries restricted immigration from the new member states for a period of years, the U.K. immediately opened its labor market, attracting a flood of new arrivals.

By 2010, then-Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to cut annual net immigration to less than 100,000, a target four Conservative governments failed to meet. In 2016, anger over the government's inability to control immigration from the EU was a big factor in Britain's vote to leave the bloc.

But Brexit did nothing to reduce the number of people entering the country on visas for work, education and family reunification. Net migration - the number of people entering the U.K. minus those who left - reached more than 900,000 in the year to June 2023, according to official figures, almost four times the pre-Brexit level.

Russian drones attack Ukraine after Kremlin turns down ceasefire proposal

KYIV, Ukraine, May 12, (AP): Russia launched more than 100 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine in nighttime attacks, the Ukrainian air force said Monday, after the Kremlin effectively rejected an unconditional 30-day ceasefire in the more than three-year war, but reiterated that it would take part in possible peace talks later this week without preconditions.

There was no direct response from the Kremlin, meanwhile, to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's challenge for Russian leader Vladimir Putin to meet him for face-to-face peace talks in Turkey on Thursday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday refused to say who might travel to Istanbul from the Russian side.

"Overall, we're determined to seriously look for ways to achieve a long-term peaceful settlement. That is all," Peskov said.

The United States and European



Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy, (center), hosts talks on Ukraine and the future of European security, at Lancaster House in London on May 12. (AP)

governments are making a concerted push to stop the fighting, which has killed tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides, as well as more than 10,000

Ukrainian civilians. Russia's invading forces have taken around one-fifth of Ukraine in Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.



A fire burns from a vast shopping complex in Warsaw, Poland, May 12, 2024. (AP)

Poland orders closure of Russian consulate in Krakow

Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said Monday that he was ordering the closure of Russia's consulate in the southern city of Krakow after Polish authorities said Russia was responsible for a fire that destroyed a shopping center in Warsaw last year.

The fire broke out May 12, 2024, in the Marywiska 44 shopping center that housed some 1,400 shops and service points, a budget marketplace in a warehouse-like structure in a northern district of Warsaw. Many of the vendors were from Vietnam, and it inflicted tragedy on many in Warsaw's Vietnamese community.

Sikorski announced the closure in a statement published in Warsaw on Monday morning, exactly one year after the fire.

He also addressed the matter during a visit to Britain, telling reporters the decision was taken because the Justice Ministry and Security forces found evidence that Russia had committed arson.

"This was a huge fire of a shopping mall in Warsaw in which, just by sheer luck, nobody was hurt. This is completely unacceptable," Sikorski said.

"So the Russian consulate will have to leave," he added. "And if these attacks continue, we'll take further action." (AP)

Pope Leo XIV urges release of imprisoned journalists

VATICAN CITY, May 12, (AP): Pope Leo XIV on Monday called for the release of imprisoned journalists and affirmed the "precious gift of free speech and the press" in an audience with some of the 6,000 journalists who descended on Rome to cover his election as the first American pontiff.

Leo received a standing ovation as he entered the Vatican auditorium for his first meeting with representatives of the general public.

The 69-year-old Augustinian missionary, elected in a 24-hour conclave last week, called for journalists to use words for peace, to reject war and to give voice to the voiceless.

He expressed solidarity with journalists around the world who have been jailed for trying to seek and report the truth. Drawing applause from the crowd, he asked for their release.

"The church recognises in these witnesses - I am thinking of those who report on war even at the cost of their lives - the courage of those who defend dignity, justice and the right of people to be informed, because only informed individuals can make free choices," he said.



Pope Leo XIV meets members of the international media in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican on May 12. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

US mediation offer renews focus on Kashmir after India-Pakistan clash risked broader war

SRINAGAR, India, May 12, (AP): A series of military strikes last week by India and Pakistan brought the nuclear-armed rivals closer to a broader war. The possibility of a nuclear conflagration seemed real and the fighting only stopped when global powers intervened.

Experts say the crisis deepened the neighbors' rivalry as both crossed a threshold with each striking the other with high-speed missiles and drones. The tit-for-tat strikes also brought Kashmir again into global focus, as the US President Donald Trump offered mediation over the simmering dispute that has long been described as the regional nuclear flashpoint.

Paul Staniland, South Asia expert and a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, said the four days of fighting shows that "India now feels substantial space to directly target Pakistan, as well as that Pakistan is willing to escalate in response." Unlike in past years, when fighting



Indian soldiers guard after India and Pakistan reported no incidents of firing overnight, in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir on May 12. (AP)

was largely limited to Kashmir, the two armies last week fired missiles and drones at each other's military installations deep inside their cities and exchanged gunfire and heavy artillery along their frontier in Kashmir.

Dozens of people were killed on both sides. Each claimed it inflicted heavy damage on the other and said its strikes met the country's objectives.

The fighting began Wednesday after India retaliated for last month's attack that killed 26 people, mostly Hindu tourists, in Kashmir, a Himalayan territory claimed in entirety by both nations.

India blamed Pakistan for supporting the attackers, an accusation Islamabad denied, saying no evidence was shared.

The Indian military said it could again strike Pakistan if it felt threatened. Pakistan's military also warned against any violation of the country's sovereignty and vowed to respond.

Pakistan and India have fought two wars over Kashmir and the specter of two nuclear-armed foes once again trading blows over the region alarmed international community.

China denounces Taiwan leader's WWII remarks, reaffirms One-China principle

BEIJING, May 12: The Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te recently sparked controversy when, speaking to Western diplomats at an event marking the end of World War II, he warned that both Taiwan and Europe face the growing threat of "a new authoritarian bloc."

According to a statement issued by China's Foreign Ministry, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian responded to these remarks by stating during a press conference that, "This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the World Anti-Fascist War, and the restoration of Taiwan. Taiwan's return to China in 1945 was a victorious outcome of World War II and an integral part of the post-war international order."

Lin cited several legal documents, including the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation,

and the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, which he said confirmed China's sovereignty over Taiwan and established the legal basis for postwar international order.

"It's the DPP authorities' go-to tactic to cover up their pursuit of 'Taiwan independence' by appealing to so-called values of democracy and freedom. But no rhetoric can alter the historical and legal fact that Taiwan is part of China, nor can they change the prevailing international consensus on the One-China principle", Lin added.

He urged relevant countries to abide by their political commitments regarding Taiwan's status and to cease actions that support separatism or contradict the one-China principle.

The Chinese official also warned against supporting separatist movements or sending misleading signals to these forces.

Voting ends in Philippines midterm polls, with detained Duterte among candidates

MANILA, Philippines, May 12, (AP): Even though he is detained in The Hague, former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte was among candidates who vied for some 18,000 national and local seats in Monday's midterm elections that analysts say will decide if he and his family continue to hold political power.

Duterte has been in custody of the International Criminal Court since March, awaiting trial for crimes against humanity over a brutal war on illegal drugs that has left thousands of suspects dead during his 2016-2022 presidency. It hasn't stopped him from running for mayor of his southern Davao city stronghold.

Under Philippine law, candidates facing criminal charges, including those in detention, can run for office unless they have been convicted and have exhausted all appeals.

Duterte is widely expected to win as Davao mayor, a position he held for over two decades before becoming president. It's less clear how he can practically serve as mayor from behind bars.

Over 68 million Filipinos were registered to vote Monday for half of the 24-member Senate, all the 317 seats in the House of Representatives and various positions in provinces, cities and municipalities.

Polls closed at 7 pm local time, but voters still in line in some areas were allowed to cast ballots. Election officers said the unofficial outcome may be known in a few hours,

while official results would be announced within a week.

The spotlight is on the race for the Senate that could determine the political future of Duterte's daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte.

She faces an impeachment trial in the Senate in July over accusations of plotting to assassinate President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and corruption involving her office's intelligence funds. She has denied the allegations, saying they were spread by her political opponents to destroy her.

Sara Duterte is considered a strong contender for the 2028 presidential race. But if convicted by the Senate, she will be removed as vice president and disqualified from holding public office. To be acquitted, she needs at least nine of the 24 senators to vote in her favor.

"The 2025 midterm elections will be crucial because the results will set the pace for what will happen next, which family or faction will dominate the elections in 2028," said Maria Ela Atienza, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines.

If Sara Duterte is convicted in the impeachment trial, it could signal the end of the Duterte family holding key positions in the country, she said. Other family members running in the election include Rodrigo Duterte's youngest son, Sebastian, the incumbent mayor of Davao, who is now running for vice mayor and widely expected to win.



In this photo provided by the Malacanang Presidential Communications Office, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center right), and his mother, former first lady Imelda Marcos, (center left), prepare to cast their votes at a polling station in Batac City, Ilocos Norte province, Philippines on May 12. (AP)

Airstrike in central Myanmar kills up to 22 people at bombed school – reports

BANGKOK, May 12, (AP): An airstrike by Myanmar's military on a village in the country's central Sagaing region hit a school on Monday, killing as many as 20 students and two teachers, according to a member of a resistance group, an aid worker and media reports.

The morning attack on Ohe Htein Twin village in the region's Tabayin township, also known as Depayin, also wounded dozens of students, they said.

Neither the military government nor state-controlled media have released information about the reported airstrike.

The military has increasingly used airstrikes to counter a widespread armed struggle against its rule, which began in February 2021 when it seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. More than 6,600 civilians are estimated to have been killed by security forces since then, according to figures compiled by non-governmental organizations.

A member of the White Depayin People's Defence Force resistance group fighting against army rule told The Associated Press that a fighter jet dropped a bomb directly onto a school, where many students from primary to high school levels were studying after 9 a.m. The area is about 115 kilometers (70 miles) northwest of Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city.

The resistance fighter, who rushed to the site of the attack to help the victims, spoke on condition of anonymity because he was afraid of being arrested by the military. He said that 20 students and two teachers were killed in the attack on the school, which is operated by the country's pro-democracy movement, and about 50 others were wounded. Three nearby houses were damaged.



Footwear lie scattered with debris on the ground of a high school after it was allegedly hit by a military airstrike in Ohe Htein Twin village in Tabayin township, also known as Depayin in Sagaing region, Myanmar, May 12. (AP)

He also said that there had been no recent fighting in the area, though Sagaing is a stronghold of the resistance.

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the opposition's National Unity Government, told the AP that he received the same information on the number of casualties, and that the death toll could rise. The organization is the main opposition group coordinating resistance to military rule.

He accused the military of deliberately attacking civilians in monasteries, refugee camps, schools and hospitals, with the excuse that resistance fighters were sheltering at such sites, though this was not the case and the bombings were intended to alienate the people from the resistance movement.

The death tolls from Monday's bombing reported by independent

Myanmar media ranged from 17 to more than 20. A volunteer in Tabayin assisting displaced people who asked not to be identified because of fear of government reprisals said he received the information from the ground that 12 students were confirmed dead and around 30-50 others were wounded.

Sagaing region, near the border with India, has been a stronghold of armed resistance, and the military in recent years has stepped up airstrikes against the local pro-democracy People's Defence Forces. The resistance has no effective defense against air attacks.

In September 2022, aerial attacks by the military's helicopters against a school and village in Let Yet Kone village in the same township, killed at least 13 people, including seven children.

Lat/Am

US withdraws Mexican gov visa: The governor of the Mexican state of Baja California, which borders the US, said on social media Sunday that the United States withdrew tourist visas from her and her husband.

Marina del Pilar Ávila, from the ruling Morena party, did not say why her visa was withdrawn.

A spokesperson for the US Embassy said that visa records are confidential and that the details of individual cases cannot be discussed.

Baja California borders California and day-to-day commercial ties between the two states run deep.

"I fully trust that the situation will be satisfactorily clarified for both of us," Ávila said on X.

Her husband, Carlos Torres Torres, who is an active member of Morena, said his "conscience is clear," in a statement on Facebook on Saturday.

"This proceeding does not represent a formal accusation, investigation or indictment by any authority in Mexico or the United States," he added. (AP)



Ávila

Panama will not renegotiate deal: Panama President José Raúl Mulino said that he will not renegotiate

an agreement with the United States to give US troops access to Panamanian facilities, despite protests charging that he compromised the country's sovereignty.

On Tuesday, thousands of Panamanians marched in the capital in the largest protest yet against an agreement signed during last month's visit by US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

The US embassy followed with a statement Wednesday saying that the agreement did not allow for establishing military bases in Panama. A US military presence in Panama is sensitive, since people still remember the US invasion in 1989 and US President Donald Trump has suggested that the US take back control of the Panama Canal.

"Panama's sovereignty is not at stake, it's not handed over, it's not given," Mulino said during his weekly press conference. He insisted the agreement would not lead to US bases in Panama.

Later Thursday, the new U.S. ambassador to Panama, Kevin Marino Carbera, said in a news conference that "the memorandum (of understanding) is going to strengthen our cooperation against drug trafficking and protect the (Panama) canal and we know that's the responsibility of both countries according to the (canal) treaty."

The locations where US troops and contractors will have access will always remain under the control of Panama and it can terminate the agreement with six months notice, the Panamanian government has said.

Protests during recent weeks have closed streets and drawn thousands.

Mulino said they were the result of political interests. (AP)

'What I've done is to allocate portfolios'

Australian premier names new Cabinet

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 12, (AP): Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced his new Cabinet on Monday after former minister Ed Husic blamed his demotion on his own criticism of Israel's war in Gaza.

Albanese named the 30 lawmakers who will fill Cabinet and outer-ministry positions after his center-left Labor Party won a landslide victory in the May 3 elections.

Labor has claimed 92 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form government. As vote counting continues, Albanese said his government could hold as many as 95 seats.

Labor had never held more seats since the first Parliament sat in 1901, he said.

"I'm deeply humbled by the trust that was put into my government with the election and we certainly won't take it for granted," Albanese told reporters at Parliament House.

While Labor prime ministers allocate the ministerial portfolios, the party's factional leaders pick the 30 lawmakers who will get them based on the proportion of seats each faction won.

The factional leaders dropped former Industry and Science Minister Husic, who was born in Sydney to Bosnian Muslim immigrants, and former Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.

Husic, who after the 2022 election became Australia's first federal minister to be sworn into office on a Quran, told Australian Broadcasting Corp on Sunday that Albanese should have intervened to keep him and Dreyfus in Cabinet.

Husic said his demotion was in part punishment for his views on how Israel has waged war in Gaza.

"I think it's been a factor in there. Would I do things differently? I don't think so," Husic told ABC.

"You can't celebrate diversity and then expect it to sit in a corner and be silent. You need to speak up ... for the communities that you care about," Husic added.

Albanese did not directly answer when asked whether he had fought for either Husic or Dreyfus to remain in Cabinet.

"We have a process in the Labor Party caucus. You've been watching it for some time," Albanese told reporters.

Albanese said he had a "constructive discussion" with Husic on Monday morning.

"What I've done is to allocate portfolios. That's the system that's there. It's one that Ed and others have supported for a long period of time," Albanese said.

Bilal Rauf, an adviser to the Australian National Imams



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announces his new Cabinet in Canberra on May 12, after his center-left Labor Party won a landslide victory at elections on May 3. (AP)

Council, called for Albanese to explain whether Husic's demotion was due to his views on Gaza.

"I think at a minimum, some explanation is warranted. We can't just leave it at explanations about factionalism," Rauf said.

"If Ed says that's a factor, I have no reason to discount that," Rauf said. "It's hard to deny that it likely is a factor." Alex Rychin, co-chief executive officer of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said his advocacy group had enjoyed good relations with both Dreyfus and Husic.

Husic had made statements after Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct 7, 2023, that were "very troublesome for the community."

Egypt-born Anne Aly has been promoted to Cabinet, making her the government's most senior Muslim. She is minister for small business, international development and multicultural affairs.

Albanese's second-term administration is the first Australian government since 2010 to have no Jewish Cabinet minister.

Most of the government's most senior ministers have portfolios that are unchanged or slightly varied.

Burkina Faso forces killed at least 100 civilians in March attack, says HRW

DAKAR, Senegal, May 12, (AP): At least 100 civilians were killed by Burkina Faso government forces in March near the western town of Solenzo, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Monday.

According to victim testimony and videos shared on social media gathered by the rights group, the attackers were Burkina Faso special forces and members of a pro-government militia, the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland. The victims were all ethnic Fulani, a pastoralist community that is widespread across the region, which the government has long accused of supporting Muslim militants.

An earlier report from Human Rights Watch stated that the government's involvement was likely, because of video evidence on social media, although the findings were not definitive. The government issued a sharp denial when first reports surfaced, saying in a statement it "condemned the propagation, on social media, of images inducing hate and community violence, and fake information aimed at undermining social cohesion" in the country.

"The viral videos of the atrocities by pro-government militias near Solenzo sent shock waves through Africa's Sahel region, but they told only part of the story," said Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Sahel researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Further research uncovered that Burkina Faso's military was responsible for these mass killings of Fulani civilians, which were followed by deadly reprisals by an Islamist armed group. The government needs to impartially investigate these deaths and prosecute all those responsible."



Burkina Faso President Ibrahim Traore speaks to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their talks in the Grand Palace in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on May 10, as part of celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany during the World War II. (AP)

Burkina Faso authorities did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the group's new report.

The landlocked nation of 23 million people has symbolized the security crisis in the arid Sahel region south of the Sahara in recent years. It has been shaken by violence from extremist groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, and the governments fighting them.

In partnership with Ministry of Education

Warba Bank sponsors Mafaz competition on Waqf values

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting impactful educational and community initiatives, Warba Bank announced its sponsorship of the inaugural edition of the "Mafaz" competition, organized in partnership between the General Secretariat of Awqaf and the Ministry of Education under the theme "Waqf, Awareness and Responsibility." The initiative aims to revive, instill and strengthen the concept of Waqf and its role in community development among students from an early age.

Warba Bank's sponsorship reflects its strategy of supporting programs that promote human values and social responsibility, solidarity and national identity by investing in youth and providing a motivating environment for leadership and creativity.

On this occasion, Mr. Anwar Bader Al-Ghaith, Deputy CEO of Support Services and Treasury at Warba Bank, said: "Our sponsorship of the Mafaz competition stems from our firm belief in the role of education in building a conscious and responsible society. We believe that embedding the values of Waqf and philanthropy in students' minds contributes to shaping a generation driven by generosity and initiative; values that reflect Warba Bank's own approach to community service and sustainable development."

He added that Mafaz is more than just a competition; it is a developmental platform that encourages creativity



Warba Bank supports youth leadership with sponsorship of Mafaz Waqf competition.

and teamwork and fosters leadership and social awareness among students.

"We at Warba Bank are proud to be part of such a pur-

poseful initiative that aligns with our vision of supporting education, empowering future generations and reinforcing Kuwaiti identity," he said.

He went on to say that the Mafaz competition serves as an inspiring model that combines education, religion and social responsibility, which are central to Warba Bank's mission of building a generation that understands and embodies the importance of giving and community engagement.

"At Warba Bank, we believe that teaching students about Waqf and volunteering, and encouraging them to explore, think and innovate, is a true investment in future leaders who will carry the values of collaboration and actively contribute to their communities and their country, Kuwait," he said.

"The real investment lies in our youth. They are the drivers of the nation and the source of its prosperity. Instilling a sense of responsibility, enhancing knowledge and promoting leadership and national belonging are what enable our children to raise Kuwait's flag high and continue its path of progress with confidence and creativity. We translate this belief into action by supporting initiatives that develop youth capabilities and instill the values we hold dear," he concluded.

Through this sponsorship, Warba Bank reaffirms its commitment to supporting community initiatives that combine Islamic values, national identity, education and knowledge, while further solidifying its role as a national banking institution dedicated to making a positive impact on society.

About the "Mafaz" Competition

The Mafaz competition is an educational initiative designed to raise student awareness of Waqf, charitable giving, and volunteerism in Kuwaiti society. It invites students aged 11-17 from intermediate and secondary schools to deliver short presentations of no more than five minutes, highlighting the role and impact of Waqf on community development in a way that reflects their understanding of human values and social responsibility.

The competition witnessed significant participation from schools in the Capital Educational Area, with 52 schools qualifying for the final round, 25 from the secondary level (9 boys' schools and 16 girls' schools) and 27 from the intermediate level (9 boys' schools and 18 girls' schools). The secondary stage finals were held at Ishbiliya Primary School for Girls in Kaifan, while Fahad Al-Askar Primary School for Boys hosted the intermediate stage finals. The competition provides an important platform for discovering students' research, presentation and innovation skills while promoting values of giving and national pride from an early age.

Warba Bank's social responsibility strategy focuses on launching impactful initiatives that create long-term value in Kuwaiti society. This includes supporting education, youth empowerment, cultural enrichment, Islamic values and preserving national heritage. The Bank ensures that its initiatives align with the Kuwait's vision and address real community needs, with a focus on promising and influential segments of society to help build a responsible, empowered generation and contribute to a more aware and cohesive society.

Warba Bank is today one of Kuwait's fastest-growing Islamic banks, combining leadership in digital innovation with a deep commitment to social responsibility, solidifying its role as a financial institution that creates value for customers and contributes meaningfully to Kuwait's social and economic progress.

Hawally, Al Asimah plunges

Kuwait's Al Ahmadi sees strongest rental growth

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Al Ahmadi apartments showed the strongest 6-month rental growth among governorates in Kuwait, with average rents for one-bedroom and two-bedroom units increasing by 6% and 10.9% over the last half-year to Q1 2025, according to Kuwait-based prop-tech company Sakan. Sakan's data, which is based on its online listings database and excludes properties promoted offline, showed mixed results for the apartment market, with average rents of areas near the capital softening over the last three and six months leading to Q1.

In Hawally Governorate, the average rents of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom-listed flats decreased by 7%, 3%, and 1% respectively when compared to Q4 2024. Al Asimah's 2BR and 3BR average rents decreased by double digits.

From a 6-month perspective, Hawally's and Al Asimah's rental markets have both seen downward performance. Hawally apartment rents for 1BR and 4BR apartments have remained the same, while those of 2BR and 3BR have declined by 2% and 4% respectively.

Al Asimah apartments have shown similar patterns except for the 1BR category, whose average rent improved by 2% over the last half-year.

But while areas near the capital have generally seen lower rents, Al Ahmadi's apartment sector saw an upward trend, driven by higher lease rates in Mahboula and Fintas districts. Among governorates, Ahmadi apartments have shown the best quarter-on-quarter performance in terms of rents, growing by 3%, 11%, and 10% for the 1BR, 2BR, and 3BR categories, respectively.

Nearly 12,000 housing units turned over in 2024

The movement in rents can be attributed to a variety of events that have shaped Kuwait's residential leasing sector over the last six months. After the Mangaf fire, the government has cracked down on overcrowding in residential properties.

At the same time, the leasing sector is seeing the effects of the massive residential construction boom sweeping across Kuwait, driven by the government's housing program. In 2024, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare distributed 11,897 housing units in Kuwait and issued 32,204 building permits in key residential projects, namely Mutlaa, South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and South Khaitan.

Anecdotes suggest that apartments which were rented by families waiting for their homes are now having challenges finding tenants.

Home ownership is expected to increase in the forthcoming years with the anticipated introduction of the Mortgage Law, which will allow commercial lenders to provide housing loans. Once implemented, the Law is seen to encourage more lending activity in the housing sector, create a more competitive market, and potentially enable more citizens to own homes.

Bursa closes slightly higher

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): Bursa Kuwait closed Monday's session with modest gains, as the general index edged up 8.84 points, or 0.11 percent, to settle at 8,064.76 points.

Trading activity saw a total of 358.7 million shares exchanged through 19,183 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 90.2 million (approximately \$276 million).

The Main Market Index posted a stronger performance, rising 19.53 points, or 0.28 percent, to 6,997.65 points. This came on the back of 217.17 million shares traded in 10,132 deals, valued at KD 35 million (\$107.1 million).

The Premier Market Index inched up by 6.62 points, or 0.08 percent, to 8,729.52 points, with 141.6 million shares changing hands through 9,051 transactions worth KD 55.17 million (\$168.8 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index recorded the session's biggest gain, rising 62.47 points, or 0.87 percent, to 7,241.35 points. A total of 157.7 million shares were traded through 7,658 transactions, amounting to KD 29.4 million (\$89.9 million).



Financial Results

Q1 2025

REVENUE

536 ↑15%
KD MILLION

EBITDA

171 ↑15%
KD MILLION

NET INCOME

48.5 ↑66%
KD MILLION

EPS

11
FILS

CUSTOMERS

50.7 ↑20%
MILLION

Revenue grows 15% YoY to reach USD1.74 billion (KD 536 million)

Zain Group Q1' 2025 net profit soars 66% YoY to reach USD 157 million (KD 48.5m)

Chairman, Mr. Osamah Al Furaih: "The Board's focus will be on driving the '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' five-year corporate strategy across all our operations"



Osamah Al Furaih
Zain Chairman



Zain Group headquarters



Bader Al-Kharafi
Zain Vice Chairman & Group CEO

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2025, with the customer base increasing 20% to reach 50.7 million customers.

Zain Group recorded impressive revenue growth of 15% to reach KD 536 million (USD 1.74 billion) for Q1' 2025. EBITDA for the quarter jumped 15% to reach KD 171 million (USD 554 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 32%. Net income for the quarter soared 66% to reach KD 48.5 million (USD 157 million), reflecting an Earnings Per Share of 11 Fils (USD 0.04).

Key Operational Notes for Q1 2025

1. Zain Group revenue grew 15% YoY, driven by strong performance across main operations including Sudan (+112%), Iraq (+13%), Bahrain (+8%), Jordan (+7%), and KSA (+6%)
2. Group customer base soared 20% with continual restoration and expansion of network in Sudan, as well as strong growth in Iraq, KSA and other markets
3. Data revenue grew 6% to reach USD 633 million, representing 36% of the Group's overall revenue
4. During the quarter, Zain Group invested USD 242 million in CAPEX, reflecting 14% of revenues
5. Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain, and Jordan continue to grow their 5G customer base
6. Fintech services (Bede in Kuwait and Bahrain; Tamam in KSA and Zain Cash) witnessed revenue growth of 30%, transaction value increased 25% to reach USD 1.7 billion
7. Consolidated enterprise revenue witnessed 16% growth as ZainTECH and B2B teams in key markets secure multiple deals with businesses and governments, ZainTECH revenue soared 184% YoY
8. Group wide Digital services witnessed revenue growth of 2%, driven by increase in Kuwait and Sudan
9. Zain Omantel International (ZOI) wholesale carrier achieved exceptional revenue growth of 371% YoY
10. Customer base and revenue continue to grow for Zain's digital operator, Yaqoot in KSA and Oodiin Iraq
11. Introduction of Global M2M offering to accelerate proliferation of connected devices across region
12. Zain brand valuation up 14.5% YoY, to reach a milestone of USD 3.5 billion, the highest in Kuwait

Mr. Osamah Al Furaih, Chairman of the Board said, "With the introduction of the '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' five-year corporate strategy, the Board will work closely with Executive Management in driving continuity, acceleration, collaboration and digital innovation across all our operations to take Zain to new heights and increase shareholder value. We look forward to expanding our ESG initiatives in providing meaningful connectivity and continuing our positive relationships with regulatory bodies and all stakeholders as we implement '4WARD' to the benefit of customers, communities, and government bodies we proudly serve."

Mr. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "It was a remarkable first quarter with solid operational performance and revenue growth across key markets, and this bodes well for rest of year as we expect this trajectory to continue, driving shareholder value. Our focus on investing in network upgrades, new technologies and monetizing our 5G and ICT services for both our individual and enterprise customers, coupled with accelerating the growth of several new business verticals, have positively impacted our financial metrics on all levels. So are our operational synergies, cost optimization and digital transformation initiatives

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for Q1' 2025

Total Managed Active Customers	50.7 million	
Revenue	KD 536 million	USD 1.74 billion
EBITDA	KD 171 million	USD 554 million
EBITDA Margin	32%	
Net Income	KD 48.5 million	USD 157 million
EPS	11 fils	USD 0.04

inoffering customers better services." "Our key operations in Kuwait, KSA, Jordan, and Bahrain performed well in line with expectations, despite strong competition and other local challenges. Notably, in Sudan the network restoration efforts have reconnected over 5.8 million customers leading to exceptional operational performance, despite the ongoing geo-political issues. The World Bank is optimistic about Sudan's economic outlook, provided the current conflict eases, which supports our confidence for continued improvement in the coming quarters."

"The success of our recent AGM, which achieved a distinct quorum of 79.2%, witnessed the approval of the Board's recommendation to renew the minimum annual cash dividend policy of 35 fils per share for another three years, extending it through to 2028. This marks a clear reaffirmation of Zain's long-term commitment to sustainable and consistent shareholder returns, as well as confidence in business's prospects."

"Our performance in this quarter was significantly boosted by the expanding impact of our growth verticals, ZOI wholesale, ZainTECH, Dizlee API entertainment platform, and Fintech services across our footprint which when combined delivered USD 191million in revenue in the first quarter alone, representing a noteworthy 185% YoY growth from USD 67 million in Q1'2024, and now contributing 11% to Group total revenue." "As the leading 5G provider across the region in regard to footprint, our 5G customer base, both individuals and enterprises in Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain, and Jordan are truly benefiting from the appealing digital technologies and services we offer in enhancing their data experience, and this is driving both revenue and customer growth."

"Our fintech's growth in revenue and customer base, witnessed increase in transaction volumes across Kuwait, KSA, Jordan, and Bahrain. Recently, in Sudan we launched the Bede brand, a key milestone in our regional rollout. In Kuwait, we look forward to receiving Central Bank approvals to expand our fintech offerings to cater for consumers and businesses. We will continue to foster Fintech, expecting this growth trajectory to continue."

"Zain Omantel International (ZOI) exceptional performance was a result of major capacity deals in Data and Connectivity, a significant growth in voice traffic volumes, as well as expansion in partnerships and international agreements."

"Likewise, ZainTECH's revenue growth of 184% YoY also witnessed several important milestones

this quarter. It launched a new Cybersecurity Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) service, helping organizations stay compliant and secure. In Saudi Arabia, ZainTECH was granted a commercial license, allowing it to formalize its regional HQ there, and expand its presence and operations. The entity also joined the NVIDIA Partner Network as a Reseller, one of the few in the region, to bring advanced AI solutions to businesses across its markets."

"The introduction of our Global M2M offering is a strategic move, capitalizing on our strategic footprint and superior connectivity to position Zain as the regional partner of choice. This service addresses the significant challenges faced by Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) operating in or looking to operate in the region. By providing a unified solution that ensures compliance and simplifies connectivity across our extensive network, Zain is empowering the connection of global manufacturers to the Middle East. This will boost the pace of digital transformation of enterprises and governments, driving socio-economic growth across the region."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "We are confident that the recently launched '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' will unleash Zain's full potential in transforming from a Telco to a purpose driven TechCo conglomerate providing 'Better Lives and Lasting Connections'. '4WARD' will provide the necessary impetus for Zain's continued relevance and impact on shaping societies and providing meaningful connectivity and drive the Zain brand value to new heights."

Financial KPIs of key markets for first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2025

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation's customer base stood at 2.6 million. Q1' 2025 Revenue was slightly higher at KD 94 million (USD 303 million), EBITDA increased 2% to reach KD 32 million (USD 103 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 34%. Net income increased 2% to reach KD 18 million (USD 58 million), for Q1 2025, with data revenue accounting for 36% of total revenue. Zain Kuwait is currently preparing to deploy 5.5G services on its network as well as focusing on increasing its postpaid mobile customer base to enhance ARPU through appealing device and data offerings.

Saudi Arabia: For Q1' 2025, revenue USD 718 million grew by 6%, EBITDA for the period increased 5% to reach USD 217 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 30%. Net income for the quarter soared 40% to reach USD 25 million. The operator's data revenue grew by 2%, representing 39% of total revenue, and active customers increased 3% to

Vice-Chairman & CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi:

- A remarkable first quarter with solid operational performance and revenue growth across key markets, bodes well for rest of year in driving shareholder value
- Strong revenue growth in Sudan (+112%), Iraq (+13%), Bahrain (+8%), Jordan (+7%) and KSA (+6%)
- Group consolidated EBITDA up 15% to USD 554 million (KD 171 million)
- Customer base soars 20% to reach 50.7m, driven by restoration of network in Sudan and improved market access in Iraq
- Data revenue grew 6% to reach USD 633 million, representing 36% of total revenues
- New growth verticals delivered USD 191 million in revenue representing a 185% YoY increase
- Fintech services witness consolidated revenue growth of 30% across multiple markets
- Digital services revenue grew across key markets, driven by increase in Kuwait and Sudan
- Enterprise revenue saw robust growth of 16%, driven by ZainTECH and Opco B2B teams
- Zain Omantel International' (ZOI) reports exceptional revenue growth of 371% during Q1' 2025
- Zain brand valuation up 14.5% YoY, to reach a milestone of USD 3.5 billion, highest in Kuwait

stand at 9 million. The operator witnessed continued growth in 5G and B2B revenue, with Yaqoot - Zain KSA's digital arm witnessing 1% growth in revenue, and Tamam, the consumer microfinance arm, witnessing revenue growth of 31%, all of which contributed towards the increase in top-line.

Iraq: For Q1' 2025, revenue grew 13% to reach USD 286 million and EBITDA increased 13% to reach USD 105 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 37%. Net income for the quarter soared 73% to reach USD 26 million. Customer base increased 11% to 20.7 million, reflecting a market leading position, driven by the investment in Tower expansion and monetizing new B2C and B2B products and services.

Sudan: For Q1 2025, Zain Sudan showed strong signs of recovery and growth despite the ongoing challenges in the country. Revenue for the quarter soared 112% to reach USD 107 million, with EBITDA reaching USD 61 million, up from USD 12 million last year, an increase of 423%, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 57%. Net income soared 138% to reach USD 53 million. The operation's exceptional growth across all KPIs was driven by the successful restoration of 1,564 sites, including 219 sites in newly liberated areas of Khartoum. This network recovery saw the customer base more than double, jumping 110% YoY from 5.2 million to 11 million in Q1 2025.

Jordan: For Q1' 2025, Zain Jordan revenue grew 7% to reach USD 141 million, EBITDA slightly increased to reach USD 55 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39%, with net income increased 8% to reach USD 18 million. Data revenue grew 10% on the back of its continually expanding 5G network, representing 53% of total revenue. Customer base increased by 5% to stand at 4.1 million, maintaining its leading position.

Bahrain: For Q1' 2025, Zain Bahrain revenue grew 8% to reach USD 56 million, an increase of 8%, EBITDA reached USD 14 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 26%. Net income increased by 10% to reach USD 3.1 million, with data revenue growing 4% to represent 44% of total revenue.

In line with its human capital development and sustainable strategy

Burgan Bank wins two awards at AUM Corporate Awards 2025

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: In a new effort to support the growth and development of Kuwait's national calibers, Burgan Bank participated in the annual Career Fair hosted by the American University of the Middle East (AUM) in search of ambitious individuals seeking to build a career in Kuwait's banking and financial sector. This initiative comes as an extension to Burgan's robust human capital development & sustainability strategy and dedicated contribution to the success of the national goals outlined in Kuwait Vision 2035.

"We were delighted to participate once again in AUM's annual Career Fair, and honored to receive two awards for 'Elite Employment and Talent Development' at AUM Corporate Award 2025," commented Mr. Abdulwahab Jamal Abdulraheem, Executive Manager – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank. "Our commitment to partaking in Kuwait's renowned career fairs goes beyond our need for fresh talent to support Burgan's continued growth. It stems from our robust talent acquisition strategy, which is invested in identifying the market's needs and aspirations for a balanced and fulfilling career and professional experience. Our on-ground presence allows our team to have valuable conversations with some of Kuwait's brightest young minds, which inspire and guide our continuous efforts to expand the professional experience we offer our employees."

This engagement, and the award-winning commitment to excellence it projected, reflects Burgan Bank's broader purpose, as guided by its vision: "To be the most progressive bank in Kuwait, driven by our employees, customers, and community." Burgan's mission reinforces this direction through its commitment to delivering outstanding customer experiences, leading with innovation, being an employer of choice, supporting the community, and driving prosperity for all stakeholders. Underpinning these efforts is considered



Burgan Bank and AUM representatives at the Bank's booth during the AUM Career Fair.



AUM Corporate Awards.

a sustainable strategic approach to implementing Burgan's core values 'Ownership, Passion, Teamwork & Transparency'. In addition to Empowerment, Agility, and Innovation, which shape its people-first culture and progressive work environment.

Throughout the career fair, Burgan representatives were actively engaged with the event's visitors, whereby they discussed the Bank's professional experience at length, beginning with the market-leading employee benefits to the year-long learning and

development opportunities, and the overall thriving work culture that defines the Burgan professional experience.

In addition, the Bank representatives seized this opportunity to share vital banking awareness and financial literacy information with the event's visitors, in line with Burgan's continued support of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the unanimous support of local banks.

It is worth noting that Burgan Bank, a certified Great Place to Work®, continues to offer one of the best and most dynamic learning and development (L&D) programs in Kuwait's banking sector, with wide opportunities that cater to Burgan Bank's employee needs, interests, and preferred learning styles. This includes the flagship talent development program 'Ro'ya', which invests in the Bank's future leaders, and 'Entalaqah', designed to introduce fresh graduates to the professional banking industry as well as many more initiatives.



Faisal Alsurayye and Abdulaziz Dhiyab receiving the Kuwait Finance House award.

In collaboration with the PR Club at GUST

KFH holds workshop on 'Public Relations in the Banking Sector'

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held a workshop titled "Public Relations in the Banking Sector" as part of its strategic partnership with the Public Relations Club at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST). The workshop explored the significant role of public relations departments within banks generally, and KFH specifically. It also addressed the tasks of public relations in educating customers and disseminating awareness through various campaigns and initiatives, such as the Diraya Campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

KFH Executive Manager Corporate Relations and CSR, Faisal Alsurayye, stated that the workshop covered the aspects of public relations including sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR), media relations, journalistic writing, media engagement, event and social media channels management, public communication, government relations and communication with official bodies, as well as content creation such as photoshoots and montage.

He also pointed out that the workshop offered key insights into public relations, shedding light on the significant role of this function in promoting organizational success at all levels, strengthening external and internal communication in addition to supporting the institution's strategic objectives.

Alsurayye highlighted the prominent role of KFH in educating and raising awareness among its employees and customers as part of its support for Diraya campaign. The campaign aims to promote the rights of customers and raise their awareness while informing them of the various banking services offered by the Bank. "KFH has supported the campaign by publishing educational videos, awareness messages, and informative content across all its social media channels, while also explaining the process of filing complaints and protecting customer rights," he noted.

Students participating in the workshop expressed their appreciation for the valuable insights on the PR practices and real-life examples in banks and financial institutions. They stated that these examples enriched their understanding and contributed to informing them of the actual objectives and tasks of PR. They thanked KFH for its constant efforts in backing students' activities and added-value events across different fields.

It serves to note that KFH remains committed to strengthening ties and collaborations with universities and organizations to promote education, training and talent acquisition. These endeavors also include providing social and educational programs throughout the year, reinforcing its leadership in supporting academic and students' activities as well as scientific research.

NBK is the diamond sponsor for 'Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week' conference

As a leading and responsible financial institution

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: In continuation of its leading and responsible efforts in the field of sustainability, National Bank of Kuwait was the diamond sponsor for "Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week" conference, which will be held from 11 to 13 May, in line with Kuwait spearheading the Board of Trustees of the Regional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

Through this sponsorship, NBK confirms its commitment to supporting initiatives of sustainability and efforts of clean energy transformation in Kuwait and the region. Several government institutions and leading private sector companies participated in this conference, further echoing the national cooperation towards achieving a more sustainable future.

NBK's sustainability team participated in a discussion panel titled "Accelerating Sustainability through Green Projects and Businesses" to highlight the bank's leadership in green projects and its continuous efforts to fully integrate sustainable practices within its operations and institutional culture, further contributing to achieving sustainable development as per international practices.

The conference aimed to strengthen regional cooperation in essential fields such as research and development, advanced technologies in renewable energy sectors, energy efficiency, sustainable energy applications, in addition to the latest environmental technology tools. Moreover, it aimed to shed light on the most recent national innovations and initiatives in the fields of energy, water, and the environment, and enhance fruitful cooperation with international organizations, prestigious scientific research centers, and leading energy companies.

The conference included in-depth workshops and discussions about the latest international developments in energy policies and the effective ways of contributing to developing strategies that further support clean energy transformation and sustainability goals in the region.

It should be noted that this conference is a great platform for interactive exchange of ideas and innovative insights on clean energy transformation, which further enhances effective collaboration



NBK team during its participation in the Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week conference.

between the public and private sectors. As for the community, the conference raised awareness and encouraged innovation about using renewable and sustainable sources of energy and highlight its positive effect upon economic growth, such as attracting local and international renewable energy investments.

Many topics were explored in the conference, the most significant of which were policies that support investments in sustainable energy projects, ways of building a sustainable future for coming generations, the exchange of knowledge among participants, the latest international trends in clean energy transformation, and awareness and innovation in this field.

NBK's participation in this event reflects its commitment to boosting sustainable development and supporting a low-carbon economy in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and international sustainable development goals, as it believes in the importance of the collaborative efforts of all sectors to achieve a safe and sustainable future for all.

The bank has come a long way in our sustainability and clean-energy transformation efforts, a sit made remarkable progress in the four pillars of the bank's environmental, social and institutional governance strategy which include Governance for Resilience, Responsible Banking, Capitalizing on Capabilities, and Investing in Communities. All these have contributed to enhancing NBK's

leading role in building a better and more sustainable future.

Moreover, NBK is keen on cooperating with strategic partners to constantly support sustainable practices and promote Kuwait's agenda for lowering carbon emissions and relying on renewable energy.

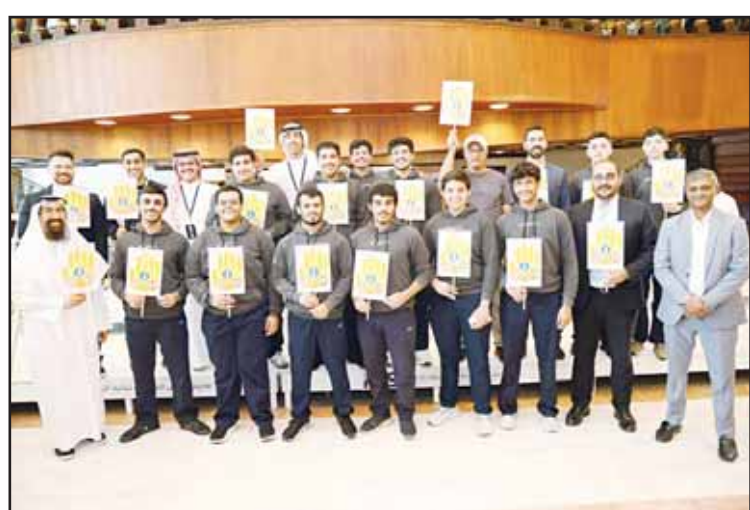
NBK emphasizes its commitment to long-term sustainable practices and low operational effects by implementing low-carbon and energy efficiency initiatives, as this has helped the bank move in the right direction towards achieving low operational emissions and ultimately carbon neutrality by 2060.

It is noteworthy that NBK received several prestigious classifications from international institutions, which highlights its commitment to sustainability and governance, confirms its progress in integrating ESG standards in its core strategy, and enhances its leading role in implementing the best international practices.

On the sidelines of the conference, Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy honored NBK in appreciation of its sponsorship of the "Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week" Conference, as well as its efforts in supporting sustainability initiatives, enhancing the future for upcoming generations, and effective contributions towards clean energy transformation locally and regionally.

Interactive road safety lecture and pledge engages GCC youth

ALSAYER sponsors First Gulf Health Awareness Conference for students



KUWAIT CITY, May 12: ALSAYER Group proudly took the lead to sponsor The First Gulf Conference for Secondary School Students, held under the topic "Health Awareness with a Gulf Perspective." The event was organized in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Interior, and Defense, the Kuwait Society for Awareness and Prevention of Drug Abuse (Giras) and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States. The conference gathered youth from across the GCC, providing an enriching platform to address critical issues related to health, safety and responsible citizenship.

As part of its longstanding commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, ALSAYER Group delivered a series of impactful contributions during the event. These included an interactive and engaging lecture on road safety, where students learned about the life-saving importance of responsible driving behavior, adherence to traffic laws and the consequences of negligence on the road.



ALSAYER sponsors First Gulf Health Awareness Conference for secondary students.

In a significant moment of unity and awareness, students also participated in the Road Safety Pledge, a collective promise to serve as safety advocates within their schools, families, and communities. The pledge symbolized a shared commitment to building a safer, more responsible generation.

In addition to road safety, the conference addressed a range of vital topics targeting the comprehensive development of youth. Workshops and discussions covered issues such as digital addiction and its impact on different segments of society, psychological and family therapy, personal development and awareness of the health, social, and psychological risks of drug and substance abuse. These sessions equipped participants with the knowledge and skills needed to make positive decisions in their daily lives.

Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Excellence Group at ALSAYER Group, remarked: "Our participation in this conference reflects our deep belief in the power of early education. By engaging directly with youth, we're helping lay

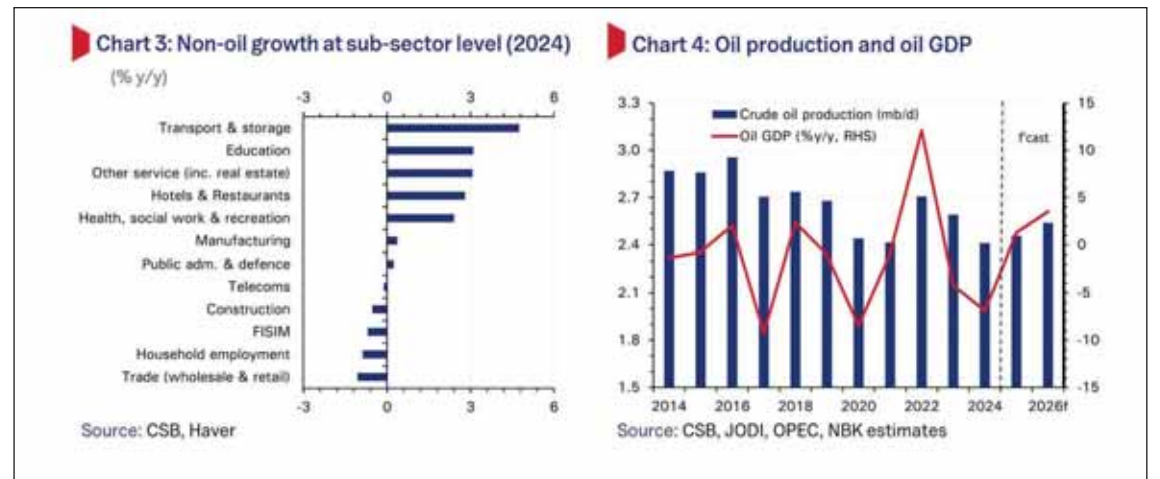
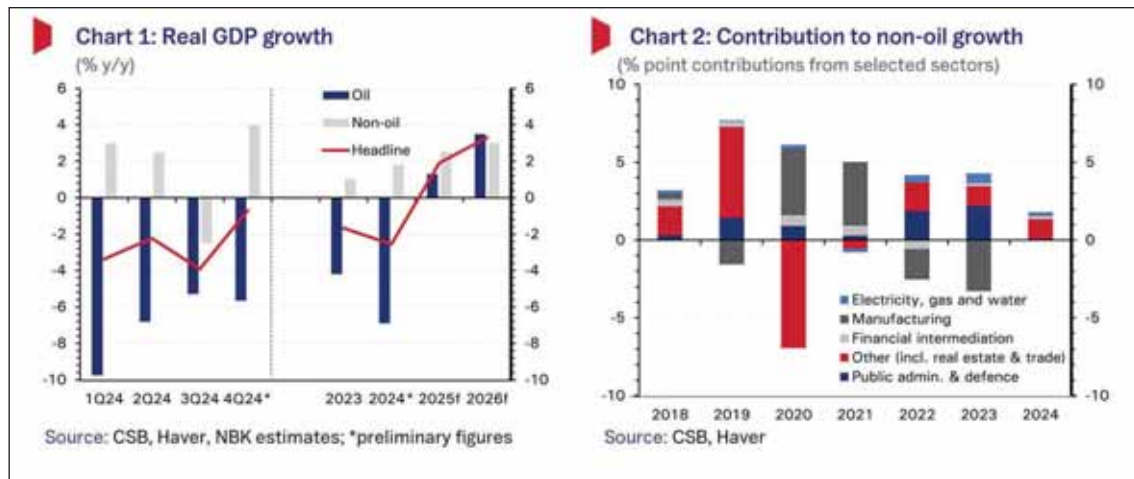


the foundation for safer behavior and informed choices. This is more than sponsorship, it's a meaningful step toward empowering a responsible and proactive generation."

Eng. Ibrahim Al-Fouzan, Senior Business Director & Vice Chairman of Sustainability Committee at ALSAYER Group, also emphasized the broader impact of such initiatives: "Supporting youth-centric initiatives is a strategic priority for us. These events create opportunities to instill values that align with long-term sustainability and community development. By fostering awareness today, we are shaping tomorrow's leaders who can drive real and lasting change in the Gulf region."

ALSAYER Group's involvement in the conference is a reflection of its broader vision to promote sustainable development, community well-being and youth empowerment. Through meaningful engagement and education, the Group continues to lead driving positive change, one pledge at a time.

Kuwait: Non-oil GDP records robust growth in Q4 2024



By National Bank of Kuwait

Preliminary official estimates show GDP declining 0.7% y/y in Q4 2024 as an annual decline in oil output more than offset a robust expansion in the non-oil economy. Oil GDP fell 5.7% y/y, with crude production weighed down by extended OPEC+ cuts but non-oil activity rebounded strongly from the contraction in Q3. For 2024 as a whole, total GDP declined for the second year in a row on the steeper fall in oil activity though non-oil GDP growth accelerated.

Non-oil GDP rebounds in Q4 2024 after declining in Q3

The figures, which did not include any revisions to the historical data, show non-oil GDP expanding 4% y/y in Q4, recording the fastest pace since Q1 2022 and recovering from a 2.5% contraction in the previous quarter. (Chart 1.) Growth was led by a rebound in manufacturing activity, which rose 12.2% y/y, reversing a steep annual decline in Q3. Other sectors, especially real estate, transport, and restaurants & hotels

also exhibited robust performance. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, non-oil GDP rose by 14.6%, solidly outperforming the seasonal increase usually observed in this quarter (which has averaged 11.5% q/q over the last ten years), with output in the construction (38.7%), manufacturing (15.6%) and hotels & restaurants (12.8%) surging, the latter possibly helped by tourism arrivals for the Arabian Gulf Cup in December.

For 2024 as a whole, non-oil activity grew 1.8%, accelerating from 1% recorded in the previous year, though still notably below the pre-Covid 2011-2019 average of 3.3%. At the sectoral level, real estate, renting, and business activities contributed the most to non-oil growth, followed by education and financial intermediation services. (Chart 2.) Manufacturing output, the second largest component in the non-oil economy, recorded a marginal gain of 0.4% y/y despite a 3.5% annual increase in refined petroleum production following the inauguration of the Al-Zour refinery in late 2023. Figures for refining output were not reported explicitly in the latest release, but it has traditionally accounted for 30-40% of manufacturing activity, and its weight is only expected to

have increased after the new refinery expansions came on stream. This seems to imply that subdued value-add from the manufacturing sector overall is due to weakness in the other sub-components. (Chart 3.)

Oil sector decline continues, though reversal nears as OPEC+ unwinds production cuts

Oil GDP remained in contraction territory in Q4 2024 (-5.7% y/y) for the seventh consecutive quarter due to Kuwait's OPEC+ obligations, which have called for reduced crude oil production from members to keep the market from being oversupplied. In 2024, Kuwait's production had to be maintained at 2.413 mb/d post-cuts of 128 kb/d and 135 kb/d, respectively the previous year. Consequently, oil GDP shrank 6.9% y/y for the full year, steepening from 2023's decline of 4.2%. (Chart 4.) The outlook for the sector is set to improve this year and next, however, owing to the unwinding of OPEC+ voluntary cuts, which commenced in April and will accelerate in May and June (+21 kb/d in both months). This would bring output up to 2.466 mb/d by end-

Q2 and return oil GDP to growth. Crude output should reach 2.54 mb/d by 2026.

Growth heading back into positive territory in 2025

While the economy shrunk by 2.6% last year amid reduced oil production, we expect it to return to positive territory this year. Non-oil growth is forecast at 2.5%, supported by ongoing gains in the refining, real estate and projects sectors and increased momentum in government reform and investment initiatives. Together with expanding oil production, total economic growth should reach 1.9% this year, its first positive figure since 2022. This is despite intensifying global economic headwinds, including deteriorating global trade relations sparked by trade tariffs and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. The potential for lower oil prices will, however, remain a key downside risk to the outlook, especially as it might trigger spending cuts as the government attempts to preserve the fiscal position.



U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, left, and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent take part in a press conference after two days of closed-door discussions on trade between the United States and China, in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, May 12, 2025. (AP)

Pause okayed for 90 days

US and China take a step back from sky-high tariffs

GENEVA, May 12, (AP) — U.S. and Chinese officials said Monday they had reached a deal to roll back most of their recent tariffs and call a 90-day truce in their trade war for more talks on resolving their trade disputes.

Stock markets rose sharply as the globe's two major economic powers took a step back from a clash that has unsettled the global economy.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the U.S. agreed to drop its 145% tariff rate on Chinese goods by 115 percentage points to 30%, while China agreed to lower its rate on U.S. goods by the same amount to 10%.

Greer and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the tariff reductions at a news conference in Geneva.

The two officials struck a positive tone as they said the two sides had set up consultations to continue discussing their trade issues. Bessent said at the news briefing after two days of talks that the high tariff levels would have amounted to a complete blockage of each side's goods, an outcome neither side wants.

"The consensus from both delegations this weekend is neither side wants a decoupling," Bessent said. "And what had occurred with these very high tariff ... was an embargo, the equivalent of an embargo. And neither side wants that. We do want trade." "We want more balanced trade," he said. "And I think that both sides are committed to achieving that."

The delegations, escorted around town and guarded by scores of Swiss police, met for at least a dozen hours on both days of the weekend at a sunbaked 17th-century villa that serves as the official residence of the Swiss ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva. At times, the delegation leaders broke away from their staffs and settled into sofas on the villa's patios overlooking Lake Geneva, helping deepen personal ties in the effort to reach a much-sought deal.

Suspend

China's Commerce Ministry said the two sides agreed to cancel 91% in tariffs on each other's goods and suspend another 24% in tariffs for 90 days, bringing the total reduction to 115 percentage points.

The ministry called the agreement an important step for the resolution of the two countries' differences and said it lays the foundation for further cooperation.

"This initiative aligns with the expectations of producers and consumers in both countries and serves the interests of both nations as well as the common interests of the world," a ministry statement said.

China hopes the U.S. will stop "the erroneous practice of unilateral tariff hikes" and work with China to safeguard the development of their economic and trade relations, injecting more certainty and stability into the global economy, the ministry said. The joint statement issued by the two countries said China also agreed to suspend or remove other measures it has taken since April 2 in response to the U.S. tariffs.

China has increased export controls on rare earths including some critical to the defense industry and added more American companies to its export control and unreliable entity lists, restricting their business with and in China.

The full impact on the complicated tariffs and other trade penalties enacted by Washington and Beijing remains unclear. And much depends on whether they will find ways to bridge longstanding differences during the 90-day suspension. Bessent said in an interview with CNBC that U.S. and Chinese officials will meet again in a few weeks. But investors rejoiced as trade envoys from the world's two biggest economies blinked, finding ways to pull back from potentially massive disruptions to world trade and their own markets.

Futures for the S&P 500 jumped 2.6% and for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 2%. Oil prices surged more than \$1.60 a barrel and the U.S. dollar gained against the euro and the Japanese yen.

De-escalation

"This is a substantial de-escalation," said Mark Williams, chief Asia economist at Capital Economics. But he warned "there is no guarantee that the 90-day truce will give way to a lasting ceasefire."

Jens Eskelund, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, welcomed the news but expressed caution. The tariffs only were suspended for 90 days and there is great uncertainty over what lies ahead, he said in a statement.

"Businesses need predictability to maintain normal operations and make investment decisions. The chamber therefore hopes to see both sides continue to engage in dialogue to resolve differences, and avoid taking measures that will disrupt global trade and result in collateral damage for those caught in the cross-fire," Eskelund said. Trump last month raised U.S. tariffs on China to a combined 145%, and China retaliated by hitting American imports with a 125% levy. Tariffs that high essentially amount to the two countries boycotting each other's products, disrupting trade that last year topped \$660 billion.

The announcement by the U.S. and China sent shares surging, with U.S. futures jumping more than 2%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index surged nearly 3% and benchmarks in Germany and France were both up 0.7%.

The Trump administration has imposed tariffs on countries worldwide, but its fight with China has been the most intense. Trump's import taxes on goods from China include a 20% charge meant to pressure Beijing into doing more to stop the flow of the synthetic opioid fentanyl into the United States.

Advanced Technology Company holds its General Assembly & approves 20% bonus share distribution

KUWAIT CITY, May 12: Advanced Technology Company (ATC), the leading provider of comprehensive healthcare and environmental solutions for both the public and private sectors, held its Annual and Extraordinary General Assembly for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.

During the meeting, shareholders approved all items on the agenda, including the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute bonus shares at a rate of 20% of the issued and paid-up capital, in a move that reflects shareholders' confidence in the company's future strategy.

In 2024, ATC achieved a notable growth of 6.3% in total revenues, reaching KD 179.2 million, compared to KD 168.6 million in 2023. Recurring revenues – which include maintenance services and medical supplies – also grew by 4% year-on-year, reaching KD 109.2 million, reflecting the company's stable and efficient operational performance.

The healthcare services sector, launched in 2023, contributed KD 30 million, representing 16.8% of total revenues, underscoring the sector's strategic importance and significant growth potential on the long-term.

Regarding profitability, net profit attributable to the shareholders of the parent company reached KD 0.7 million in 2024, with earnings per share standing at 4.69 fils.

Strategic Healthcare Projects Underway

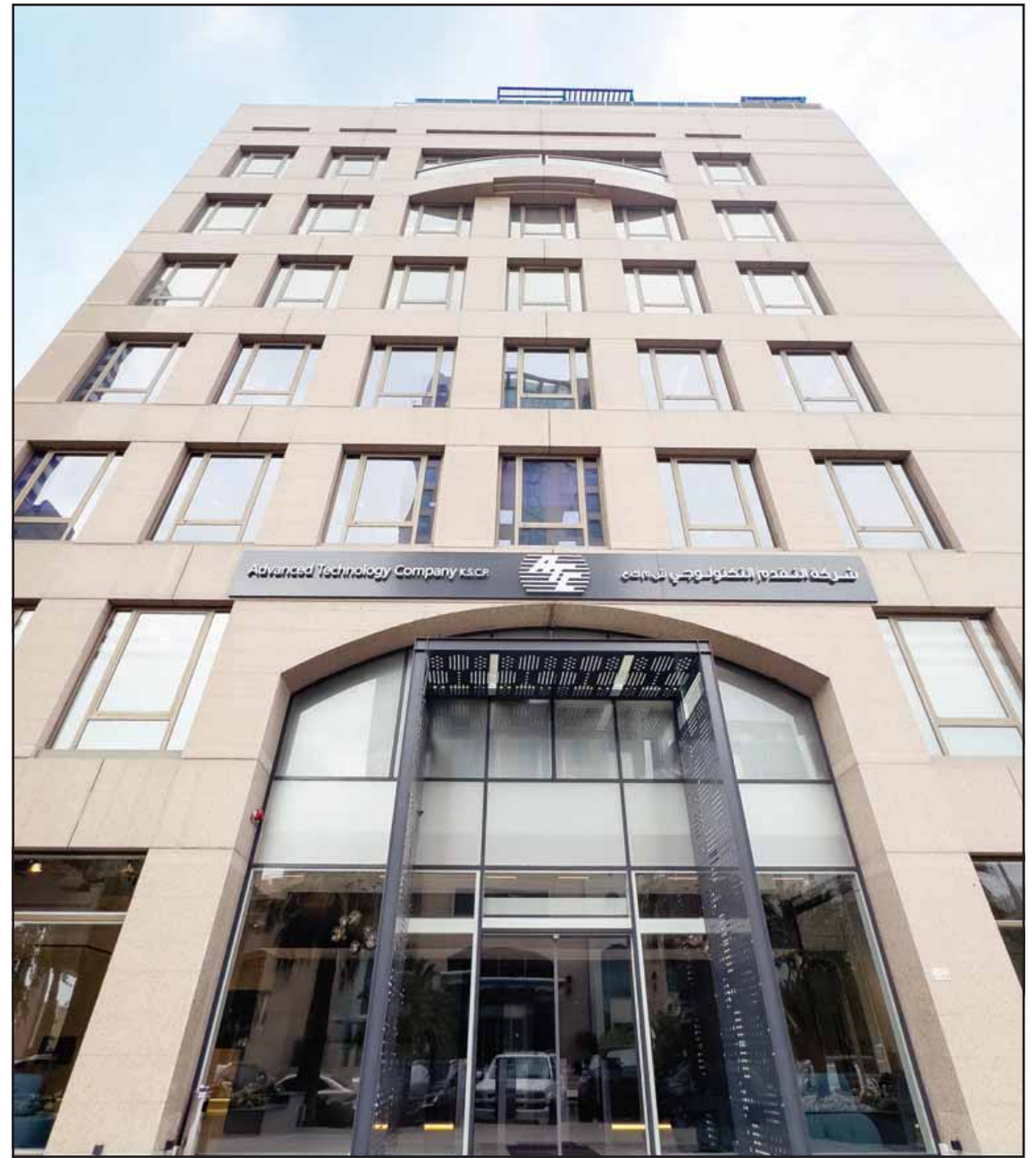
ATC continues to execute several major projects in the healthcare infrastructure sector, most notably Al-Sabah Hospital and the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, both expected to be completed in 2025. The successful completion of the New Maternity Hospital project in 2024 marked a significant addition to the country's healthcare system and supported national efforts to enhance and expand medical infrastructure.

A Forward-Looking Vision Driven by Innovation and Growth

ATC is advancing an ambitious growth strategy aimed at accelerating development within the healthcare sector, with a strong emphasis on innovation and the cultivation of strategic partnerships both locally and internationally. Through these efforts, the company continues to strengthen its market leadership in Kuwait while delivering added value to shareholders by offering cutting-edge solutions aligned with the evolving demands of a modern healthcare system.



ATC logo



ATC Tower

Economic jitters and soaring gold prices create a frenzy for US jewelry merchants

LOS ANGELES, May 12, (AP) — At the biggest jewelry center in the United States, Alberto Hernandez fired up his machine on a recent day and waited until it glowed bright orange inside before shoveling in an assortment of rings, earrings and necklaces weighing about as much as a bar of soap: just under 100 grams, or 3.2 troy ounces.

Minutes later, the bubbling liquid metal was cooling in a rectangular cast the size of a woman's shoe. An X-ray machine determined it was 56.5% gold, making it worth \$177,000 based on the price of gold that day.

As gold prices soar to record highs during global economic jitters, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of gold are circulating through the doors of St. Vincent Jewelry Center in downtown Los Angeles on any given day.

Many of the center's 500 independent tenants, which include jewelers, gold refiners and assayers, say they have never seen such a surge in customers.

"Right now, we're seeing a lot of rappers and stuff melting their big pieces," said Alberto's nephew, Sabashden Hernandez, who works at A&M Precious Metals. "We're getting a lot of new customers who are just getting all of their grandfather's stuff, melting it down pretty much."

Gold's current rally comes as President Donald Trump issues ever-changing announcements on tariffs, roiling financial markets and threatening to reignite inflation.

In response, people across the country are flocking to sell or melt down their old jewelry for quick cash, including middlemen like pawn shop owners. Others, thinking their money might be safer in gold than in the volatile stock market, are snapping it up just as fast.

Los Angeles jeweler Olivia Kazanjian said people are even bringing in family heirlooms.

"They're melting things with their family's wedding dates and things

from the 1800s," Kazanjian said.

She recently paid a client for a 14-karat gold woven bracelet with intricate blue enamel work that could be turned into a brooch. The customer walked away with \$3,200 for the amount of gold contained in the piece measured in troy ounces, the standard for precious metals equivalent to 31 grams.

But Kazanjian doesn't plan to melt the piece. The real artistic and historical value was a lot more, she said.

"It's just stunning ... and you won't see that kind of craftsmanship again," Kazanjian said, adding she has persuaded some customers to change their minds about melting items. "It's a piece of history, and if you're lucky enough to inherit it, it's a piece of your family."

Businesses on the sales side of the action, offering gold bars and other material, also are working hard to keep up with the frenzy.

"Stuff comes in and it goes right

out," said Edwin Feijoo, who owns Stefko Cash for Gold in Pennsylvania and receives shipments from customers across the U.S. looking to sell their gold. "Everybody's busy right now."

Business hasn't been good for everyone, though.

For some jewelers who source their products from places abroad like Italy, Turkey and China, the combination of high gold prices and added tariffs have cut into profit margins and hurt demand.

"Our profit margins are so razor thin here," said Puzant Berberian, whose family founded V&P Jewelry inside St. Vincent in 1983. Berberian said he recently paid an extra \$16,000 on a package from overseas.

Customers also are feeling "sticker shock" when they can't afford the things they used to. A chunky, 14-karat gold bracelet weighing about 10 grams (0.32 troy ounces) might have sold for around \$600 last year, but now it's closer to \$900, Berberian said.

Marvel movie thrives on positive feedback

'Thunderbolts' and 'Sinners' top box office charts again

LOS ANGELES, May 12, (AP): Marvel's "Thunderbolts" and Ryan Coogler's "Sinners" dominated the North American box office charts again this weekend.

Now in their second and fourth weekends respectively, the two films had some new competition, including a horror movie, a Kerry Washington action pic, a Josh Hartnett airplane thriller, and a Shakespeare-inspired musical. None of the additions made a significant impact.

"Thunderbolts" took first place, with \$33.1 million from theaters in the US and Canada, according to studio estimates Sunday. That's down 55% from its opening. Internationally, it added \$34 million, bringing its global total to \$272.2 million. In just two weekends, the Walt Disney Co. release is already the fourth biggest of the year, globally and domestically.

The movie is also faring better than the previous Marvel movie, "Captain America: Brave New World," which took a big 68% dive in its second weekend. The key difference was reviews, which don't always dictate the fate of superhero movies, but good word of mouth has helped "Thunderbolts."

"The holding power of this film harkens back to the heyday of Marvel," said Paul Dergarabedian, the sen-

ior media analyst for Comscore. "The currency of the long-term playability is more important than the sheer opening weekends."

The studio also has another big movie coming later this summer in "The Fantastic Four: First Steps."

"Sinners," meanwhile, crossed the \$200 million mark in North American ticket sales this weekend, which is especially notable for an original R-rated movie. It added \$21.1 million domestically, and \$6.6 million internationally, bringing its global total to \$283.3 million. Next weekend, it's also returning to 70mm IMAX screens "by popular demand," IMAX said.

Warner Bros.' other juggernaut, "A Minecraft Movie," has made \$409 million domestically and \$909.6 million globally in its six weekends in theaters. It added just under \$8 million to take third place this weekend, followed by "The Accountant 2" in fourth with \$6.1 million.

Several new movies also opened in wide release this weekend, but none seemed to break through the noise. The biggest of the bunch was "Clown in a Cornfield," which earned \$3.7 million (a relative high water mark for its distributor IFC) and cracked the top five.

"The second weekend in May, there is typically a bit of a lull," Dergarabedian said. "IFC picked a perfect date for this clown to scare people into the theater."

"Shadow Force," a Lionsgate action pic with Washington and Omar Sy from "The Grey" filmmaker Joe Carnahan, made \$2 million from 2,170 screens. Vertical's "Flight or Fight," starring Hartnett as a mercenary on a plane full of assassins, also debuted with an estimated \$2 million from 2,153 screens.

In limited release, the Tim Robinson and Paul Rudd movie "Friendship" launched on six screens in New York and Los Angeles and scored the best per-screen average of the year (\$75,317) with many sellouts reported. A24 plans to expand the release nationwide over Memorial Day.

Overall, it was a relatively quiet weekend, but thanks to "A Minecraft Movie," "Sinners" and "Thunderbolts," the year-to-date box office is up around 16% from last year, according to Comscore data. Compared with 2019, however, it's down over 32%.

Next week, "Final Destination: Bloodlines" should give the marketplace another jolt before two giants debut over the holiday weekend: "Lilo & Stitch" and "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning."



This image released by Marvel Studios shows Florence Pugh in a scene from 'Thunderbolts.' (AP)

Freedom hit

'Voice of America' dims under Trump

CHICAGO, May 12, (AP): Growing up in the former Soviet Union, Pedro Spivakovsky-Gonzalez's father and grandparents would listen to Voice of America with their ears pressed to the radio, trying to catch words through the government's radio jamming.

The US-funded news service was instrumental in helping them understand what was happening on the other side of the Iron Curtain, before they moved to the United States in the 1970s.

"It was a window into another world," Spivakovsky-Gonzalez said. "They looked to it as a sort of a beacon of freedom. They were able to imagine a different world from the one they were living in."

When Spivakovsky-Gonzalez and his family heard of President Donald Trump's attempts to dismantle the U.S. Agency for Global Media - the agency that oversees VOA, Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia -- he said it was a "gut punch."

The first months of the second Trump administration have delivered blow after blow to American efforts to promote democracy abroad and pierce the information wall of authoritarian governments through programs that had been sustained over decades by presidents of both political parties.

The new administration has decimated the Agency for Global Media, restructured the State Department to eliminate a global democracy office and gutted the US Agency for International Development, which just last year launched an initiative to try to halt democratic backsliding across the globe. In all, the moves represent a retrenchment from the US role in spreading democracy beyond its borders.

Experts say the moves will create a vacuum for promoting freedom and representative government, and could accelerate what many see as anti-democratic trends around the world.

"The United States has historically been the leading power in spreading democracy globally. Despite different administrations, that has remained the case -- until now," said Staffan Lindberg, a political science professor at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

Democracy

David Salvo, managing director for the Alliance for Securing Democracy at the German Marshall Fund, said promoting democracy abroad has been "a pillar of American foreign policy in the last 50 years" as a means of ensuring more stable, peaceful relationships with other countries, reducing the threat of conflict and war, and fostering economic cooperation.

Yet among Trump's early actions was targeting democracy programs through the State Department and USAID, which had launched a new global democracy initiative at the tail end of Democrat Joe Biden's presidency. The Treasury Department halted funding to the National Endowment for Democracy, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in April he would shutter a State Department office that had a mission to build "more democratic, secure, stable, and just societies."

Funding cuts have hit the National Democratic Institute, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and U.S. nonprofits that have worked for decades "to inject resources into environments so that civil society and democratic actors can try to effect change for the better," including through bolstering unstable democracies against autocrats, Salvo said.

Whether global democracy programs are worth funding was central to a hearing Thursday held by a US House Foreign Affairs subcommittee as Rep. Maria Salazar, R-Fla., repeatedly asked how to "ensure our return on investment is really high."

About 1.2% of the federal budget went to foreign aid in the 2023 fiscal year, according to the Pew Research Center.

"I understand the committee is interested in how we can improve ... and get back to basics," Tom Malinowski, a former Democratic congressman from New Jersey and assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor under President Barack Obama, told lawmakers. "The problem is the administration is eliminating the basics right now."

Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows David Corenswet in a scene from 'Superman.' (AP)

Can Summer 2025 win back moviegoers?

'Superman' return lifts Hollywood hopes

LOS ANGELES, May 12, (AP): Superman already has a lot on his broad shoulders. It seems unfair to add the fate of Hollywood to his worries.

But that's the kind of pressure that comes with being one of the biggest stars in the comic book universe, who is getting a grand reintroduction at a tumultuous time. Thankfully he's not doing it alone - Marvel Studios is also returning to theaters in a big way with two movies this summer, "Thunderbolts" and "The Fantastic Four: First Steps."

Five years after the COVID-19 pandemic brought movie business to a halt, and two years after the strikes, the industry has yet to fully recover. Critics may have complained of superhero fatigue, but after several summers of depleted offerings, it's clear that they're a vital part of the mix - especially when they're good.

The \$4 billion summer of "Barbenheimer" may be most remembered for those two movies, but it didn't get to that number without the "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "Spider-Man" movies, the second- and third-highest grossing of the season.

The filmmakers behind some of the summer's biggest movies spoke to The Associated Press about what to expect in 2025.

Summer has begun early in Hollywood, on the first weekend in May. Kids might still be in school, and pools might still be closed, but that kickoff can make or break that pivotal 123-day corridor that has historically accounted for around 40% of the annual box office. Last year was the first in many that didn't launch with a Marvel movie and it showed - the business limped along for weeks until Disney came to the rescue with "Inside Out 2" and "Deadpool & Wolverine."

This year, the powerful studio is back in that familiar spot with "Thunderbolts," which brings together misfits and antiheroes like Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), Red Guardian (David Harbour) and Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan).

Action

"It's a fun twist on what a movie like this could be," said director Jake Schreier. "There are some places we're gonna go that are different from what you would normally expect."

He added: "It's trying to be a movie about something and the moment we're in - not in a political sense, but just where everybody's at and what everyone's been going through."

The Memorial Day weekend could also be a behemoth a few weeks later with the live action "Lilo & Stitch" and "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning" storming theaters. With a new "Jurassic World," a live-action "How to Train Your Dragon" and a Formula One movie also on the schedule through June and July, the summer 2025 season has the potential to be the biggest in the post-COVID era.

Before the pandemic, all but one summer since 2007 broke the \$4 billion mark. Since 2020, only one has: 2023, led by "Barbie."

After three "Guardians" movies, James Gunn knows enough to know that he doesn't have much control over whether people buy tickets for his movies. His job is to make something good, entertaining and "worthy" of the audience.

But that's also possibly underplaying the pressure of taking on Superman and overseeing a unified DC universe that kicks off with "Superman" on July 11. He considers it the first true superhero movie he's ever made.

"It's a personal journey for Superman that's entirely new," Gunn said. "It is, first and foremost, about what does Superman learn about himself. But it's also about the robots and the flying dogs and all that stuff. It's taking a very real person and putting them in the middle of this outrageous situation and outrageous world and play-

ing with that. I think it's a lot of fun because of that."

The film introduces a new actor to the role of Superman/Clark Kent in David Corenswet, who stars alongside Rachel Brosnahan as Lois Lane and Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor. Gunn said to expect different things from both.

"It was a lot of fun making a Lex that is actually going to kill Superman," he said. "He's pretty scary."

The film is also "seeding the rest of the DCU," Gunn said. "If it works as a movie in a basic way, that's what we need to happen, that's what I care about."

Superman as a brand has always trailed Batman at the box office. None of the Zack Snyder films crossed \$1 billion, not accounting for inflation, while both Christopher Nolan "Dark Knight" sequels did. But Gunn isn't thinking a lot about that.

"I just want to make a decent movie that makes a little money," Gunn said.

Legacy

Superman's not the only legacy brand getting a splashy reintroduction this summer. A new Fantastic Four crew, assembled for the first time under umbrella of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Kevin Feige, is heading to theaters July 25.

"Fantastic Four is a comic I've loved since I was a kid," said director Matt Shakman. "They are the legendary heroes of the '60s that the Marvel silver age was built on."

Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, The Fantastic Four is among Marvel's longest-running comics series. But it has not had the most distinguished history on film, including two with Chris Evans and one with Michael B. Jordan.

"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" is set in a retro-futuristic



This image release by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows, (from left), Ebon Moss-Bachrach as Ben Grimm/The Thing, Vanessa Kirby as Sue Storm/Invisible Woman, Pedro Pascal as Reed Richards/Mister Fantastic and Joseph Quinn as Johnny Storm/Human Torch, in a scene from 'The Fantastic Four: First Steps.' (AP)

1960s New York, where Pedro Pascal's Reed Richards is "basically Steve Jobs meets Einstein who's creating technology that's changing the world" and Vanessa Kirby's Sue Storm is "essentially the secretary-general of the UN," Shakman said.

A television veteran with directing credits on shows like "WandaVision" and "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," Shakman said he wants to do right by the characters, and audience.

"It's working on an incredibly large scale in terms of world building, but it's also no different from all of the great comedies and dramas that I've done," Shakman said. "In the end, it comes down to character, it comes down to relationships, it comes down to heart and humor."

Plus, he feels a responsibility to the idea of the big summer movie.

"It was the joy of my childhood. ... A lot of it has to do with building worlds and entering into a place of wonder," he said. "That's what I felt when I saw 'Indiana Jones' when I was a kid and it's what I hope people feel when they see 'Fantastic Four' this summer."

Studios know that superheroes alone don't make a robust theatrical marketplace and there are plenty of other options on the menu including franchises, event movies and independents: There are family pics ("Smurfs," "Elio," "The Bad Guys 2"); action and adventures ("Ballerina," "The Karate Kid: Legends"); horrors, thrillers and slashers ("28 Years Later," "I Know What You Did Last Summer," "M3GAN 2.0"); romances ("Materialists," "Jane Austen Wrecked My Life"); dramas ("Sorry, Baby," "The Life of Chuck"); a new Wes Anderson movie ("The Phoenician Scheme"); and comedies ("Freakier Friday," "Bride Hard," "The Naked Gun") - though one of the most anticipated, "Happy Gilmore 2," will be on Netflix.

"The frequency of movies, the cadence, the sheer number of them and the perceived quality and excitement surrounding this lineup is like almost like never before," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "Draw me a blueprint of a perfect summer lineup: 2025 is it."

Pressure

One of the biggest movies of the season may be "Jurassic World Rebirth," the seventh movie in a \$6 billion franchise. Even its poorly received predecessor made \$1 billion. This time they enlisted a new filmmaker, self-proclaimed "Jurassic Park" superfan Gareth Edwards, and the original's screenwriter for a new adventure with Scarlett Johansson, Mahershala Ali and Jonathan Bailey.

"People say, like, do you feel pressure and the most pressure I feel is from myself as a fan and to Steven Spielberg, to not disappoint him," Edwards said. "Weirdly what's great about doing a 'Jurassic' movie is that everybody knows deep down that like half the reason they're in this business is because of that film and Steven's work."

It's fitting, in a way, that 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of what's considered the first summer blockbuster: "Jaws."

Edwards said he was born into that world of big summer blockbusters that shaped his early love of movies. Directing one, he said, "is kind of the dream. You get the chance to swing for the fences."

And the unstable economy might work in the industry's favor, at least when it comes to moviegoing. Even with increased ticket prices, theatrical movies remain the most affordable entertainment outside of the home and attendance tends to increase during recession years. The annual domestic box office crossed \$10 billion for the first time in 2009.

HEALTH



Boxes for the medications Wegovy and Zepbound are arranged for a photograph in California on Thursday, May 8. (AP)

First head-to-head trial of blockbuster drugs

Zepbound beats Wegovy in weight loss study

NEW YORK, May 12, (AP) — People taking Eli Lilly's obesity drug, Zepbound, lost nearly 50% more weight than those using rival Novo Nordisk's Wegovy in the first head-to-head study of the blockbuster medications.

Clinical trial participants who took tirzepatide, the drug sold as Zepbound, lost an average of 50 pounds (22.8 kilograms) over 72 weeks, while those who took semaglutide, or Wegovy, lost about 33 pounds (15 kilograms). That's according to the study funded by Lilly, which was published Sunday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Both drugs are part of a new class of medications that work by mimicking hormones in the gut and brain that regulate appetite and feelings of fullness. But tirzepatide targets two such hormones, known as

GLP-1 and GIP, while semaglutide targets GLP-1 alone, said Dr. Louis Aronne, director of the Comprehensive Weight Control Center at Weill Cornell Medicine.

"Two drugs together can produce better weight loss," said Aronne, who led the study and presented the findings Sunday at the European Congress on Obesity in Spain.

While tirzepatide won out in what Aronne said many view as "a drag race of efficacy," both are important tools for treating obesity, which affects about 40% of American adults.

"The point of these medications is to improve health," he said. "The majority of people won't need the most effective medication."

The trial included 751 people from across the US

who were overweight or had obesity and at least one other weight-related health problem, but not diabetes. Participants received weekly injections of the highest tolerated doses of Zepbound, either 10 milligrams or 15 milligrams, or Wegovy, 1.7 milligrams or 2.4 milligrams.

By the end of the trial, those who took Zepbound lost about 20% of their body weight on average, compared with a nearly 14% loss for those who took Wegovy. The tirzepatide group trimmed about 7 inches (17.8 centimeters) from their waist circumference, compared to about 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) with semaglutide. In addition, nearly 32% of people taking Zepbound lost at least a quarter of their body weight, compared to about 16% of those taking Wegovy, the study found.

Pharmas slam pricing plan

Trump vows to cut US drug prices to match global rates

WASHINGTON, May 12, (AP) — President Donald Trump says he'll sign an executive order on Monday that, if implemented, could bring down the costs of some medications — reviving a failed effort from his first term on an issue he's talked up since even before becoming president.

The order Trump is promising will direct the Department of Health and Human Services to tie what Medicare pays for medications administered in a doctor's office to the lowest price paid by other countries.

"I will be instituting a Most Favored Nation's Policy whereby the United States will pay the same price as the Nation that pays the lowest price anywhere in the World," the president posted Sunday on his social media site, pledging to sign the order on Monday morning at the White House.

"Our Country will finally be treated fairly, and our citizens Healthcare Costs will be reduced by numbers never even thought of before," Trump added.

His proposal would likely only impact certain drugs covered by Medicare and given in an office — think infusions that treat cancer, and other injectables. But it could potentially bring significant savings to the government, although the "Trillions of Dollars" Trump boasted about in his post may be an exaggeration.

Medicare provides health insurance for roughly 70 million older Americans. Complaints about US drug prices being notoriously high, even when

compared with other large and wealthy countries, have long drawn the ire of both parties, but a lasting fix has never cleared Congress.

Under the planned order, the federal government would tie what it pays pharmaceutical companies for those drugs to the price paid by a group of other, economically advanced countries — the so-called "most favored nation" approach.

Trump's plan to change the pricing model for some medications is already facing fierce criticism from the pharmaceutical industry before he's even signed the executive order set for Monday that, if implemented, could lower the cost of some drugs.

The nation's leading pharmaceutical lobby by Sunday pushed back, calling it a "bad deal" for American patients. Drugmakers have long argued that any threats to their profits could impact the research they do to develop new drugs.

"Importing foreign prices will cut billions of dollars from Medicare with no guarantee that it helps patients or improves their access to medicines," Stephen J. Uhl, the president and CEO of PhRMA, said in a statement. "It jeopardizes the hundreds of billions our member companies are planning to invest in America, making us more reliant on China for innovative medicines."

It was a rule that Trump tried to adopt during his first term, but could never get through. He signed a similar executive order in the final weeks of his presidency, but a court order later blocked the rule from going into effect under the Biden administration.

The pharmaceutical industry argued that Trump's 2020 attempt would give foreign governments the "upper hand" in deciding the value of medicines in the U.S.



Trump

US listeria outbreak sickens at least 10 linked to 'foods'

SAN FERNANDO, Calif., May 12, (AP) — At least 10 people in the U.S. have been sickened in a listeria outbreak linked to ready-to-eat food products, and a producer is voluntarily recalling several products, federal officials said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Saturday that federal, state and local officials are investigating the outbreak linked to foods produced by Fresh & Ready Foods LLC of San Fernando, California. The FDA says the 10 people who fell ill were in California and Nevada, and required hospitalization.

The agency said the products were sold in Arizona, California, Nevada and Washington at locations including retailers and food service points

of sale, including hospitals, hotels, convenience stores, airports and by airlines.

Listeria symptoms usually start within two weeks of eating contaminated food. Mild cases can include fever, muscle aches, nausea, tiredness, vomiting and diarrhea, while more severe symptoms may include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance and convulsions.

Federal officials said they started investigating the recent outbreak last year but didn't have enough evidence to identify a source of the infections. They said the investigation was reopened in April when FDA investigators found listeria in samples collected from Fresh & Ready Foods that matched the strain from the outbreak.

'Gaza is at critical risk of famine'

Arab Parliament urges UN action to save Gaza's children from starvation

CAIRO, May 12, (Agencies) — President of the Arab Parliament Mohammad Al-Yamahi appealed, on Sunday, to the United Nations to take immediate action so as to save Gaza's children from a starvation policy imposed by the Israeli occupation forces.

This is came in urgent messages sent by Al-Yamahi to UN Secretary General, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF Executive Director, the AP said in a statement.

"Catastrophic situations in Gaza have reached 'unprecedented' levels of starvation, acute malnutrition and the lack of medicine," Al-Yamahi said.

This is a flagrant violation of the children rights' agreement and international humanitarian law that could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, he noted.

He expressed sorrow over international silence toward the continuation of crimes, clarifying that saving those children is not an option but a humanitarian duty.

Responsibility

Protecting children is a collective responsibility, he said, calling for serious international action, and safeguarding permanent and safe humanitarian corridors.

Al-Yamahi called for the urgent entry of medical and food aid, and press Israeli occupation forces to respect its humanitarian and legal commitments towards civilians, mainly children.

The AP will continue legal and political action regionally and internationally till putting an end to the sufferings of Palestinian children, and ensuring their rights to life and dignity, he affirmed.

The Gaza Strip is at critical risk of famine if Israel doesn't lift its blockade and stop its military campaign, food security experts said in a stark warning on Monday.

Outright famine is the mostly likely scenario unless conditions change, according to findings by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises.

Nearly a half million Palestinians are in "catastrophic" levels of hunger, meaning they face possible starvation, the report said, while another million are at "emergency" levels of hunger.

Israel has banned any food, shelter, medicine or other goods from entering the Palestinian territory for the past 10 weeks, even as it carries out waves of airstrikes and ground operations. Gaza's population of around 2.3 million people relies almost entirely on outside aid to survive, because Israel's 19-month-old military campaign has wiped away most capacity to produce food inside the territory.



Ward Nar, left, reacts as she speaks with the photographer after returning empty-handed from attempting to receive donated food for her family, including her husband Mohammed Zaharna (center right) and their children, Sally (right) and Raed, at a community kitchen in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, Friday, May 9, 2025. (AP)

Food supplies are emptying out dramatically. Communal kitchens handing out cooked meals are virtually the only remaining source of food for most people in Gaza now, but they too are rapidly shutting down for lack of stocks.

Thousands of Palestinians crowd daily outside the public kitchens, pushing and jostling with their pots to receive lentils or pasta.

"We end up waiting in line for four, five hours, in the sun. It is exhausting," said Riham Sheikh el-Eid, waiting at a kitchen on Sunday. "At the end, we walk away with nothing. It is not enough for everybody."

The lack of a famine declaration doesn't mean people aren't already starving, and a declaration shouldn't be a precondition for ending the suffering, said Chris Newton, an analyst for the International Crisis Group focusing on starvation as a weapon of war.

Blockade

"The Israeli government is starving Gaza as part of its attempt to destroy Hamas and transform the strip," he said.

The office of Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, did not respond to a request for comment. The army has said that enough assistance entered Gaza during a two-month ceasefire that Israel shattered in mid-March when it relaunched its military campaign.

Israel says the blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release the hostages it still holds. It says it won't let aid back in until a new system giving it control over distribution is in place, accusing Hamas of siphoning off supplies.

The United Nations denies substantial diversion of aid is taking place. It says the new system Israel

envisages is unnecessary, will allow aid to be used as a weapon for political and military goals, and will not meet the massive needs of Palestinians.

The United States says it is working up a new mechanism that will start deliveries soon, but it has given no timeframe. The U.N. has so far refused to participate, saying the plan does not meet humanitarian standards.

Monday's report said that any slight gains made during the ceasefire have been reversed. Nearly the entire population of Gaza now faces high levels of hunger, it said, driven by conflict, the collapse of infrastructure, destruction of agriculture, and blockades of aid.

Commenting on the report, the head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said any delay in restoring the flow of aid "bringing us closer to famine."

"If we fail to act, we are failing to uphold the right to food, which is a basic human right," FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the group's Oct. 7, 2023, surprise attack on Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 hostages, most of whom have been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's offensive has killed over 52,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, whose count does not distinguish between civilians or combatants.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, first set up in 2004 during the famine in Somalia, groups more than a dozen UN agencies, aid groups, governments and other bodies.

Cancer center

'City of Hope' expands care

LOS ANGELES, May 12, (AP) — As advances in early detection and treatment transform cancer into a chronic disease, City of Hope, one of the largest and most advanced cancer research and treatment organizations in the US with its National Medical Center named top 5 in the nation for cancer by US News & World Report, opens its largest outpatient facility among its network of 38 US locations. Hope Plaza brings together cancer experts across specialties in one place, making care easier and more convenient for patients and their families.

"As one of the nation's leading comprehensive cancer centers, City of Hope is visionary in the delivery of cancer care and in recognizing the needs of people with cancer and their families. A shift in patient demographics to younger adults and more cancer survivors living longer has created a need for City of Hope to offer both more outpatient care and supportive care," said Marcel van den Brink, M.D., Ph.D., president, City of Hope Los Angeles and City of Hope National Medical Center, and Deana and Steve Campbell Chief Physician Executive Distinguished Chair.

In Los Angeles County, 1 in every 271 people is diagnosed with cancer each year. City of Hope treats more than 157,000 patients annually across its national cancer care system. Designed with patients in mind, Hope Plaza increases the number of services City of Hope can provide in an outpatient setting to meet today's cancer care needs. Moreover, Hope Plaza has 84 exam rooms, increasing outpatient visit potential by 69% or by 168,000 more patient visits.

Personalized

"City of Hope experts are on the forefront of personalized medicine based on an individual's genes, robotic and minimally invasive surgery, state-of-the-art interventional radiology that concentrates on disease and leaves healthy cells untouched, and supportive care that improves quality of life for our cancer survivors and their family members," Dr. Van den Brink said.

Hope Plaza grew from an idea 10 years ago to become one of City of Hope's most ambitious projects to-date — the centerpiece of a seven-year, \$1 billion campus transformation.

City of Hope, with a 112-year legacy of treating life-threatening illness, is a national system of cancer care that has been a leading contributor to innovative cancer treatments, including therapies that jumpstart an individual's immune system, that target and kill tumors, and that engineer cells and genes to heal the body. People around the world come to City of Hope to receive specialized cancer care. City of Hope physicians have performed more than 16,000 robotic surgeries, nearly 20,000 bone marrow transplants and more than 1,600 CAR T cell therapies.

City of Hope's discoveries and other developments in cancer care have ushered in less intense treatment regimens, leading to the need for more comprehensive outpatient centers.

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Bell finishes in the top three for sixth time

Larson wins again at Kansas Speedway for 3rd Series victory this season

KANSAS CITY, Kan., May 12, (AP): Kyle Larson took most of the drama out of his second straight spring victory at Kansas Speedway.

After putting his No. 5 car on the pole for Hendrick Motorsports, Larson led 221 of 267 laps, winning both stages and cruising to his third NASCAR Cup Series win of the season. He was never challenged down the stretch by second-finishing Christopher Bell - and he most certainly didn't need another last-lap pass to win at the wire like he did a year ago.

The margin over Chris Buescher then was 0.001 seconds, the closest in Cup Series history. It was 0.712 seconds on Sunday.

"Glad to not win by an inch this time," Larson said with a smile. "A little safer gap."

Larson, who also has wins at Homestead and Bristol, has finished in the top

four in each of his past four Cup Series races, and now he will take that momentum to Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Larson will be on track Tuesday as he begins another shot at "the Double" - running every lap of the Indianapolis 500 and Coca-Cola 600 on the same day Memorial Day weekend.

Last year, he contended in the rain-delayed Indy 500 before a speeding penalty on pit road resulted in an 18th-place finish. He then hopped a flight to Charlotte for the NASCAR race, but rain there kept him from ever completing a lap.

"It's a cool win here at Kansas," Larson said in victory lane, "and now we'll try to execute two good weeks at Indy."

Even though Larson spent most of a hot, sunny day at Kansas in the lead, he found himself trailing Chase Elliott early in the final stage. But when Elliott's team dropped the jack too soon before

his right rear tire was on during a pit stop, Larson was able to get back to the front on the restart, and he spent the last 50 laps cruising to the checkered flag.

Bell, a three-time winner already, finished in the top three for the sixth time this season. Ryan Blaney came in third, giving Team Penske another good run after Austin Cindric won two weeks ago at Talladega and Joey Logano won last week at Texas.

"I was just trying to get to the end. I know Ryan was coming on really strong there," Bell said. "I feel like our day was kind of a product of qualifying well and having good pit stops and restarts."

Blaney knew he was coming on strong, too, but he was left to lament what might have been.

"We were kind of running those guys down quick," Blaney said. "A few more laps, I would have scared the 5 a bit at least."

Chase Briscoe finished fourth and Larson's teammate Alex Bowman rounded out the top five.

Brad Keselowski looked as if he might finally have his first top-10 finish this season. He started from the rear but steadily made his way forward, and the 2012 series champion had moved into second behind Elliott when his right rear went down with 72 laps to go. Keselowski wound up in the wall, ending his hopes of contending.

"I mean, it was going to be a great day," Keselowski said. "I heard a big boom and around it went. It's unfortunate."

Denny Hamlin also had a fast car all afternoon, but he wound up fighting a clutch problem that made pitting a nightmare. He was still running with the leaders before Keselowski's caution, when yet more clutch trouble finally ruined his day.



Kyle Larson does a burnout at the finish line after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kan. (AP)

Reward for nurturing players

Clubs group asks UEFA for 5% of Euro competition money

GENEVA, May 12, (AP): A proposal to share hundreds of millions of euros in UEFA prize money was made Monday by a European group representing them.

The Union of European Clubs wants to help close the growing wealth gap in soccer if UEFA would allocate at least 5% of broadcast and commercial revenue from the Champions League and other competitions to clubs that did not take part yet had nurtured those players early in their careers.

Gross revenue this season for the Champions League, Europa League and Conference League is at least 4.4 billion euros (\$4.88 billion) and 5% would be 220 million euros (\$244 million).

Only clubs which did not advance to play in the league phase of the three competitions would be eligible for payments, the UEC said in a statement.

The idea is "a pragmatic, merit-based approach to restoring fairness and balance in the football ecosystem," said the 140-member group, which estimated its idea could have earned at least 400,000 euros (\$444,000) to each of 400 clubs across Europe in recent years.

The UEC said "the core principle is clear - clubs that invest in player development should be fairly rewarded when those players contribute to the success of European competitions."

It is unclear why UEFA and the influential European Club Association - which has a key say over commercial and sporting decisions in the Champions League - would agree to a proposal from a non-

recognized group effectively taking money from its members.

The ECA, led by Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser al-Khelaifi, has a working agreement with UEFA that recognizes the group "as the sole body representing the interests of European clubs at European and global level."

UEFA and the ECA, both based in Nyon, Switzerland, were approached for comment.

The UEC was formally launched in 2023 by officials who saw the ECA as too focused on representing a storied and wealthy group of elite clubs. Before al-Khelaifi, the ECA had been led since 2008 by Bayern Munich's Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Andrea Agnelli from Juventus, who used the platform to launch the failed Super League project in 2021.

Current UEC members include Belgian league leader Union Saint-Gilloise, which is on track to play in the Champions League for the first time, and Burnley, which returns to the English Premier League next season.

Its proposal, called the Player Development Reward, was shared with European Union officials in Brussels, the UEC said in a statement.

EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg are increasingly seen as the most effective way to force change in how soccer is run by international bodies like FIFA and UEFA.

The formula to calculate payments, the UEC said would be "based on the minutes played in UEFA competitions and prize money earned by players they have trained and developed."

Moroccan wins Marc-Vivien Foe award

Hakimi named top African player in French league

PARIS, May 12, (AP): PSG defender Achraf Hakimi has been voted the top African player in the French league after helping his club win a record-extending 13th Ligue 1 title and reach the Champions League final.

The 26-year-old Moroccan won the Marc-Vivien Foe award ahead of Nice forward Evann Guessand, from Ivory Coast, and Senegalese midfielder Habib Diarra, who plays for Strasbourg.

The prize is named after the late Foe, the popular Cameroon player and two-time African champion who collapsed and died on a field in France in 2003 while playing for his country.

Hakimi, regarded as one of the best right-backs in the world, scored last week as PSG defeated Arsenal 2-1 in the second leg of their Champions League semifinal.

He is the second defender to win the award after Congolese player Chancel Mbemba in 2023. He's also the fourth Moroccan, following Marouane Chamakh in 2009, Younès Belhanda in 2012 and Sofiane Boufal in 2016.

PSG is hoping for its first-ever treble this season. In addition to the Champions League final against Inter Milan on May 31, it faces Reims the week before in the French Cup final.

Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang won the honor in 2024.



PSG's Achraf Hakimi celebrates after scoring his sides second goal during the Champions League semifinal, second leg soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal at the Parc des Princes in Paris. (AP)

Best of the Rest

UEFA selects Kovács for final: UEFA picked István Kovács as its Champions League final referee on Monday, completing a European competition hat trick for the Romanian official.

Kovács will take charge of the Inter Milan vs. Paris Saint-Germain title game on May 31 in Munich, UEFA said.

He also handled a standout game in the Champions League this season - PSG's 1-0 victory at Liverpool in the round of 16 second leg before the French champion won a penalty shootout.

Kovács will complete a set of UEFA cup competition finals. He worked Atalanta's win over Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League final last year and Roma beating Feyenoord in the 2022 Europa Conference League final. (AP)



Sepp Straka, of Austria, poses with the trophy after winning the Truist Championship golf tournament at the Philadelphia Cricket Club in Flourtown. (AP)

Straka wins Truist Champ'ship

Thitikul takes Mizuho Americas Open

FLOURTOWN, Pa., May 12, (AP): Sepp Straka seized the lead with a par on the 16th hole and shot 2-under 68, outdueling Shane Lowry on Sunday in the final round of the Truist Championship at Philadelphia Cricket Club for his second victory of the season.

Lowry missed the green on the par-3 16th and failed to convert a 6-foot par putt to fall one shot behind. He also missed a 22-foot birdie chance on the 17. Trailing by one shot, he gunned his 28-foot birdie putt some 8 feet by the hole and three-putted for bogey on the 18th for a 70.

Straka rolled in his 3 1/2-foot par putt for a two-shot victory over Lowry and Justin Thomas (67). He finished at 16-under 264.

Straka joined Rory McIlroy (three victories) as the only other multiple winner this year on the PGA Tour. He also won The American Express in January.

McIlroy shot 68 and tied for seventh in his tune-up event before the Masters champion goes to the PGA Championship at Quail Hollow, a course where he has won four times.

Jeeho Thitikul of Thailand turned back a pair of challenges and played bogey-free over the final 27 holes at Liberty National, closing with a 3-under 69 for a four-shot victory over Celine Boutier in the Mizuho Americas Open.

Thitikul, who captured the Race to CME Globe and its \$4 million prize to end last season, won for the first time this year and the fifth time in her LPGA Tour career.

Nelly Korda is still trying to win for the first time this year. She was within one shot of Thitikul until driving into the hazard on the par-4 ninth hole and taking bogey. It was



Jeeho Thitikul, of Thailand, chips on the 8th green during the final round of the Mizuho Americas Open LPGA golf tournament in Jersey City, N.J. (AP)

a downward spiral from there, as Korda played the back nine with two bogeys and no birdies and was never a factor the rest of the way, closing with a 73.

The final challenge came from Boutier, who was posed to catch the Thai player on the 15th hole until she three-putted from 10 feet and Thitikul made a sensational par save from the bunker. Boutier shot 72 and finished second.

Ryan Fox of New Zealand chipped in from just outside 50 feet on the first playoff hole to win the Myrtle Beach Classic for his first PGA Tour title, sending him back to the PGA Championship.

Fox closed with a 5-under 66 that looked like it might not be enough when Mackenzie Hughes came to the 18th hole with a one-shot lead.

Hughes pulled his drive into the trees, had to pitch out and missed a 10-foot par putt for a 67 that put him in a playoff at 15-under 269 with Fox and Harry Higgs, who missed a 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th with a chance to win for the first time. Higgs shot 68.

Going back to the 18th for the playoff, Hughes and Higgs found the

fairway and each had decent looks at birdie. Fox went from the rough to the collar right of the green. He raised both arms when the chip dropped for birdie. Higgs and Hughes missed their birdie putts.

The 38-year-old Fox had won three times on the European tour, including the flagship BMW PGA Championship in 2023, and has climbed as high as No. 23 in the world. The PGA Championship was holding a spot in the field at Quail Hollow for the winner of the Myrtle Beach Classic.

Martin Couvra of France won his first European tour title when he rallied from four shots behind with a 7-under 64 for a two-shot victory in the Turkish Airlines Open.

Couvra opened with four birdies in six holes, and then seized control with four birdies in a five-hole stretch early on the back nine. He finished at 17-under 267 to finish two shots ahead of Jorge Campillo of Spain and Haotong Li of China, who both shot 67.

Li went out in 30, but he played even par on the back nine. It was the third time Li has been runner-up at the Turkish Airlines Open, back on

the European tour schedule for the first time since 2019.

Couvra has five top 10s on the European tour in his rookie season and moved to No. 8 in the Race to Dubai standings.

Lucas Herbert of Australia pulled away with a 7-under 64 for a five-shot victory over Younghun Song and Yuta Sugiura in the International Series Japan on the Asian Tour. Herbert now has titles on the PGA Tour, Asian Tour, European Tour and PGA Tour of Australasia.

Hyo Joo Kim closed with a 3-under 69 for a two-shot victory over Chiara Tamburlini in the Aramco Korea Championship on the Ladies European Tour. ... Clement Charmasson closed with a 2-under 69 for a one-shot victory over Victor Sidal Svendsen in the Challenge de Espana, his first title on the European Challenge Tour.

Sophia Popov, the 2020 Women's British Open champion, won the Epson Tour's Carlisle Arizona Women's Golf Classic in 100-degree heat at the TPC Scottsdale. The 32-year-old German player closed with a 2-under 69 for a two-stroke victory. She finished at 14-under 270 on the Champions course.

American John Marshall Butler won the Bupa Championship in Mexico City for his first PGA Tour Americas title. He closed with a 6-under 66 to finish at 19 under, a stroke ahead of Vicente Marzilio of Argentina. Marzilio also shot 66.

Luis Carrera of Mexico won the FBC Zimbabwe Open with a 4-under 68 to win by four shots on the Sunshine Tour. ... Jiyai Shin of South Korea closed with a 1-over 73 and defeated Saiki Fujita (75) in a playoff to win the World Ladies Championship Salonpas Cup on the Japan LPGA.

Yewon Lee shot 2-under 69 for a two-shot victory in the NH Investment & Securities Ladies Championship, her second win this year on the Korea LPGA.

Dhalluin scores 3 goals

Stanford beats USC 11-7 to win NCAA women's water polo title

INDIANAPOLIS, May 12, (AP): Juliette Dhalluin score three goals on Sunday and the Stanford defense allowed just one second-half goal to help the Cardinal beat Southern California 11-7 to claim its 10th NCAA women's water polo championship and third in the last four seasons.

No. 1 Stanford (25-1) finished the season on a 10-game win streak, dating to a 12-11 loss to the Trojans on March 29. The Cardinal beat USC 11-7 on April 27 in the semifinals of the MPSF Championship.

Dhalluin scored with a second left in the first half to make it 6-6 and again with 6:47 left in the third - the only goal of the quarter - gave Stanford the lead for good.

Serena Browne added a goal with 6:04 to play and another with 3:06 remaining to make it 9-6.

Ryann Neushul scored a goal to give her and has 228 - fifth most in program history - in her seven-year career (after winning the 2019 national championship, Neushul stepped away from the Cardinal

for two years to train with the U.S. national team) and is the first four-time NCAA team champion in Stanford history.

Christine Carpenter had nine saves for the Cardinal.

Meghan McAninch led USC (29-5) with two goals and Anna Reed finished with 11 saves.

The Cardinal are the all-time leaders in NCAA team championship with 137 and have won at least one team title in each of the past 49 seasons.

Kuwait Club clinches Zain Premier League title

Whites edge Al-Arabi in finale



Kuwait Club celebrates with the championship trophy.

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): Kuwait Club secured the 2024-2025 Zain Premier League title on with a 2-1 victory over Al-Arabi in the season's final match at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Al-Arabi initially took the lead with a goal from Kanil Al-Aswad. However, after an Al-Arabi player received a red card, Kuwait Club capitalized on the opportunity, scoring two goals – one from Mohammed Daham and another from Mohammed Marhoun – to complete the comeback.

With this win, Kuwait Club claimed its 20th league title, extending its lead over Qadsia and Al-Arabi, who each have 17 titles. Kazma and Salmiya have won the league four times, while Al-Jahra has won it once.

KUNA photo

Reaffirming the Bank's commitment to community development through sports

KIB | The Stadium joins ranks of 'Major Sporting Event of the Year' nominees at SPIA 2025

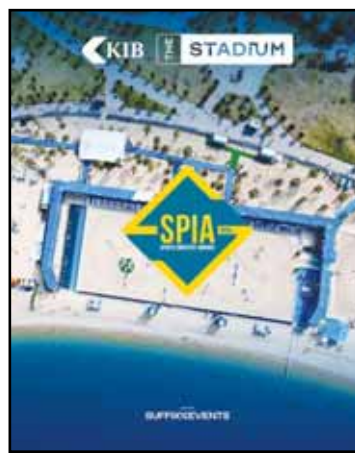
KUWAIT CITY, May 12: In a new testament to its steadfast commitment to community development through sports, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that its annual mega sporting event, KIB | The Stadium, organized by the Bank's strategic partner Suffix, was nominated for the Middle East Sports Industry Awards - SPIA 2025 in the 'Major Sporting Event of the Year' category.

The nomination comes on the heels of the third season of KIB | The Stadium's notable success, which featured a first-of-its-kind show jumping tournament by the sea, pitting it against major sporting events, such as the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup UAE 2024 Dubai, the Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu

Dhabi Grand Prix, and the NBA Abu Dhabi Games 2024 presented by ADQ, among others.

The Sports Industry Awards celebrate excellence in the Middle East's sports sector, recognizing the achievements of individuals, teams, and organizations that have contributed to advancing the sports culture in Kuwait and strengthening its societal and economic impact.

Commenting on the nomination, Marwa Marafie, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "It is an honor to see KIB | The Stadium nominated alongside global sporting giants for this esteemed award, especially after presenting only three editions of the event in



SPIA awards nomination

partnership with Suffix. In line with KIB's vision to become the

Islamic bank of choice, commitment to social responsibility, and adherence to the finest environment, social, and governance (ESG) principles, we are proud to continue sponsoring and supporting initiatives across Kuwait that contribute to our society's comprehensive development."

She added: "This nomination stands as a testament to our dedication to nurturing Kuwait's sporting culture, particularly equestrianism, which is deeply rooted in our nation's heritage. It also reflects the growing impact of KIB | The Stadium as a platform for celebrating equestrian talent, inspiring the next generation of athletes, and strengthening Kuwait's position as an emerging hub for international

sporting events."

On his part, Ahmed Al-Majed, Chief Operations Officer of Suffix, said: "Being nominated alongside some of the Middle East's most prestigious sporting events is a milestone moment for all of us at Suffix. This recognition affirms that a bold vision and strong partnerships can place Kuwait on the global sports map. KIB | The Stadium has become more than just an event – it's a unique platform that shines a spotlight on equestrian sports, particularly showjumping, which is deeply rooted in our culture and identity. Through this initiative, we celebrate our heritage, empower emerging talents, and deliver unforgettable experiences that resonate across the commu-

nity. We thank KIB for believing in this shared vision and continuing to support events that inspire national pride and international recognition."

It is worth noting that the Bank's sponsorship of KIB | The Stadium since its debut in 2023 stemmed from its firm belief in the unique power of sports in influencing positive change on the individual and societal levels, especially among the younger generations. This comes as part of the Bank's comprehensive social responsibility program and multifaceted contributions to the overall development of Kuwaiti society, in line with its continued efforts to support the success of the New Kuwait Vision 2035.



Group shot of meeting attendees.

Special Olympics meeting in Cairo highlights role of athlete families

CAIRO, May 12: Special Olympics Kuwait, represented by Sadika Al-Ansari – Chair of the Athletes' Families Council and Vice Chair of the Regional Council – took part in the Regional Council for Athlete Leaders meeting, organized by Special Olympics Middle East and North Africa in Cairo.

Al-Ansari stated that the event featured discussion panels, dialogue sessions, and

presentations of inspiring stories, all focused on empowering family councils to better support athletes. The sessions explored effective ways to influence athletes' behavior, develop their capabilities, and foster a stronger love for sports. Key topics included how to manage behavioral challenges such as stubbornness and how to train athletes to become more independent.

An interactive session also emphasized the

role of the athlete as a leader within both the family and the broader community.

Al-Ansari praised the quality of discussions, highlighting their impact on strengthening family councils and equipping athletes with greater confidence and essential life skills. She noted that the experience helps athletes become more self-reliant, vocal about their needs, and better prepared for integration into society.

OKC outplays Denver to even series

Pacers rout Cavaliers for 3-1 series lead

INDIANAPOLIS, May 12, (AP): Pascal Siakam scored 21 points and the Indiana Pacers tied an NBA playoff record by taking a 41-point halftime lead before routing the top-seeded Cleveland Cavaliers 129-109 on Sunday night for a 3-1 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The Pacers can earn a second straight trip to the East finals with a victory Tuesday in Cleveland, where they won the first two games.

Indiana jumped to an 80-39 lead at halftime and led by 44 points. The 41-point lead matched the margin Cleveland set in Game 2 of the 2017 Eastern Conference finals against Boston, according to Sportradar.

And Indiana did it mostly without Benedict Mathurin, one of its top playoff scorers, who was ejected just 7 1/2 minutes into the game for a flagrant foul.

Darius Garland led the Cavs with 21 points and Donovan Mitchell had 17 points despite not playing in the second half because of a left ankle injury. Coach Kenny Atkinson said his All-Star guard would have an MRI exam Monday.

For the Pacers, it was a redeeming moment in front of a towel-waving home crowd just two days after an embarrassing 22-point loss on its home court. The Cavs dominated



Indiana Pacers forward Aaron Nesmith (23) looks to pass around Cleveland Cavaliers guard Darius Garland (10) in the first half of Game 4 in the Eastern Conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs in Indianapolis. (AP)

the glass, held two-time All-Star Tyrese Haliburton to four points and five assists and fought harder than Indiana.

This time, the Pacers left no doubt about who would be the aggressor.

Indiana took control quickly with early runs of 11-2 and 13-0 to build a commanding 48-23 lead with 9:24 left in the first half. They didn't stop – or back down – there, either, closing the half on a 19-2 run.

Thunder 92, Nuggets 87

In Denver, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder finally outplayed Denver in crunch time, beating the Nuggets to knot their second-round series at two games apiece.

The Thunder trailed 69-63 after three quarters and fell behind by eight when Peyton Watson started the fourth quarter by swishing a hook shot. But Oklahoma City used

an 11-0 run fueled by reserves Casson Wallace, who had a pair of 3-pointers, and Aaron Wiggins, who added another, to take control.

Wallace's second 3-pointer put Oklahoma City ahead for good at 75-73.

The Nuggets had outlasted the youngest team in the NBA with wins in Games 1 and 3, crediting their playoff experience and championship pedigree. And they looked poised to put the top-seeded team in the West on the cusp of elimination when Aaron Gordon's turnaround jumper made it 73-66.

This time, however, it was the Thunder who came up big down the stretch and the Nuggets who fumbled away the chance to put OKC in a 3-1 hole.

Game 5 is Tuesday night back in Oklahoma City, where the Thunder had a 43-point blowout of the Nuggets in Game 2.

Nikola Jokic led Denver with 27 points and 13 rebounds. Christian Braun and Jamal Murray each had 17 points and Gordon scored 15. Michael Porter Jr. scored just three points after scoring 15 Friday night.

Wiggins and Wallace each added 11 points and Alex Caruso and Jalen Williams each scored 10. Williams was 2 for 13 from the floor after scoring 32 in Game 3.

Brazil signs Real Madrid coach Ancelotti ahead of World Cup

SAO PAULO, May 12, (AP): Brazil's soccer federation said on Monday it has a deal with Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti eyeing the 2026 World Cup.

The 65-year-old Ancelotti, who will be Brazil's first full-time foreign coach in a century, is still under contract with Madrid. The last round of the Spanish league will be on May 25 and the CBF said in a statement that he will officially take over Brazil the following day.

"Bringing Carlo Ancelotti to coach Brazil is more than a strategic movement. It is a statement to the world that we are determined to recover the top of the podium," CBF President Ednaldo Rodrigues said in a statement. "He is the greatest coach in history and, now, he will be with the greatest national team on the planet. Together, we will write new glorious chapters of Brazilian soccer."

Rodrigues said Ancelotti will take charge of Brazil's next two fixtures in South American World Cup qualifying, with his debut at Ecuador on June 5th and five days later in front of home fans against Paraguay in Sao Paulo.

Ancelotti's contract with Madrid ends next year but is expected to be terminated early.

He will replace Dorival Júnior, who



In this file photo, Real Madrid's head coach Carlo Ancelotti reacts during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Celta Vigo at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. (AP)

held the job for 14 months and was fired in March after a 4-1 defeat at Argentina. Brazil lags in 4th position in World Cup qualifying after 14 matches and has its 33-year-old star Neymar still in difficulties to return to top form after an ACL injury in 2023. The top six teams will secure direct spots in next year's tournament.

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KUNA photo
Kuwait edged Egypt 29-25 in the third-place match at Arab Cup. The first half ended in a draw, but Kuwait delivered an impressive second-half performance to seal the win. Saif Al-Adwani of Kuwait was named Best Player of the Match. Pictured are the players with their medals.

Sports

Kuwait takes center stage as OCA holds General Assembly



A group photo of Minister Al-Mutairi with the presidents of the International Olympic Committee, Bach and Coventry, members of the Olympic Council of Asia, and representatives of the National Olympic Committees.



The President of the International Olympic Committee, German Dr. Thomas Bach honored.



Hussein Al-Musallam with other officials during the OCA General Assembly.

Meeting focuses on enhancing Asia's role in global sports

KUWAIT CITY, May 12, (KUNA): The 45th General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) took place on Monday in Kuwait, bringing together leaders from National Olympic Committees across 45 Asian countries. Kuwait's representation was led by Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee. The event began with a vibrant opening ceremony attended by top sports officials and dignitaries from across Asia and the world.

Minister of Information, Culture, and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi conveyed Kuwait's deep pride in hosting this major continental Olympic gathering. He highlighted the honor of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah representing the nation at the opening ceremony, and wished the OCA continued success in developing Asian sports across all disciplines.

In his address, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Dr. Thomas Bach emphasized Asia's vast and growing influence in global sports. "Asia is not only the largest continent but one with a rich history and a powerful presence in the sporting world," he said. Dr. Bach also praised the OCA's "outstanding work" in contributing to the success of Olympic Games such as Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022.

OCA First Vice President Timothy Fok expressed appreciation for Kuwait's role as the Council's home base and thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince for their unwavering support of the Asian Olympic Movement.

The meeting, chaired by Hussein Al-Musallam, the Director of the OCA, began with a keynote address by Kirsty Coventry, the newly elected President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Coventry, who will officially assume her IOC position in June, emphasized sport's power



Dancers perform during the opening ceremony of OCA General Assembly in Kuwait.

as a unifying force for athletes, giving them the platform to express themselves and engage with their communities.

In her speech, Coventry highlighted Asia's key role in the global Olympic movement, noting the success of Asian countries in hosting major Olympic events. She particularly praised the organization of the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics, Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics, and Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. Coventry commended the exceptional organization of the OCA's assembly and the opening ceremony in Kuwait, reflecting the region's strength in managing international sports events.

Following the opening remarks, the assembly heard reports from the OCA Vice Presidents representing each Asian region. These included

Timothy Fok (Hong Kong, East Asia), Dr. Norza Zakaria (Malaysia, Southeast Asia), Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck (Bhutan, South Asia), Otobek Umarov (Uzbekistan, Central Asia), and Dr. Thani Al-Kuwari (Qatar, West Asia).

The assembly also heard presentations from Witold Banka, President of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), as well as updates from the organizing committees of future events, including the Hangzhou 2023 Asian Summer Games and the Harbin 2025 Asian Winter Games in China. The upcoming Asian Youth Games in Bahrain (2025), Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan (2026), Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Riyadh (2026), and the Asian Winter Games in NEOM (2029) were also discussed.

The meeting concluded with the Council's standing committees presenting their annual reports, delivered by the heads of each committee. These included the advisory, athletes, cultural, education, electronic sports, martial arts and mind sports, ethics, finance, gender equality, international relations, legal, media, and medical committees. Reports were also presented from the committees on the Parallel Asian Games, peace through sports, sports, sports and the environment, and sports for all.

During the assembly, the OCA honored Dr. Bach with the prestigious Order of Merit in recognition of his more than 12 years of leadership and contributions to the Olympic Movement. The Council also congratulated newly elected IOC President Christy Coventry on her victory.

Kuwait Olympic Committee Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah noted that the assembly provides a vital platform for collaboration and shared vision among Asia's leading sports figures. He reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to supporting the OCA's objectives and working closely with national Olympic committees to empower young athletes and develop regional sports.

Chinese basketball legend Yao Ming spoke at the event, reflecting on the powerful role sports played in shaping his education, personal growth, and international understanding. He praised the assembly in Kuwait for offering a supportive environment for athletes and sports leaders alike.

Al-Shehab makes history with victory at Porsche Carrera Cup

BRUSSELS, May 12: Kuwaiti rally driver Ahmed Al-Shehab added a remarkable milestone to his racing career by clinching first place in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland race held at Belgium's iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit.

By securing 25 points in the latest round, Al-Shehab not only topped the podium but also made history as the first Kuwaiti and Arab driver to win at this legendary track.

Following his win, Al-Shehab dedicated the achievement to Kuwait, expressing pride in representing his country on the international stage. He reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining his winning momentum and delivering strong performances for the remainder of the season.

Al-Shehab also extended heartfelt thanks to his supporters, saying their encouragement fueled his drive to compete for first place in every round – a mission he remains focused on as the championship continues.



Kuwaiti rally driver Ahmed Al-Shehab celebrates his win.

King Kohli leaves behind legendary red-ball legacy

End of an era: Kohli retires from test cricket after 14-year career

NEW DELHI, India, May 12, (AP): India's great Virat Kohli retired from test cricket Monday after playing 123 matches in his glorious 14-year red-ball career.

Kohli made his test debut in 2011 against the West Indies and has been India's standout batter since Sachin Tendulkar's retirement in 2013.

"As I step away from this format, it's not easy - but it feels right," Kohli posted on Instagram. "It's been 14 years since I first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket. Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life."

The 36-year-old Kohli's retirement comes only days after Rohit Sharma stepped down from test cricket, taking two senior batters out of selection contention for India's tour to England. India will need to select a new skipper and reshape its batting order for the five-test series starting June 20.

Kohli scored 9,230 runs, including 30 centuries and 31 half-centuries at a test batting average of 46.85. He also led India in 68 test matches and was India's most successful captain with 40 test wins.

The former India captain is one of the highest-profile people in cricket, with 271 million followers on Insta-



In this file photo, India's Virat Kohli plays a shot during the third one day international cricket match between India and England in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

gram and almost 68 million on X, and he owns batting records in the longest and the limited-overs formats. He's expected to continue playing one-day international cricket, and he's still heavily involved in the lucrative Twenty20 Indian Premier League, which was suspended last Friday for a week following the escalating military tensions with Pakistan.

Kohli said the traditions and ebbs and flows of the five-day format were special to him, including "the quiet

grind, the long days, the small moments that no one sees but that stay with you forever."

"I am walking away with a heart full of gratitude - for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way," he wrote. "I will always look back at my test career with a smile. #269, signing off."

Kohli finished as India's fourth-highest scorer in tests after Tendulkar (15,921), Rahul Dravid (13,265), and

Sunil Gavaskar (10,122). He also scored the most double centuries for India in tests - seven, one more than the legendary Tendulkar.

His crowning glory in test cricket, though, came as captain. His 40 test wins set a record for an India captain, surpassing MS Dhoni (27 from 60 tests) and Sourav Ganguly (21 from 49 tests).

He finished fourth in the all-time list of most wins as test captain, behind South Africa's Graeme Smith (53 from 109 tests), Australia's Ricky Ponting (48 from 77 tests), and Stephen Waugh (41 from 57 tests).

Kohli also led India to the International Cricket Council's No. 1 ranking in test cricket after taking over from Dhoni in 2014-15, and helped his side maintain a stronghold on that position for five years.

In 2018, he guided India to its first-ever test series victory against Australia in Australia.

Speculation over Kohli's test future has intensified since India's five-test tour of Australia finished in January. After scoring a 30th test hundred in Perth, Kohli's series tapered off, and he finished it with 190 runs in nine innings at an average of 23.75. Still, his impact on the game in India and around the cricket world has been huge.