



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear ministers, the capital is lonely at night, and the solution is here

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

I HOPE His Highness the Prime Minister and the relevant ministers visit the capital during the night to witness the desolation that takes over the city, and then compare it with other capital cities that are bustling with life both day and night.

Major cities, particularly capital cities, reflect the vibrancy of a country. While the morning traffic jams at the entrances to Kuwait City give the impression of a bustling city, the reality is quite different. Once official working hours end, especially for ministries and institutions, the traffic clears, and by evening, Kuwait City becomes totally empty.

For many years, there have been calls to transform the capital into a hub of social and economic activity around the clock. Sadly, these calls have largely gone unaddressed by the relevant authorities.

Across the globe, capital cities are designed to be the beating hearts of their countries, teeming with residential towers, commercial buildings, and are self-sufficient.

With the beginning of Kuwait's financial boom, the government became active in purchasing homes within the capital, with the aim of helping citizens escape hardships and establishing commercial ventures. The intent was never to depopulate the capital or transform it into just a government hub. However, a flawed understanding of housing welfare, focused solely on expanding private housing, has resulted in citizens leaving the heart of the city.

This exodus has left the capital in a state of desolation. Despite the city's bright lights at night, it lacks vitality and soul.

Meanwhile, the misguided approach to housing

has fueled urban sprawl into remote areas, without a clear economic or social vision to boost the country's economy.

As a result, the adoption of the "land and loan" principle, coupled with parliamentary interventions aimed at securing votes, has led to haphazard construction and the development of unsightly concrete cities. These developments not only harm the environment and nature but also clash with the social culture.

On the other hand, the housing crisis has worsened, as every citizen wants to build their own home according to personal preferences and often invests in rental properties, which further increases pressure on public facilities.

How long will this policy of horizontal housing expansion continue while neglecting the potential of vertical urban growth?

To what extent can the state meet housing demands and allocate plots for construction while neglecting the economic, industrial, and agricultural activities that are the backbone of social stability and the country's prosperity?

Former Housing minister Bader Al-Humaidi was wise when he developed a plan to utilize the capital city for housing purposes. However, members of the National Assembly pressured to halt the project, prioritizing the ballot box over the long-term interests of the community and its citizens.

Continued on Page 5

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Amir hails Kuwaiti women as nation builders



His Highness the Amir



His Highness the Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, marking Kuwait Woman Day on Friday, expressed pride of the noticeable contributions by the women in building and developing the dear homeland.

His Highness the Amir affirmed the effective role undertaken by the Kuwaiti woman in various fields at the local and international levels through her serious participation in achieving the comprehensive development aspirations.

He proudly noted the honorary

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait fast-tracks new cities buildout

Mutlaa, Saad Al-Abdullah lead housing surge

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has achieved remarkable progress in implementing major housing city projects, confirming its progress over the approved timetables through the acceleration of work in various major housing city contracts.

The newspaper obtained a copy of statistics issued by the Implementation Sector, showing that the number of public buildings under construction as of April

reached 217.

These buildings include 92 in Mutlaa City, 74 in the Affordable Housing Project, 31 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Project, 17 in Sabah Al-Ahmad City, and one each in Jaber Al-Ahmad, Saad Al-Abdullah and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

The statistics indicated that two supervisory contracts were signed to provide consultancy services and supervise the construction, completion and maintenance of public buildings in residential suburbs N1, N3, N2 and N4 in the Mutlaa City project.

The South Sabah Al-Ahmad Project has recorded remarkable progress, with the actual completion rate of the main roads contract reaching 48.63 percent -- exceeding the contractual rate of 40.88 percent.

Continued on Page 5

Strikes kill 153

Kuwait condemns massacre in Gaza

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a recent massacre committed by Israeli occupying forces against innocent civilians in Gaza Strip and deliberate targeting of public property and hospitals in a blatant breach of international law, international humanitarian law and international legitimacy resolutions.

In a press release on Friday, the ministry renewed Kuwait's call on the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to shoulder its legal and humanitarian responsibilities by halting the genocide against the Palestinian people, and bringing the Israeli occupation to accountability for its crimes against unarmed civilians and to ensure full protection for hospitals and medical facilities and aid delivery to the needy.

It also reiterated Kuwait's unwavering and principled stance supporting the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights, along with its solidarity with the legitimate struggle for an independent Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 border with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Continued on Page 5

Dusty gusts choke Kuwait as allergy sufferers urged to mask up



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Engulfed in a haze of dust, vehicles inch forward on a Kuwait road Saturday as powerful winds slash visibility, turning the landscape into a near-invisible blur.

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): Director of the Meteorological Department Dirar Al-Ali revealed that the State of Kuwait is currently affected by the movement of dusty northwest winds with a speed exceeding 60 kilometers per hour and the level of horizontal visibility declining to less than one thousand meters in some places, especially the open areas.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday, Al-Ali explained that the country is affected by the extension of a surface depression accompanied by a hot and dry air mass with a rise in temperature, causing soil fragmentation and increase in the amount of dust.

He advised the citizens and expatriates, who suffer from asthma and allergies, to use masks when going out. He also urged the sea-goers to be careful of the high level of sea waves that could reach up to seven feet, while warning road users about the low visibility.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait International Fair Company (KIF) announced on Saturday the 23rd International Gold and Jewelry Exhibition will take place between May 21-26 at the International Fairgrounds, with the participation of 400 local and international companies.

KIF CEO of Marketing and Merchandise **Basma Al-Duhaim** said in a statement that the exhibition is one of the most prestigious and successful annual gold and jewelry exhibitions in the Middle East.

It also provides entrepreneurs and jewelry designers with a platform to showcase the latest designs in gold jewelry, bullion, diamonds, silver, platinum, precious metals, gemstones, and natural pearls. (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: Turkiye has discovered a new natural gas reserve of 75 billion cubic meters (bcm) in the Black Sea, President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** announced on Saturday.

"We have discovered a new natural gas reserve of 75 billion cubic meters in the field. With this amount, we will be able to meet the residential demand alone for approximately 3.5 years," Erdogan said during his speech at the opening of Istanbul Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Training and Research Hospital.

"Our work at the Goktepe-3 well (in the Black Sea), which began on March 27 with our 7th-generation drilling ship **Abdullah Hamid Han**, was completed as of yesterday," he added. (KUNA)

NEW YORK, May 17, (KUNA): Kuwait stressed the importance of adhering to the provisions of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2474 (2019) on missing persons in armed conflicts, which aims at alleviating the suffering of many families.

This came in a speech delivered by Minister Plenipotentiary Faisal Al-Enezi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN, during a Security

Council session on Thursday evening to discuss the implementation of the UN resolution on missing persons in armed conflicts.

Al-Enezi explained that the call for implementing this resolution came at a critical time, in light of the fierce, inhumane conflicts witnessed on regional and international arenas.

He said that adherence to humanitarian and legal practices is not merely a duty, but rather a bridge that

connects the concerned parties to a common negotiating platform and strengthens trust and dialogue.

He added that providing information, revealing the fate of all missing persons, reuniting them, and treating remains with dignity in accordance with humanitarian standards are cornerstones for preventing impunity and holding perpetrators accountable.

Continued on Page 5

Arabs back unified Syria, welcome sanctions lift

Palestine, peace and security top summit agenda

BAGHDAD, May 17, (KUNA): The 34th Arab Summit in Baghdad on Saturday emphasized the centrality of the Palestinian cause, the importance of boosting inter-Arab cooperation as well as addressing challenges and finding paths to achieve the aspirations of the Arab people.

The summit's final communique came out with several resolutions including one concerning the Palestinian cause, which was one of the main focuses in this summit due to the current dire situation in the Gaza Strip in addition to the Israeli occupation assault and harassment of Palestinians living in the West Bank.

On Palestine, Arab leaders said that the right of Palestinian for self-determination whether within Palestine or amongst the refugee populace abroad was undeniable.

The summit's participants condemned the inhumane and illegitimate practices carried out by the Israeli occupation against the Pales-



KUNA photo

Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Zayani heads his country's delegation to the 34th Ordinary Arab Summit in Baghdad.

tinian people who have the right for dignity and freedom as found in all creeds and relative international laws and norms.

The unjust war against the Gaza Strip must end to protect innocent civilians and allow much-needed humanitarian aid to enter the war-stricken Gaza Strip, they affirmed.

The leaders noted that all countries must provide political, financial, and legal assistance based on the plans of the Arab emergency summit and the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) Foreign Ministers meeting in Cairo and Jeddah on March 4, 2025 and March 7, 2025 respectively.

They indicated that the plans would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the reconstruction and recovery of the Gaza Strip, expressing refusal of any attempt to displace Palestinians and kick them out of their lands and homes.

Continued on Page 5



8 Zain sponsors and participates in KSEW

8 Kuwait Insurance reports Q1 gross profit of KD 3.8 million



9 NBK Wealth Group relocates to its new London office

10 Kuwait Airways Airbus A321neo aircraft arrives in Kuwait

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:32	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:55	Maghrib ..	18:34
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:01

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.

Weather			
By Night: Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-40 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	41	29	

Abdaly	42	23
Jahra	43	26
Salmiyah	38	28
Jal Aliyah	40	24
Nuwaisib	39	26
Wafra	41	26

Women empowerment must for development: Al-Fassam

‘Kuwaiti women play major role in nation-building’

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Friday that Kuwaiti women enjoy a high status and essential role in societal renaissance and prosperity, being a key element of the nation-building process.

In a press release marking Kuwaiti Women's Day, which falls on May 16, the ministry commended Kuwaiti women's impressive achievements covering various fields, mainly the diplomatic domain, where they have proved themselves so efficiently.

It added that Kuwait women's feats reflect the Kuwaiti political leadership's support for women's empowerment as per justice and equality principles, approved by international charters, in a way that copes with Kuwait's development vision.

Kuwaiti Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam affirmed on Friday that Kuwaiti women have proven their competence and leadership, and that Kuwait has always been a pioneer in supporting women.

Al-Fassam told KUNA on the occasion of Kuwaiti Women's Day (which falls on May 16 of each year), that empowering women is not an option, but rather a national necessity to achieve



Al-Fassam



Al-Masha'an

comprehensive and sustainable development.

She highlighted the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which focus on empowering women and enhancing their participation in leadership positions.

She pointed out that women represent more than 60 percent of government employees and hold approximately 18 percent of leadership and supervisory positions in the country.

Women also hold advanced positions in the

Ministry of Finance and other government agencies, and constitute a significant part of planning and decision-making teams, she added.

Al-Fassam explained that the Ministry of Finance and its affiliated entities are working to adopt specific programs and initiatives to empower women, enhance a supportive work environment, and encourage their participation in the public and private sectors.

She emphasized the need to work and commit to implementing the directives of the political leadership to support national competencies, especially Kuwaiti women, who have consistently demonstrated their ability to contribute and excel in various fields.)

Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Masha'an said that May 16th would represent a milestone in the history of Kuwaiti democracy, through which Kuwaiti women attained their political rights in voting and candidacy.

Dr. Al-Masha'an told KUNA on the occasion of Kuwaiti Women's Day, which falls on May 16 of each year, that Kuwaiti women have played a pioneering role in the development process since the pre-oil era until today, proving their competence and leadership.



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the PM

Amir congratulates Norwegian King on nation's National Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable to King of Norway Harald V, expressing congratulations on his country's National Day and wishing him good health and the friendly country further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent Saturday a cable to King of Norway Harald V, expressing congratulations on his country's National Day and wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable to King of Norway Harald V, expressing congratulations on his country's National Day.

Korea fest in Kuwait to bolster health, medical tourism bonds



Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar (second right), Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait Park Chung-suk and guests at the exhibition.

Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Culture, art bridge gaps: NCCAL's Al-Jassar

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait Park Chung-suk has affirmed his satisfaction over the inauguration of the Korea Health and Beauty Festival in Kuwait through the concerted efforts of the embassy, Korea Tourism Organization and Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA).

Speaking at the event, Park underscored the significance of the event in bolstering bilateral relations, particularly in the fields of health and medical tourism.

He stated "it is with great pleasure that we extend to the Kuwaiti people a comprehensive South Korean experience that reflects substantial progress in the domains of cosmetic medicine,

sophisticated healthcare and medical tourism, alongside the rich cultural heritage that imparts a distinctive character of South Korean health and beauty services."

He said the festival, held on May 16-17 at The Avenues Mall, is considered a commercial landmark in Kuwait; including interactive and experiential activities like health consultations, AI-driven skin diagnostics, live cosmetic demonstrations, massage sessions, displays of the 'hanbok' -- a traditional attire, handicrafts, musical performances featuring K-pop and the renowned Korean show 'Nanta'.

He pointed out that the event transcended service introductions, as it is a platform for connecting leading South Korean enterprises in the health and beauty sector with their Kuwaiti counterparts.

This was made possible through the 'Korean Medical Tourism Evening' held on May 15 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Resort, with more than 100 participants; including officials, experts, and representatives from the health and travel industries.

The evening featured presentations by prominent South Korean hospitals, live consultation sessions, and a keynote address by a Kuwaiti in-

fluencer, sharing personal experiences in South Korea.

Park added "the demand for medical and beauty travel to South Korea among Kuwaitis has been witnessing a remarkable growth -- 65 percent increase in 2024 compared to the preceding year. We are optimistic that this festival will contribute to the establishment of new avenues for collaborative engagement and enhance the image of South Korea as a preferred destination for those seeking quality and excellence in healthcare."

He affirmed that the South Korean culture has evolved beyond entertainment, serving as a conduit for intercultural connection through practical and humanitarian fields such as health. He said his nation remains committed to maintaining this productive collaboration with the State of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar has stressed the importance of cultural events in fostering rapprochement and mutual understanding.

Al-Jassar commended the organization of the festival, the participation of South Korean and Kuwaiti artists, and the presence of distinguished cultural and artistic professionals.

Missing Filipina prompts 'alert'

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: A brief security alert was triggered at Kuwait International Airport after a Filipino domestic worker went missing shortly before boarding a flight to Manila; prompting swift intervention by airport detectives, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the worker was scheduled to depart when she unexpectedly disappeared just minutes before the boarding gate was set to close. She was later found in one of the airport's bathrooms, but refused to disclose the reason for her sudden disappearance.

The source confirmed that security personnel responded in accordance with standard procedures. Once her safety was confirmed, the worker's travel arrangements were rescheduled and she departed on a later flight without any legal infraction.

While the reason behind her initial refusal to board and temporary disappearance remains unclear, the incident has been officially documented for administrative review and follow-up.

‘Final exams for intermediate, secondary students from Wed’

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The final exams for the 2024/2025 academic year will start on Wednesday for about 257,862 students in intermediate and secondary schools in various educational districts, marking the end of the academic year.

These students include 161,644 from the intermediate level in public, private and special education schools; while the number of transfer students in grades 10 and 11 in public, private, religious and special education schools reached 96,218.

A total of 45,428 Grade 10 students will take the exams; while the Grade 11 students include 11,593 in the Literature Section and 30,197 in the Science Section.

The Ministry of Education previously confirmed that all the necessary preparations have been completed to ensure that the exams proceed in a suitable environment; such as equipping the exam halls, assigning

teaching and administrative staff, and taking into account the health and organizational aspects.

The ministry urged the students to strictly follow the instructions and regulations, stressing the importance of providing a supportive learning environment at home to support the students during this period. The ministry wished everyone success in the final exams.

Meanwhile, educational sources affirmed that the cheating regulations will be implemented during the exam period. "Schools have been instructed to follow the procedures stipulated in the regulations without leniency and to cancel exams in subjects where cheating is proven. This may extend to canceling all exams in the event of repeated violations, the use of prohibited electronic means, or any other improper behavior in exam halls," sources added.

The ministry called on all students to refrain from any attempt to cheat or disrupt the exam system.

Other Voices

Lifestyle and how much we live?

By Ahmad alsarraf

WHILE it is not possible to predict the exact moment of death, we can estimate life expectancy based on the same criteria used by life insurance companies. These criteria stem from actuarial science, which relies on large data sets and statistical models to calculate life expectancy based on various personal and demographic factors.

These factors include age, gender, health status, family medical history, lifestyle habits such as smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, and risky behaviors, socioeconomic status, and access to healthcare. Mortality tables analyze these factors and provide highly accurate predictions for large populations, but they only offer statistical estimates for individuals.

For example, the life expectancy of two people of the same age and gender may differ significantly if one is a smoker or suffers from a chronic illness.

While these predictions are helpful for determining insurance premiums and retirement planning, they do not account for random events or all potential health changes.

Life expectancy calculations are averages or probabilities, not guarantees or precise predictions of an individual's lifespan. Insurance companies highlight that some factors have a greater impact on life expectancy than others. For instance, younger individuals are expected to live longer. As a result, a person's age at the time of applying for life insurance plays a big role in estimating life expectancy and determining insurance



alsarraf

premiums.

Gender plays an important role in estimating life expectancy, with women generally living longer than men, which often results in lower insurance rates for women. Health status, including factors like body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and medical test results, plays a critical role in assessing risk. Family medical history, including conditions affecting parents and grandparents, as well as genetic predispositions to diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, also significantly influence life expectancy estimates.

Lifestyle choices, such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, diet, exercise, and engagement in risky activities, also play a significant role in determining life expectancy and influence insurance premiums, both in terms of value and duration.

High-risk occupations, such as mining, construction, and aviation, as well as dangerous hobbies like diving and horse racing, elevate the risk of death and factor into life expectancy calculations.

Also, lower socioeconomic status is often linked to reduced life expectancy, primarily due to limited access to healthcare and increased exposure to health risks.

Questionnaires, medical examinations, and statistical models are commonly used to estimate an individual's life expectancy and determine insurance premiums.

Half a century ago, I conducted a calculation using specific tables that assigned points to various factors. The result of that calculation suggested I could live to be 96. I recently repeated the experiment, and the outcome was nearly the same. This is because my health, habits, and lifestyle have remained relatively unchanged over the years!

☐ ☐ ☐

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diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Shun slander ... Saudis play big role in facilitating Hajj rituals

“EVERY year during the Hajj season, media platforms affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and supported by Iran and Turkey become active in calling for the internationalization of Hajj. They claim that the Sacred House of God should not be under the sole authority of a single country, but rather administered by Islamic entities collectively, as it belongs to all Muslims”, columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“These platforms frequently criticize the Saudi government, at times accusing it of politicizing the Hajj, and at other times alleging that it exploits the pilgrimage for financial gain. They claim that Saudi Arabia is not qualified to manage or serve the Sacred Mosque.



Hamad Al-Marri

“This year, Abdullah Al-Sharif, a prominent social media figure affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, presented a new fabrication that few could have imagined, an idea seemingly inspired by Satan himself, who vowed to mislead humanity with all his cunning and power, as reflected in God’s words:

“He said, ‘Then by Your might, I will surely mislead them all (82) Except, among them, Your chosen servants (83).’

“This slander is a deliberate attempt to deter Muslims from performing Hajj. God Almighty warns in His noble book: ‘And why should God not punish them while they prevent [people] from al-Masjid al-Haram, while they were not its guardians? Its guardians are only the righteous, but most of them do not know.’ (Surah Al-Anfal, 34)” And their prayer at the House was nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. So taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve.” (Surah Al-Anfal, 35)

“Abdullah Al-Sharif recently posted a high-tech video on social media, attempting to deceive Muslims by claiming that the money they spend on Hajj ends up in the Saudi treasury, which is then transferred to the U.S. government. He goes further to allege that this money is used to manufacture weapons and missiles that are supplied to Israel and used to bomb the people of Gaza.

“This film is clearly not the work of an individual but it is the product of a well-organized media operation. With professional actors, advanced camera equipment, and high-level direction, it resembles a Hollywood production. This confirms the scale and coordination of the Muslim Brotherhood’s media apparatus, which is supported by Iran, Turkey, and other states and intelligence agencies. Their relentless campaign to tarnish the image of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shows no sign of stopping, even if it continues for generations.

“In fact, this film is not merely an attack on the Saudi government, but it is an affront to the Hajj itself. It is a purely malicious and destructive act. Hajj is a sacred obligation and one of the pillars of Islam for those who are able to perform it. Any effort to dissuade Muslims from undertaking this duty is an attack on Islam itself, not just the Saudi government. Saudi Arabia’s commitment to serving the Two Holy Mosques and ensuring the comfort and safety of pilgrims is widely recognized by all.

“Al-Sharif’s claim that Hajj funds are being used for political purposes is a blatant lie. The Saudi government issues Hajj and Umrah permits free of charge. The money paid by pilgrims and Umrah performers goes directly to travel companies for services such as tickets, accommodation, food, and transportation in Makkah, Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalifah, and is not received by the Saudi government.

“The Saudi government has been working day and night to expand the Two Holy Mosques, manage the influx of millions of pilgrims, and ensure their safety and comfort. This is a testament to its unwavering commitment.

“I ask God to protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to turn the plots of those who conspire against it back upon themselves.”

Also:

“Abdullah Port, a waterway located in the northern Arabian Gulf, lies between Iraq’s Al-Faw Peninsula and Kuwait’s Boubyan Island, serving as a natural boundary between the territorial waters of Kuwait and Iraq”, columnist **Muzahim Al-Rumaij** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“For decades, this creek has been a topic of dispute between the two countries. However, from both a legal and historical perspective, Kuwait holds a well-established claim to it, supported by several factors:

1. Geography and natural position: Abdullah Port naturally separates the Iraqi and Kuwaiti mainlands. Its eastern section borders the Kuwaiti islands of Boubyan and Warba, which are internationally recognized, particularly by the United Nations, as part of Kuwaiti territory.

This geographic positioning makes control over the waterway critical to Kuwait’s maritime security, especially as it serves as the main access route to Kuwait’s northern ports, including Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

2. History and international boundaries: Following the Gulf War (1990–1991), the border between Iraq and Kuwait was demarcated in accordance with United Nations Security Council

Resolution 833, which was accepted by both countries.

As a result of this decision, the maritime boundaries were clearly defined, including those in Abdullah Port. It was established that the majority of the port falls under Kuwaiti sovereignty, while Iraq retains access through a narrow waterway via the Khor Al-Zubair Canal.

3. International treaties: In 2012, Kuwait and Iraq signed an agreement regulating navigation in Abdullah Port. This agreement outlined the framework for maritime cooperation and ensured freedom of navigation for both parties.

4. Legal and political arguments: From a legal perspective, any subsequent Iraqi claim to Abdullah Port contradicts signed and documented international agreements and the UN Security Council resolutions that remain in effect. The international community, as represented by the United Nations, supports Kuwaiti sovereignty over the majority of Abdullah Port.

Kuwait’s claim to the port is based on firm geographical, historical, and legal foundations, reflecting the country’s adherence to international law and the principles of good neighborliness. Respecting this sovereignty is essential for maintaining stable Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations and promoting security in the Arabian Gulf region.”

“What is happening between the Arab countries? This question came to mind when I read about Sudan severing ties with both the UAE and Algeria a few months ago, following rising tensions with Abu Dhabi”, Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Algerian television aired a program that reflected a narrative shared by many Arab countries regarding their view of the Gulf states.

“What stands out in this context is the growing tension among Arab nations, suggesting that the region is entering a fragile phase, with no clear safeguards to prevent the Arab world from being affected by external or internal crises. The conflict between India and Pakistan has only added to the region’s instability.

“There is no doubt that developments in Iran, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria are exerting pressure on the regional situation. In addition, some Iraqi institutions and officials are attempting to bring the Khor Abdullah issue back to the forefront, with signs of Iranian involvement. Tehran continues to hinder the development of the Durra oilfield, which is an exclusive right of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, despite the strong relations between Kuwait and Iran.

“This complex regional and international situation requires a political, security, and diplomatic team with extensive field experience to analyze these developments and assess our capabilities in maintaining Kuwait’s neutrality in the region.

“It is also important to apply the principle of ‘when you hear the sound of cannons, start building factories.’” Do the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have a role to play in this regard, or will they continue to adopt a reactive stance? It must also be acknowledged that major powers have started shifting from nuclear war to smaller, limited conflicts, first to operate weapons factories, and second to strengthen their global dominance.

“For example, if we examine the relationships between Pakistan, China, and Russia on one side, and India’s ties with the United States, Israel, and France on the other, we see that the conflict, in one of its dimensions, serves as a marketing platform for the weapons industries of major powers such as China, the U.S., and France, sometimes under ideological pretexts, and other times driven by border disputes.



Adel Al-Kharafi

“Amid these developments, no country can afford to remain on the sidelines. No nation can close its doors and windows and say, ‘It’s none of my business as long as the fire is far from me.’” The reality is that the Gulf states are highly coveted by global powers due to their oil wealth, strategic location, and proximity to the ancient trade route to India and Asia. As an old sage once said, “Woe to him who is born on the road to India.”

“The region’s unique geographic location and vast energy resources have long compelled the Gulf states to act as stabilizing forces. Their focus must remain on shielding themselves from external threats, rather than being drawn into the center of the fire.

“We in the Gulf states must learn from the experiences of others. During World War II, several countries maintained neutrality. Despite facing some confrontations, they managed to turn the situation to their advantage. Switzerland, for example, protected and strengthened its banking sector. Brazil’s neutral stance for a period also helped preserve its own stability and that of its neighbors in Latin America.

“In conclusion, will we learn from the lessons of others, or will we continue to react passively, turning a blind eye, as if unaware, while becoming consumed by internal conflicts?”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty



Top and above: KFF fined many shops violating safety rules.

KFF photos

KFF finds many shops in violation of rules

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign in Shuwaikh Industrial recently, in collaboration with several government agencies, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Electricity

and Water, the Environment Public Authority, and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the campaign was aimed at identifying buildings and establishments that violated fire safety

and prevention regulations. As a result, several establishments were fined and administratively closed for failing to comply with fire safety standards and the requirements of other relevant authorities.

Court dismisses appeal filed against law of ministers trial

Travel ban service for debtors activated on Sahel

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Constitutional Court on Thursday rejected the appeal that challenged the constitutionality of Article 3 of Law No. 88/1995 concerning the Ministers’ Trial Committee, which had claimed it violated Article 167 of the Constitution.

The court affirmed that the establishment of the Ministers’ Court was consistent with the Constitution’s provisions and in accordance with Article 132.

The appeal, filed by a citizen, challenged the constitutionality of Article 3 of Law No. 88/1995 regarding the Trial of Ministers. The article stipulated the formation of an investigative committee composed of three Kuwaiti advisors from the Court of Appeals for examining submitted reports and exercising all the powers legally assigned to investigative authorities.

The citizen argued that the committee’s formation violated Article 167 of the Constitution, which grants the Public Prosecution exclusive authority to conduct public prosecutions on behalf of society, except for those security agencies au-

thorized by law to handle prosecutions in misdemeanor cases.

He stated that he had a direct and personal interest in filing the appeal, as the aforementioned committee had issued a decision on August 5, 2024, to seize all of his cash, movable and immovable assets, and to prohibit him from disposing of them, in connection with the investigation into Case No. 2/2024, despite the fact that he had neither been summoned for questioning nor formally charged with any crime.

The appellant further cited Article 132 of the Constitution, which mandates the legislature to issue a special law defining offenses committed by ministers in the course of their duties, as well as specifying the procedures and competent authority for their prosecution and trial.

In line with this constitutional requirement, Law No. 88/1995 was enacted for designating a special court composed of five Kuwaiti counselors from the Court of Appeals as the competent body to try ministers. According to Article 3 of the law, which is the article under appeal, this court is also empowered to investigate such cases through a special committee consisting of three Kuwaiti advisors from the Court of Appeals.

In its ruling, the Constitutional Court found that the claim of unconstitutionality based on an alleged violation of Article 167 was unfounded and

lacked merit. Consequently, the Advisory Chamber of the Constitutional Court dismissed the appeal and ordered the forfeiture of the bail.

Travel ban service activated: The Ministry of Justice has informed the General Department for Sentences Enforcement that it has activated the “Travel Ban” service for debtors on the Sahel app, free of charge, starting Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior conducted a large-scale security and traffic campaign in Bneid Al-Gar on Thursday, with the participation of the Traffic Affairs and Operations Sector, including the General Traffic Department, the General Directorate of Rescue Police, the Central General Directorate of Operations, and the Women’s Police, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign resulted in the issuance of 474 traffic citations, and the arrest of five individuals for violating residency and labor laws, seven individuals wanted for criminal cases, two individuals for lacking a driving license, two reported as absconding. Two vehicles wanted by the judiciary, and a motorcycle were impounded. In addition, two individuals were arrested for failing to comply with Criminal Court’s rulings, and one person was referred to the traffic police.



KFF photo
KFF personnel during the maid’s rescue bid.

2 cars erupt in fire

Domestic worker hurt in fall from height in house

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: A domestic worker sustained injuries after she fell from a height in the stairwell of a house in Firdous on Friday morning.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Central Ardiya Fire Station and the Search and Rescue unit dealt with the incident after receiving information about it.

The woman was handed over to the emergency medical services team for further care.

2 cars on fire: Fire engulfed two vehicles in a dirt lot in Jahra, but no casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Jahra Fire Station rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further.

Also, fire broke out in a vehicle on Fahaheel Road . No casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Salmiya fire station rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before handing over the site to the relevant authorities.

Groceries shut: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that inspection campaigns carried out by the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department of Ahmadi Municipality resulted in the removal of five unlicensed mobile groceries and four electric generators in Ali Sabah Al-Salem (Umm Al-Hayman), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The seized items have been transferred to the municipal seizure compound.

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Serious violations at health institute

‘Illegal, expired drugs sold’

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Ministry of Health has announced that the serious violations at a health institute in the southern part of the country were uncovered during the recent inspection campaign conducted by the Drug Inspection Department, in cooperation with the Health Licensing Department and the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

The ministry revealed that a suspicious advertisement was posted on a social media platform, promoting misleading medical information and unlicensed diagnostic and therapeutic activities, affirming that the inspection committee immediately took action

and carried out a field campaign.

The ministry said the violations found during the campaign included operating the institute with expired health and commercial licenses, practicing medical and pharmaceutical activities without a license from the ministry, displaying and selling nutritional supplements and special foods without a license, trading in health products not registered with ministry, and violating the medical advertising regulations in the country.

It confirmed the implementation of immediate measures to ensure community safety; such as taking samples of unregistered products for analysis by the competent authorities, seizing violating products and referring them to the Drug Inspection Department, issuing reports on the observed violations, and contacting the relevant authorities in preparation for referring the file to the Public Prosecution.

It then reaffirmed its commitment to implement the law and to continuously conduct inspection campaigns, calling on all health authorities to fully comply with the legal requirements and controls.

Repairs in full swing as PART overseeing 6 current projects

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), as per the directive of Public Works Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, continues its achievements in the implementation of highway maintenance projects, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Several projects have had remarkable progress, affirming the commitment of the authority to expedite the pace of work and optimize the use of roads to ensure smooth traffic flow in the country.

Sources from the authority told the daily that PART is currently overseeing six road maintenance projects, particularly the general maintenance of Salmi Road, which has

reached a completion rate of 15.83 percent -- exceeding the planned rate of 14.16 percent.

Sources said PART Director General Khaled Al-Assimi is monitoring the implementation of these works daily, as part of a comprehensive plan to expedite the completion of road maintenance works and provide a safe infrastructure that contributes to a smooth traffic flow and to overcome obstacles.

Sources disclosed that the authority has completed 55.60 percent of the radical maintenance work on the Sixth and Seventh ring roads, far exceeding the planned 15 percent and reflecting the intensive efforts of the teams working on-site.

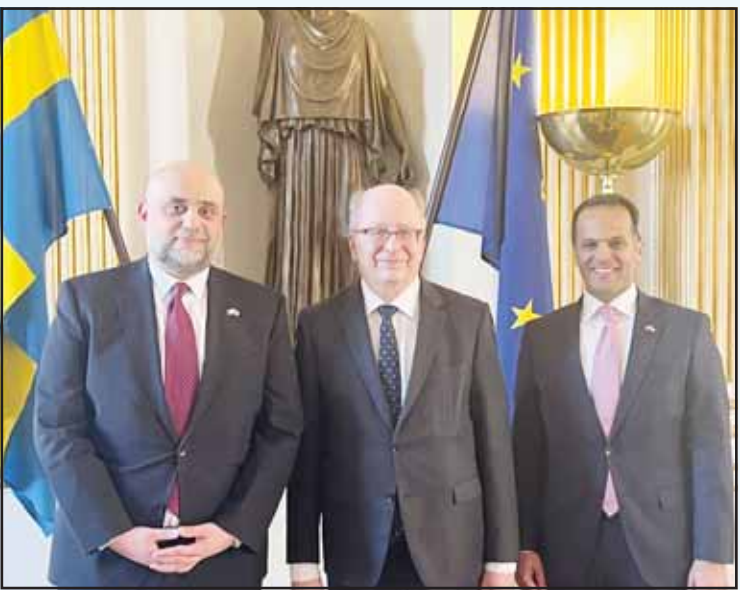
Kuwait, Sweden to boost economy, culture ties

KUWAIT CITY, May 17. (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sweden Mohammad Hayati has recently met with Swedish Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dag Hartelius to discuss the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Sweden, with the 60th anniversary of these ties falling this year. The meeting at the Swedish Foreign Ministry focused on enhancing cooperation in various fields, including economy and culture, and emphasized the importance of mutual visits and events.

During their discussion, the two sides addressed regional and international issues, highlighting Kuwait's commitment to resolving conflicts through peaceful dialogue to promote stability.

A notable topic was the successful economic partnership with OK Q8, a Swedish energy company that has established a prominent presence in Kuwait. Ambassador Hayati expressed Kuwait's desire to leverage Swedish expertise in innovation, technology, and cybersecurity to attract more specialized international companies and investors.

For his part, Hartelius acknowledged the success of Swedish companies in Kuwait and reiterated the potential for further economic collaboration. The meeting included representatives from various sectors, underscoring a collective interest in expanding ties between the two countries.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sweden Mohammad Hayati meets Swedish Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dag Hartelius.

CAPT nods around KD5 million for project

MEW seeks to up skills of technical, admin workers

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), during its meeting on May 7, to award an integrated training building contract at a total cost of KD4.785 million.

The project will be implemented by the company that meets the terms and specifications (lowest bid).

Sources revealed the project is included in the plans of the ministry to develop the capabilities of its employees, as well as their technical and administrative skills in various fields of work.

Sources stated that a training center equipped with the latest technology will be established; including multi-use training halls, areas for practical tests, and other facilities aimed at providing trainees with the knowledge and skills in line with the latest developments in the fields of electricity, water and renewable energy.

Sources indicated that, according to the technical specifications in the tender documents, the building will include all the elements needed to ensure an integrated educational environment like the latest technologies in digital training and practical simulation.

Sources added the project includes designing the building in line with environmental and sustainability standards -- a step aimed at supporting the ministry's efforts to shift towards renewable energy and environmental conservation.

Sources disclosed that "the tender procedures are scheduled to be completed and sent to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) soon for review and auditing before the signing and contracting procedures to begin the implementation of the work in accordance with prior oversight rules."

In a related development, the ministry got the approval of CAPT to award a tender for the supply and installation of a photovoltaic system on carports and buildings in the southern power station at a total cost of KDI.487 million. This project will expand the use of renewable energy to supply electricity from non-traditional sources, save money, protect the environment and ensure sustainability; as electricity

for the aforementioned structures will be provided from renewable sources.

Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations in Geneva Nasser Al-Hayen reaffirmed commitment to participate in the World Health Assembly (WHA78) and launch strategic dialogue with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Speaking to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Hayen revealed that Kuwait will participate in the 78th session of the (WHA78) that will take place in Geneva from May 19-27, with a high-level delegation led by Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

The Assembly will bring together senior representatives from member states and stakeholders under the theme "One World for Health"

This year's session comes at a critical point in time for global health with the recent withdrawal of the United States -- previously WHO's top funder -- it has directly impacted the organization's operational capacity and placed additional pressure on its agenda and resources.

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Ahmadi Governor presents a commemorative gift to the Governor of Rijal Almaa.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah presents a shield to the Governor of Rijal Almaa.

Kuwait seeks to strengthen brotherly bonds with Saudi

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Rijal Almaa Governor Hassan bin Abdulkhaliq Al-Hafzi and Rijal Almaa Mayor Abdullah bin Hassan Al-Asmari from the Asir Province in Saudi Arabia at his office on Thursday morning.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser extended a warm welcome to his guests, emphasizing that such friendly visits strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation, and embody the close relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The meeting included a cordial exchange on prominent issues related to Rijal Almaa, as well as shared experiences that could help develop the governorates in both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Hafzi and

Al-Asmari expressed their gratitude for Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser's generous hospitality and warm welcome, and wished him success in his duties as well as continued progress, prosperity, security, and stability for Kuwait.

Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received at his office in the Ahmadi Governorate General Diwan, the Governor of Rijal Almaa Governorate in Saudi Arabia Al-Hassan bin Abdulkhaleq Al-Hafzi, and the Mayor of Rijal Almaa Eng. Abdullah bin Hassan Al-Asmari on Thursday.

According to a press release issued by Ahmadi Governorate, the meeting, which was attended by Ahmed Al-Shammari, focused on enhancing cooperation and exchanging expertise between Ahmadi Governorate and Rijal Almaa Governorate.

Talks held on Google's investment

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar met with Ruth Porat, Chief Investment Officer at Alphabet Inc. (Google), during her visit to Kuwait.

The meeting aimed to strengthen their strategic partnership, focusing on

technology and digital investment collaboration to enhance digital integration in government agencies.

This initiative supports Kuwait's development vision, "New Kuwait 2035."

Key attendees included Shaima Al-Terkait, Abdulrahman Al-Thehaiban, Salim Eid and Martin Roski.



KUNA photo
Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam receives Dean of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) Slagjana Taseva.

Vienna talks cement agenda

Kuwait reaffirms support for global anti-corruption efforts

VIENNA, May 17, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna Ambassador Talal Al-Fassam has affirmed Kuwait’s unwavering support for the international efforts to combat corruption and solidify the sovereignty of law. Ambassador Al-Fassam, during a reception of the Dean of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) Slagjana Taseva at the headquarters of the Kuwaiti permanent mission in Vienna, emphasized significance of the partnership with the academy. The talks with Professor Taseva

dealt with cooperation between the academy and the State of Kuwait in the spheres of education, training and capacity building, in addition to expertise swap, boosting transparency and integrity at the national and international organizations. The State of Kuwait views the academy as a strategic partner at the level of combating corruption, he said, affirming Kuwait’s resolve to pursue its effective support for multi-party institutions and enhancing well-guided governance at the regional and international levels.

Kuwait named first Arab host of global scout event

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): Kuwait’s hosting of the 31st World Conference of the International Scout and Guide Fellowship in October 2027 reflects global appreciation for Kuwait’s role in promoting peace and friendship values, said the Arab Scout Organization’s head. Speaking to KUNA on Saturday, Abdullah Al-Turaiji, who doubles as



Al-Turaiji

chairman of the Kuwaiti Boy Scout Association, said that the organization’s recent approval of Kuwait’s bid to host the gathering following competition with Mexico, Ghana and Senegal shows Kuwait’s pioneering scouting and humanitarian role. “The State of Kuwait is the first Arab country to play host to this world conference,” Al-Turaiji boasted. He pointed out that this move reflected the State’s relentless support for the youth and scout sector, in addition to Kuwait’s ability to organize major events so efficiently.

Kuwait urges dialogue, defends maritime border rights

Khawr Abdullah rooted in Kuwaiti legacy, say scholars

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University organized a discussion session titled, “Khawr Abdullah: History and Reality”, at Sabah Al-Salem University City. The session aimed to adopt a language of regional cooperation, without compromising on any attempt to undermine Kuwaiti national sovereignty. This, in turn, contributes to building international relations based on mutual respect with all countries, and avoiding the incitement of strife and conflict. Dr. Nasser Al-Sanea, a member of the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies, moderated the discussion; with several academic staff, political opinion leaders and intellectuals in attendance. Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Ambassador Khaled Al-Mughamis pointed out that this is not a just a discussion of maritime passageway; as it is rather a discussion of rights, understanding and national sovereignty. “These discussions fall within the commitment of Kuwait to use legal and diplomatic means to protect rights and address contentious issues with responsibility and cooperation,” he asserted. He also pointed out that Kuwait, throughout its history, has been committed to establishing the principles of international law and respecting bilateral agreements and conventions. He added the country is always keen on resolving disputes through dialogue. He added that Kuwaiti sovereignty over Khawr Abdullah, as recognized by international agreements, is a settled and clear issue, not open to interpretation or doubt. “Everyone must live up to the responsibility of defending these rights with wisdom, steadfastness and adherence to the law. After the invasion, National Security Council Resolution No. 833/1993 stipulated the demarcation of Khawr Abdullah based on the median line between Iraq and Kuwait, with specific maritime border markers,” he clarified. Political Science Professor in the College of Social Sciences at Kuwait University Prof. Ghanem Hamad Al-Najjar stressed the need to establish a large Kuwaiti-Iraqi media forum, bringing together intellectuals from both countries, to counter such Iraqi allegations. “This forum will highlight the most important international norms and agreements pertaining to the demarcation of the border between the two countries. From the Kuwaiti side, the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khawr Abdullah is valid. Kuwait rejects any attempt to cancel it, given its importance in maintaining security and the safety of navigation in the region,” he explained. He pointed out that joint action and

the integration of official and popular efforts are the way to strengthen Kuwait’s position. Dr. Mohammad Al-Abd Al-Jader explained that Kuwait has historically been a maritime nation; indicating the Kuwaiti fleet consisted of about 4,000 ships in the mid-10th century, which saved Iraq from major famines. He said two teams were formed – one Swedish and the other from New Zealand. “They came to Kuwait and Iraq to demarcate the border between the two countries. These teams submitted their case to the International Court of Justice, where the international decision became binding and fell under Chapter VII of the United Nations. The border must be demarcated, so Iraq signed the 2013 agreement regulating navigation in Khawr Abdullah,” he added. Dr. Ali Al-Rashidi stated that the agreement was concluded after consultations between the two countries and was ratified by the Iraqi Parliament (the competent Iraqi authority). “The UN committee was keen to secure the waterways at the entrance to Khawr Al-Zubair for Iraq so that the demarcation line in these areas deviates southward into Kuwaiti territorial waters,” he clarified. He stressed the need for Iraqi officials to find a solution to this crisis and to activate the role of institutions so that Iraq can return to its role as an effective, influential, and constructive regional power. He also stated that it is impossible to focus solely on the his-

torical or geographical aspect without addressing the legal aspect. Dr. Abdullah Al-Najdi stated that Khawr Abdullah is one of Kuwait’s most prominent landmarks. “According to documents and maps, it was named after the second ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah bin Sabah, who ruled Kuwait from 1762 to 1812,” he disclosed. He said the Kuwaiti borders that Iraq agreed to respect during the royal era in a letter from its former Prime Minister, Nuri Al-Said, include the Kuwaiti islands located in Khawr Abdullah, such as Warbah, Bubiyan, Miskan and Failaka. “This is an explicit recognition by the Iraqi side -- that the demarcation of international borders requires the definition and demarcation of the borders of those islands,” he asserted. He stated that these allegations are not the first to be leveled against Kuwait, attempting to diminish its standing and deny its historical rights to the border. He asserted that “Kuwait signed an agreement with the Republic of Iraq in 2013 (regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah) in light of Security Council Resolution 833 of 1993 regarding the international border between the two countries. Is it permissible, after this, to disregard historical facts and international legitimacy resolutions, which aim to serve the interests of two Arab countries, each of which seeks security and stability?”

Kuwait bars expats with ‘ambiguous’ HIV results

MoH bans PCR use in test disputes

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: In a bid to improve the medical testing procedures for expatriate workers and ensure adherence to the highest standards of accuracy and safety, the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, has issued a decision to

classify residency applicants or newly arrived expatriates as “medically unfit” and place them on the list of those banned from entering Kuwait if laboratory antibody tests return indeterminate results for HIV. As per the decision, the use of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing as an alternative method for determining health status in such cases is strictly prohibited. Full compliance

with the established regulations and procedures is required to ensure result accuracy and the safety of society. Residents with indeterminate antibody test results must undergo two additional tests and two PCR tests for both types of the virus to make a final determination regarding their health fitness, in accordance with the approved fees. The Ministry of Health confirmed that this decision is part of a series of regulatory measures recently implemented to regulate expatriate worker testing, including the decision regarding the handling of indeterminate Hepatitis C cases.

Continued from Page 1

Dear ministers,

Today, a large segment of young people in Kuwait is in need of housing support, many of whom have studied abroad, particularly in Europe and the West, where they are accustomed to living in apartments and residential buildings. Instead of spending years on a waiting list, these young people would prefer apartments ranging from 400 to 500 square meters that are self-sufficient with services, and conducive to social cohesion. Why isn’t the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Kuwait Municipality, and the Ministry of Finance working together to allocate the undeveloped land in Kuwait City for vertical housing? By doing so, they could provide young citizens with a vital source of life for the capital. Kuwait City is home to many heritage sites, neglected facilities, and dilapidated buildings that could be revitalized socially, culturally, and economically. This transformation could be achieved at no cost to the state beyond the issuance of plot allocation transactions. In contrast, the current policy followed by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare is outdated, creating one crisis after another and draining a lot of money from the public budget. Meanwhile, the Kuwait Credit Bank has provided approximately KD 3.5 billion in long-term loans. I had previously suggested that this money could be better invested in residential development projects within the capital city. Many citizens rush to sell their plots as soon as they obtain the usufruct rights, often at high prices ranging from KD 300,000 to KD 400,000, while the government charges just 250 fils per square meter. This exacerbates the housing crisis and drives up the cost of rent allowances granted to employees. By the end of 2024, the state is projected to have spent KD 3.8 billion to cover the rent allowance budget. This money is being wasted due to a lack of a clear vision, despite the existence of simple solutions that require only competent will and amendments to relevant laws, particularly the Kuwait Municipality Law and the Law of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. Encouraging young people to live in vertical residential buildings within the capital’s borders could be an effective strategy. I once again urge His Highness the Prime Minister to allow ministers to spend a night in the desolate Kuwait City. Perhaps this experience will help them understand the true meaning of a city that lacks spirit after dark.

Kuwait fast-tracks

The infrastructure contract for 7,623 plots has an actual completion rate of 9.03 percent, compared to a contractual rate of 4.94 percent. The second contract for 6,189 plots achieved an

actual completion rate of 9.55 percent, compared to a contractual rate of 4.75 percent. The third infrastructure contract for 6,568 plots achieved an actual completion rate of 4.7 percent, compared to a contractual rate of one percent. In the South Saad Al-Abdullah Project, the actual completion rate of the main roads contract reached 32 percent, compared to a contractual rate of 12.3 percent. Meanwhile, the infrastructure contracts for the plots are still being prepared. As for the affordable housing project, the actual completion rate for the first and second contracts reached three percent, compared to the contractual rate of 0.01 percent. Infrastructure contracts for the remaining homes are still being prepared. Statistics confirmed the commitment of the State Ministry for Housing to expedite the completion of housing projects and daily monitoring of implementation works to ensure project completion before the deadline. The statistics indicated that the number of housing applications reached 101,604 in April.

Kuwait condemns

Elsewhere, Israeli bombardment across the Gaza Strip killed over 153 people and wounded 459 others in just the past day, according to the Palestinian health authority on Saturday. The death toll from Israel’s war on Gaza has risen to 53,272 deaths, with more than 120,673 injured since October 7 2023, said the authority in a statement. The ambulance and civil defense teams were unable to reach many of the killed and wounded due to the dangerous conditions recurring shooting by the occupation forces. This coincided with gunfire from gunboats west of the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, while artillery and air strikes focused on the Tel al-Zaatar neighborhood in Jabalia camp and the Shuja’iyya neighborhood east of Gaza City. Eyewitnesses told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that many families were forced to leave and flee the western and northern areas of Beit Lahia, Jabalia camp and Tal al-Zaatar. A large number of besieged families sent a distress call to international organizations and the Red Cross to work on getting them out of the besieged camps and towns in the northern Gaza Strip.

Kuwait urges

Al-Enezi highlighted the Kuwaiti experience in this regard, given the real suffering Kuwait faced in the early 1990s, with its humanitarian dimensions touching every Kuwaiti and

resident family. He said that Kuwait hasn’t healed yet from the Iraqi invasion, even with the continuation of field efforts to search for the remains of the remaining 308 missing persons, leaving many families displaced. He reiterated Kuwait’s firm position on this humanitarian issue to ensure continued progress on the ground, stressing the importance of appointing a high-level UN official to exclusively oversee the extensive process of identifying the remains of all missing persons. Al-Enezi also stressed the importance of continuing the mechanism of periodic reviews by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Dusty gusts He stressed the need for everyone to be updated on the weather forecast by closely monitoring the official website of the department, its application and accounts on social media platforms to know the latest weather developments.

Amir hails

patriotic stands that have been taken by the Kuwaiti women in various phases of the homeland history, demonstrating sincere commitment in serving the dear homeland, thus earning widespread admiration. He lauded the Kuwaiti woman achievements namely attaining her full franchise and congratulated all Kuwaiti women on this annual occasion, wishing them success in continuing their faithful giving for the homeland. Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said he was proud of the eminent role played by the Kuwaiti women in the “ambitious march of our dear homeland.” His Highness the Crown Prince affirmed significance of the women role in boosting the Kuwaiti society developments, alluding to accomplishments made by the Kuwaiti women in various domains. His Highness the Crown Prince expressed heartfelt congratulations to the gracious Kuwaiti women on the annual occasion wishing them all success for serving the dear homeland and elevating its status. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah expressed pride in the significant achievements and contributions made by Kuwaiti women. He confirmed in a statement on Kuwaiti Women’s Day that Kuwaiti women’s journeys are filled with much success and achievement, affirming that women have been and will continue to be a fundamental partner to their male counterparts in various fields.

He stated that the Kuwaiti woman has proven her competence and ability to bear the burdens of responsibility in all state agencies and fields of the labor market. The Prime Minister affirmed the government’s ongoing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti women and giving them a greater role in serving their country at all levels and fields, believing in their essential role in building society and elevating its status. Kuwait celebrates Kuwaiti Women’s Day each year on May 16 to honor the pivotal role women play in Kuwait’s development, and it also marks the day Kuwaiti women were granted their full political rights in 2005 by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Since then, Kuwaiti women have made remarkable strides across all sectors, from political and diplomacy to science and finance. They first participated in parliamentary elections in 2006, and in 2009, four women were elected to the National Assembly for the first time in Kuwait’s history. In the 2009 National Assembly elections, Kuwaiti women achieved a historic milestone in the country’s democratic journey with four women winning seats in Parliament, they were Dr. Massouma Al-Mubarak, Dr. Aseel Al-Awadhi, Dr. Rola Dashti, and Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar, selected from among 17 female candidates who contested the elections. Today, Kuwait’s current cabinet includes three female ministers: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan as Minister of Public Works, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah as Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Family and Childhood Affairs, and Noura Al-Fozan as Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment. Women hold 28 percent of top governmental roles, a figure that has doubled in sectors such as the diplomatic sector, security, oil, and justice. In the Central Bank of Kuwait, women occupy 41 percent of leadership roles, while in the banking sector overall, they represent 35 percent of the workforce. Kuwaiti women continue to break barriers in medicine, engineering, space sciences, and technology, supported by strong political backing, also, six Kuwaiti women were listed among Forbes’ 100 Most Powerful Businesswomen in the Middle East, and many have earned global recognition in cybersecurity, healthcare, and space. Kuwait is also a pioneer in the field of empowerment of women and has implemented initiatives to support female entrepreneurs and productive families, Kuwait has also ratified key international agreements focused on eliminating discrimination and combating trafficking. This continued progress reflects Kuwait’s commitment to gender equality as part of its Vision 2035, affirming the

essential role of women in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future. Palestine, peace Establishing a Gaza reconstruction fund was paramount as per the Cairo emergency summit in 2023 and the Arab-Islamic summit in Saudi Arabia in 2024, the conferees affirmed, indicating that establishing a fund to rebuild Lebanon was also on the table and a priority. Opening crossings to the Gaza Strip and supporting UNRWA in all of Palestine are necessary steps and the Israeli occupation must be pressured to allow such necessary steps to be implemented, they agreed, welcoming at the same time, the establishment of a cooperation fund with the UN to sponsor 40,000 Palestinian orphans, amputees and wounded. The conferees called for resolving the Palestinian issue in a just and comprehensive manner to establish an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 border and within the framework of the two-state solution, the Arab peace initiative, and international resolutions concerning the cause. They called for the deployment of UN troops in Palestine to ensure the execution of the two-state resolution, calling on the UNSC to enforce such plan in a certain timeframe and prevent any attempts to destabilize the region. The attendees called on the Palestinian factions to unite behind a national plan to achieve the aspiration of the Palestinian people for an independent state, expressing at the same time welcome of the UNGA’s resolution on May 10, 2024 calling for the full membership of Palestine in the UN as the 143rd state. They called on the UNSC to reconsider its decision on April 18, 2024, which went against the desire of the Palestinian people for life, freedom, and human dignity, saying that resolutions related to the rights of Palestinians and occupied Arab territories must be implemented at once. The Arab Leaders and participants called on the UNSC to execute resolution 2720, which called for increasing aid for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, affirming in the same regard, the imperativeness of ending the Israeli occupation of Arab lands including the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon according to related-UNSC resolutions. On the status of Jerusalem, the leaders stressed the importance of the holy city to all members of the Abrahamic faiths, condemning in this regard, the Israeli occupation violations of Islamic and Christian sites in the city and elsewhere in Palestine. They expressed support to the Jordanian custodianship over Jerusalem Islamic and Christian sites, reaffirming that Al-Aqsa mosque was a sacred

sanctuary to Muslims from around the globe. The conferees commended Spain, Norway and Ireland for their recognition of the Palestinian state in 2024, urging other countries to follow suit and commit to this historic and humanitarian obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s right for dignity and freedom. The leaders also showed solidarity towards South Africa’s case against the Israeli occupation and their genocidal crimes against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. On Syria, the leaders expressed solidarity to all the people of Syria regardless of their background, ethnicity or religion, saying that the fellow Arab country deserves stability, security, and development. They refused all attempts to undermine Syria’s unity, showcasing support to all international resolutions focusing on a united Syria through a political process that would ensure the rights of all segments of the Syrian people. The leaders welcomed the announcement by US President Donald Trump during his visit to Saudi Arabia on May 13, 2025, resulting in the lifting of sanctions on Syria, stressing that such step would help build a stronger Syria political, economically, and financially. Reducing European Commission sanctions was also a welcomed step, they asserted, saying that the priorities now were bringing back refugees, and supporting national dialogue. The leaders expressed support to Lebanon, underlining in the process the importance of respecting the country’s sovereignty, refusing attempts at division amongst Lebanese, and expressing support towards political and economic reforms. They stressed the importance of implementing UNSC resolution 1701, saying that the Israeli occupation had repeatedly violated international laws concerning the issue. The Israeli occupation must withdraw from internationally recognized Lebanese territories, release prisoners taken during the last round aggression on Lebanon, and refer back to 1949 Armistice Agreements, which ensured Lebanon’s security, stability and sovereignty and also called for the return of displaced Syrians to their country, they said. On Yemen, the Arab leaders and participants expressed solidarity with the legitimate government in Yemen, saying it was paramount to keep and support unity in the Arab country and find solutions to bring Yemenis together to achieve prosperity and the dreams of the people of the country. In regards to Sudan, they stressed that the conflict there must be resolved, unity must be upheld, and humanitarian aid must be delivered to people in desperate need of support since the war began in 2023.



Las Vegas Metro Police officers are shown in front of a Las Vegas Athletic Club after a shooting on May 16, in Las Vegas. (AP)

2 dead, at least 3 injured in Las Vegas gym shooting: police

A shooting inside a Las Vegas gym Friday afternoon left two people dead, including the suspect, and injured at least three others, police said.

One person was killed at the Las Vegas Athletic Club on the city's west side as gunfire erupted, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Undersheriff Andrew Walsh said.

Officers shot the suspect, who was armed with a gun, after he ran out the door, the police department said in a statement. He was confirmed dead at a local hospital, police said in a social media post. Police said three people who were injured were transported to local hospitals, with one in critical condition.

Walsh said there was no longer a threat to the public. Officials said they were still investigating a motive.

"They said 'Get out, get out, get out,'" Claudio Vigan, a witness who was at the gym when the shooting began, told KLAS-TV. "Then I saw the dead guy next to the machine."

Gary Steward, who was headed to the gym with another person, told the Las Vegas Review-Journal that a stop at a nutrition store saved their lives. He said if they hadn't stopped, they would have been at the front desk where the shooter entered. They saw glass breaking as they walked up to the gym and ran back to the parking lot. (AP)



A person walks past a large tree blocking a road after a severe storm moved through on May 16 in St. Louis. (AP)

Severe weather leaves 21 dead in Kentucky, Missouri

Storm systems sweeping across parts of the Midwest and South have left at least 21 dead, including nine people killed after what appeared to be a devastating tornado in southeast Kentucky.

In Kentucky, some 14 people were killed by severe weather, and the death toll is likely to rise, according to Gov Andy Beshear. Earlier, local authorities in Laurel County said nine people were killed after a tornado touched down in southeastern Kentucky, causing structures to crumble and even flipping over a car on I-75.

Laurel County resident Chris Cromer said he got the first of two tornado alerts on his phone around 11:30

pm or so, about a half-hour before the tornado struck. He and his wife grabbed their dog, jumped in their car and went to a relative's nearby home and got in a crawl-space.

The storms were part of a weather system Friday that killed seven in Missouri and also spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, left several hundred thousand customers without power in the Great Lakes region and brought a punishing heat wave to Texas.

St Louis Mayor Cara Spencer confirmed five deaths in her city and said more than 5,000 homes were affected. (AP)

Dems slam package as ‘big, bad bill’

US conservatives block Trump’s big tax breaks bill in stunning setback

WASHINGTON, May 17, (AP): In a setback, House Republicans failed Friday to push their big package of tax breaks and spending cuts through the Budget Committee, as a handful of conservatives joined all Democrats in a stunning vote against it.

The hard-right lawmakers are insisting on steeper spending cuts to Medicaid and the Biden-era green energy tax breaks, among other changes, before they will give their support to President Donald Trump’s “beautiful” bill. They warn the tax cuts alone would pile onto the nation’s \$36 trillion debt.

The failed vote, 16-21, stalls, for now, House Speaker Mike Johnson’s push to have the package approved next week. But the Budget Committee plans to reconvene Sunday to try again. Lawmakers vowed to negotiate into the weekend as Trump is returning to Washington from the Middle East.

“Something needs to change or you’re not going to get my support,” said Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas.

Tallying a whopping 1,116 pages, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, named with a nod to Trump, is teetering at a critical moment. Johnson is determined to resolve the problems with the package that he believes will inject a dose of stability into into a wavering economy.

With few votes to spare from his slim majority, the Republicans are trying to pass it over the staunch objections of Democrats who slammed the package as a “big, bad bill,” or as Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., called it, “one big, beautiful betrayal.”

Ahead of Friday’s vote, Trump had implored his party to fall in line.

“Republicans MUST UNITE behind, ‘THE ONE, BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL!’” the Republican president posted on social media. “We don’t need ‘GRAND-STANDERS’ in the Republican Party. STOP TALKING, AND GET IT DONE!”

The Budget panel is one of the final stops before the package is sent to the full House floor for a vote, which is still expected sometime next week. Typically, the job of the Budget Committee is more administrative as it compiles the work of 11 committees that drew up various parts of the big bill.

But Friday’s meeting proved momentous even before the votes were tallied.

The conservatives, many from the Freedom Caucus, had been warning they would block the bill, as they holdout for steeper cuts. At the same time, GOP



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., speaks during a news conference at the Capitol on May 6, in Washington. (AP)

lawmakers from high-tax states including New York are demanding a deeper tax deduction, known as SALT, for their constituents.

Four Republican conservatives initially voted against the package - Roy and Reps. Ralph Norman of South Carolina, Josh Brecheen of Oklahoma, Rep. Andrew Clyde of Georgia. Then one, Rep. Lloyd Smucker of Pennsylvania, switched his vote to no in a procedural step so it could be reconsidered later, saying afterward he was confident they’d “get this done.”

Norman insisted he was not defying the president - “this isn’t a ‘grandstand,’” he said - as he and the others push from Trump’s priorities.

In their quest for deeper reductions, the conservatives are particularly eyeing Medicaid, the health care program for some 70 million Americans. They want new work requirements for aid recipients to start immediately, rather than on Jan. 1, 2029, as the package proposes.

Democrats emphasized that millions of people would lose their health coverage and food stamps assistance if the bill passes while the wealthiest Americans would reap enormous tax cuts. They also said it would increase future deficits.

“That is bad economics. It is unconscionable,” said Rep. Brendan Boyle, the top Democratic lawmaker on the panel.

At the same time, talks are also underway with the New Yorkers have been unrelenting in their demand for a much larger SALT deduction than what is proposed in the bill, which could send the overall cost of the package skyrocketing.

As it stands, the bill proposes tripling what’s currently a \$10,000 cap on the state and local tax deduction, increasing it to \$30,000 for joint filers with incomes up to \$400,000 a year.

Rep. Nick LaLota, one of the New York lawmakers leading the SALT effort, said they have proposed a deduction of \$62,000 for single filers and \$124,000 for joint filers.

The conservatives and the New Yorkers are at odds, each jockeying as Johnson labors to pass the package from the House by Memorial Day and send it onto the Senate.

At its core, the sprawling package extends the existing income tax cuts that were approved during Trump’s first term, in 2017, and adds new ones that the president campaigned on in 2024, including no taxes on tips, overtime pay and some auto loans.

It increases some tax breaks for middle-income earners, including a bolstered standard deduction of \$32,000 for joint filers and a temporary \$500 boost to the child tax credit, bringing it to \$2,500.

It also provides an infusion of \$350 billion for Trump’s deportation agenda and to bolster the Pentagon. To offset more than \$5 trillion in lost revenue, the package proposes rolling back other tax breaks, namely the green energy tax credits approved as part of President Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act. Some conservatives want those to end immediately.

Supreme Court rejects WH bid to resume quick deportations of Venezuelans

WASHINGTON, May 17, (AP): The Supreme Court on Friday barred the Trump administration from quickly resuming deportations of Venezuelans under an 18th-century wartime law enacted when the nation was just a few years old.

Over two dissenting votes, the justices acted on an emergency appeal from lawyers for Venezuelan men who have been accused of being gang members, a designation that the administration says makes them eligible for rapid removal from the United States under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

The court indefinitely extended the prohibition on deportations from a north Texas detention facility under the alien enemies law. The case will now go back to the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which declined to intervene in April.

President Donald Trump quickly voiced his displeasure. “THE SUPREME COURT WON’T ALLOW US TO GET CRIMINALS OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!” he posted on his Truth Social platform.

The high court action is the latest in a string of judicial setbacks for the Trump administration’s effort to speed deportations of people in the country illegally. The president and his supporters have complained about having to provide due process for people they contend didn’t fol-



The El Valle Detention Center in Raymondville, Texas is pictured on May 1. (AP)

low US immigration laws.

The court had already called a temporary halt to the deportations, in a middle-of-the-night order issued last month. Officials seemed “poised to carry out removals imminently,” the court noted Friday.

The case is among several making their way through the courts over Trump’s proclamation in March calling the Tren de Aragua gang a foreign terrorist organization and invoking the 1798 law to deport people.

The high court case centers on the opportunity people must have to contest their removal from the

United States - without determining whether Trump’s invocation of the law was appropriate.

“We recognize the significance of the Government’s national security interests as well as the necessity that such interests be pursued in a manner consistent with the Constitution,” the justices said in an unsigned opinion.

At least three federal judges have said Trump was improperly using the AEA to speed deportations of people the administration says are Venezuelan gang members. On Tuesday, a judge in Pennsylvania signed off on the use of the law.

Vatican could be venue for Russia and Ukraine talks, says Rubio

ROME, May 17, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Saturday that the Vatican could be a venue for Russia-Ukraine peace talks, taking up the Holy See’s longstanding offer after Pope Leo XIV vowed to personally make “every effort” to help end the war.

Speaking to reporters in Rome before meeting with Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the Vatican point man on Ukraine, Rubio said that he would be discussing potential ways the Vatican could help, “the status of the talks, the updates after yesterday (Friday) and the path forward.”

Asked if the Vatican could be a peace broker, Rubio replied: “I wouldn’t call it broker, but it’s certainly - I think it’s a place that both sides would be comfortable going.”

The Vatican has a tradition of diplomatic neutrality and had long offered its services to try to help facilitate talks, but found itself sidelined during the all-out war, which began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Leo, who was elected history’s first American pope on May 8, took



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, rescuers recover the bodies of passengers after a Russian drone struck a passenger bus at the village of Bilopilnia in the Sumy region, Ukraine on May 17. (AP)

up Francis’ call for peace in Ukraine in his first Sunday noon blessing as pope.

Meanwhile, a Russian drone hit a bus evacuating civilians from a front-line area in Ukraine’s north-eastern Sumy region Saturday, killing nine people, Ukrainian officials said, hours after Moscow and Kyiv had held their first direct peace talks in years that failed to yield a cease-fire.

Romania braces for presidential runoff viewed as choice between East or West

BUCHAREST, Romania, May 17, (AP): As Romania braces for a high-stakes presidential runoff this weekend between two starkly different candidates, 25-year-old medical resident Alexandra Bejinariu is anxious about which direction her European Union nation will choose in the closely watched vote.

Like many voters, the young medic views Sunday’s ballot between hard-right nationalist frontrunner George Simion and pro-Western reformist and incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan as a choice for the country’s geopolitical future.

It’s a choice between “East or West,” she told The Associated Press in Bucharest. “It has divided my family, my relatives, my friends,” she said.

Romania is gripped by a deep political crisis after a top court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

Deep societal divisions have been exposed during Romania’s chaotic election cycle, and Bejinariu said she fears that a Simion presidency would undermine Romania’s long-standing Western alliances. “I think it’s a big risk,” she said.

“It has to change, but I don’t know in what direction it will change,” she added. “I hope that our future will be good ... it really gives me anxiety this election.”



Presidential candidate George Simion speaks to members of the business community at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania, days ahead of the second round of the presidential election redo in Bucharest, Romania on May 13. (AP)

Europe

British police charge 3 men with spying: British police said on Saturday they have charged three Iranian men with spying offenses after an investigation by counterterror detectives.

The Metropolitan Police force said Mostafa Sepahvand, 39, Farhad Javadi Manesh, 44, and Shapoor Qalehali Khani Noori, 55, were charged with “engaging in conduct likely to assist a foreign intelligence service” - that of Iran - between Aug 14, 2024 and Feb 16, 2025.

All three men live in London. They have been in custody since their arrests on May 3 and are due to appear in court later Saturday.

Sepahvand was also charged with engaging in “surveillance, reconnaissance and open-source research,” intending to commit serious violence against a



Murphy

person in the United Kingdom. The others are charged with engaging in surveillance and reconnaissance with the intention serious violence would be committed by others.

Police did not identify the individual allegedly targeted.

Commander **Dominic Murphy** of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command, called the charges “extremely serious.” (AP)

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‘Russian hackers attacked party websites’: Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that Russian hackers attacked the websites of parties in his ruling coalition on Friday, two days before a presidential election.

The frontrunner in Sunday’s election is a high-ranking member of Tusk’s Civic Platform party, Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski.

“Two days before the elections, a group of Russian hackers operating on Telegram attacked the websites of the Civic Platform,” Tusk wrote on X on Friday afternoon.

Tusk said that the websites of other parties in his governing coalition, the Left and the Polish People’s Party (PSL), were also targeted. “The services are conducting intensive actions in this matter. The attack is ongoing,” he said. (AP)

Midterm election outcome blow to Marcos

Philippine ex-president Duterte’s loyal aides top Senate race in Philippines

MANILA, May 17, (Agencies): The Philippines’ Commission on Elections (Comelec) on Saturday officially proclaimed the 12 senate race winners, including two loyal supporters of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, in Monday’s midterm elections. Reelected Senator Christopher Go, a close Duterte aide, topped the polls. Fellow Duterte ally Senator Ronald Dela Rosa placed third. Other Duterte-endorsed winners include Senator Imee Marcos, Representative Rodante Marcoleta, and Camille Villar. Villar, a “guest candidate” on the Duterte slate who also enjoys backing from president Ferdinand Marcos Jr., was included in the count.

Also making the top 12 were Marcos-backed candidates Erwin Tulfo, Pia Cayetano, Lito Lapid, and former senators Panfilo Lacson and Vicente Sotto. Two candidates not affiliated with Marcos and Duterte, former Senator Paolo Benigno Aquino and former Senator Francis Pangilinan, completed the 12 senate spots. Representative Tobias Tiangco, campaign manager for the Marcos bloc, acknowledged setbacks in Mindanao, a Duterte stronghold.

He attributed the poor showing to backlash over the February impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte. In a May 13 Facebook post, Duterte’s former presidential spokesperson and chief presidential counsel Salvador Panelo called the results a “thunderous repudiation” of the Marcos administration, asserting that the vote reflected public support for the Dutertes and rejection of “vindictive politics. Monday’s midterm election elected more than 18,000 positions, including 12 senators, members of the House of Representatives, and provincial and town officials.

The midterm election outcome provided unexpectedly strong backing for Duterte and boosted his daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte, ahead of her impeachment trial in the Senate in July.

The election also was a blow to Marcos Jr.’s administration, whose candidates did not do as well as expected in midterm polls when the president’s influence is usually strong, analysts said.



US President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center right), and Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte, daughter of former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte, greet during the inauguration ceremony at National Museum on June 30, 2022 in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

The election results reflected “a vote against the administration,” political analyst Ronald Llamas said, adding that it wasn’t a vote for the Dutertes because many anti-Duterte candidates also won, including in the lower house of Congress.



Supporters of Lee Jae-myung, presidential candidate of the Democratic Party, cheer during a campaign event in Seoul, South Korea on May 12. (AP)

S.Korea’s ex-prez Yoon leaves party ahead of presidential election

Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol announced departure from his conservative People Power Party on Saturday ahead of the June 3 presidential election.

“I’m leaving the People Power Party today. I bow down to my comrades in the party who believed in me and stayed with me for a long time,” Yoon said in an online statement.

Yoon noted that his departure from the party, he believed, would be the best way he can to win the snap presidential election and protect the country’s liberal democracy.

Calls recently emerged for Yoon to leave the party to woo swing voters in the upcoming election,

caused by Yoon’s botched martial law bid, his impeachment, and his permanent removal from office.

Yoon asked the public to join forces with Kim Moon-soo, presidential candidate of the People Power Party, and cast their ballots in the June 3 election to safeguard freedom, sovereignty, and prosperity. (Xinhua)



Quechua musicians play flutes in support of former president Evo Morales during a march to the Electoral Tribunal offices in El Alto, Bolivia on May 16. (AP)

Bolivia ex-prez Morales supporters clash with police in push to secure candidacy

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA, May 17, (AP): Hundreds of supporters of ex-President Evo Morales marched toward Bolivia’s top electoral court on Friday to push for their leftist leader’s candidacy in presidential elections later this year, a rally that descended into street clashes as police tried to clear out a group of demonstrators.

The confrontations come in response to a ruling by Bolivia’s Constitutional Court that blocks Morales, the nation’s first Indigenous president who governed from 2006 until his ouster in 2019, from running again in Aug 17 elections.

The turmoil escalates political tensions as Bolivia undergoes its worst economic crisis in four decades.

As the march arrived in Bolivia’s capital of La Paz, protesters seeking to register Morales’ candidacy surged toward the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, chanting, “Comrades, what do we want? For Evo to come back!”

Security forces barricading a road to the court held them back. Police reported that the clashes between rock-throwing protesters and tear gas-lobbing police forces injured two officers, a journalist and a local merchant.

“They’re using firecrackers and rocks that are hurting our forces,” said



Supporters of former president Evo Morales run from tear gas launched by police during clashes near the offices of the Electoral Tribunal in La Paz, Bolivia on May 16. (AP)

police Commander Juan Russo. “This is not a peaceful march.”

The authorities did not report on any injuries among the protesters, who were seen being pushed onto the ground, shoved into police cars and blasted with tear gas. Morales had

promised to attend the march Friday but did not show up.

The court’s unanimous decision Wednesday upheld an earlier ruling that bans presidents from serving more than two terms. Morales has already served three, and, in 2019, resigned under pressure from the military and went into exile as protests erupted over his bid for an unprecedented fourth term.

Morales returned to Bolivia a year later as the 2020 elections vaulted to power his preferred candidate, President Luis Arce, from his long-dominant Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, party.

Arce, who announced earlier this week that he would not seek re-election, insisted that the Constitutional Court had disqualified Morales, his mentor-turned-rival, from running in 2025.

But many experts doubt the legitimacy of that decision in a country where political conflicts undermine the courts and presidents have maneuvered to get their allies on the bench.

“The Constitutional Court issues unconstitutional arbitrary rulings at the whim of those in power,” said Morales, who himself reaped the benefits of favorable judges while seeking to run for a fourth consecutive term in 2017.

Children die as USAID aid cuts snap lifeline for world’s most malnourished

DIKWA, Nigeria, May 17, (AP): Under the dappled light of a thatched shelter, Yagana Bulama cradles her surviving infant. The other twin is gone, a casualty of malnutrition and the international funding cuts that are snapping the lifeline for displaced communities in Nigeria’s insurgency-ravaged Borno state.

“Feeding is severely difficult,” said Bulama, 40, who was a farmer before Boko Haram militants swept through her village, forcing her to flee. She and about 400,000 other people at the humanitarian hub of Dikwa - virtually the entire population - rely on assistance. The military restricts their movements to a designated “safe zone,” which severely limits farming.

For years, the United States Agency for International Development had been the backbone of the humanitarian response in northeastern Nigeria, helping non-government organizations provide food, shelter and healthcare to millions of people. But this year, the Trump administration cut more than 90% of USAID’s foreign aid contracts and \$60 billion in overall assistance around the world.

Programs serving children were hit hard.

Bulama previously lost young triplets to hunger before reaching therapeutic feeding centers in Dikwa. When she gave birth to twins last August, both were severely underweight. Workers from Mercy Corps enrolled them in a program to receive a calorie-dense paste used to



A malnourished child receives treatment at the Intersos facility, an Italian humanitarian organization, the only remaining facility providing in-patient services for malnutrition in Dikwa, northeastern, Nigeria on April 29. (AP)

treat severe acute malnutrition.

But in February, Mercy Corps abruptly ended the program that was entirely financed by USAID. Two weeks later, one of the twins died, Bulama said.

She has no more tears, only dread for what may come next.

“I don’t want to bury another child,” she said.

Globally, 50% of the therapeutic foods for treating malnutrition in children were funded by USAID, and 40% of the supplies were produced in the U.S., according to Shawn Baker, chief program officer at Helen Keller Intl and former chief

nutritionist at USAID.

He said the consequence could be 1 million children not receiving treatment for severe malnutrition, resulting in 163,500 additional deaths per year. For Helen Keller Intl, its programs in Bangladesh, Nepal and Nigeria have been terminated.

“It is very traumatic,” said Trond Jensen, the head of the United Nations humanitarian office in Maiduguri, Borno’s capital, of the funding cuts, noting that other donors, including the European Union, have taken similar steps this year. “One of the things is the threat to the lives of children.”

Overthrown Gabon President Bongo and family arrive in Angola: officials

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, May 17, (AP): The former president of Gabon, who was ousted in a 2023 coup, has been allowed to leave the country and has flown to Angola with his family, the Angolan leader’s office said Friday.

The Angolan presidency posted photos on its official Facebook page of Ali Bongo Ondimba arriving in the Angolan capital, Luanda.

It said the release of Bongo, his wife and their son came after an agreement between Angolan President Joao Lourenco and new Gabon leader Gen. Brice Oligui Nguema, who overthrew Bongo nearly two years ago and was declared the winner of an election last month.

Alain-Claude Bilie-By-Nze, the former prime minister of Gabon and a spokesperson for Bongo, said the Bongo family had been detained illegally and were released after “international demands.”

The African Union had called for the



President of Gabon Ali Bongo Ondimba addresses the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on Sept. 21, 2022 at UN headquarters. (AP)

Bongo family’s release and Angola’s Lourenco was acting in his capacity as the chairperson of the AU when he facilitated the agreement, his office said.

Bongo was placed under house arrest after the coup in August 2023, but was freed a week later due to health concerns, according to Gabon authorities. His supporters denied he was free and said his movements were still being restricted.

His wife Sylvia Bongo and son Noureddin Bongo Valentin had been detained in a prison in the capital, Libreville since 2023 on money laundering and corruption charges. Ali Bongo himself was not charged.

The coup by Oligui Nguema, the former head of the country’s Republican Guard, ended 54 years of Bongo family rule in Gabon, a nation of 2.3 million people on the Atlantic coast in central Africa. Ali Bongo’s father Omar Bongo Ondimba was president from 1967 until his death in 2009. Ali Bongo succeeded him.

Chad ex-PM held in clash probe

N'DJAMENA, Chad, May 17, (AP): Chad’s former prime minister and opposition leader **Succès Masra** was arrested Friday for his alleged involvement in a clash between herders and farmers in the country’s southwest a day earlier, the country’s prosecutor said.

Public prosecutor Oumar Mahamat Kelaye said fighting Thursday in Chad’s southwestern Logone Occidental province left 42 people dead and several homes burned.

Clashes between herders and farmers, who accuse the herders of grazing livestock on their land, are common in the Central African country.

The prosecutor said Masra is being investigated on charges of inciting hatred and revolt through social media posts that called on the population to arm themselves against a community in the area. It was unclear what specific posts he was referring to.



Masra



A bird flies in the backdrop of Mount Everest, as seen from Namche Bajar, Solukhumbu district, Nepal on May 27, 2019. (AP)

2 climbers die on Mount Everest

An Indian and a Filipino climber have died while climbing Mount Everest as hundreds of climbers are attempting to scale the world’s highest peak, expedition organizers said Friday.

The Indian climber, identified as Subrata Ghosh, died on Thursday just below the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit of the peak while he was returning from the top.

The other climber, identified as Philipp Santiago, 45, from the Philippines, died Wednesday while he

was headed to the summit. He had reached Camp 4, which is the highest camp on the mountain, and was preparing for the final bid to reach the summit.

Bodha Raj Bhandari of the Nepal-based Snowy Horizon Trek and Expedition, which equipped and organized the expedition, said the bodies were still on the mountain and it was yet to be decided if and when they would be brought down. (AP)

Kuwait crude oil up 9 cents to \$64.17 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 17, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil rose by nine cents during Friday's trading to reach USD 64.17 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 64.08 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Saturday. Brent futures went up by 88 cents to USD 65.41 pb and West Texas Intermediate rose by 87 cents to USD 61.49 pb.

Other Voices

Kuwait expands overseas investments

\$4 trillion Gulf investments pledged in US over 3 years

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Recent visits by the U.S. President have resulted in \$4 trillion worth of investments in the U.S. over the next three years from three Arab Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. These investments are expected to yield productive outcomes that could strengthen security and stability in the region.



Kamel Al-Harami

There are also strong indications that a new deal between the U.S. and Iran is imminent, which could help stabilize oil prices. While huge sums of money are being spent, there is hope that oil prices will recover in the coming years. Many Arab Gulf states are currently facing huge deficits due to low oil prices, which are insufficient to cover even 40 percent of their state budgets and expenditures.

The visit itself serves as a strong indication of a new and emerging alliance between the USA and the Gulf States, in terms of the security and safety of all Gulf nations. This is aimed at ensuring they work together for defense in the event of an emergency. Meanwhile,

the Gulf states continue to use all available means to secure their safety while simultaneously investing in the U.S. through arms purchases and financial investments.

From this perspective, Kuwait is emerging as a leading global investor, as it is channeling its surplus funds into overseas investments, primarily in the U.S. and European countries. This investment strategy is expected to extend further into Far Eastern markets, including Japan, and eventually China, amounting to \$40 billion. This shift is becoming a huge development, offering potential for growth in Kuwait's oil industry, as well as in refining and petrochemicals. The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) should seriously consider these opportunities.

The President's visit to our region is a clear indication of the commitment to the stability of the region. However, one element that was overlooked is the future stability of oil prices, especially among the top producers. It appears the issue was intentionally left untouched, allowing the oil markets to make their own predictions and remain separate from politics.

Undoubtedly, the visit was a highly successful one, with a \$4 trillion deal, marking the largest-ever weapons purchase in a single state visit.



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Operating profit stands at KD 2.1 mln

Kuwait Insurance reports Q1 gross profit of KD 3.8 million

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Kuwait Insurance Company announced the results of the first quarter of the current year, where the Gross profit for the current period amounted to KD 3.8 million (USD 12.4 million) compared to KD 3.6 million (USD 11.7 million) for the same period last year, which shows an increase of KD 200,000 (USD 652,000), equal to 5.5%.

The net profit achieved, for the current period, amounted to KD 2.92 million (USD 9.5 million) with Earnings per Share of Fils 15.77 (USD 51 Cents).

The Gross Written Premium for the current period amounted to KD 16 million (USD 52.1 million).

The Net Operating profit amounted to reached KD 2.1 million (USD 6.8 million).

Total investment profits reached KD 1.76 million (USD 5.7 million) for the current period, compared to KD 1.53 million (USD 4.9 million), a 15% increase.

The CEO of the company, Mr. Sami Sharif, stated that the successes achieved are the result of significant efforts made in previous years to build the foundations that allow sustainable growth in profits and premiums. The company enjoys a strong and stable financial base. The company was awarded the "Most Trusted Comprehensive Insurance Company - 2025" title and additionally "Most Trusted Insurance Company - 2024" title by "The Global Economics" magazine, a foundation specializing in launching annual rankings in economics and business.

Mr. Sharif added that in addition to profits and premiums, the company maintains an excellent credit rating from AM Best and Moody's at A- and A3, respectively, with a stable outlook. We are proud to continue receiving these ratings, placing us among the leading local and regional companies in the insurance services sector.

This year, the company celebrates the 65th anniversary as the first insurance company in Kuwait and in the GCC, portraying its strong position as a leading insurance company in the Kuwaiti market. The company launched a marketing campaign to mark its 65th anniversary through advertisements, outdoor



Sami Sharif

displays, and social media platforms across Kuwait.

Aiming to focus on the importance of corporate social responsibility, Kuwait Insurance Company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity. KIC aims to contribute by sponsoring specialized and diverse programs in the fields of science and technology for children and youth to hone their skills and develop their talents and abilities. The company also sponsored the Kuwait Sustainability Exhibition to promote the culture of sustainability in society and spread awareness about the importance of creating a sustainable society for future generations. The company, in cooperation with the Kuwait Food and Relief Bank for the second year in a row, carried out its charitable campaign "Ifar for the Fasting Person" by distributing Iftar meals to fasting workers and people with limited income.

Kuwait Insurance Company is keen in investing and developing the staff by providing training and enrolling them for educational programs, which will develop them in providing insurance services to organizations, individuals, and stakeholders. With this step, they not only serve the interests of the society but also of the State of Kuwait.

We still look forward to accomplishing a lot in the coming years and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed in achieving our goals, including the Board of Directors, the shareholders, and the company's employees.

Zain sponsors and participates in KSEW

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Zain announced its sponsorship and participation in the Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week (KSEW), held in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity, Water & Renewable Energy, and the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE). At the event, Zain showcased its efforts in leveraging technological innovation to support sustainability goals and reaffirmed its role as a strategic partner to the public sector in the transition toward a sustainable digital economy.

Zain took part in the opening ceremony, attended by the event's patron, H.E. Dr. Subeesh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Electricity, Water & Renewable Energy, alongside Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait, ministry officials, company executives, and a distinguished group of local and international experts in energy and sustainability.

This participation came as part of Zain's ongoing strategy to strengthen its presence in national initiatives aimed at reinforcing the principles of sustainability and digital transformation. The company firmly believes in the importance of harnessing modern technologies to serve Kuwait's environmental and developmental objectives.

During the event, Zain hosted a dedicated booth at the accompanying exhibition, where it showcased a range of its latest ICT solutions that support sustainable goals. These included innovations in smart cities, smart meters, and other solutions that help reduce carbon footprint and enhance energy efficiency.

The company's support to this national initiative reflects its continued role as a strategic government partner in the transition toward a sustainable digital economy. It also highlighted Zain Group's broader commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with global and regional efforts to combat climate change.

Zain also took the opportunity to highlight its Smart Meters Project, launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity and Water back in 2017. The project marked a key milestone in upgrading Kuwait's energy infrastructure and paved the way for the adoption of further smart and sustainable solutions nationwide.

The company reiterated its support for ini-

Company showcases ICT innovations



Al-Gharabally with Zain's team at the company's booth in the exhibition.



Minister Al-Mukhaizeem explores Zain's sustainable solutions at the company's booth.



Dr. Subeesh Al-Mukhaizeem honors Nawaf Al-Gharabally for Zain's support of the event.

tiatives and projects that advance the future of clean energy and contribute to building a comprehensive national sustainability ecosystem. It emphasized that collaboration between the public and private sectors remains the optimal path to achieving the country's sustainable development goals.

Zain has set strategic targets to reduce its carbon footprint and aims to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. To this end, the company contin-

ues to explore cutting-edge technologies such as 5.5G, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy, which can help minimize the environmental impact of the ICT sector.

Reinforcing its commitment to sustainability and clean energy initiatives, Zain recently installed a solar panel setup at the outdoor car park in its headquarters. The initiative promotes the use of clean energy to contribute to powering the company's buildings and reducing its carbon emissions.

Second mandate boosts KIB Invest's global debt market growth

KIB Invest partakes as Joint Lead Manager for 2nd time in Central Bank of Bahrain's Sovereign Sukuk

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), through its investment arm, KIB Invest, proudly announces its role as Joint Bookrunner in the successful execution of the Central Bank of Bahrain's latest international issuance. The offering included an eight-year USD-denominated senior unsecured Sukuk, structured under Ijara and Murabaha principles, issued under the 144A/Reg S format.

The Sukuk tranche, rated B+ with a Stable outlook by both Fitch and S&P, attracted strong demand from a broad spectrum of regional and international investors. With the order book surpassing USD 4.4 billion against a targeted issuance of USD 1.75 billion, the offering achieved an impressive oversubscription of 2.5 times. Priced at a competitive profit rate of 6.25%, the Sukuk is listed on the London Stock Exchange – further cementing Bahrain's reputation as a leading sovereign issuer in the Islamic capital markets.

Citi, First Abu Dhabi Bank, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, and National Bank of Bahrain acted as Joint Global Coordinators. Joining



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen

them as Joint Bookrunners on the Sukuk tranche were Bank ABC, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, KFH Capital, and KIB Invest.

Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB, remarked:

"We are proud to once again play a role in a landmark issuance by a



Jamal Hamad Al-Barrak

distinguished sovereign issuer. This continued mandate is a clear reflection of the market's confidence in our Islamic investment capabilities and the enduring trust placed in us by both regional and global stakeholders. At KIB, we remain firmly committed to supporting the growth of capital markets through innovative, Shariah-compliant solutions

that deliver long-term value with integrity."

Jamal Hamad Al-Barrak, CEO of KIB Invest, added:

"Being selected once again for a sovereign Sukuk mandate is a strong affirmation of our expanding capabilities in the debt capital markets space. It highlights not only our ability to execute with precision, but also the strategic progress KIB Invest is making as an emerging force in Islamic finance. We are especially proud that this transaction marks the largest issuance KIB has participated in as a Joint Lead Manager – a milestone that reflects our growing presence and credibility in the market. We remain committed to supporting transactions that foster sustainable economic growth and enhance financial connectivity across the region."

KIB Invest continues to expand its footprint in the debt capital markets, underpinned by strong market insight, disciplined execution, and a dedicated team committed to delivering tailored, Shariah-compliant financial solutions to sovereign and institutional clients across the region.

Net profit soars 61.5% to KD 8.4 mln

Al-Beyout Investment Group approves 20% cash dividend

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: The General Assembly of Al-Beyout Investment Group Holding Company has approved the company's financial statements for the fiscal year 2024, along with the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends to shareholders at a rate of 20 percent.

This brings the total cash dividends distributed for the year to 33.5 percent, marking a strong debut following the company's listing on Boursa Kuwait (Premier Market) on June 11, 2024.

Board Chairman Atallah Awad Al-Mutairi pointed out that 2024 was a defining year in the history of the company. "This milestone capped years of strategic planning, operational strengthening and portfolio development. Al-Beyout has built a resilient and diversified business model across high-potential sectors, with a growing presence in regional and Gulf markets," he disclosed.

He said the group continues to demonstrate robust performance and strong operational capabilities. "In 2024, Al-Beyout expanded its service offerings in human resources management and support services, while growing its real estate operations through its subsidiary, Real Estate House Company. The group managed over 8,000 outsourced employees across key sectors, further reinforcing its regional and international footprint," he affirmed.

He added the company also enhanced its strategic partnerships, particularly through its joint venture in Servcore, in collaboration with V2X. "This venture significantly boosted Al-Beyout's ability to deliver mission-critical services to federal contractors within the US Central Command (CENTCOM) region, showcasing the group's operational and technical

depth," he revealed.

Commenting on the achievements of the company, CEO Abdulrahman Al-Khannah stated, "By the grace of Allah Almighty, 2024 concluded with remarkable accomplishments aligned with our strategic roadmap – from diversifying income streams to elevating subsidiary performance and expanding into stable, high-growth markets."

Al-Khannah stressed that the group's primary goal last year was to build a stronger, more financially efficient organization with resilient and value-generating operational assets. "These assets are designed to withstand economic volatility while preserving fair market value and ensuring liquidity. Our strategy is rooted in a unified vision between the board and executive leadership to establish a sustainable service-driven group that consistently delivers value-added solutions to public and private sector clients," he explained.

He confirmed that the commitment of the company to excellence has reinforced its position among top-tier clients. "The company continues to seek growth opportunities that align with shareholder expectations, with a focus on strategic expansion, operational excellence, and income diversification," he elaborated.

In the human resources sector -- led by the Kuwait Resources House for Human Resources Services, Al-Beyout has bolstered its regional and international presence by offering end-to-end solutions including recruitment, training, labor management and advanced logistics services.

In real estate, Al-Beyout has solidified its standing through projects like the Mutlaa "M1" development, a model for integrated industrial zones. These are not merely real estate assets but core to the company's income diversification and value-creation strategy.

Financially, the group has delivered consistent growth:

■ Net profit rose from KD 5.2 million in 2022 to KD 8.4 million in 2024, marking a 61.5 percent increase and a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.6 percent.

■ Return on equity (ROE) more than doubled from 7.6 percent in 2022 to 16.1 percent in 2024, reflecting enhanced financial efficiency.

■ Total assets increased from KD 128.1 million in 2022 to KD 213 million in 2024, achieving a CAGR of 29 percent.

■ In 2024 alone, assets grew by 57.17 percent compared to 2023, with total equity attributable to the parent company's shareholders rising to KD 53.2 million, up 3.7 percent from the previous year.

Al-Khannah reiterated the group's long-term vision: "Our future is anchored in strengthening operational foundations and achieving sustainable returns for our shareholders. The journey does not end with success -- it evolves with each milestone," he stated.

He pointed out that looking ahead to 2025, Al-Beyout anticipates continued transformation through new contracts and expansions, especially through its subsidiaries in human resources and real estate. "The company is well-positioned to capitalize on contracts with government and private entities across local, regional, and international markets. The executive team remains dedicated to pursuing strategic, well-paced growth, enhancing service quality, and maintaining the group's leadership in integrated solutions across vital sectors," he stressed.

He concluded "our adaptability, diversified business model and strong team will continue to drive our success. We remain committed to protecting and growing shareholder value while capturing high-quality opportunities in Kuwait, the Gulf and beyond."

Underscoring its commitment to excellence in client service and tailored wealth solutions

NBK Wealth Group relocates to its new London office

LONDON, May 17: NBK Wealth Group has announced the completion of its newly refurbished office within NBK International building dedicated to providing an elevated experience for its wealth management clients, and reaffirming the Group's ongoing commitment to enhancing the client experience and delivering exceptional standards in wealth management.

The official opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer; Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer; Mr. Malek Khalifa, CEO of NBK Wealth Global Private Banking and Switzerland, Mr. Omar Bouhadiba, CEO of International Banking Group at NBK, and Mr. Bassem Boustany, the Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait, London (NBK International).

This move underscores NBK Wealth's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional wealth management services to its clients, providing them with seamless access to its products and services.

The new office, situated within

NBK's London building, offers enhanced client meeting spaces and upgraded technological infrastructure. This investment in a modern and accessible environment will further enable the NBK Wealth team in London to deliver tailored financial solutions and personalized support to meet the evolving needs of its valued clientele.

NBK Wealth remains dedicated to fostering strong relationships with its clients. In addition to its selective range of banking products, the London office offers residential and commercial real estate finance to our esteemed clients who are seeking property investments in the UK guiding them through the financing process. Knowing the importance of preservation of family wealth and planning, our dedicated team of Trust professionals in London can assist clients with their succession planning requirements to ensure a secure and seamless transition of wealth to future generations.

NBK Wealth remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering strong relationships with its clients in Kuwait and KSA. This investment in a dedicated and upgraded space within the London office will further strengthen NBK Wealth's ability to deliver tailored wealth management solutions.

All existing contact details, including phone numbers and email addresses, will remain the same, ensuring a smooth transition for clients.

NBK Wealth is one of the pillars of NBK Group and a pioneer wealth management group in the



NBK Wealth opens upgraded London office for elite clients.



provides a comprehensive package of products, including private banking services, financial planning, asset management, and advisory services. NBK Wealth follows a specialized solution-based approach that suits the individual needs of its clients as per their unique goals, whether that of ultra-high-net-worth individuals and institutions.

NBK Wealth is a brand registered under the name of National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P ("NBK"), for use by the Asset Management business of, among other NBK group entities, Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C., a leading investment firm and its affiliates worldwide, combined with the Private Banking services of NBK worldwide, which is one of the largest and oldest financial institutions in the region.

Faster, safer transactions

'Warba' upgrades ATM for 24/7 smart banking

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Warba Bank successfully rolled out a comprehensive upgrade of its ATM and cash deposit machines across all branches in an aim to provide customers with a more secure, flexible and seamless banking experience, available 24/7. The upgrade is part of the Bank's ongoing commitment to adopting the latest digital banking solutions that enhance service quality and meet evolving customer expectations.



Ahmad Faisal Al Qatami

The new machines feature advanced speed and efficiency, allowing customers to perform cash withdrawals and deposits with greater ease and speed. They also offer a modern user interface and align with the highest global standards of banking security and technology. The upgraded system supports expanded digital services across the branch network, reinforcing Warba's leadership in digital banking innovation.

Commenting on this milestone, Mr. Ahmad Faisal Al Qatami, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Warba Bank, stated: "We are continuously working to enhance our banking infrastructure to ensure a smart and convenient customer experience. Upgrading our ATMs and cash deposit machines is part of our commitment to offering high-performance services that simplify daily banking transactions and reflect our vision to stay close to our customers at all times."

Al Qatami added that Warba Bank puts customer experience at the center of everything it offers, continuously investing in digital services that keep pace with the latest global banking technologies. These efforts support the Bank's confident and professional journey toward full digital transformation.

Warba Bank provides a comprehensive suite of leading digital banking services, including its advanced mobile app, online banking platform, digital onboarding for new accounts, international transfers via Mastercard and Western Union channels, digital gold trading and delivery options and WhatsApp customer service. Additionally, the Bank offers tailored banking packages for its premium Royal Bank-

Its participation aligns with its sustainability program and Kuwait Vision 2035

stc a Diamond Sponsor of the 'Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week'

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, participated as a Diamond Sponsor in the Kuwait Sustainable Energy Week ('KSEW') conference and exhibition organized by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy in collaboration with the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency ('RCREEE'). The conference and exhibition were held under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref. stc's sponsorship and participation align with the Company's comprehensive sustainability and corporate social responsibility frameworks, which aim to support national energy goals through innovative technologies that contribute to environmental stewardship.



Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem at the stc pavilion.

The opening ceremony was attended by Engineer Muataz Aldharrab, CEO of stc, and Mohammad N. Al-Nusif, CEO of solutions by stc. KSEW aimed to raise awareness on various solutions and technologies that could assist in conserving energy and reducing the consumption of natural resources, accelerating the shift towards sustainable energy solutions. Additionally, KSEW served as a platform for countries within the MENA region to share their insights, research, and developments within the renewable and clean energy space, to assist one another and achieve the common goal of a sustainable future.

During the conference, stc presented its advanced smart electricity meters, designed to support the MEW in efficiently monitoring real-time energy consumption. These innovative meters play a vital role in optimizing electricity usage, enhancing the accuracy of billing processes, and significantly reducing the need for manual intervention, which in turn minimizes the risk of human error. Equipped with remote connectivity capabilities, the meters allow for seamless and secure power disconnection during maintenance activities, thereby improving both operational safety and resource management.

As part of its participation in the conference, which included panel discussions and interactive activities for participants, stc participated in a panel discussion titled "Accelerating Sustainable Development through Entrepreneurship." Ahmed Nasser Al-Nuwaibit, stc's Public Relations and Social Media Director, represented the company in this panel. During his participation, Al-Nuwaibit highlighted the company's efforts to support entrepreneurship, promote digital innovation, and its pivotal role in enabling digital transformation in Kuwait, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Al-Nuwaibit emphasized that stc continues its commitment to social responsibility through practical initiatives and impactful projects in the fields of digital education, supporting entrepreneurs, and environmental sustainability, in addition to strengthening partnerships with government and private entities to build a sustainable digital future.

He also noted that the company works to provide a supportive environment for innovators through its programs and technology incubators, such as "InspireU," which has produced numerous startup



Muataz Aldharrab and Mohammad N. Al-Nusif with the stc team.

projects that have contributed to serving the national economy and achieving social impact. This participation comes within the framework of stc's commitment to actively contributing to the community dialogue on issues of sustainability and entrepreneurship.

stc indicated in a statement that it has consistently invested in programs and initiatives aimed at advancing sustainability and environmental conservation across various sectors. In line with its long-term sustainability objectives, the Company is committed to developing innovative solutions that contribute to Kuwait's environmental goals while supporting the digital transformation of essential infrastructure.

As a pioneer in the private sector, stc is dedicated to drive meaningful impact through its sustainability and CSR frameworks. The Company will continue to pursue and support similar initiatives that align with Kuwait's vision, strengthening its role in shaping a

greener and more sustainable future for the generations to come.

About stc

Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2008. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014.

stc Kuwait is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and solutions to customers, both for individuals and enterprises, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc Kuwait has expanded its portfolio by acquiring companies such as Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait, and e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries.

ADNOC deepens energy partnerships with US companies

UAE, US leaders discuss strategic partnership, regional developments

ABU DHABI, May 17, (KUNA): UAE President Sheikh Mohamad bin Zayed Al Nahyan held Thursday talks with US President Donald Trump on the strategic partnership between the UAE and US, as well as ways to strengthen cooperation across various fields to serve shared interests.

The two leaders also discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The discussions took place during President Trump's state visit to the UAE, where he was received by His Highness at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi.

Sheikh Mohamad welcomed the US President and emphasised the importance of this visit in advancing strategic cooperation between the two countries at all levels. He also commended President Trump's efforts to enhance UAE-US relations since taking office, noting that the two nations share a vision of further progress and prosperity.

The two leaders explored opportunities to expand collaboration, particularly across the fields of investment, energy, advanced technology, artificial intelligence, industry, and other areas that support the two countries' determination to foster a more prosperous future.

They also addressed regional and international issues of mutual concern, with a focus on containing regional escalation as a threat to security and stability.

Sheikh Mohamad underscored the UAE's commitment to deepening cooperation with the United States in light of their longstanding ef-

orts to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Middle East and around the world. This, he noted, is in line with the UAE's unwavering support for global stability, peace, and development through multilateral international cooperation.

During the meeting, both leaders affirmed their joint aim to further enhance the UAE-US strategic partnership.

The UAE leader pointed to the future-focused partnership between the UAE and US that has been further strengthened by President Trump's support, particularly in the fields of the new economy, advanced technology, and artificial intelligence.

For his part, the US President praised the leadership of Sheikh Mohamad bin Zayed, affirming that relations between the UAE and US have reached new heights and continue to grow stronger.

Sheikh Mohamad bin Zayed and President Trump also celebrated the launch of a new 1GW AI cluster that will be housed within an Abu Dhabi-based AI campus.

Also:

ABU DHABI: ADNOC announced on Friday multiple agreements with the US energy majors, during the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-US business dialogue, with US President **Donald Trump**.

UAE News Agency (WAM) stated that the agreements will potentially enable \$60 billion of US investments in UAE energy projects across the lifespan of the projects.

The agreements include a landmark field development plan with ExxonMobil and INPEX/JODCO to expand the capacity of Abu Dha-

bi's Upper Zakum offshore field through a phased development.

ADNOC also signed a strategic collaboration agreement with Occidental to explore increasing the production capacity of Shah Gas field's capacity to 1.85 billion standard cubic feet per day (bscfd) of natural gas, from 1.45 bscfd, and accelerating the deployment of advanced technologies in the field.

The agreements reinforce the shared commitment of the UAE and US to maintaining global energy security and the stability of energy markets. The enterprise value of UAE energy investments into the US is set to reach \$440 billion by 2035, as part of the UAE's \$1.4 trillion investment plan into the country.

Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology **Dr. Sultan Al Jaber**, ADNOC Managing Director and Group CEO, said, "The deep-rooted bilateral relationship between the UAE and the US is underpinned by our shared commitment to enabling energy abundance and we are reinforcing this commitment through these agreements with US energy majors.

We see significant opportunities for further UAE-US partnerships across the energy-AI nexus and we look forward to working with our American partners to unlock long-term sustainable value and drive socioeconomic progress."

The agreements reinforce the shared commitment of the UAE and US to maintaining global energy security and the stability of energy markets. The enterprise value of UAE energy investments into the US is set to reach \$440 billion by 2035, as part of the UAE's \$1.4 trillion investment plan into the country.

New arrival the first of nine ordered

Kuwait Airways Airbus A321neo aircraft arrives in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: With intensive media coverage, the Kuwait Airways inaugural Airbus A321neo aircraft successfully landed at Kuwait International Airport (Terminal 4) on Thursday.

This aircraft, the first of nine ordered, was manufactured by Airbus.

Following his arrival on the flight from Toulouse, France; alongside Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, Kuwait Airways Chairman Abdulmohsen Al-Faqan conveyed to KUNA and Kuwait TV that the new aircraft, named ‘Al-Mutlaa’, is distinguished by its efficient maintenance and fuel consumption, achieving approximately 20 percent fuel saving.

He elaborated that the new aircraft, slated to commence service within days upon completion of the required documentation, features 16 business-class seats and 150 economy-class seats, and is equipped with advanced onboard entertainment systems.

He said the delivery of the remaining A321neo aircraft stipulated in the agreement is expected shortly, reinforcing the airline’s dedication to the ongoing development of the national carrier and the provision of superior customer service, in accordance with the directives of the political leadership.

He disclosed that a meeting was convened with senior officials from Rolls-Royce PLC to discuss the advancement of the engine system and the provision of support to Kuwait Airways.



Kuwait's Ambassador to France, Abdullah Al-Shaheen, took part in the ceremony celebrating the delivery of Kuwait Airways' first new A321neo aircraft from Airbus' facilities in Toulouse, France.

Meanwhile, Lewis disclosed that she visited the Rolls-Royce production facility in Derby, United Kingdom, where aircraft engines, particularly for wide-body Airbus aircraft, are manufactured.

Lewis added that she visited the Airbus facility in Toulouse, France; which integrates leading European aviation technology from the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany and France, and en-

compasses a diverse range of aircraft of varying capacities and sizes, produced and distributed globally.

She said she was impressed by the new aircraft, which incorporates cutting-edge technological features, environmentally friendly, safe, healthy and enhances passenger comfort and enjoyment.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Abdullah Al-Shaheen affirmed on Friday

that Kuwait Airways received the new aircraft from Airbus, reflecting the depth of the partnership and cooperation between the two countries.

Al-Shaheen made this statement to KUNA after participating in the ceremony marking Kuwait Airways' receipt of its first new A321neo aircraft from Airbus in Toulouse, France. He asserted "we are proud of this occa-



KUNA photos
Kuwait Airways marked the delivery of its first new A321neo aircraft from Airbus.

sion, which reflects the outstanding level of relations between the two friendly countries and it is considered an extension of a long history of constructive cooperation based on trust and mutual respect."

He added that Kuwaiti-French relations have witnessed "continuous development" in various fields over the decades, particularly in the economic

and strategic sectors; stressing that the State of Kuwait is keen on strengthening this cooperation to serve mutual interests.

Al-Shaheen, Al-Faqan, Lewis, French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin and senior officials from Kuwait Airways and Airbus attended the aircraft delivery ceremony from Toulouse last Wednesday.

Apps processed 400 mln transactions in '24

Kuwait Finance House unveils major update to KFHOnline app

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: In a move that reflects its dedication to digital transformation strategy, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced a comprehensive update to its KFHOnline app, featuring a sleek modern design with smart banking services.

This major update reinforces KFH's leadership in digital innovation and its commitment to delivering state-of-the-art financial solutions that cater to customers' demands and ensure a seamless, user-friendly banking experience.

Deputy General Manager Digital and Alternative Channels at KFH, Meshal Alobaid, said that the main features of the new design include:

- **New landing page:** the homepage has been redesigned to deliver a more interactive and seamless user experience, making it easier to navigate and access a wide range of banking services and solutions.
- **Customer profile and benefits:** this new feature allows customers to view details of their banking tiers and enjoy exclusive benefits tailored to each program, along with a glimpse of the advantages offered in the other programs.



Meshal Alobaid

- **New services:** these new innovative services include the instant issuance of the digital card, managing the ATM card usage limits.
- **Virtual cards issuance:** customers can easily issue a prepaid card through the app, add it to the digital wallet and start online shopping immediately.

He noted that other services are set to launch soon in line with KFH's digital transformation strategy aimed at advancing modern banking.

Unlimited banking services
Alobaid mentioned that KFH re-

corded over 400 million successful banking transactions carried out by customers through its online applications in 2024, confirming the remarkable success of KFH's digital channels.

He explained that KFHOnline provides access to more than 200 banking services. Additionally, KFH smart hybrid branches offer other services. "This means that our customers have the flexibility to either interact directly with an employee or use state-of-the-art self-service devices," added Alobaid.

Alobaid noted that the digital channel services include e-payment solutions such as WAMD service, online account opening, instant printing for all bank cards, gold trading, adjusting ATM card purchase and withdrawal limits, and completing numerous transactions through KFH Go without the need to visit a branch.

According to Alobaid, KFH's advanced initiatives demonstrate substantial progress in its digital transformation journey, solidifying its leading position in modern banking and delivering an innovative and smooth banking experience for customers.



Lulu officials and guests who attended the launch ceremony.

LuLu Hypermarket launches Lulu Bridal Wedding Expo 2025

LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, launched its exciting 'Lulu Bridal Wedding Expo 2025' across all its outlets on 15 May. The ten-day long exhibition, which runs until 25 May, showcases exclusive bridal collections, offering a unique opportunity to explore the finest bridal wear at incredibly competitive prices.

The event was inaugurated on 15 May at the Lulu Al Rai outlet by renowned influencers, vloggers, and fashionistas in Kuwait, in the presence of LuLu Kuwait management. Fantastic 25 Percent discounts are being offered on a wide range of bridal collections, including exquisite lehengas, gowns, sarees, and churidars from some of the finest brands.

The expo is beautifully designed with separate stalls displaying various bridal categories, ensuring a personalized shopping experience for those ladies seeking to

wear something memorable on their big day. To provide further inspiration to the brides-to-be, influencers and vloggers attending the event showcased their favorite collections during the event.

The bridal collections feature the latest designs and styles, offering something for every bride – from striking traditional to chic contemporary looks. Shoppers can find a wide variety of options, from luxurious bridal lehengas to elegant gowns and timeless bridal sarees. The event is designed to cater to brides and their families, offering an all-in-one wedding shopping experience.

Do not miss out on this amazing opportunity to shop for your dream bridal outfit at unbeatable prices – only at Lulu stores in Kuwait during the 10-day bridal-wear spree.

Moody's strips U.S. govt of its top credit rating

Ratings agency cites DC's failure to rein in debt

WASHINGTON, May 17, (AP): **Moody's Ratings stripped the U.S. government of its top credit rating Friday, citing successive governments' failure to stop a rising tide of debt.**

Moody's lowered the rating from a gold-standard Aaa to Aa1 but said the United States "retains exceptional credit strengths such as the size, resilience and dynamism of its economy and the role of the U.S. dollar as global reserve currency."

Moody's is the last of the three major rating agencies to lower the federal government's credit. Standard & Poor's downgraded federal debt in 2011 and Fitch Ratings followed in 2023.

In a statement, Moody's said: "We

expect federal deficits to widen, reaching nearly 9% of (the U.S. economy) by 2035, up from 6.4% in 2024, driven mainly by increased interest payments on debt, rising entitlement spending, and relatively low revenue generation."

Extending President Donald Trump's 2017 tax cuts, a priority of the Republican-controlled Congress, Moody's said, would add \$4 trillion over the next decade to the federal primary deficit (which does not include interest payments).

A gridlocked political system has been unable to tackle America's huge deficits. Republicans reject tax increases, and Democrats are reluctant to cut spending.

On Friday, House Republicans failed to push a big package of tax breaks and spending cuts through the



US President Donald Trump speaks with reporters in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. (AP)

Budget Committee. A small group of hard-right Republican lawmakers, insisting on steeper cuts to Medic-

aid and President Joe Biden's green energy tax breaks, joined all Democrats in opposing it.

Confidence shaken

Japan's economy shrinks as trade war hits exports

TOKYO, May 17, (AP): The Japanese economy contracted at an annual rate of 0.7% in the first quarter, according to government data released Friday, as U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war hurt exports and dented consumer confidence.

Japan's real gross domestic product, or the measure of a nation's goods and services, shrank at a greater-than-expected 0.2% in January-March compared to the previous quarter in the first contraction in a year, the Cabinet Office's seasonally adjusted preliminary data showed.

Exports declined at an annual rate of 2.3%. Consumer spending remained flat, while capital investment grew 5.8%.

Trump's tariffs are likely to hurt Japan's giant exporters, especially the automakers, not only for products shipped from Japan, but from other nations, like Mexico and Canada. Officials acknowledge planning a response is a challenge because Trump keeps changing his mind.

"Regional automakers face increased operating costs and potential revenue losses because their U.S. sales depend on diverse production bases and supply chains," S&P Global Rat-

ings said in a report.

"Even companies with minimal sales in the U.S. could face indirect but meaningful impacts as tariffs affect global economy and consumer demand," it said.

The Japanese economy has been struggling for years, plagued by weak demand as the population ages and declines, as more people stay single and have fewer children.

The Bank of Japan, which kept interest rates at zero or minus levels for years, has been gradually raising the benchmark rate, noting wages are holding up and prices are gradually rising.

The latest findings, which seem to highlight the fragility of the economy, make it more likely the central bank might hold off on further rate hikes.

Some analysts are advocating lowering the 10% consumption tax, which is similar to the sales tax in other nations, to help alleviate people's hardships.

But so far Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba hasn't said he supports the idea. Japan's national finances are under severe strain due to ballooning social welfare costs.

The economy grew an annual rate of 2.4% in the last quarter of 2024.

US stocks power within 3% of their record as Wall Street closes out a winning week

NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): Wall Street cruised to the finish of its strong week on Friday, as U.S. stocks glided closer to the all-time high they set just a few months earlier, though it may feel like an economic era ago.

The S&P 500 rose 0.7% for a fifth straight gain and closed out its third winning week in the last four. It's rallied back within 3% of its record set in February after briefly dropping roughly 20% below last month, thanks to building hopes that President Donald Trump will lower his tariffs against other countries after reaching trade deals with them.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 331 points, or 0.8%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.5%.

Trump's trade war had sent financial markets reeling worldwide because of twin dangers. On one hand, tariffs could slow the economy and drive it into a recession. On the other, tariffs could push inflation higher.

This week featured some encouraging news on each of those fronts. The United States and China announced a 90-

day stand-down in most of their punishing tariffs against each other, while a couple reports on inflation in the United States came in better than economists expected.

It was "a week to remember," according to economists at Bank of America led by Claudio Irgoyen and Antonio Gabriel. But they also said they're not expecting a significant drop in volatility, and they're not changing big-picture forecasts.

"There is still huge uncertainty regarding the impact of tariffs on economic activity and inflation," they said in a BofA Global Research report.

That uncertainty has been hitting U.S. households and businesses, raising worries that they may freeze their spending and long-term plans in response, which would hurt the economy. The latest reading in a survey of U.S. consumers by the University of Michigan showed sentiment soured again in May, though the pace of decline wasn't as bad as in prior months.

Perhaps more worryingly, expectations for coming inflation keep building, and U.S. consumers are now bracing for 7.3% in the next 12 months, according to the University of Michigan's preliminary survey results. That's up from a forecast of 6.5% a month before.

When everyone expects inflation to be high, it could kick off a vicious cycle of behavior that only worsens inflation.

To be sure, only some of the University of Michigan's survey responses for the preliminary May reading came after the United States and China announced their 90-day truce.

On Wall Street, Charter Communications rose 1.8% after it said it agreed to merge with Cox Communications in a deal that would combine two of the country's largest cable companies. The resulting company will change its name to Cox Communications and keep Charter's headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut.

CoreWeave jumped 22.1% after Nvidia disclosed that it had increased its ownership stake in the company, whose

cloud platform helps customers running artificial-intelligence workloads. Nvidia now owns 7% of CoreWeave, up from its nearly 6% stake before CoreWeave's initial public offering of stock in March.

Novo Nordisk's stock that trades in the United States fell 2.7% after the Danish company behind the Wegovy drug for weight loss said that Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen will step down as CEO and that the board is looking for his successor. The company cited "recent market challenges" and how the stock has been performing recently.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 41.45 points to 5,958.38. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 331.99 to 42,654.74, and the Nasdaq composite gained 98.78 to 19,211.10.

In the bond market, Treasury yields held relatively steady. The yield on the 10-year Treasury edged down to 4.44% from 4.45% late Thursday and from more than 4.50% the day before that. Lower bond yields can encourage investors to pay higher prices for stocks and other investments.

Joaquin Phoenix battles 2020 America in Aster's film

'Eddington' finds a mixed reception at Cannes

CANNES, France, May 17, (AP): Ari Aster's COVID-era Western "Eddington," about a 2020 America quickly losing its mind to conspiracy theories, TikTok and political extremism, premiered to a mixed reception at the Cannes Film Festival.

"Eddington," starring Joaquin Phoenix as a muddled, mistake-prone sheriff who runs for mayor in a fictional New Mexico town, was among the most feverishly awaited American films at Cannes. It marks the first time in competition at the French festival for Aster, the lauded director of "Hereditary," "Midsommar" and "Beau Is Afraid."

It's also his most politically ambitious film by a long shot. "Eddington," which A24 will release in July, plunges into the pandemic psyche of the United States, plotting a small-town feud that swells to encompass nationwide events including mask mandates, the death of George Floyd and right-left divisions.

As a portrait of the US in microcosm, it's a hardly a more peaceful affair than "Midsommar." When Joe Cross (Phoenix) tires of the mask ordinances of the town's mayor (Pedro Pascal), he decides to oppose him in the upcoming election. Other pressures on Cross (Emma Stone plays his shut-in wife, who has a history with the mayor) gradually increase, driving "Eddington" toward a surreal and bloody eruption.

In Aster's dark satire, both MAGA Republicans and elitist Democrats get skewered, but the new, ominous data center just outside of town suggests a common social poison in the internet.

"Eddington," predictably, proved divisive at Cannes. Some critics hailed it as an eerily accurate

film about contemporary America, while others called it a tedious and wayward rumination.

After a not particularly enthusiastic stranding ovation, Aster himself seemed both proud and apologetic for what he had wrought.

"I don't know what to say. I don't know what you think," he said, smiling. Aster added: "I don't know, sorry?"

Meanwhile, you can get nostalgic about almost anything at the Cannes, even Jerry Seinfeld on a zip line in a bumblebee costume.

Gambits

For many years, Cannes has played host not just to an endless stream of artistically ambitious movies, but also to some of Hollywood's most extreme promotional gambits. With so many films packed into the 12-day festival, and with much of the world watching, there are high stakes to standing out in Cannes.

But in recent years, the Cannes marketing stunt has turned into an endangered species. Hopes that Tom Cruise might revive a dormant tradition passed with the relatively sedate premiere Wednesday of "Mission: Impossible - Final Reckoning."

Would Cruise parachute into the Palais? Could he ride an airplane wing to the premiere? Nothing so elaborate came to pass. Cruise and company walked the red carpet while serenaded by an orchestra playing the "Mission: Impossible" theme.

Along the Croisette this year, there's a noticeable lack of the kind of grand advertisements Hollywood has often trotted out for the festival. Paramount Pictures has a "Mission: Impossible" installation outside

the Carlton Hotel, but - as has been true for several years - Hollywood rarely still seeks to make big marketing splashes in Cannes.

Even though Universal Pictures' upcoming Formula One action drama "F1" might seem like a natural fit, with the Monaco Grand Prix just days away, "F1" - at least so far - has made no pit stop in Cannes.

Things could change. Cannes runs until May 24. Someone might yet arrive by parasail over the Mediterranean, as T.J. Miller did in 2017 for "The Emoji Movie," or do ninja kicks with a troupe of giant pandas, as Jack Black did in 2008 for "Kung Fu Panda."

But for years, the circus-like quality of Cannes has been in decline. That's owed partly to budgetary constraints and shifting marketing priorities for major studios. For Cruise and "Final Reckoning," Cannes was just one stop on a worldwide tour.

Plus, some of those who were most devoted to bringing Hollywood entertainment to Cannes are no longer regulars here. While head of DreamWorks Animation, Jeffrey Katzenberg made sure his films left a mark in Cannes, whether with models wearing "Trolls" wigs or Seinfeld's "Bee Movie" zip line.

Is the absence of such things anything to lament? Probably not, but they did add to the crazy-things-will-happen nature of Cannes, giving the festival the feel of big tent extravaganza. It could be counted as one small, superficial way that movies aren't quite the carnivalesque show they once were.

For now, though, we can say we'll always have when Sacha Baron Cohen, for "The Dictator," rode a camel down the Croisette. Ah, the memories.



Joaquin Phoenix, (from left), director Ari Aster and Pedro Pascal pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Eddington' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 17. (AP)

Variety

LONDON: A fellow musician and friend of **Chris Brown** has been charged alongside the Grammy-winning singer on allegations they beat and seriously injured a music producer at a London nightclub in 2023, police said Saturday.

Omolulu Akinlolu, 38, who performs under the name "Hoody Baby," was due to appear in Manchester Magistrates' Court on a charge of causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Brown, 36, was jailed without bail on the same charge Friday, throwing his upcoming tour into question. He is scheduled to appear at Southwark Crown Court in London on June 13, which is the third day of his world tour.

Akinlolu is a rapper from Dallas, Texas, who has collaborated with Brown and Lil Wayne. He also goes by the names "Fat Leopard" and "Super Hood."

Police gave no details on what role Akinlolu played in the alleged assault but said he was charged in connection with the same incident as Brown.

Brown was on tour in the U.K. in February 2023 when he launched an unprovoked attack on producer Abe Diaw, striking him several times with a bottle at the Tape nightclub in the swanky Mayfair neighborhood in London, prosecutor Hannah Nicholls said in court Friday. (AP)

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LJUBLJANA, Slovenia: Police in Slovenia are investigating the disappearance of a bronze statue of US first lady Melania Trump that was sawed off and carried away from her hometown.

The life-size sculpture was unveiled in 2020 during President Donald Trump's first term in office near Sevnica in central Slovenia, where Melanija Knavs was born in 1970. It replaced a wooden statue that had been set on fire earlier that year.

Police spokeswoman Alenka Drenik Rangus said Friday that the police were informed about the theft of the statue on Tuesday. She said police were working to track down those responsible.

According to Slovenian media reports, the bronze replica was sawed off at the ankles and removed. Franja Kranjc, who works at a bakery in Sevnica that sells cakes with Melania Trump's name in support of the first lady, said the stolen statue won't be missed. (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: R&B singer Cassie delved further into text messages with former boyfriend Sean "Diddy" Combs during her cross-examination Friday in the music mogul's sex trafficking trial, telling him "I'm not a rag doll. I'm somebody's child" after he beat her at a Los Angeles hotel in 2016.

However, as they tried to recover from the episode, she and Combs were expressing love for each other just days later, with Cassie writing in one text: "We need a different vibe from Friday."

She and one of Combs' defense attorneys read the couple's messages aloud during two days of cross-examination in a Manhattan courtroom, which ended Friday afternoon. The defense also tried to discredit Cassie's testimony that Combs molested her in 2018 after she ended their nearly 11-year relationship.

In the "rag doll" text, Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, told Combs he was out of control from drugs and alcohol that day. After hotel security video of the assault was released last year, Combs apologized and said he was "disgusted" by his actions. (AP)

Cannes

'Stories of Surrender' finds the rock star in reflection

Bono brings his stories, himself to Cannes

CANNES, France, May 17, (AP): Cannes is a short trip from Bono's seaside villa in Eze-sur-Mer. He bought it with The Edge in 1993, and considers himself grateful to a coastline that, he says, gave him a "delayed adolescence."

"I can tell you I've slept on beaches close to here," Bono says with a grin. "I've woken up in the sun."

But that doesn't mean the Cannes Film Festival is a particularly familiar experience for the U2 frontman. He's here to premiere the Apple TV+ documentary "Bono: Stories of Surrender," which captures his one-man stage show. Before coming, Bono's daughter, the actor Eve Hewson, gave him some advice.

"She said: 'Just get over yourself and bring it,'" Bono said in an interview on a hotel off the Croisette. "What do I have to bring? Bring yourself and your gratitude that you're a musician and they're allowing you into a festival that celebrates actors and storytellers of a different kind. I said, 'OK, I'll try to bring it.'"

Besides, Cannes, he notes, was founded amid World War II as an alternative to then-Mussolini controlled Venice Film Festival. It was, he says, "designed to find fascists."

Shifts in geopolitical tectonics was much on Bono's mind. He has spent much of his activist life fighting for aid to Africa and combating HIV-AIDS. US President Donald Trump's dismantling of USAID has reversed much of that.

Defacement

"What's irrational is taking pleasure in the defacement of these institutions of mercy," Bono said.

"Bono: Stories of Surrender," an Andrew Dominik-directed black-and-white film that begins streaming May 30, adapts the one-man stage show that, in turn, came from Bono's 2022 book, "Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story."

In the film, Bono is self-effacing and reflective, sifting through the formative influence of his father, U2's skyrocketing to fame and considering how ego and social work might be related. He calls it "the tall tales of a short rock star." And as was the case on a recent sunny afternoon in Cannes, Bono makes a captivating raconteur.

Remarks have been lightly edited for clarity.

AP: You've long maintained that globalization lifts developing nations out of poverty. What do you make of the shift away from globalization by many countries recently?

Bono: Well, that's right. Globalization did very well for the world's poor. That and increased aid levels brought a billion people out of extreme poverty and halved childhood mortality - remarkable jumps for quality of life for human beings.

But it's also fair to say certain communities really paid the price for that - here in Europe, in the United States. And I'm not sure those communities were credited enough for weathering storms that globalization brought. So I understand how we got to this place, but it doesn't mean that it's the right place to be in.

Nationalism is not what we need. We grew up in a very charged atmosphere in Ireland. It makes you suspicious of nationalism and



Bono poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Bono: Stories of Surrender' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 17. (AP)



Bono, (from left), Amal Clooney and The Edge pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Bono: Stories of Surrender' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 16. (AP)

those animal spirits that can be drummed up. This is me speaking about surrender, "Stories of Surrender," at a time when the world has never been closer to a world war in my lifetime. At first I think it looks absurd, a bit ridiculous - now that has never stopped me in the past - but I think it's OK to look ridiculous for these ideas. Like surrender, nonviolence, peace.

AP: Do you have any sense yet of Pope Leo XIV?

Bono: The new pope, he does look like a pope. That's a good start. I just saw the other day his first piece and he was talking about stopping shouting. God might prefer whispers. I thought, "Oh, this could be interesting." I'm more of a shouter myself. I come from

punk rock. But I'm learning to turn that shout into a whisper in this film to get to an intimacy.

AP: The most moving parts of "Stories of Surrender" are when you talk about your dad, who died in 2001. How have you feelings about him evolved with time?

Bono: Well, the accuracy of the put-down - "You are a baritone who thinks he's a tenor" - is so all encompassing. I was going to call the play "The Baritone Who Thinks He's a Tenor." He's on my mind because he's the reason I sing.

It's a wound that will never close because after playing him on stage for all those nights - just by turning left or right - I always loved him but I started to really like him. He

started to make me laugh. There was a gift, as well as the voice, that he left me. Would he forgive me for impersonating him in the Teatro di San Carlo, a sacred place for tenors, probably not. But here I am impersonating an actor, so.

AP: You've spent the last five years in some state of self analysis. First the book, then the stage show, now the film. Why?

Bono: Mission creep. I knew I had to write the book. The play was so I didn't have to tour the book in normal promotional activity, that I could actually have fun with it and play all the different characters in my life. I thought it was really good fun. Then I realized: Oh, there's parts of you that people don't know about. We

don't go to U2 shows for belly laughs. But that's a part of who I am, which is the mischief as well as the melancholy.

Then you end up doing a play with a lot of cameras in the way. Enter Andrew Dominik and he taught me something that I didn't really understand but my daughter does: The camera really knows when you're lying. So if want to tell this story, you better get ready to take your armor off. You're going to feel naked in front of the whole school, but that's what it takes.

AP: Coming out the other side, did you gain any new perspective on yourself?

Bono: Based on my behavior just in the past week, the answer to that question is probably: Must try harder. The pilgrim's lack of progress. I would say that I understand a little better where I came from and that where I end up depends on how I deal with that.

I've been calling it the hall of mirrors, when you try to figure out who you are and who's behind the face. Then you just see all these faces staring back at you, and they're all true. The real star of this movie is my dad. I sort of like him better than I like myself because humor has become so important to me. It's not like everything needs to be a belly laugh, but there's a freedom. People like me, we can sing about freedom. It's much better to be it.

AP: You earlier spoke about the rising threat of world war. As someone who's often sang for and worked for peace, do you still have hope?

Bono: There's a minister from Albania who said something that really stuck with me. She said: If you have a chance to hope, it's a moral duty because most people don't. So, yes, I feel we'll figure our way out of this. This is a scary moment.

I think acknowledging that we can lose all we've gained is sobering but it may be course-changing. I just believe in people enough. I believe in Americans enough. I'm an Irish person, I can't tell people how to vote.

I can tell you that a million children dying because their life support systems were pulled out of the wall, with glee, that's not the America that I recognize or understand. You're on the front lines of Europe here. America came in and saved the day. Ironically, so did Russia. More people died from Russia fighting the Nazis than everybody else. Now they tread on their own sacred memories by treading on the Ukrainians who also died on the front lines. I think part of that is that history didn't acknowledge it.

I believe there is integrity in the Russian people. They need to change their leader, in my view. I believe there is integrity in the Americans. They will figure it out. Who was it who said: If you give Americans the facts, they will eventually make the right choice. Right now, they're not getting the facts. Think of it: a 70% decline in HIV-AIDS, Republican-led, Democratically followed though. The greatest health intervention in the history of medicine to fight HIV-AIDS has been thrown away. It was nearly there. To a space traveler, it's like getting to Mars and going, "Nah, we'll go back." It's bewildering to me.

Album promises earworm hits and country anthem vibes

Wallen’s ‘I’m The Problem’ will be everywhere ... buckle up

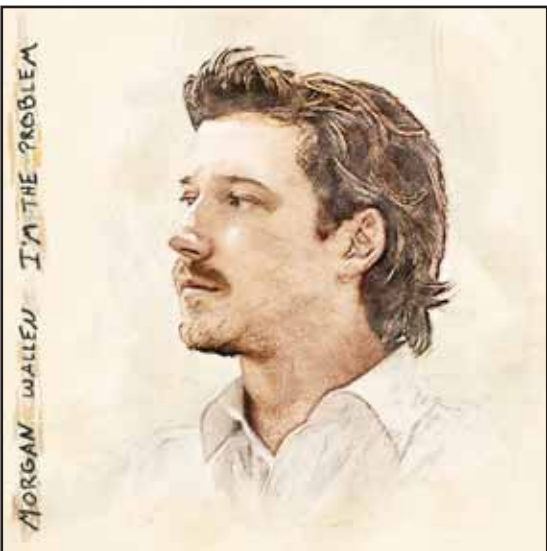
NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): Morgan Wallen says he’s the problem. And soon, he’ll be yours.

The country megastar’s fourth studio album, “I’m the Problem,” will be everywhere imminently if it isn’t already - just like his earlier records, the last of which out-sold Taylor Swift. It is a collection of earworm hooks and twangy big belts about party and women, the kind that has made Wallen unignorable.

The 32-year-old’s incredible popularity is at least partially due to the hybridity of his style. Bro country and dirt-rock evolved into his final form, which embraces hallmarks of hip-hop: trap high hats and Bone Thugs-n-Harmony-inspired vocal phrasing. That appears throughout the gargantuan “I’m The Problem,” everywhere from the “Interlude,” “Kiss Her in Front of You” and “Miami” to tracks like “What I Want,” featuring the Gen-Z Britney Spears Tate McRae. The latter marks his first time featuring a woman vocalist on one of his songs, no doubt a bucking of country duet tradition but also a doubling down of his vocal style - warm, muscular, masculine.

The album is never revelatory, but there are surprises: like the Bon Iver-channeling “Smile.”

Wallen’s also a traditionalist - in the weeping guitars of “Falling Apart,” the backroads balladry of “Skoal, Chevy, and Browning,” where chewing tobacco and hunting gear has never sounded so ... romantic? Most of his songs deal with heartbreak and self-deprecation with lyrical specificity and a total lack of pretension, appealing to both a fluid listenership and country radio loyalists looking for some-



This album cover image released by Big Loud/Mercury Records shows 'I'm the Problem' by Morgan Wallen. (AP)

thing familiar enough.

In full, “I’m The Problem” is 37-tracks, running near-ing two hours long. It’s exhaustive but only exhausting

for the active listener - just like his last two, which also topped 30 tracks. His style hasn’t detoured too much from his previous work, giving new credence to not fixing what isn’t broke. The album plays out like a soundtrack to a road trip, effortless and pleasant background music.

Then, of course, is the financial incentive: Longer albums equate to more streams, and streams often account for far more of an album’s chart position than downloads and purchases. It’s good business.

All that aside, everything Wallen does, including the release of this new album, is inextricable from his controversies. Despite them - or perhaps, partially because of, for a certain subset of listeners interested in bad boys with real talent - Wallen has become one of the biggest performers in the United States, underestimated by a mainstream music media that often regionalizes country music culture.

And there have been a number of controversies. In 2020, he was arrested on public intoxication and disorderly conduct charges after being kicked out of Kid Rock’s bar in downtown Nashville. In 2021, after video surfaced of him using a racial slur, he was disqualified or limited from several award shows and received no Grammy nominations for his bestselling “Dangerous: The Double Album.” He’s currently under supervised probation after pleading guilty to two misdemeanor counts of reckless endangerment for throwing a chair from the rooftop of a six-story bar in Nashville and nearly hitting two police

officers with it.

Regardless, his last album, “One Thing at a Time,” was certified seven-times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America. It held the No. 1 spot on the Billboard 100 for 16 weeks in 2023. That’s just over 30% of the year. “One Thing at a Time” then reemerged in 2024 to hold the spot for three additional weeks in 2024. Presented another way, the album broke Garth Brooks’ record for longest running No. 1 country album. In that respect, Wallen is not just a superstar in his chosen genre, but any genre.

Redemption is a theme across “I’m The Problem,” which is given additional weight by Wallen’s extramusical behaviors. Earned or otherwise, when Wallen sings he does so with the wisdom of a wizened man. Like in “Superman,” written for Wallen’s son Indigo, which directly references the father’s past indiscretions.

“One day you’re gonna see my mugshot from a night when I got a little too drunk,” he opens the song. “Hear a song about a girl that I lost from the times when I just wouldn’t grow up.”

It’s unclear if that growth has happened. (And considering the rest of the album’s hungover revelations and soured relationships, subjects Wallen knows intimately and has made a career off writing to, it seems unlikely.) But if Wallen is singing to his son in the future, he’s singing to himself and the millions who will be listening in the present. And clearly, they’re willing to take the journey with him.

Music



KAJ from Sweden performs the song 'Bara Bada Bastu' during the dress rehearsal for the Grand Final of the 69th Eurovision Song Contest, in Basel, Switzerland, Friday, May 16. (AP)

Sweden, Austria, France among favorites

Eurovision contest reaches its grand final

BASEL, Switzerland, May 17, (AP): The world’s largest live music event has reached its glitter-drenched conclusion with the grand final on Saturday of the Eurovision Song Contest.

A trio singing for Sweden about the joys of saunas and a classically trained Austrian countertenor are among those tipped to take the microphone-shaped Eurovision trophy at the contest in Basel, Switzerland.

But at the ever-unpredictable event, the prize could just as easily go to powerful singers from France, the Netherlands or Finland - or even an Estonian who sings about Italian coffee. The final kicks off at 9 p.m. local time.

Bookmakers say the favorite is KAJ, representing Sweden with their ode to sauna culture “Bara Bada Bastu,” followed by Austrian singer JJ’s pop-opera song “Wasted Love.”

French chanteuse Louane has risen up the odds with “maman,” as has Dutch singer Claude with soulful ballad “C’est La Vie” and Finland’s Erika Vikman with the innuendo-laden “Ich Komme.” Estonia’s Tommy Cash is also a contender with his highly caffeinated dance-pop song “Espresso Macchiato.”

Acts from 26 countries - trimmed from 37 entrants through two elimination semifinals - will perform to some 160 million viewers for the continent’s pop crown. No smoke machine, jet of flame or dizzying light display has been spared by musicians who have 3 minutes to win the viewers who, along with national juries of music professionals, pick the winner.

The live show is also set to feature a



Zoe Me from Switzerland who will perform the song 'Voyage' is introduced to the crowd during the dress rehearsal for the Grand Final of the 69th Eurovision Song Contest, in Basel, Switzerland, Friday, May 16. (AP)

guest performance by nonbinary Swiss singer Nemo - who won last year’s contest in Sweden - and a face-off between two fan favorites: Baby Lasagna of Croatia, the 2024 runner up with “Rim Tim Tagi Dim,” and Finland’s Käärijä, whose rap-pop party anthem “Cha Cha Cha” came second in 2023.

There are also rumors of an appearance by Celine Dion. Before she was a global star, the Canadian chanteuse won Eurovision in 1988, competing for Switzerland. She sent a video message to one of the semifinals, where three singers performed her winning song, “Ne partez pas sans moi” (Don’t Leave Without Me).

Dean Vuletic, an expert on the history of Eurovision, said the competition has become more diverse over the years, both musically and linguistically. There are songs in 20 languages this year, including Ukrainian, Icelandic, Albanian, Latvian and Maltese.

“In the past it was about having a catchy, innocuous pop song, usually in English,” he said. But in the past decade “we’ve seen songs become much more socially and politically engaged, songs that present the audience with some sort of meaning.”

“In recent years the formulaic approach to a Eurovision entry hasn’t succeeded,” he added. “An entry needs

to be memorable and it needs to be authentic in order to succeed these days.”

This year’s contest has been roiled for a second year by disputes over Israel’s participation. Dozens of former participants, including Switzerland’s Nemo, have called for Israel to be excluded.

Pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel protests have both taken place in Basel, though on a much smaller scale than at last year’s event in Sweden, where tensions spilled over backstage and Dutch competitor Joost Klein was expelled over an alleged altercation with a crew member.

The European Broadcasting Union or EBU, which runs Eurovision, subsequently tightened the contest’s code of conduct, calling on participants to respect Eurovision’s values of “universality, diversity, equality and inclusivity” and its political neutrality.

Performers say the backstage vibe this year is more relaxed.

After a controversial ban in 2024 on flags, apart from national ones, being waved in the arena, this year audience members can bring Palestinian flags or any others, as long as they are legal under Swiss law. Performers, though, can only wave their own country’s flag.

Axel Ahman, one third of favorites KAJ, acknowledged that it’s tough to keep Eurovision an unpolitical event.

“The world always seeps in in some sense,” he told the AP. “But we’re here to represent Sweden and we have prepared for this for all our lives and want to make the best of our moment as artists in this huge and legendary competition.”

Obituary

Master melody-maker

Broadway composer Charles Strouse dies

NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): Three-time Tony Award-winner **Charles Strouse**, Broadway’s industrious, master melody-maker who composed the music for such classic musical theater hits as “Annie,” “Bye Bye Birdie” and “Applause,” died Thursday. He was 96.

Strouse died at his home in New York City, his family said through the publicity agency The Press Room.

In a career that spanned more than 50 years, Strouse wrote more than a dozen Broadway musicals, as well as film scores and “Those Were the Days,” the theme song for the sitcom “All in the Family.”

Strouse turned out such popular - and catchy - show tunes as “Tomorrow,” the optimistic anthem from “Annie,” and the equally cheerful “Put on a Happy Face” from “Bye Bye Birdie,” his first Broadway success.

“I work every day. Activity - it’s a life force,” the New York-born composer told The Associated Press during an interview on the eve of his 80th birthday in 2008. “When you enjoy doing what you’re doing, which I do very much, I have something to get up for.”

Deep into his 90s, he visited tours of his shows and met casts. Jenn Thompson, who appeared in the first “Annie” as Pepper and directed a touring version in 2024, recalls Strouse coming to auditions and shedding a tear when a young girl sang “Tomorrow.”

“He was tearing up and he put his hand on mine,” she recalled. “And he leaned in to me and very quietly said, ‘That was you. That used to be you.’ And I thought I would die. I thought my heart would drop out of my shoes.”

She added: “He’s so gorgeously generous and kind. He has always been that way.”

His Broadway career began in 1960 with “Bye Bye Birdie,” which Strouse wrote with lyricist Lee Adams and librettist Michael Stewart. “Birdie,” which starred Dick Van Dyke and Chita Rivera, told the tale of an Elvis Presley-like crooner named Conrad Birdie being drafted into the Army and its effect on one small Ohio town.

Strouse not only wrote the music, but he played piano at auditions while Edward Padula, the show’s neophyte producer, tried to attract financial backers for a production that would cost \$185,000.

“We never stopped giving auditions - and people never gave money at all. The idea of using rock ‘n’ roll - everybody was so turned off,” Strouse said.

Finally, Padula found Texas oilman L. Slade Brown. When he heard the score, he said, in a Texas twang, “I like those songs,” pushed Strouse aside and picked out the tune of “Put on a Happy Face” on the piano.

Brown then said, “How much do you fellas need?” and wrote out a check for \$75,000 to cover the start of rehearsals. “Suddenly, the world turned Technicolor,” Strouse remembered.

The popularity of “Birdie” spawned a film (with Van Dyke, Janet Leigh and Ann-Margret) in 1963 and a television adaptation with Jason Alexander and Vanessa Williams in 1995.

Strouse and Adams gave several non-musical theater stars, including Sammy Davis Jr. and Lauren Bacall, stage successes.



Strouse

Former president Bush draws artistic influence from Dallas

DALLAS, May 17, (AP): Former President George W. Bush didn’t need to look too far for inspiration for his newest works of art.

The 78-year-old has brushed portraits of world leaders and people who immigrated to the US but his newest collection draws on scenes much closer to home: his presidential library in Dallas.

The exhibit opened Thursday at the George W. Bush Presidential Center on the campus of Southern Methodist University. Bush and former first lady Laura Bush moved to Dallas after he left the White House in 2009, and he took up oil painting a few years later.

The 35 new works are an ode not only to life at the center but also to SMU. The exhibit called “A Shining City on the Hilltop” is both a nod to SMU’s nickname - The Hilltop - and former President Ronald Reagan’s famous use of the phrase “shining city upon a hill” to refer to America, said Teresa Lenling, director of the presidential museum.

“This features not just the places around the SMU campus but it really takes a look at the people that are the heart of this campus and the community,” said Lenling, adding that Bush composed the paintings from photos taken around the center and campus.



Teresa Lenling, Director of the George W. Bush Presidential Museum, speaks during an interview about an exhibit featuring paintings by President George W. Bush on Thursday, May 15, in Dallas. (AP)

Variety

CANNES, France: A palm tree fell on a man at the Cannes Film Festival who was walking along the Croisette on Saturday in the seaside French town.

Authorities sped through festivalgoers to tend to the person who laid injured and bleeding on the sidewalk. No information was immediately available on their condition.

Representatives for the festival didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

The incident happened midday at the festival. Cannes, which runs until May 24, is about halfway through. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Oprah Winfrey’s latest book club pick is a new novel from Ocean Vuong, one of the country’s most admired young writers.

Winfrey announced recently that she has chosen

Vuong’s “The Emperor of Gladness,” in which the Vietnamese American author tells of the bond between a suicidal teen and an elderly widow with dementia.

Winfrey’s video podcast interview with Vuong can be seen on her YouTube channel, among other outlets. The interview was held in Chicago at a Starbucks, which is partnering with Winfrey for the current edition of her book club.

“Ocean draws from his own personal experiences of being born in Vietnam, raised in a working-class family in Connecticut, and working as a fast-food server as inspiration for this story, which features an unlikely cast of truly unforgettable characters,” Winfrey said in a statement. “This award-winning author



Winfrey

and acclaimed poet has written in stunning prose, a heartfelt and powerful examination of those living on the fringes of society, and the unique challenges they face to survive and thrive.” (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: An organization that honored The Associated Press’ Nick Ut with its “photo of the year” in 1973 for a picture of a girl running from a napalm attack in the Vietnam War says it has “suspended its attribution” to Ut because of doubts over who actually took it.

World Press Photo’s report Friday adds to the muddle over an issue that has split the photographic community since a movie earlier this year, “The Stringer,” questioned Ut’s authorship. The photo of a naked and terrified Kim Phuc became an iconic symbol of the war’s tragedy.

After two investigations, The Associated Press said it found no definitive evidence to warrant stripping Ut’s photo credit. (AP)

Jordan rejects requests to stay

Gaza children sent back to war zone after medical care

AMMAN, Jordan, May 17, (AP): When Haitham Abu Daqa's 5-month-old daughter developed a heart problem that could not be addressed near their home in Gaza, the family sought medical help in Jordan, where she underwent successful open-heart surgery.

After the surgery, Daqa's wife, who was with their daughter, pleaded with Jordanian officials to be allowed to stay. She feared that little Nevine's recovery would be at risk in the war-ravaged Palestinian enclave that has few functioning medical facilities. But the officials insisted that the family had to go home.

"How can I take care of the girl while I am living in a tent, and at the same time, the bombing doesn't stop," Daqa said, sobbing. "How dare they send her back? If there is treatment in Gaza for her case, why did they take her in the first place?"

Daqa's daughter was among 17 Palestinian children who were recently returned to Gaza with their caregivers after receiving medical treatment in Jordan. Rights groups warn that forcing the children to go back to a war zone is a possible violation of international law. It also raises doubts about whether the young patients can regain their health in a place where medical



Enas Fathi Salout feeds her young daughter, Nevine, who was recently sent back to Gaza after receiving medical treatment in Jordan, at their tent in a camp for displaced Palestinians in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Thursday, May 15. (AP)

care is scarce and military strikes are an everyday threat.

The children are trapped between Israel intensifying its military operation in Gaza as it threatens to seize the territory and a proposal to permanently resettle much of the population - which experts say could also be a legal violation - and the refusal of Arab countries to take part in any such plan, which they view as forcible expulsion that could create another refugee crisis.

Arab nations have long been reluctant to take in Palestinians, or give them permanent status, out of fear that the refugees might never be allowed to

return and that permanent resettlement would undermine the prospects for the creation of a Palestinian state.

Jordan, which is already home to a large Palestinian population, has been hesitant to accept more due to its own demographic balance, weak economy and high unemployment.

For Daqa's family, the dangers of the Israel-Hamas war returned almost immediately. As his wife crossed into Gaza on Tuesday, their bus was rerouted because an Israeli airstrike hit the hospital that was their destination, he said.

The couple's child was in excellent health when she was discharged more than a month ago from the Specialty Hospital in the Jordanian capital of Amman, said Dr. Reyad Al-Sharqawi, the hospital's assistant director general.

Three other children from Gaza were also treated and discharged, he said. The hospital covered the families' rent and other expenses until they left Tuesday, Al-Sharqawi said.

More than two dozen children and their caregivers were evacuated from Gaza in March as part of a Jordanian initiative to provide urgent medical care to 2,000 children. The 17 patients who completed their treatment were

returned to Gaza.

Jordan's King Abdullah II, a close U.S. ally, announced the initiative during a meeting with President Donald Trump in February aimed at heading off the American leader's proposal for Gaza to be depopulated and redeveloped as a tourism destination. The Israeli government has embraced Trump's plan.

A Jordanian official who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation acknowledged that some Palestinians asked to stay beyond the treatment, but he said the plan was always to return them.

"We are not going to allow the displacement of Palestinians outside Gaza," he said.

Jordan's government said the children who left made room for others to come. On Wednesday, four cancer patients arrived from Gaza to start care.

Forcing people to return to a place where they could face serious harm would be a violation of international human rights law, according to rights groups. Under the law, all returns must be safe and voluntary, and the evacuating country should ensure that adequate services are available in their place of origin.

The war has gutted Gaza's health system. Israel has blocked all imports, including food, fuel and medicine, for more than two months. Hospitals are running out of supplies, and experts have warned that the territory will likely fall into famine unless Israel lifts the blockade and ends its military campaign. Israel says the blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release the 58 hostages it still holds.

Human rights experts said Jordanian officials were in a tough position, not wanting to be complicit in what many see as the expulsion of Palestinians while providing aid to those in need. Still, the law comes down to the rights of wounded children, said professor Omer Shatz, a human rights lawyer and lecturer at SciencesPo University in Paris.

"There is an absolute prohibition on returning them to a place where they will be exposed to cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment, let alone a risk to their life," Shatz said.

Like refugees in other contexts, Palestinians should have the freedom to choose whether to return to their country, said Omar Shakir, the Israel and Palestine director at Human Rights Watch. Countries that take in Palestinians from Gaza should seek assurances that they will be allowed to return if and when they choose, he said.

'Take active breaks to retrain your brain'

Easily distracted? How to improve your attention span, mental clarity

MILWAUKEE, May 17, (AP): Feel like you can't focus? Like you'll never finish a book again? Like the only way to keep your mind and hands busy is to scroll on social media for hours?

You're far from alone. One body of decades-long research found the average person's attention span for a single screen is 47 seconds, down from 2.5 minutes in 2004. The 24/7 news cycle, uncertainty about the state of the world and countless hours of screen time don't help, experts say.

"When my patients talk to me about this stuff there is often a feeling of helplessness or powerlessness," said Dr. Michael Ziffra, a psychiatrist at Northwestern Medicine. "But you can change these behaviors. You can improve your attention span."

Here are ways to start that process. As you read, challenge yourself to set a 2.5 minute timer and stay on this article without looking at another device or clicking away.

A shifting attention is an evolutionary feature, not a bug. Our brains are hardwired to quickly filter information and hone in on potential threats or changes in what's happening around us.

What's grabbing our attentions has changed. For our ancestors, it might have been a rustle in the bushes putting us on guard for a lurking tiger. Today, it could be a rash of breaking news alerts and phone notifications.

The COVID-19 pandemic warped many people's sense of time and increased their screen usage like never before, said Stacey Nye, a clinical psychologist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Technology isn't the only thing that influences our attention, experts say, but the effects of those pinging notifications or hours scrolling through 30-second long videos can build up over time.

"Our attention span has really been trained to only focus in those little, small blips and it interrupts our natural focus cycles," she said.

Experts say "active" breaks are among the best way to retrain your mind and your attention. They only take about 30 minutes, Nye said, and can be as simple as taking a walk while noticing things around you or moving to another room for lunch.

Don't be afraid to get creative. Develop a list of alterna-

tive activities or randomly choose ideas out of a fish bowl. Try craft projects, a short meditation, fixing a quick meal or talking a walk outside. All the better if you can involve a friend as well.

The break needs to be a physical or mental activity - no passive phone-scrolling.

When the brain is understimulated and looking for change, it'll usually grab onto the first thing it sees. The smartphone, an "ever-producing change machine," is an enticing option, said Cindy Lustig, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Michigan.

Recommend

Turn off unnecessary notifications and put that "do not disturb" mode to good use, especially before bedtime. Better yet, put your phone in a whole different room, Lustig said.

Multitasking may make you feel like you're getting more done, but brain experts recommend against it.

"Be a single tasker," Nye said. "Work on one thing at a time, for a specified period of time and begin to work your way up."

Lustig is a big fan of the "Pomodoro technique," in which you set a timer and work on something for 25 or 30 minutes before taking a five-minute break.

She tells herself: "I can do anything for this amount of time," and the world will still be waiting for her at the end.

It's not enough to just have a hobby, Lustig said. It helps to choose hobbies that include deliberate practice and a goal to strive toward, whether it's playing guitar for an audience or improving in a sport.

It helps to pick something that you enjoy as well.

"You don't want to start with the heavy nonfiction or like 'War and Peace,'" Lustig said. "If you need to start with the romance novel, then start with the romance novel. You can work your way up."

It's also important to be kind to yourself. Everyone has good and bad days, and attention needs are different - and even vary from task to task.

The key is to make an intentional effort, experts say.

"It is in many ways similar to a muscle in the sense that we can build it up with practice and exercises," Ziffra said. "Conversely, it can weaken if we're not exercising it."

New therapy offers lifeline for rare conditions

Gene editing helps desperately sick baby thrive, offers hope to millions

NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): A baby born with a rare and dangerous genetic disease is growing and thriving after getting an experimental gene editing treatment made just for him.

Researchers described the case in a new study, saying he's among the first to be successfully treated with a custom therapy that seeks to fix a tiny but critical error in his genetic code that kills half of affected infants. Though it may be a while before similar personalized treatments are available for others, doctors hope the technology can someday help the millions left behind even as genetic medicine has advanced because their conditions are so rare.

"This is the first step towards the use of gene editing therapies to treat a wide variety of rare genetic disorders for which there are currently no definitive medical treatments," said Dr. Kiran Musunuru, a University of Pennsylvania gene editing expert who co-authored the study published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The baby, KJ Muldoon of Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania, is one of 350 million people worldwide with rare diseases, most of which are genetic. He was diagnosed shortly after birth with severe CPS1 deficiency, estimated by some experts to affect around one in a million babies. Those infants lack an enzyme needed to help remove ammonia from the body, so it can build up in their blood and become toxic. A liver transplant is an option for some.

Knowing KJ's odds, parents Kyle and Nicole Muldoon, both 34, worried they could lose him.

Transplant

"We were, like, you know, weighing all the options, asking all the questions for either the liver transplant, which is invasive, or something that's never been done before," Nicole said.

"We prayed, we talked to people, we gathered information, and we eventually decided that this was the way we were going to go," her husband added.

Within six months, the team at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn Medicine, along with their part-



In this photo provided by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, KJ Muldoon, (center), sits with his siblings after a follow up dose of an experimental gene editing treatment at the hospital in April 2025. (AP)

ners, created a therapy designed to correct KJ's faulty gene. They used CRISPR, the gene editing tool that won its inventors the Nobel Prize in 2020. Instead of cutting the DNA strand like the first CRISPR approaches, doctors employed a technique that flips the mutated DNA "letter" - also known as a base - to the correct type. Known as "base editing," it reduces the risk of unintended genetic changes.

It's "very exciting" that the team created the therapy so quickly, said gene therapy researcher Senthil Bhoopalan at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, who wasn't involved in the study. "This really sets the pace and the benchmark for such approaches."

In February, KJ got his first IV infusion with the gene editing therapy, delivered through tiny fatty droplets called lipid nanoparticles that are taken up by liver cells.

While the room was abuzz with excitement that day, "he slept through the entire thing," recalled study author Dr. Rebecca Ahrens-Nicklas, a gene therapy expert at CHOP.

After follow-up doses in March and April, KJ has been able to eat more normally and has recovered well from illnesses like colds, which can strain the body and exacerbate symptoms of CPS1. The 9 1/2-month old also takes less medication.

Considering his poor prognosis earlier, "any time we see even the smallest milestone that he's meeting - like a little wave or rolling over - that's a big moment for us," his mother said.

Still, researchers caution that it's only been a few months. They'll need to watch him for years.

"We're still very much in the early stages of understanding what this medication may have done for KJ," Ahrens-Nicklas said. "But every day, he's showing us signs that he's growing and thriving."

Researchers hope what they learn from KJ will help other rare disease patients.

Gene therapies, which can be extremely expensive to develop, generally target more common disorders in part for simple financial reasons: more patients mean potentially more sales, which can help pay the development costs and generate more profit. The first CRISPR therapy approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, for example, treats sickle cell disease, a painful blood disorder affecting millions worldwide.

Texas' measles outbreak starting to slow

NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): Texas' measles outbreak shows signs of slowing, with fewer than 10 newly reported cases in the last week, but experts say it's not fully over.

"This outbreak does appear to be leveling off, but the affected states remain hypervigilant, and that's because it's travel season," US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention incident manager Dr. Manisha Patel said Thursday of the southwestern outbreak, which also affects New Mexico and Oklahoma. "There is a lot of global measles activity right now."

Across the US, there are 1,024 confirmed measles cases as of Friday - an increase of 23 in a week. Texas still accounts for the vast majority of cases.

There are three other major outbreaks in North America. One in Ontario, Canada, has resulted in 1,622 cases from mid-October through May 13, which rose by 182 cases in a week. Another in Alberta, Canada, has sickened 409 as of Thursday. And the Mexican state of Chihuahua had 1,306 measles cases and one death as of Friday, according to data from the state health ministry.

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Buttler to miss playoffs

Starc among foreign players who won’t return when IPL resumes

NEW DELHI, May 17, (AP): Australia pacer Mitchell Starc is among the foreign players who will not return when the Indian Premier League restarts this weekend, while England batter Jos Buttler will miss the playoffs because of the rescheduling.

Virat Kohli’s Royal Challengers Bengaluru took on Kolkata Knight Riders in Bengaluru on Saturday in the first game since the IPL was suspended a week ago because India and Pakistan were firing missiles at each other. A ceasefire and government clearance means all 17 remaining matches will be played but the IPL will finish on June 3, nine days later than originally planned.

That spills into foreign tours and matches. England is hosting Zimbabwe and the West Indies, Bangladesh is going to Pakistan, and the World Test Championship final between Australia and South Africa starts on June 11 at Lord’s.

Cricket South Africa has denied its players extended no-objection certificates, and they must return home after May 25. Cricket West Indies has granted extended NOCs to its players until the

IPL’s end on June 3.

Starc, the Delhi Capitals’ leading wicket-taker, has told the team he will not return. Neither will Australia and Delhi teammate Jake Fraser-McGurk.

Starc and Fraser-McGurk are understood to have been shaken by the abrupt suspension of the league. They were part of the Delhi-Punjab Kings match in Dharamsala on May 8, which was abandoned after 10.1 overs amid air raid alarms in a security blackout in north-west India.

Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood, also in Australia’s WTC final squad, is rehabbing a shoulder niggle in Brisbane and will rejoin Bengaluru for the knockouts.

Australia skipper Pat Cummins and opening batter Travis Head will rejoin Sunrisers Hyderabad, despite the team out of playoffs contention.

Buttler has scored 500 runs in 11 games for the league-leading Gujarat Titans, including five half-centuries. The Titans have signed Sri Lanka’s Kusal Mendis for about \$90,000 as Buttler’s re-

placement in the knockouts. Mendis will make his maiden IPL appearance, having played in the Pakistan Super League for Quetta Gladiators until the PSL was also suspended on May 7.

Bengaluru’s English players Will Jacks, Liam Livingstone and Jacob Bethell have already returned. But countrymen Jofra Archer and all-rounders Sam Curran and Jamie Overton won’t be returning. Their teams, Rajasthan and Chennai, can’t make the knockouts.

In light of players’ unavailability, IPL officials have allowed franchises to sign players on short-term contracts for the remainder of the league, but these players cannot be retained ahead of the 2026 season.

Punjab signed New Zealand’s Kyle Jamieson for about \$230,000 in place of compatriot Lockie Ferguson, who injured a hamstring.

Lucknow Super Giants brought in New Zealand pacer Will O’Rourke for about \$350,000 to replace pacer Mayank Yadav, who injured his back and was out for the season.



Delhi Capitals’ Mitchell Starc bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala, India. (AP)

Team mired in historic winless skid

Galaxy gives multi-year deal extension to coach Vanney

WASHINGTON, May 17, (AP): Head coach Greg Vanney has been given a multi-year contract extension by the defending MLS Cup champion LA Galaxy despite their historic 13-game winless skid to start the new season.

The Galaxy announced the deal Friday for Vanney even though the club has 10 losses and three draws in the worst start to a season by any team in MLS history.

Galaxy general manager Will Kuntz said the decision to keep Vanney for the long term was made last year. Vanney, a two-time MLS Cup champion coach, was previously under contract only through the current season.

“Greg is one of the most respected and successful coaches in MLS history, and we are excited to be continuing under his leadership,” Kuntz said in a statement. “While this season’s results haven’t reflected our standards, this was a decision made following our 2024 MLS Cup victory, and we remain confident in the project we are building with Greg and we have a clear path forward to returning to an MLS champion level. Greg’s commitment to development, culture, and high standards is unwavering.”

Vanney led the Galaxy to their MLS-record sixth league title last season in a stunning turnaround for a team that had almost no success in the previous decade since winning the 2014 title. LA finished second in the Western Conference before streaking through the playoffs and beating the New York Red Bulls 2-1

at home in the MLS Cup Final.

Vanney also won the MLS Cup and reached three MLS Cup Finals during his lengthy tenure with Toronto before the former Galaxy defender returned to his native Southern California in 2021. The Galaxy made the playoffs in two of Vanney’s first four seasons in charge.

But the new season has been horrific for the Galaxy without star midfielder Riqui Puig, who led MLS in touches last season by a wide margin before he tore a knee ligament in the conference final.

Forward Dejan Joveljic, midfielder Mark Delgado and MLS Cup MVP Gastón Brugman were among the contributors who had to be moved in the offseason due to the salary cap constraints annually created for MLS champions.

Designated players Joseph Paintsil, Gabriel Pec and Marco Reus all returned for the new season, but all have struggled with injuries - and the Galaxy are foundering with just three points from 13 games. The Galaxy have earned one victory this season, beating Herediano 4-1 in a CONCACAF Champions Cup match in March.

The Galaxy lost 1-0 to Sporting Kansas City earlier this month despite not giving up a shot, falling on an own-goal by Maya Yoshida. LA then matched the worst margin of defeat in MLS history during a 7-0 drubbing from the Red Bulls.

The Galaxy lost 3-2 to Philadelphia on Wednesday. They host Los Angeles FC on Sunday night in the El Tráfico rivalry game.

FIFA finalizes date & venue

LAFC to host América in Club World Cup qualifying playoff

MIAMI, May 17, (AP): Los Angeles FC will host Mexico’s América on May 31 in a Club World Cup qualification playoff.

The winner will get group-stage games against Chelsea in Atlanta on June 16, then Esperance from Tunisia in Nashville, and Flamengo of Brazil in Orlando.

The play-in game is needed to complete the 32-team lineup of the tournament that starts on June 14 because another Mexican club, León, was removed. León broke tournament integrity rules being in the same ownership group as another Club World Cup entry, Pachuca.

FIFA finalized the date and venue on Friday, 10 days after León’s appeal against expulsion was lost at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland.

LAFC’s 22,000-seat home BMO Stadium - next to the LA Memorial Coliseum and shared with Angel City - will stage the game at 7:30 p.m. local time.

That is several hours after the Champions League final in Munich between Inter Milan and Paris Saint-Germain. Both have qualified for the Club World Cup.

The Club World Cup entry for LAFC or América is worth an initial \$9.55 million payment from FIFA for a CONCACAF region team, plus a share of the \$1 billion in total prize money based on results at the month-long tournament. It is being played in 11 U.S. cities.



Los Angeles FC’s Denis Bouanga, right, scores on a penalty kick during the first half of an MLS soccer match against the Vancouver Whitecaps in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Awoniyi to stay in the hospital: Taiwo Awoniyi is expected to stay in the hospital for another five days after having emergency surgery on an abdominal injury, Nottingham Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo said.

The Nigeria striker had two operations to repair internal damage after he collided with a post during the 2-2 draw with Leicester in the Premier League on Sunday. He was placed in an induced coma to aid his recovery but is now awake and talking with his family, Britain’s Press Association reported.

Espirito Santo said he hopes Awoniyi will be able to attend the final game of the season - against Chelsea on May 25.

“He went to surgery - surgery went well,” Espirito Santo said. “He is under observation now, but he is recovering. We still have to wait for the doctors to allow visits. We are concerned but it is positive. It has been very difficult because of the concern of the injury, the situation he went through.” (AP)

Sinner to renew rivalry with Alcaraz in Italian Open final



Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz returns the ball to Italy’s Lorenzo Musetti during their semifinal tennis match at the Italian Open, at the Foro Italico in Rome. (AP)

Duo in first meeting since October ’24

ROME, May 17, (AP): Jannik Sinner has gone all the way to the final in his first tournament back from a three-month doping ban.

And Carlos Alcaraz is waiting for him in the Italian Open title match.

The top-ranked Sinner rallied past No. 12 Tommy Paul 1-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the semifinals as he attempts to become the first Italian man to lift the Rome trophy since Adriano Panatta in 1976.

Earlier, Alcaraz advanced to his first Rome final by beating Lorenzo Musetti 6-3, 7-6 (4).

Sunday’s final will mark the first meeting between Sinner and Alcaraz since October, when Alcaraz won the China Open final in a third-set tiebreaker. Alcaraz holds a 6-4 edge in his career meetings with Sinner and has won three straight against his biggest rival.

But Sinner has not lost since that defeat to Alcaraz in Beijing and is on a 26-match winning streak. He’s playing his first tournament since he won his third Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January.

“He’s playing great. I’ve been watching his matches,” Alcaraz said. “His level is really high right now. Every time that I play against him is always a battle, always really, really tough. I kind of enjoy (those) moments.”

Sinner cranked up his level to near perfection in a rout of Casper Ruud in the quarterfinals on Thursday. Against Paul, Sinner made unforced errors in the first set while his American opponent hit shot after shot on the lines. But Sinner quickly turned the match around.

Sinner said cooler, heavier conditions made it more challenging and that

getting broken in his first service game was a “punch in my face.”

“But I tried to stay there mentally, trying to understand what might work a little bit better,” Sinner said. “Tennis can change quickly.”

Toward the end of the match, Sinner appeared to be grimacing at times and clutching his thighs.

“Since the third round I have a small blister under my feet which doesn’t allow me that well to move in some moments,” he said. “Leg-wise I’m not concerned, it’s just a bit tight.”

“There are no excuses. With the adrenaline there is just going to be a lot of energy on Sunday. I’m 100% not concerned.”

Sinner is the first Italian man in the Rome final since Panatta lost the 1978 title match to Bjorn Borg, and Alcaraz

noted that playing Sinner before his home crowd will be “even more challenging.”

Sinner’s fans have been out in full force for all of his matches, many of them wearing wigs and hats in orange - his theme color. One fan held aloft a sign during the semifinal that translated from Italian to, “Sinner, we missed you.”

In February, Sinner agreed to a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency that raised questions, since the three-month suspension conveniently allowed him not to miss any Grand Slams and come back at his home tournament.

Rome is the last big warmup before the French Open starts on May 25.

It’s the third final in three clay-court events this season for Alcaraz, who won the Monte Carlo Masters and fin-

ished runner-up in the Barcelona Open. He withdrew from the Madrid Open because of injury.

The third-ranked Alcaraz withdrew from the Madrid tournament with an upper right leg issue and also had a left leg injury. In Rome, he has been wearing a long black brace covering the upper portion of his right leg stretching down to just below his knee.

Musetti took the first set off Alcaraz in the Monte Carlo final but Alcaraz broke the Italian’s serve in the first game of the rematch to silence the pro-Musetti crowd on Campo Centrale. Musetti didn’t help himself with unforced errors and began pushing Alcaraz only at the end of the set.

Musetti was docked a point for misbehavior late in the second set after receiving a warning earlier for breaking his racket.

On a windy day at the Foro Italico, Alcaraz said it wasn’t about playing “brilliant,” but rather “smart tennis” was required.

“Waiting for your chances to play aggressive, so I think I did it pretty well,” Alcaraz said. “I stayed strong mentally when things didn’t went to my side.”

Alcaraz is playing the Italian Open for the second time. During his Rome debut last year, he lost to then-135th-ranked Hungarian qualifier Fabian Marozsan in the third round.

The women’s final on Saturday features Coco Gauff against Jasmine Paolini.

Paolini and partner Sara Errani also advanced to the women’s doubles final when they beat Russian pair Mirra Andreeva and Diana Shnaider 6-4, 6-4 in a rematch of last year’s Olympic final also won by the Italians.



Italy’s Jannik Sinner celebrates after winning the semifinal tennis match against Tommy Paul, of the United States, at the Italian Open in Rome. (AP)

Ancelotti to be introduced shortly after

Brazil soccer body to pick new president

SAO PAULO, May 17, (AP): The Brazilian Football Confederation will pick a new president shortly before it introduces Real Madrid’s Carlo Ancelotti as the new national coach.

CBF vice president Fernando Sarney, who was named by a judge as the caretaker president after Ednaldo Rodrigues was removed from office, announced on Friday that the vote will take place on May 25, the same day as the last round of the Spanish league.

When Rodrigues was in charge, Ancelotti was expected to arrive the next day at the CBF headquarters in Rio de Janeiro to announce his squad for two World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Paraguay in June.

The coach has confirmed his move to Brazil at the end of La Liga but has not mentioned when he arrives.

Later on Friday, Rodrigues filed a motion with Brazil’s Supreme Court for the election not to be held due to the risk of sanctions by FIFA for alleged third-power interference. His lawyers claim only a general assembly of the soccer body can pick a new president.

The CBF election will also include eight vice president positions.

“The management of the electoral process will be under the responsibility of an independent electoral commission,” Sarney said in a statement.

Rio-based judge Gabriel de Oliveira Zefiro re-

moved Rodrigues from the presidency on Thursday and ordered new elections “as soon as possible.” The embattled soccer executive is appealing to the country’s Supreme Court to keep his position.

Rodrigues announced the signing of Ancelotti as Brazil coach on Monday. He won re-election in March to remain on the job until March 2030.

Zefiro put Sarney, who asked the court to unseat Rodrigues, in charge of organizing new elections. The judge ruled the agreement that validated Rodrigues’ first term was null and void, and that without it Rodrigues should not have been eligible for his second term.

Rovanperä, Ogier, Evans and Katsuta deliver electrifying performances

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing seals commanding 1-2-3-4 finish at Rally Islas Canarias

MADRID, May 17: TOYOTA GAZOO Racing World Rally Team (TGR-WRT) showcased complete domination at the Rally Islas Canarias, clinching a stellar 1-2-3-4 finish at the first pure asphalt round of the season in style. The emphatic victory was spearheaded by the electrifying performance of Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (No. 69 GR YARIS Rally1), marking a grand return to the top of the podium. They were challenged by Sébastien Ogier and co-driver Vincent Landais (No. 17), Elfyn Evans and co-driver Scott Martin (No. 33), and Takamoto Katsuta and co-driver Aaron Johnston (No. 18) to claim second, third, and fourth place respectively.

Akio Toyoda, TGR-WRT Chairman, commented: “This wonderful result we achieved was made possible by the efforts of every single member of TGR-WRT. It was amazing that we could finish 1-2-3-4 with Kalle, Seb, Elfyn, and Takamoto on the roads of Gran Canaria, which we drove for the first time. Even on unfamiliar roads, our engineers and mechanics managed to prepare the cars with setups that the drivers already felt confident with in shakedown”

Toyoda added: “We are a team where members can say thank you to each other while fighting together and TGR-WRT always aspires to be such a team. Thank you, everyone! Great work! This rally, in particular, was filled with everyone’s hearts. We have a busy schedule ahead leading up to Rally Finland. Let’s continue to push as one team!”

In the first rally with the new hard-compound Hankook asphalt tyre, TGR-WRT exhibited a commanding performance. Rovanperä and Halttunen dominated from the start and sealed the top spot by a margin of 53.5 seconds, setting the best time in the rally-ending Power Stage. With this, Rovanperä has become the most successful driver for Toyota in the WRC with 16 career wins.

The rally also marked Ogier’s strong return to action. Teaming up with Landais, he even bettered Rovanperä in the penultimate stage to secure second place on the podium. By finishing third, Evans and Martin attained their fourth top-three finish of the season. With 43 points, Evans is now a frontrunner for the drivers’ championship title.

With this emphatic win, Toyota reigns at the top of the table with a strong 208 points in contention for the manufacturers’ title.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota’s participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota’s belief that ‘the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,’ TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota’s commitment to making ‘ever-better’ cars. Harnessing years of



Drivers in action during Rally Islas Canarias.

experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

Race Notes:

- No: 69 GR YARIS Rally1 (Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen)
- Position: 1st
- Time: 2 hours, 54 minutes, and 39.8 seconds
- No: 17 GR YARIS Rally1 (Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais)

- Position: 2nd
- Time: 2 hours, 55 minutes, 33.3 seconds
- No: 33 GR YARIS Rally1 (Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin)
- Position: 3rd
- Time: 2 hours, 55 minutes, 56.9 seconds
- No: 18 GR YARIS Rally1 (Takamoto Katsuta and Aaron Johnston)
- Position: 4th
- Time: 2 hours, 56 minutes, 42.7 seconds

Villa, Chelsea raise CL hopes

Blues overcome ‘a stuffy’ Man United

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 17, (AP): Aston Villa and Chelsea won home games and strengthened their hopes for a top five Premier League finish and a place in next year’s Champions League.

Ezri Konsa and Boubacar Kamara scored and gave Villa a 2-0 win over an under-strength Tottenham Hotspur, and Chelsea overcame a stuffy Manchester United 1-0 thanks to a second-half goal from Marc Cucurella.

The result left Chelsea in fourth with 66 points, and Villa in fifth on goal difference.

The other teams fighting for one of the four Champions League spots after league winner Liverpool all have two games left to play.

Arsenal has 68 points, Newcastle 66, Manchester City 65, and Nottingham Forest 62.

On a tense night at Villa Park, the home side had the better of the play but was forced to wait until the 59th minute to get the opener.

Ollie Watkins steered John McGinn’s corner back across goal and an unmarked Ezri Konsa turned in the ball.

Boubacar Kamara doubled the



Chelsea’s Pedro Neto, left, and Manchester United’s Patrick Dorgu battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Manchester United at Stamford Bridge, London. (AP)

lead with a low drive from the edge of the penalty area. It was his first Premier League goal in his 69th game.

“We knew today was a must win,” the Frenchman told broadcaster Sky Sports. “We want to play Champions League football again. ... We had a taste of it this season and us as players it’s a competition you want to play in.”

Villa’s final match is against Man United at Old Trafford on May 25. The win was Villa’s eighth in its last nine league matches and extended its unbeaten home run to 21 games in all competitions, its best since 1977.

Meanwhile, at Stamford Bridge, Chelsea woke up after a dull first half when Spanish defender Cucurella headed home Reece James’

cross after 71 minutes. Spurs and Man United went into the matches with one eye on next week’s Europa League final.

Both coaches rested some regular starters and got through the night without any new injury worries.

Both matches were brought forward by 48 hours to allow the sides more time to prepare for the final on Wednesday in Bilbao.

Kuwait Football Association delegation attends 75th FIFA Congress in Paraguay

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: A delegation from the Kuwait Football Association (KFA) took part in the 75th FIFA Congress, held on May 15 in Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. The KFA was represented by Osama Hussein, Vice President for Technical Affairs, and Ayman Al-Husseini, a member of the Board of Directors.

Osama Hussein actively participated in the official voting process on various resolutions presented during the congress. Meanwhile, Ayman Al-Husseini was selected as one of three observer representatives to oversee the electronic voting process, underscoring FIFA’s commitment to transparency and integrity.



KFA representatives Osama and Al-Husseini.

On the sidelines of the event, the Kuwaiti officials held key meetings with FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Paraguayan President Santiago Peña, as well as several other prominent sports figures. Discussions focused on strategies to advance Kuwaiti football, enhance its regional and international presence, and explore new development opportunities.

The Congress agenda covered several important topics, including: The FIFA Annual Report

A review of 2024 activities and events

The financial statements for the previous year

Elections for members of FIFA’s Disciplinary, Ethics, Appeals, Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committees

The event reaffirmed Kuwait’s active role in global football governance and its ongoing efforts to strengthen its position within the international football community.

Final day drama in Zain First Division: Al-Jahra crowned, who takes second?



Al-Jahra players celebrate.

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Al-Jahra will officially be crowned champions of the Zain First Division League tonight when they face Sulaibikhat at 7:10 PM in the 20th and final round of the season. Simultaneously, Burgan will take on Al-Sahel in a decisive match at Al-Shabab Stadium.

Al-Jahra secured the league title and promotion to the Zain Premier League after defeating Al-Sahel 2-0 last in Round 19, raising its tally to 25 points and making tonight’s match a celebratory outing.

The battle for second place – and a potential promotion opportunity –

remains intense. Al-Shabab, currently with 22 points, is not playing this round but will be watching closely. It needs Al-Jahra to either draw or defeat Sulaibikhat to maintain its second-place position.

Sulaibikhat, with 20 points, enter the match with a win-or-go-home mentality, knowing that only a victory will keep its hopes alive. Meanwhile, Burgan, on 19 points, are technically still in contention. A win combined with a Sulaibikhat loss or draw would see them finish level with Al-Shabab at 22 points – but Al-Shabab holds the edge in head-to-head results, giving it the tiebreaker advantage.

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NEWS



Celtic players celebrate with the Scottish Premiership trophy, after a Scottish Premiership soccer match against St Mirren at Celtic Park, in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Sports

Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club finalize preparations for Crown Prince Cup final

KUWAIT CITY, May 17: Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club will wrap up their final training sessions this evening as both teams gear up for tomorrow’s highly anticipated Crown Prince Cup Final.

With the title on the line, the coaching staff of both sides has intensified tactical preparations, aiming to deliver a performance worthy of the occasion. Al-Arabi, in particular, enters the match seeking redemption after losing the Zain Premier League title last week, falling 2-1 to Kuwait Club in the final round of the season.

The final comes just days after the Kuwait Football Association’s Disciplinary Committee announced a series of penalties following disturbances that erupted during the recent league clash between the two sides.

Al-Arabi players Sofiane Bouchar, Emmanuel Iwala, and Hamza Khaba were each suspended for two league matches and fined KWD 1,000. Additionally, Jassim Taqi, a member of the club’s fan association, received a three-month stadium ban and was fined KWD 1,000 for offensive behavior on the social platform X, under Article 58 of the Disciplinary Regulations.

Another Al-Arabi supporter, Abdulaziz Al-Darbas, was handed a one-year stadium ban and fined KWD 500 after storming the pitch and engaging in an altercation with Kuwait Club players.

The club itself was fined KWD 8,000 for repeated infractions by its fans, which included throwing smoke bombs, sound bombs, and chanting offensive slogans.

On the Kuwait Club, players Sami Al-Sanea, Ayman Abu Al-Fath, Mohammed Daham, and Ahmed Al-Zanki were each suspended for two league matches and fined KWD 1,000 under Article 60. Amr Abdel-Fattah received a KWD 500 fine for physical altercations with Al-Darbas, while photographer Nasser Bin Nasser was suspended for two matches and fined KWD 500 for his involvement in the incident.

A press conference for the Crown Prince Cup Final will be held at 12:00 PM today at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, featuring the head coach and one player from each team. The session is expected to address the teams’ strategies, preparations, and remarks ahead of the cup showdown.



Smoke rose from the crowd during the Zain Premier League match between Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club.

Kuwait wins nine medals at West Asian Gymnastics Championships

AMMAN, May 17: The Kuwaiti youth, junior, and girls artistic gymnastics teams delivered an impressive performance at the West Asian Gymnastics Championships, securing a total of nine medals – six gold, one silver, and two bronze – on the second day of the competition held in Amman, Jordan.

In the individual events, Abdullah Behbehani of the upper national team captured gold in the all-around category, while Saud Al-Rudaini secured gold in the junior division. His teammate, Musa Al-Sahaf, contributed to the tally with a silver medal in the same category.

Kuwait also dominated the team competitions, with both the youth and junior teams capturing gold medals by finishing first in their respective categories.

The girls’ artistic gymnastics team made a strong mark as well, collecting four medals: two gold and two bronze. Sarah Al-Qattan claimed gold in the floor exercise (HP3), while Nawal Al-Zamel secured gold in the vault (HP3). Fatima Al-Nama



Sarah Al-Qattan



Nawal Al-Zamel

earned bronze in the all-around junior women’s competition, and Shahab Al-Mulla took bronze in the floor exercise (HP3).

Fahad Al-Soula, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Gymnastics Federation, praised the

exceptional efforts of the Kuwaiti athletes, highlighting their success amid tough competition from across the region. He expressed optimism that Kuwait’s medal count would increase in the remaining days of the tournament.

KBA: FIBA Congress in Manama key platform for global sports dialogue

MANAMA, May 17, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait Basketball Association, Dhari Barjas, emphasized the significance of the FIBA Midterm Congress held in Manama, describing it as a vital platform for discussion, collaboration, and exchange of international basketball expertise.

In remarks made during the main session of the congress – attended by 180 national federation delegates and over 500 international sports figures – Barjas highlighted Bahrain’s growing reputation as a premier host of global sports events. He noted that Bahrain’s success-



Dhari Barjas

ful hosting of the congress further strengthens the region’s role in promoting international athletic development.

Barjas also commended the efforts of FIBA President Sheikh Saud Al-Thani and the FIBA board for their dedication to a long-term strategic vision aimed at the sustained growth and improvement of basketball worldwide.

The congress opened with a special presentation introducing Bahrain and showcasing its rich heritage and position as a hub for international sports events.

Best of the Rest

Young to leave Everton: Everton defender Ashley Young will leave the club as a free agent in the offseason when his contract expires.

The 39-year-old Young, a former Manchester United and England player, has played 34 times this season despite his

age.

Everton manager David Moyes hailed Young’s professionalism and leadership qualities.

“His versatility, experience and know-how have also been really beneficial to the team and me,” Moyes said.

With United, Young won the Premier League title as well as the FA Cup and English League Cup. He has also played for Inter Milan and had two spells at Aston Villa. (AP)

Knicks end Celtics’ reign, advance to East finals

New York to face Pacers

NEW YORK, May 17, (AP): Jalen Brunson and the New York Knicks viewed reaching the Eastern Conference finals as just another step in a season that’s not over. It’s not time to celebrate.

Try telling that to the thousands of fans dancing and chanting inside and on the streets all around Madison Square Garden.

The Knicks reached the conference finals for the first time in 25 years and ended the one-year NBA title reign of the Boston Celtics with astonishing



New York Knicks’ OG Anunoby (8) celebrates after making a three-point shot during the second half of Game 6 in the Eastern Conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs against the Boston Celtics in New York. (AP)

ease, rolling to a 119-81 victory in Game 6 on Friday night.

On the way to their postgame press conference, Josh Hart showed Mikal Bridges a video of a fan climbing a light pole outside the arena.

“I’m new here, but just know how much New York loves their sports, especially the Knicks,” Bridges said. “So, excited to be a part of it. They enjoy it for us right now, but obviously we’ve got way more to go.”

Brunson and OG Anunoby each scored 23 points for the Knicks, who will face the Indiana Pacers, the same team they met in their last conference finals appearance in 2000. Game 1 is Wednesday night in New York.

“It’s a great win. We advance. You look at that, but you also understand you have to get ready for the next series,” Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. “The Pacers are a terrific team and we’re going to have to be ready.”

The Knicks hadn’t won a playoff series on their home floor since the 1999 East finals. So the celebrating started late in the one-sided first half and was sure to carry on deep into the night around the arena.

Bridges scored 22 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 for the Knicks, whose 38-point margin of victory was their largest in a postseason game.

Jaylen Brown scored 20 points for the Celtics, who lost leading scorer Jayson Tatum to a ruptured Achilles tendon in Game 4 but believed they still had enough to get it back to Boston for Game 7 and keep their title defense alive.

It was quickly clear that wasn’t happening. Boston coach Joe Mazzulla began pulling his starters in the third quarter after the deficit reached 41 points.



Boston Celtics’ Jrue Holiday (4) defends New York Knicks’ Jalen Brunson (11) during the first half of Game 6 in the Eastern Conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs in New York. (AP)

“We didn’t have the same team this year that we had last year,” Celtics guard Derrick White said. “Every year, it’s a different team. We had a goal at the beginning of the year, and we fell short.”

New York blew it open with a 13-3

run that made it 49-27, a surge highlighted by 6-foot-1 guard Deuce McBride’s chase-down block of White’s shot that led to Hart’s second straight basket while being fouled.

Ben Stiller and Lenny Kravitz shared a handshake and hug afterward along

celebrity row, where the A-listers were standing and cheering much of the night, the same as the fans sitting near the top of the arena.

The Knicks led 64-37 at halftime, a 27-point lead that matched their biggest in a playoff game in the shot-clock era.

They led the Lakers 69-42 in Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals, when Willis Reed’s return from injury sparked the Knicks to their first NBA title.

Hart finished with 10 points, 11 rebounds, and 11 assists

Dortmund, Frankfurt clinch Champions League qualification

MUNICH, May 17, (AP): Borussia Dortmund and Eintracht Frankfurt qualified for the Champions League on the last day of the Bundesliga season on Saturday, leaving Freiburg to be content reaching the Europa League.

Dortmund clinched fourth place and the last for Champions League qualification with a 3-0 win at home over

already-relegated Holstein Kiel, which had a player sent off after less than 10 minutes played.

It’s a remarkable turnaround under coach Niko Kovac, who took over a Dortmund team languishing in 11th place in February. Dortmund won its last five Bundesliga games straight.

Frankfurt stayed third with a 3-1 win in Freiburg, which dropped to fifth as a result, two points behind Dortmund. Freiburg had needed a win to qualify for the Champions League in place of Frankfurt.

Mainz drew with Bayer Leverkusen 2-2 to qualify for the Conference League in sixth place, a point ahead of Leipzig,

which missed out on European qualification after a 3-2 loss at home to Stuttgart.

Bayern Munich, which clinched the title with two rounds to spare, finished the season with a 4-0 win at Hoffenheim in Thomas Müller’s last Bundesliga game for the club. It was his 503th.