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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Is the Bedoun issue still unresolved?

FOR decades, Kuwait has been suffering from the issue of illegal residents, or the so-called “Bedoun.”

Many countries have confronted this issue, but they implemented realistic solutions by integrating this segment of the population into economic, craft, social, and cultural activities, while also addressing their declining need for labor.

Countries such as Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, and Norway have enacted attractive laws aimed at revitalizing their youth populations amid aging demographics.

Germany did so notably after reunification. Some Gulf countries also tapped into the potential of skilled workers, intellectuals, and artisans by offering them citizenship or permanent residency, and at times, even financial incentives.

In Kuwait, the issue has been left to be manipulated based on personal interests, leading to a worsening crisis. The number of Bedoun residents has increased rather than decreased, and the figures continue to grow.

The Central Agency for Remedying the Situations of Illegal Residents (CARSIR) has proposed several practical recommendations that would serve social security and save huge public funds. These include granting certain benefits to these residents, particularly the highly qualified ones who could add value to the state.

CARSIR has studied many cases and concluded that some individuals deserve citizenship. However, the decision remains in the hands of the government, as it is a sovereign matter. CARSIR is tasked with submitting proposals and revealing the nationalities of these individuals.

Unfortunately, these proposals have been exploited to target CARSIR and its chairman by former MPs, influential fig-

ures, or those who benefit from maintaining the status quo, for reasons that have yet to be clarified.

The Bedoun residents have long become a burden on the state in various sectors due to the lack of a clear vision for resolving the issue.

The number of Bedoun residents has exceeded 90,000, in addition to those who have not been officially registered but are known to the Ministry of Interior. This is a relatively large number compared to the number of citizens. Therefore, a solution has become an urgent need at all levels.

A realistic solution could involve granting them limited-term passports, similar to those used in other countries in terms of visa eligibility, referred to as a “full-cream passport.” Proposals also include offering a sum of money to those who wish to leave Kuwait, either to the country of origin they held citizenship with upon entering Kuwait, as recorded by CARSIR, or to another country of their choice. There, they could find employment opportunities and potentially obtain permanent residency or citizenship.

Solving this crisis would have been much easier before the number of Bedoun residents reached this level. However, many solutions are still possible to prevent the issue from continuing to be a source of criticism for Kuwait in international forums.

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Amir receives Crown Prince, KNG Chief, Acting PM

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received at Al-Seif Palace Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Similarly, His Highness His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Seif Palace Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Delegates engage in the ninth preparatory meeting of GCC Education Undersecretaries, held in Kuwait on Sunday.

Brains meet bytes in GCC education push

Future of Gulf classrooms take shape in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait hosted the ninth preparatory meeting of the Undersecretaries of Ministries of Education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states on Sunday.

This meeting, held prior to the ministerial meeting scheduled for Monday, brought to-

gether the undersecretaries of the ministries of education and prominent educational leaders in the Gulf.

Acting Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees.

He underscored the significance of the meeting in bolstering educational integration and cooperation among GCC nations, with the aim of fulfilling the ambitions of their leaders and the needs of future generations.

He affirmed the strong fraternal bond between GCC states and their collaborative efforts towards achieving effective and sustainable educational in-

tegration.

He pointed out that this preparatory meeting sets the stage for the meeting of the Ministers of Education on Monday, during which the general and higher education issues will be discussed in the context of evolving global challenges.

On the other hand, Assistant Secretary General for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC Secretariat General Dr. Khaled Al-Sunaidi stressed that education plays a vital role in the development of GCC countries.

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Customs flags five suspect companies

Kuwait pumps brakes on fuel smugglers

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Under the directives of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and in coordination with the General Administration for Customs, an attempt to smuggle petroleum products out of the country was successfully thwarted on Saturday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that five containers belonging to three different companies had raised suspicion. Upon in-

spection, the containers were found to contain barrels filled with a suspicious substance. Samples of the suspected substance were sent to specialized technical laboratories, where analysis confirmed that some samples contained kerosene. In addition to the three previously mentioned companies, two other companies were found to have exported materials containing diesel fuel.

Legal action is currently being taken, and investigations are being completed against the involved companies,

pending referral of the case to the competent authorities.

The Ministry of Interior reaffirmed its ongoing cooperation and coordination with all relevant entities to address any violations of the law, stressing that the state's resources are a red line that will not be compromised.

It emphasized that the law will be applied to everyone without exception and urged all companies and institutions to fully adhere to applicable laws and regulations.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with senior ministry officials to discuss enhancing diplomatic performance and addressing regional developments.

Kuwait FM charts path to stronger diplomacy

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Sunday with his deputies at the ministry's headquarters in the diplomatic district, in the presence of Deputy Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The meeting focused on enhancing the ministry's operations in line with the directives and vision of the

political leadership, with the goal of advancing diplomatic performance and achieving meaningful progress.

In a statement, the ministry said the discussions also covered the latest regional and international developments, particularly in light of the growing and fast-paced challenges in the region. (KUNA)

Doctors, media figures among 157 Kuwaiti citizenship pulls

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm” published in its Sunday issue Decree No. 88/2025 that revoked Kuwaiti citizenship from 154 individuals, along with those who had acquired it through them, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The list includes doctors, scholars, former footballers, and media figures who had obtained Kuwaiti nationality under the clause of “providing distinguished services to Kuwait.”

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8 Faisal Al-Adsani highlights Gulf Bank's vital role in funding sustainable development at the 3rd Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Conference

9 Agility reports Q1 net profit of KD 12 mln

Kuwait sets regional pace with groundbreaking law

‘Public-private partnerships powering Kuwait’s growth’

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam has stressed the need to strengthen all aspects of partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to achieve economic development in the country, especially since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah gives special

importance to the activation of the national economy.

Al-Fassam made the statement at the opening of the Third Kuwait Conference on Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors, titled “Partnership Projects: A Promising Start in the New Reform Era.”

The Union of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consulting Firms, in cooperation with Razan Exhibitions and Conferences Management Company, organized the conference under the patronage of the minister

at the Jumeirah Hotel on Sunday; during which Al-Fassam emphasized the necessity of cooperation between the public and private sectors to achieve Kuwait Vision 2035.

She pointed out that Kuwait was the first country in the region to regulate the framework for cooperation between the public and private sectors through Law No. 116/2014, which regulates partnerships between the two sectors and stipulates attracting investments to Kuwait.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Participants gather on stage for a commemorative photo at the Third Kuwait Conference on Public-Private Partnerships.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti army announced on Sunday that the naval force will conduct live-fire exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 20 and 21, from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Local-time.

In a press statement, the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of the army stated that the design-

nated naval firing range is located 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Julaia, extending toward Qaruh Island, and 6 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour, extending to Umm Al-Maradim Island, as shown on the map.

The Directorate urged citizens and residents to avoid the mentioned areas during the specified period for everyone's safety. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:24	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:54	Maghrib ..	18:35
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:02

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times over western areas northerly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

Weather
By Night: Rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for airborne dust.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	45	29

Abdaly	44	25
Jahra	45	28
Salmiyah	40	29
Jal Aliyah	40	26
Nuwaisib	44	26
Wafra	44	28



A housing complex in Al-Mutla'a nears completion

Competition to streamline prices of housing units

Major Gulf real estate firms rush to Kuwaiti market

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Less than two weeks after the Council of Ministers approved a draft decree-law for amending certain provisions of Law No. 118/2023 regarding the establishment of companies to create, and economically develop cities or residential areas, also known as the "Real Estate Developer Law", sources revealed that major Gulf real estate development companies are rushing into the Kuwaiti market to seize the opportunities presented by the new law.

They explained that some companies have already started studying the Kuwaiti market to assess available opportunities and the economic feasibility of entering the market.

Meanwhile, several companies have already entered Kuwait, and have begun recruiting and building their organizational and legal structures to conduct operations.

Among the companies entering the local market is a Saudi company (unnamed by the sources) listed on the Saudi Stock Exchange.

The sources confirmed that the total construction area developed by the company in Saudi Arabia exceeds 6 million square meters,

in addition to a total of 18,000 housing units, some of which are still under construction.

They believe that the development of real estate and housing legislation in Kuwait, the government's commitment to reducing citizens' waiting time for housing, and the involvement of the private sector in resolving the housing issue have all paved the way for many real estate companies to enter the Kuwaiti market.

The sources emphasized that this will create real and intense competition, which will positively impact the quality and prices of housing units, as well as the services provided to citizens.

PAI withdraws 22 industrial & craft plots violating rules

Judicial police powers granted to 37 CMA employees

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), chaired by Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel, decided to withdraw 22 industrial and craft plots during its meeting on Sunday.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), PAI confirmed the issuance of a decision to withdraw seven industrial plots and 15 craft plots from the beneficiaries who violated the terms and conditions for the distribution of such plots.

The authority pointed out that the decision is based on the recommendation of the Permanent Committee for Industrial Violations. It revealed that the violations committed by the plot owners include closure of the plot,

not operating the factory, failure to operate the factory within the specified period, lack of seriousness in implementing the industrial or craft project as there are no workers and work has been halted on the plot for some time, and some have not utilized the licensed plot.

Meanwhile, Al-Ajeel granted judicial police powers to 37 male and female employees at the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate crimes committed in violation of the provisions of Law No. 7/2020 on establishing CMA and regulating securities activities, its executive regulations and their amendments.

Ministerial Resolution No. 95/2025, published in the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm), stipulates the expanded duties of employees covered by the resolution to

include entering the headquarters of companies operating in the securities sector, headquarters of stock exchanges or any other entity located there; and reviewing the records, books, documents, data, recordings, computer systems or any other data storage or data processing media at the headquarters of the aforementioned entities or at any other entity in their possession or under their control.

Moreover, Al-Ajeel outlined the rules for delegating Ministry of Commerce and Industry employees to positions that fall under the concept of "attached to representative missions abroad."

Ministerial Resolution No. 97/2025 stipulates the termination of the provisions of Ministerial Resolution Nos. 506/2012 and 425/2019 referred hereto; and all secondment decisions issued in implementation of their provisions shall be deemed to have expired 45 days after the date of the issuance of the resolution on Sunday.



Khalifa Al-Ajeel



Al-Seyassah photo

Students sitting for exams in file photo. Intermediate and Secondary School exams are set to begin on Wednesday.

Minister gives nod to expand list of US academic programs

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal recently issued a decision to expand the list of approved academic programs and scholarly journals for Kuwaiti students pursuing higher education in the United States of America (USA), reports Al-Anba daily.

This move is based on the recommendations of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education.

The daily obtained a copy of the decision with the following provisions:

■ **Article One:** Addition of new academic programs and degrees to the list of higher education institutions in the United States authorized for enrollment at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

■ **Article Two:** Enrollment must be full-time, in-person attendance for the entire

duration of the program. Only programs delivered through traditional, on-campus education formats are eligible.

■ **Article Three:** The program to be enrolled in depends on the completion of the specified study period for awarding the degree, as determined by the graduation of the first class from the college offering the program.

■ **Article Four:** The decisions regulating admission and the study system at higher education institutions outside Kuwait must be observed. Academic degrees must be obtained in accordance with the regulating decisions issued by the Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait.

■ **Article Five:** This decision shall take effect immediately from the date of issuance. Any previous provisions that conflict with this decision are hereby annulled.

Priority for those whose files are in enforcement dept

Six committees set up to review debtors applications

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Chairman of the Debtors Committee Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi had earlier announced the formation of six Sharia technical committees tasked to review applications to benefit from the third national campaign for the settlement of debts, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed that priority will be given to citizens with files at the Enforcement General Department in the Ministry of Justice. "Other than that, no debtor's file will be considered this time until all eligible disbursement requirements are reviewed; particularly the enforcement file," sources explained.

Sources confirmed that "the six committees have already started reviewing the files to ensure the applicants meet the eligibility criteria. Ahmadi Governorate recorded the highest number of such files with 2,000 out of the total 9,119 and the remaining files are distributed to the five other governorates."

Sources said each governorate has its own committee and all inquiries related to the campaign are answered immediately through the Sahel application; thereby, enhancing transparency and ensuring prompt communication with the public. They affirmed that the committees have adopted a transparent approach in their work, based on strict regulations, to guarantee that the

funds are disbursed to the rightful beneficiaries.

Sources stressed that the committee fully adheres to an ethical code of conduct applied on its members who are required to sign a legal pledge declaring that there is no conflict of interest or personal relationship with beneficiaries, that information will not be disclosed or exploited, and that any violation will be reported immediately. They added the code stipulates harsh penalties for those who violate the regulations; thus, enshrining the principles of integrity and fairness of entitlement, ensuring equitable distribution, and preventing duplication of spending or misuse or deviation from the primary objective of the campaign.

MoE saves KD10 mln in power rationing one year measures

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Education — in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy — saved more than KD10 million within one year by taking several measures that contributed to the 23 percent reduction in electricity and water consumption, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources informed the daily that the concerned authorities conducted a study on consumption rates in educational facilities from December 2023 to December 2024, which revealed the aforementioned energy consumption savings.

Sources pointed out that despite the opening of new schools in several areas, the Education Ministry achieved such savings through the implementation of certain measures under the supervision of engineers from the Educational Facilities Sector in all schools and entities affiliated with the ministry and in coordination with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. Sources said efforts were intensified and engineering teams were formed during the summer vacation.

Sources revealed that directives were issued to turn off unnecessary air conditioning units, while the old and high-load air conditioning and lighting units were replaced with more efficient and less energy-consuming ones. Sources added the engineering teams are constantly monitoring the periodic maintenance of air conditioning systems, which contributed to waste reduction.

Sources indicated that energy conservation programs have been implemented in all schools under the Education Ministry, while raising public awareness on the importance of conservation among staff and students.

Sources also confirmed the continuous cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy — through the Rationalization Committee — to develop and implement the best solutions to reduce consumption and maintain power supply.

Sources added the consumption of the Education Ministry's facilities for fiscal 2023/2024 amounted to KD46,285,516; compared to KD35,554,039 for fiscal 2024/2025; indicating the savings totaled KD10,731,477.

MoE sets conditions for scholarship programs

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Higher Education has announced the launch of the 2025/2026 academic year.

Online registration will open on June 11, 2025, and will remain available until noon on February 24, 2026, through the ministry's official website.

In addition to the standard annual requirements, the announcement includes strict eligibility conditions. Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 5.5 in all sections of the IELTS test or a minimum score of 47 on the TOEFL test, with both tests to be taken at accredited centers in Kuwait or through cultural offices abroad.

High school diplomas must have been obtained no more than two academic years prior to graduation, with proof required for graduates of foreign schools.

The instructions also provided detailed guidelines for holders of British and American certificates, as well as the International Baccalaureate. In addition, students holding Saudi high school diplomas must submit a certificate of study sequence for the final three academic years.

The ministry stated that students will be assigned only for the semester in which they complete their paperwork, adding that registration will be considered void if the required documents are not submitted through the official website within the designated registration period.

It also confirmed that a student's guardian must be present to sign a special pledge after the student is accepted. In cases where one parent holds educational custody, the applicant must submit the relevant court ruling within 60 days.

Retired Syrian soldier jailed 7 yrs in nationality forgery

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Criminal Court sentenced a retired Syrian soldier to seven years in prison, fined him KD961,000 and dismissed him from his job for unlawfully getting his salary, pension and rent allowance; and attempting to obtain a residential plot by forging Kuwaiti citizenship, claiming he is related to a deceased citizen.

The Public Prosecution had earlier charged the defendant with unlawfully receiving cash amounting to KD22,430 from the Public Insti-

tution for Social Security (PIFSS); when he approached PIFSS employees and requested for pension based on forged documents: his civil identification and Kuwaiti nationality certificate, which falsely indicated that he is a Kuwaiti citizen. He also forced the institution to pay him a periodic pension; thereby, enabling him to unlawfully obtain the aforementioned cash.

Sources disclosed this crime was inextricably linked to another felony -- forgery of an official document related to the PIFSS database, as revealed in the investigations.

Moreover, the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm) on Sunday published Decree No.

88/2025 revoking the Kuwaiti citizenship of 154 individuals and those who acquired the citizenship through them.

This decree covers doctors, preachers, former athletes and media professionals who obtained citizenship based on the 'noble deeds' clause.

Kuwait Al-Youm also published Cabinet Resolution No. 553, which revoked the Kuwaiti citizenship of three individuals and those who acquired the citizenship through them; pursuant to Article 21bis(A) of Nationality Law No. 15/1959 and its amendments, specifically the stipulations on forgery.

Other Voices

Of heritage, art & architecture

By Ahmad alsarraf

A few days ago, I wrote about the achievements of Sheikhha Mai Al-Khalifa in Bahrain. I expressed hope that the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) would reach out to her and invite her to visit Kuwait to give a lecture on her efforts to preserve her country's culture and heritage. She did this through the museums, archaeological sites, and homes that she either acquired or received as donations, and transformed into stunning historical works of art and architecture.

Kuwait has long been proactive in heritage preservation, notably when it halted the demolition of some distinctive citizens' homes, particularly those along the coastal front. These homes were acquired by the state during the period when housing units were purchased following the country's wealth surge, which facilitated the modern reorganization of the capital.

However, few of these homes and historical monuments have received the attention they truly deserve, especially when compared to the homes, museums, and monuments that Sheikhha Mai Al-Khalifa has carefully preserved in Bahrain.

Aside from the Red Palace and Yousef Sherin House, which was transformed into a Sadu House, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Palace (formerly the Diwaniya of Sheikh Khazal bin Murdaw), Al-Ghanim Palace (formerly the Diwaniya of Sheikh Khazal bin Murdaw), and Dickson House, the rest have been turned into diwanis run by their owners, and most of them lack the splendor and spirit they once held.

What caught my attention on this topic was the interview conducted by Al-Qabas daily with Kuwaiti antiquities collector Fahad Al-Abduljalil. The interview revealed his ownership of a vast collection of rare artifacts in his home, including the oldest map to mention the name of Kuwait, drawn by the explorer Niebuhr in 1776, as well as the first copy of the Constitu-

tion of Kuwait. In these times, it is especially important to highlight such artifacts in a new light to showcase to the world our undeniable historical rights.

There are many other private museums owned by collectors of antiques and antiquities, such as the Nawaf Al-Asfour Museum, the Khaled Al-Abdul-Mughni Museum, the Hani Al-Asousi Museum, the Saleh Al-Misbah Museum, and others. The National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters could collaborate with these collectors by purchasing or borrowing their items and displaying them in state-owned historic houses and diwanis, reviving these spaces rather than leaving them in their current neglected state. We could work with the managers of these diwanis to designate specific visiting hours, particularly in the mornings and on weekends, for citizens, expatriates, and visitors to Kuwait, allowing everyone to experience and learn about our rich heritage.

I hope the National Library and other archaeological sites will remain open outside of regular working hours, especially on holidays, so that everyone can visit and enjoy their treasures.

In addition, I hope the NCCAL will continue to engage with officials from the Amiri Diwan to transform the historic Seif Palace, which served as the seat of government for over a century, into an open-air museum.

The Seif Palace, originally established in 1904 during the reign of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, was renovated in 1961 during the tenure of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem. The palace showcases an Islamic architectural style, enriched with distinctive elements of Kuwaiti heritage.

Please note: After writing this article, I received information that the relevant authorities have approved the acquisition of Dasman Palace to be converted into a historic monument.

I believe the historic Al Seif Palace would be an ideal location to house the complete collections of Kuwaiti antiquities collectors. I also propose naming the exhibition halls after these collectors, in recognition of their valuable contributions to preserving Kuwait's heritage.



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diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Nuclear balance guarantees global peace and tranquility

“WHENEVER an international crisis erupts between superpowers, there are often predictions about the possibility of a nuclear war. However, I firmly believe that such a war will not break out, God willing, for reasons I will explain”, columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“While studying political science and economics, one of my fellow students once asked our lecturer, “Is a nuclear war likely between the United States and the Soviet Union?”



Ahmad Al-Dawas

The lecturer responded by explaining that any nuclear strike launched by one power against another possessing nuclear weapons would lead to a devastating cycle. The targeted nation would be able to absorb the initial strike and retaliate with its own nuclear response, based on the principle “If you strike us, we will strike you back.”

“I remember that years ago, when India conducted a nuclear test, Pakistan immediately followed by detonating its own nuclear bomb. This created a state of nuclear equilibrium between the two countries, where both sides refrained from initiating any nuclear conflict. This situation is a prime example of what political science refers to as “nuclear equilibrium theory” or “nuclear deterrence”.

“In 2017, North Korea made threats to attack parts of the United States, including Guam, an island in the Pacific with U.S. military bases, as well as Alaska and even the U.S. West Coast. This provoked a strong reaction from the U.S., with President Donald Trump declaring that he would respond by bombing North Korea if they carried out such an attack.

“Some political analysts have commented on this issue. On an Arab television channel, a presenter asked an analyst whether he thought a nuclear war could break out between the United States and North Korea. As is often the case, the Arab analyst used vague rhetoric, dragging out his response without offering a clear answer. The presenter, clearly frustrated, repeated the question, asking, “On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that a nuclear war will break out between America and North Korea?” The analyst dodged the question again, continuing to evade a direct answer, until the presenter became increasingly annoyed and ended the interview.

“While it is true that only God knows the future, I believe, based on the theory of nuclear deterrence, that a nuclear war will not occur. This is primarily due to the state of nuclear balance, or nuclear deterrence. Just as we saw in the case of India and Pakistan, where neither side possesses nuclear superiority to threaten the other, nuclear balance ultimately enhances peace.”

Also:

“The US-Iranian negotiations have become clearer, as both sides have secretly and discreetly agreed to implement a joint technical, technological, and investment agreement. This agreement is set to bring about major political and economic surprises for both countries”, columnist **Tariq Idris** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“As a result, we expect the negotiations to continue with multiple rounds, ultimately leading to the formation of a joint Iranian-American team to oversee the implementation of this agreement. In doing so, Washington and Tehran will successfully achieve their goals of rapprochement in the fields of investment, nuclear, and technology. Thus, Tehran will return to Washington’s embrace, thanks to the understanding both sides are pursuing after a period of escalation.

“Through these rounds, the two sides have successfully formed a joint team, which is an expected outcome. Tehran has thus won an important round. In contrast, Ukraine failed in its first round of direct negotiations when the Ukrainian president met with President Trump at the White House. Will Tehran now

open the door to US investments in oil and precious metal mining, potentially becoming a strategic alternative for both Americans and Iranians in the future?

“In this way, Tehran takes advantage of its mineral wealth to achieve joint cooperation with what it has long referred to as the “Great Satan.”

“We await the biggest surprises following the conclusion of these negotiations. Who will win the final round - Tehran or Washington? Let us be optimistic about the outcome.”

□ □ □

“A question crossed my mind as I followed US President Donald Trump’s tour of Riyadh, Doha, and Abu Dhabi: Was what was achieved in Riyadh truly a victory? This question arises, especially considering the lifting of US sanctions on Syria and the other outcomes stemming from the conclusion of major investment deals”, columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“First, we must acknowledge that the US President’s tour was 100 percent economics, as he did not bring any military leaders with him.

“Second, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has proven himself to be a master of soft power victories and an Arab man of the moment, particularly with his vision for the future role of a post-sanctions Syria.

“Third, Prince Mohammad bin Salman has proven that victory does not come through violence, destruction, or the possession of weapons, but through investment in the future and economic development, which in turn enhances security and social stability.

“Diplomacy is a powerful tool for those who master the art of bridging differences and preventing tensions.

“Some people claim that Gulf money is part of the Arab fund and has ended up in the United States’ pocket. We have long been accustomed to hearing this. Those who repeat it, however, have done nothing to contribute to the prosperity of the region. Why are the Gulf states the only ones targeted for criticism, while no one talks about the wealth of other Arab countries? Shouldn’t this Arab wealth be used for Arab development?”

“Saudi Arabia wielded enormous power, surpassing even nuclear power, namely money, to support the Syrian Arab people. What has been achieved by standing with Iran as it destroyed Syria and other Arab countries? Was the goal truly development, or was it to defeat its Arab brethren, no matter the cost?”

“Did it help end the injustice faced by the Palestinians, especially those in Gaza? It is true that Gaza is our greatest concern. When US President Trump describes the situation in Gaza as “barbaric,” it means that he is starting to recognize that the Arab vision for a solution is the most viable one and that the two-state solution is the way to end the tragedy that has continued since 1948. What Trump said reflects his belief in the need to stop Israeli aggression, particularly in countries where Tel Aviv is backed by Washington and other major world capitals.



Adel Al-Kharafi

Therefore, the only way out of this impasse is through soft power, which is exactly what Prince Mohammad bin Salman has deployed. “The world has changed, and the United States is changing. We must invest in our soft power. When the president of the most powerful country in the world comes to us with development projects rather than war projects, we must recognize the extent of our influence and learn how to harness it. Therefore, we need to assess the outcomes of the US president’s tour of the region realistically, and understand what we want to achieve from it. I mean this for everyone: Kuwait, the Gulf states, and the Arab countries. It is time to break free from the stagnation and move forward.”

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

15 % of suspects women

Drug peddling, use in steep rise

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Public Prosecution statistics revealed a remarkable increase in drug and psychotropic substance trafficking and abuse cases in 2024 — reaching levels not seen in the past six years, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

A total of 3,374 cases involving the use and trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances were recorded last year, alongside 993 addiction complaints filed by families against their children. This brought the total number of drug-related reports in 2024 to about 4,300; including seizures and addiction-related incidents.

So far in 2025, authorities have already documented 1,500 cases — comprising 1,102 drug-related offenses and 355 addiction complaints. As the year is not yet halfway through, this signals a continuing upward trend.

Official sources told the daily that majority of these cases involved drug abuse, with most seizures comprising psychotropic substances, such as pills and sedatives; in addition to narcotics like hashish. The 2024 figures showed a significant rise from the 2,666 cases recorded in 2023.

Sources emphasized that drug cases are being registered continuously, and that the Public Prosecution is working closely with anti-narcotics authorities to issue search and arrest warrants following rigorous investigations. They also highlighted the adherence to due legal process, stating that all investigations require the presence of legal counsel and the full observance of defendants’ rights under the Criminal Procedures and Trials Law.

The data also showed that approximately 15 percent of the suspects were female, indicating a noticeable rise in drug use among women. One of the oldest individuals involved in a drug case was 70 years old, apprehended upon returning to the country in possession of narcotic substances disguised as psychotropic medication.

Authorities disclosed that around 300 of the 3,374 cases recorded in 2024 involved individuals caught bringing banned substances into the country upon arrival. Some of these cases were dismissed due to lack of evidence or the defendants’ good faith, while others were referred to court for further legal action.



Left: Fire brigade at the site and damage caused by the fire.



KFF photos

Occupants escape apartment fire

Fire broke out in an apartment in Farwaniya early Saturday morning. Occupants fled the blaze, no casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), fire-

fighters from Farwaniya and Sabhan fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further.



Al-Seyassah photo

The traffic campaign in progress.

12 wanted people held in ‘Bneid Al-Gar’ swoop

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Ministry of Interior continued its extensive security campaign in Bneid Al-Gar which resulted in the issuance of 474 traffic violation tickets and the arrest of 12 wanted persons, two absconders and two individuals without a driver’s license.

Traffic, rescue and women’s police participated in the campaign that began Thursday evening and continued until the early hours of Friday morning to apprehend wanted persons, violators and outlaws.

In a related development, the Wafra Command at Ahmadi Security Department impounded 10 vehicles used for reckless driving and issued 22 traffic violation tickets. The vehicles were referred to the competent authorities.

Meanwhile, the Public Security Sector at the Interior Ministry recently launched an intensive security campaign; during which a young man was arrested and detained at Ahmadi Police Station for allegedly running over a security officer, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Six individuals were also referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) for the possession and consumption of narcotics and alcoholic drinks.

All seven individuals face charges of being under the influence of intoxicants in public and possessing illegal substances. Several others were also issued traffic citations for driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The individuals referred to DCGD will be subject to further investigation to determine the source of the narcotics and alcohol in their possession.

This campaign was carried out as per the directive of Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamad Al-Munif and under the direct field supervision of Assistant Director of Ahmadi Security Directorate Brigadier General Hussein Dashti. It covered various areas; including Al-Hajan, Al-Julai’a and Bneider.

According to a security source, the campaign -- conducted with the participation of Kuwait Municipality officials -- resulted in the arrest of 12 expatriates for various violations like residency issues and absconding from employers.

Authorities also impounded nine unlicensed food trucks and dismantled eight unauthorized camping sites.

This campaign underscored the commitment of the ministry to maintain public order and ensure compliance with laws throughout the country.

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New Justice service: The Ministry of Justice has launched the “Arrest and Subpoena Request” online service on the Sahel app, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ministry explained that this request has been added to the list of online execution services. The service allows applicants (creditors) to submit an arrest and subpoena request against a defaulting debtor and track the request electronically. The General Department for Sentences Enforcement will verify the requirements for the arrest and subpoena in accordance with the law before approving the request.

The ministry indicated that this service is part of the services provided by the General Department for Sentences Enforcement through the Sahel app.

Market closed as illegal items smuggling foiled

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The General Administration of Correctional Institutions announced the temporary closure of the central market serving inmates at the Ministry of Interior camp in Sabhan, after authorities uncovered an attempt to smuggle prohibited items hidden inside food items intended for inmates, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Investigations revealed the smuggling attempt was orchestrated by a visiting relative of an inmate, who took advantage of the food delivery procedures. Legal measures have been initiated in response to the incident. Efforts are underway to enhance the service system to ensure stricter oversight.

Meanwhile, the administration revealed that an electronic purchasing service for inmates will soon be launched, which will allow inmates’ families to securely place orders through an integrated monitoring system.

In this regard, the Ministry of Interior affirmed that this initiative is part of its ongoing efforts to improve the correctional environment, and ensure a balance between security and humanitarian considerations.

Man absolved in walkway quarrel

Acquitted in drugs case

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Criminal Court acquitted a young man of intentionally injuring and threatening a citizen while they were on a sports walkway due to a lack of conclusive evidence.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with intentionally causing harm to the victim, as described in the forensic medical report, which resulted in severe physical pain.

He also insulted the victim in a public place by using the phrases described in the investigations, in full view of the public. He uttered threatening phrases described in the investigations to prevent the victim from calling for help during the assault, with the intent of instilling fear in him.

Attorney Abdullah Al-Alanda asserted before the court and argued that the delay in reporting the case, the lack of any charges against his client, and the absence of any evidence other than the victim’s statements and the investigations were insufficient to incriminate his client.

Al-Alanda asserted that, with regard to the crime stipulated in Article 173/1 of the Penal Code, the charge was not supported by material and moral elements like criminal intent, lack of evidence, and lack of evidence in the documents.

It should be noted that the penalty stipulated by law in this case, if the charge is proven, is five years imprisonment.

Article 173 of the Kuwaiti Penal Code states that “anyone who threatens a person with any harm, whatever it may be, shall be punished by death.”

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Acquitted in drugs case: The Court of Cassation affirmed the acquittal of an individual on charges of drug trafficking and

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‘Law treats Kuwaiti women fairly, rights given’

Trend shows rise in gov’t support for empowerment

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Attorney Dalal Al-Mullah has affirmed that the law treats Kuwaiti women fairly and granted them their full legal rights in addition to the ongoing official support for their empowerment, particularly in the legal field.

In an exclusive interview with the newspaper, Al-Mullah explained that this trend has had a positive impact on the status of female lawyers in Kuwait in terms of empowerment, active participation, and recognition of their professional competence. Following is an excerpt of the interview:

Question: How do you view the position of women in Kuwaiti legislation?

Answer: From my perspective, Kuwaiti legislation has treated women fairly in many aspects, granting them clear legal rights in employment, education, litigation and family life.

There is also a noticeable trend within the State toward empowering women and involving them in decision-making positions, as reflected in some legal amendments and practices.

However, there are still some areas where legislative development or modernization can be made to keep pace with the evolving role of women in society, particularly in personal status laws and some administrative procedures that may require



Attorney Dalal Al-Mullah

greater flexibility.

Q: Does Kuwait Lawyer’ Association play a role in supporting female lawyers?

A: Yes, it cannot be denied that the association plays a role in supporting female lawyers in recent years. It has been keen to include female lawyers in specialized committees, giving them the opportunity to represent Kuwait in regional and in-

ternational legal forums and opening the way for them to participate in decision-making within the association.

This approach has strengthened the status of female Kuwaiti lawyers and contributed to changing the stereotypical image that prevailed previously. Their presence has become no less efficient and influential than that of their male counterparts.

Q: Tell us about your professional beginnings and why you chose criminal cases in particular.

A: From the beginning of my legal practice, I have had passion for criminal cases, as I view them as a rich field for legal reasoning, analysis of evidence, and exploration of the hidden facts to uncover the truth.

This passion prompted me to embark on criminal cases. I found them to be a real challenge and a field that required high precision and immersion in legal details.

Over time, criminal cases became not just a field of work for me, but a space for self-realization and proving my competence.

Q: On what basis do you select the cases you take? Do you reject certain cases?

A: When selecting cases, I ensure there is real scope for advocacy and professional legal work. I do not treat cases as mere files. Rather, I always look for cases where I can add real value to the client, whether by providing a solid defense or reaching fair solutions.

At the same time, I ensure that the case does not conflict with my personal and professional convictions, because for me, the legal work is not just a profession; it is also a moral responsibility.

There are limits I never cross. Therefore, I

completely refuse to plead in certain cases, especially if I feel they do not align with my convictions or if I cannot perform my professional role in to the satisfaction of my conscience. I believe that a lawyer must be convinced of the case they are handling, as belief in the case gives the defense its strength and credibility.

Q: In your opinion, what are the reasons behind the recent change in the crime pattern in Kuwait?

A: Without a doubt, the crime pattern in Kuwait -- as in many societies -- has witnessed a significant development. We are now facing new patterns that were previously unfamiliar.

In my opinion, this is due to several intertwined reasons, most notably the lack of religious restraint among some groups, uncontrolled openness to western cultures, and the negative influence of social media, which has facilitated the spread of some deviant behaviors and created a fertile environment for imitation and deviance.

Nonetheless, we must commend the recent step taken by the State to impose harsher penalties, which has clearly contributed to reducing certain crimes and strengthened the concept of general deterrence, something we see in the cases we handle in the office.

Q: It is said that criminal cases require a male lawyer more than a female lawyer. What is your comment on this?

A: This is a traditional belief that no longer aligns with the reality of the profession today. I have dealt with a large number of male clients, yet they have given me their full trust because they have witnessed my professionalism, cred-

ibility and diligence.

Female lawyers in criminal cases may face multiple challenges initially, especially in a society where some perceptions are still limited to traditional roles. However, with time, perseverance and commitment, competence alone becomes the deciding factor, not gender.

I believe that a female lawyer is capable of proving herself strongly in this field when she possesses the necessary tools and is based on solid legal work.

Q: In addition to criminal cases, your group is known for having specialized departments for commercial and international cases. Do you specialize in a specific legal field or do you prefer a diverse legal practice?

A: In fact, I believe that specialization is required, but within a comprehensive institutional framework. We, at Dalal Al Mulla Law Group, began with criminal cases, but we quickly expanded to cover other areas; such as commercial law, arbitration and international contracts, in addition to a department specializing in cases of a foreign nature, including partnerships, investments and cross-border disputes.

A successful law firm in this era cannot remain confined to a narrow scope. Rather, it must offer an integrated system of services, and each department must have a specialized and experienced team.

I personally enjoy specializing in criminal cases, but I believe in comprehensiveness as an institutional approach, as it provides clients with a comprehensive legal solution under one umbrella. This is what we are currently working on within the group.

NCCAL honors 10 Kuwaiti women

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: On the occasion of the declaration of Kuwait as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for 2025 and the Kuwaiti Women’s Day; the Secretariat General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) will host a special ceremony on Sunday (today) at the Kuwait National Library Theater, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the event, 10 outstanding Kuwaiti women will be honored for their exceptional achievements in academic, professional and creative fields as follows:

- Counselor Ibtisam Al-Qaoud - President of the International Organization for Women’s Em-

- powerment and Capacity Building
- Hayat Al-Fahad - renowned actress known as the ‘Lady of the Gulf Screen’
- Dr. Abeer Al-Amiri - Vice President of Kuwait Information Technology Society
- Dr. Noha Al-Mae’ - inventor in the field of nuclear medicine
- Dr. Hala Al-Jassar - physicist and Director of Kuwaiti National Satellite Project
- Ruqayya Al-Kout - veteran theater director
- Amani Al-Hajji - opera singer
- Aya Ibrahim - composer and media personality
- Shamail Al-Mulla - champion archer and runner

E-link proposed between Municipality and MoCI

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Municipal Council member Farah Al-Roumi has submitted a proposal to establish an electronic link between Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The proposal requires the issuance of construction contracting licenses to companies and institutions registered at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry only after obtaining the Municipality’s approval.

‘Geoparks part of sustainable development, income source’

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: President of the Kuwait Society for Geosciences Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri confirmed that the State of Kuwait possesses a number of important geological sites, which could be included as parks in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.



Mubarak Al-Hajri

In an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday, Al-Hajri said that geoparks have become an integral part of sustainable development plans, a source of economic income, and a source of tourism.

He pointed out that adding Kuwaiti sites as geoparks is a strategic goal for the society and could preserve the local heritage, emphasizing the possibility of achieving this in cooperation with relevant government agencies.

Regarding the nature of these parks, Al-Hajri explained that they are geographical areas characterized by a unique and diverse geological heritage and are managed in an integrated manner to preserve heritage and promote sustainable development through education, tourism, community engagement and job creation.

He stated that these parks are open natural laboratories for students and researchers to study Earth sciences, biodiversity and climate history. They also serve as attractive sites for visitors interested in nature, contributing to strengthening the local economy and raising environmental awareness, he added.

He affirmed that geo-parks have achieved successful experiences in a number of countries, helping to develop

strategies to mitigate the effects of disasters and raise awareness on the risks of earthquakes and volcanoes. “They also host unique ecosystems that have contributed to the preservation of biodiversity,” he stressed.

Regarding the association’s vision for developing these parks, he said “this is a national project that requires cooperation between the public and private sectors, public benefit associations, and relevant academic bodies. It includes activities related to traditional crafts, local foods, and cultural activities that promote sustainable development and aim to protect rare sites from deterioration or uncontrolled use.”

He said there are important sites that could be included in the first phase of this project, including Al-Subiya, which is considered one of the most suitable sites for a geopark, as it hosted the Ubaid civilization, in addition to its historical heritage and environmental and natural diversity, which can enhance the economic project.

He stated that this project will go through several stages like evaluating the sites in terms of their geological, environmental and cultural importance and ensuring the interconnectedness between them to form a ‘geological network’ within the park.

He asserted that the interest in this issue affirms Kuwait’s commitment to develop the tourism sector as one of the fundamental pillars of achieving the New Kuwait 2035 vision, which aims to diversify sources of income and promote sustainable development.

He also confirmed the country’s readiness to host the 52nd meeting of the United Nations Tourism Organization’s Regional Commission for the Middle East next year, chaired by Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.



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Court Cases

Jail overturned in drugs case

Kuwaiti gets death ruling in girlfriend rape, murder

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Criminal Court sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to death for detaining, raping and killing his girlfriend in Rumaihiya.

Case files indicate that the accused put the victim’s body in a bag and took it outside his home.

The Public Prosecution, represented by its lawyer Attorney Fares Hussein Al-Dabbous, urged the court to declare the citizen guilty and impose the maximum penalty on him.

During his court pleadings, Al-Dabbous indicated that the accused violated the privacy of the victim. He pointed out “the crime stated in the case files brought tears to the eyes, clouded the sky with mourning, expressed human baseness, brought criminal villainess to us, embodied the burdens of humanity and took us to a real tragedy. The accused is a wolf that preyed on the innocence of the victim with his claws, and robbed her of the right to life that all heavenly religions have enshrined and forbidden tampering with.”

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Jail term overturned: The Court of Cassation overturned a two-year prison sentence issued against a Kuwaiti citizen, and acquitted him of drug use and trafficking charges.

The court rejected the appeal filed by the Public Prosecution, citing doubts over the facts attributed to the defendant. It

found that the arresting officer had concealed part of the documents in an attempt to legitimize the procedures. The court also relied on the fact that the defendant’s urine sample tested negative for any narcotic or intoxicating substances.

The defendant’s lawyer, Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, called for the conviction to be annulled, arguing that the case lacked any credible material evidence aside from the forensic report, which alone was insufficient to prove the charge.

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Organizing judiciary: Decree Law No. 68/2025 has been issued for amending certain provisions of Decree Law No. 23/1990 concerning the organization of the judiciary.

The decree, published in the official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm”, stated the following:

Article One:

The texts of Articles 16, 18 (clause 1), and 61 (clause 1) of Decree Law No. 23/1990 shall be replaced with the following:

Article 16: The Supreme Judicial Council shall be composed under the chairmanship of the President of the Court of Cassation, with the following members: the Vice President of the Court of Cassation, the President of the Court of Appeals, the Attorney General, the Vice President of the Court of Appeals, the President of the Court of First Instance, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice.

Kuwait tackles AI, genetics at IOMS conference

Experts urge Sharia-guided approach to gene tech

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The 17th International Conference of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences (IOMS), with the theme, “Genetic Imprinting and Gene Editing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: An Islamic Perspective,” was conducted under the auspices of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

In his inaugural address, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, who represented His Highness the Crown Prince, pointed out that the theme of the conference affirms the scientific and jurisprudential bodies recognize the rapid transformations occurring globally.

He said artificial intelligence interfaces with human values and Sharia principles; hence, the need for a contemplative methodology that harmonizes ethical considerations with scientific pursuits.

He revealed that Genetic Science has evolved into a cornerstone of contemporary medicine, offering promising potential for the treatment of certain genetic diseases. “It also engenders critical inquiries regarding the legitimacy of intervening in human creation and modifying genetic traits. This necessitates comprehensive institutional dialogues that address these concerns from the Sharia, scientific and ethical perspectives,” he explained.

He elaborated that advancements in artificial intelligence now facilitate the analysis of millions of genetic codes within seconds and the prediction of drug responses with unprecedented accuracy. “However, these technological advancements pose substantial challenges to the world, including genetic manipulation for non-therapeutic purposes, infringement on genetic privacy, and genetic discrimination,” he added.

He advocated for a judicious institutional stance that integrates Science, jurisprudence and prudence.

He lauded the pioneering role of IOMS since its inception in 1984 at the initiative of HH the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad; affirming the provision of an advanced platform over the past decades for monitoring medical developments from a Sharia perspective, addressing intricate issues such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), organ transplantation, gene banking, artificial womb, artificial intelligence and bioprinting.

He added that Kuwait’s hosting of this conference exemplifies the commitment of its sagacious leadership to support scientific research, enshrine humanitarian principles, and foster dialogue between Sharia and contemporary knowledge.

On the other hand, President of IOMS and Chairman of the conference Dr. Mohammed Al-Jarallah expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Photos during the 17th International Conference of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences (IOMS), with the theme, ‘Genetic Imprinting and Gene Editing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: An Islamic Perspective’.

for supporting such a significant scientific and religious conference. He emphasized that this support reflects the enlightened vision of the Kuwaiti leadership in promoting the integration of religion and Science to overcome contemporary medical challenges.

He said the organization also benefits from the generous support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah -- both of whom acknowledged the organization’s pivotal role in addressing issues related to medicine, jurisprudence and humanity during an era of accelerating transformations and escalating ethical and medical challenges.

He expressed appreciation for First



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah for coordinating the efforts of various departments in his ministry; particularly the Criminal Evidence Department, General Department of Investigations and Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, to ensure the success of this conference.

He also commended the unwavering support of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi for the organization and his continuous efforts to leverage the ministry’s resources to guarantee the triumph of this scientific event.

He thanked Secretary General of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, the Egyptian Dar Al-Ifita, Al-Azhar University and the

Sharia and medical universities and colleges in Kuwait.

He welcomed the conference participants, who traveled from various countries in Islamic world, to participate in this intellectual and scientific event.

He chronicled the history of the organization, which was established in 1981 at the behest of HH the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to function as the medical and jurisprudential arm of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

He said the organization has conducted over 50 scientific conferences and symposia, which have become a reference for religious and medical scholars in the Islamic world. “These events addressed critical issues such as cloning, organ transplantation, genetic engineering, milk banks, artificial insemination, stem cells, artificial womb and medical ethics,” he revealed.

He stated that the current conference is not an isolated occurrence but rather a continuation of a prolonged scientific endeavor initiated by the organization in 1987, when it first raised the topic of genetic fingerprinting at one of its conferences; thereby, affirming its intellectual and scientific leadership in this domain.

He clarified that the world currently faces an exceptionally perilous scientific and ethical challenge, exemplified by the intersection of artificial intelligence and genetics. “Contemporary applications are capable of analyzing genetic codes with extreme precision, forecasting diseases, determining the characteristics of newborns in advance, and even designing them according to specifications,” he pointed out.

He added “we are not living in the age of Science fiction, but rather a novel reality that necessitates collective legal reasoning that integrates Science, Islamic Law, and human dignity. The outcomes are astounding and unsettling: a child with three parents, designed physical and mental attributes, determining eye color, height and IQ... and even altering the genetic map!”

He clarified for the formulation of a well-founded legal and scientific stance based on sound knowledge, balanced jurisprudence and astute wisdom’ with the engagement of trusted physicians, established jurists and conscientious legislators, to steer these scientific breakthroughs toward the common good and to shield them from the perils of unregulated, commercial or discriminatory exploitation.

Secretary General of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy Dr. Qutb Mustafa stressed the significance of the adherence to ‘fatwa’, issuance and health institutions in member states to the academy’s resolutions on the human genome, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering to preserve the unity of the Islamic legal and intellectual authority of the nation.

He pointed out that the conference derives its importance not just from its scientific title, but also from its function as a unifying platform for formulating a humane, ethical and Sharia-compliant vision that guides the trajectory of scientific advancement and safeguards it from the pitfalls of disorder.

He advocated for the establishment of an integrated knowledge system that bolsters collaboration among experts and ensures equitable governance of modern technologies.

Continued from Page 1

Is the Bedoun

The numerous benefits announced by the Chairman of CARSIR Saleh Al-Fadhala are positive and will improve the humanitarian situation for this group. However, they remain insufficient and do not provide a radical solution to the problem.

The Bedoun issue continues to trouble the government, despite the possibility of a solution, especially as countries increasingly seek to attract new nationals. Therefore, this opportunity must be seized to close this file once and for all and relieve Kuwait of this chronic problem.

Once resolved, the Bedoun can return to Kuwait after obtaining a passport from another country. Their residency in Kuwait will then be legal, and the state will be freed from this burden, akin to a chronic illness. This dark spot on the human rights record must be removed.

Brains meet

He considers education an important instrument for transforming reality and preparing individuals to navigate future developments and modern technology.

He confirmed that the GCC leaders are focusing on education as per their vision to prioritize building innovative, excellent and competitive generations.

He added that the Supreme Council approved the Gulf Strategy for Combating Drugs (2025-2028) during its 45th session in Kuwait in December 2024, indicating it as a key discussion point at the meeting.

He revealed the agenda includes a number of strategic issues as follows:

- Developing the work of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States,
- Following up the work of the Technical Education and Vocational Training Committee,
- Progress reports on achieving the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals,
- Promoting financial literacy among students,
- Supporting scouts and guides,
- Strengthening international cooperation in the field of education.

He went on to point out that technical education and vocational training are witnessing rapid growth in the GCC countries. He revealed the number of licensed colleges, institutes and

centers exceeded 1,000; while the number of trainees has reached more than 300,000, reflecting the Gulf efforts in this vital sector.

Furthermore, acting Undersecretary of Kuwait’s Ministry of Higher Education Lamia Al-Malhem confirmed that higher education in the Gulf countries is experiencing a critical transformational moment; requiring a review of priorities and the development of a new educational model that links education and scientific research, promotes innovation, and takes into account the development requirements in a changing world.

She asserted “it is no longer possible to rely on traditional paths in higher education in an era where the laws of the future are written in the language of data, while algorithms shape the features of civilizations. Rather, it has become imperative for us to develop a flexible and innovative educational environment and enable students and academics to deal with the challenges of the era, so that we can elevate the educational system to be on par with the regional and international standards.”

She also underscored the importance of cybersecurity in higher education; indicating that it is no longer just a technical issue, as it is now “a national necessity to protect the independence of academic institutions and preserve their research and knowledge resources.” She said protecting academic and research data ensures continued excellence, preserves privacy, protects intellectual property rights, and enhances trust in educational environments.

She stated that artificial intelligence is “an influential force, reshaping the educational process” by providing customized educational models, smart assessments and interactive environments. She asserted that with these rapid transformations, the need for legislative and ethical frameworks to regulate this path and preserve core values has emerged. “The biggest responsibility lies not in what artificial intelligence produces, but in how we decide to direct it to serve humanity and culture,” she explained.

She added that universities are no longer just institutions for graduating students; they must become platforms for innovation and knowledge production through curricula that promote critical thinking, an environment that encourages initiative, and partnerships that link educational outputs with the needs of the labor market and decision-makers.

She stressed the importance of Gulf in-

tegration in higher education as a “strategic option to enhance competitiveness and sustain progress,” explaining that this is embodied in mutual recognition of degrees, joint programs, research cooperation, as well as digital transformation through unified educational platforms and electronic libraries, and cyber networks that ensure a safe and effective educational environment.

She cited dedication, joint planning and institutional work as keys to success in achieving the aspirations of GCC countries; indicating that “what we achieve as a unified Gulf group far exceeds what can be achieved individually. The decisions that will emerge from this meeting will have a direct impact on the features of our university education for decades to come.”

Doctors, media

The official gazette also published Cabinet Resolution No. 553/2025 for revoking the citizenship certificates of three individuals and those who acquired it through them, based on Article 21 bis-A of Kuwaiti Nationality Law No. 15/1959 and its amendments, relating to forgery cases.

On Saturday, the official gazette published in its supplement two decisions issued by the Supreme Committee for Investigating Kuwaiti Nationality concerning the revocation of citizenship for five individuals due to dual nationality.

The first decision, No. 9/78-2/2025 ordered the revocation of citizenship for two women, based on Article 10 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 concerning the Nationality Law.

The second decision, No. 9/79-2/2025, stipulated the revocation of citizenship for three individuals, based on Article 11.

Article 10 of the Nationality Law states: “A Kuwaiti woman who marries a foreigner shall not lose her Kuwaiti nationality unless she acquires her husband’s nationality at her own request.”

Article 11 states: “A Kuwaiti man shall lose his nationality if he voluntarily acquires a foreign nationality. His Kuwaiti wife shall not lose her nationality unless she acquires his new nationality. His minor children shall lose their Kuwaiti nationality if they acquire their father’s new nationality in accordance with the laws of the country granting it.”

Children have the right to declare their choice to retain Kuwaiti nationality to the Minister of Interior within two years of reaching the age of majority.

‘Public-private

She disclosed the two sectors are currently implementing some projects, most notably the Zour North Power and Desalination Plant -- a 40-year partnership, as well as the Umm Al-Hayman Wastewater Plant and numerous other joint projects.

She said these ongoing partnerships create a diversified economy and provide more job opportunities for Kuwaiti youths, considering that Kuwaitis constitute 70 percent of the total workforce in these partnerships.

Meanwhile, acting Director General of Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) Asmaa Al-Mousa is hoping that the conference will contribute to strengthening capabilities and formulating policies to attract major local and international companies to partner with the private sector in order to complete all infrastructure projects.

She explained that the partnership extends to broad horizons, including entering into vital projects such as developing postal services in Kuwait through the private sector.

She said the Sabah Al-Ahmad Elderly Care Resort will provide comprehensive services to the elderly, in addition to visions for the future educational infrastructure through the private sector and the construction of a shopping center and car auctions, in addition to the Nuwaiseeb Free Zone and Naayem Economic Zone.

Vice Chairman and Group CEO of the United Real Estate Company Mazen Hawwa affirmed that the company has been committed to urban development since the 1970s and contributes to the development of vital housing sectors.

He explained that government support for real estate is reflected in its contribution to the development of important sectors related to housing and other fields.

CEO of Al-Ahmadiah Contracting and Trading Company Elie El-Hani revealed that the company has been a key partner in building the country’s renaissance with the help of its people since 1954.

President of the World Organization of Public-Private Partnership Units and Professionals and Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Task Force on Public-Private Partnerships Ziad Alexander Hayek pointed out that the whole world is very interested in partnerships between governments and the private sector; as this cooperation will have positive effects on the economies of countries in particular, especially since many countries have made progress and taken steps forward through their partnerships with the private sector.

Bidding deadline July 24

Dabdaba-Shagaya tender aims to boost energy mix

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) -- in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy -- has invited companies and consortiums to participate in the bidding for the design, financing, construction, operation, maintenance and transfer of the Dabdaba Power Generation Project and the Shagaya Renewable Energy Project - Phase III - Project 2 (Zone).

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), KAPP disclosed that the deadline for submission of bids is on July 24. The project is a renewable energy generation plant with a net capacity of 500 megawatts, located in Shagaya in Jahra Governorate -- 100 kilometers from Kuwait City.

KAPP explained that the project will export its output from the plant to the electricity grid through a 30-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with the ministry.

It stated that a consortium led by Ernst & Young (principal and financial advisor), DLA Piper (legal advisor) and DNV (technical and environmental advisor) has been appointed to support KAPP and the ministry in preparing the project documents.

It explained that the project seeks to achieve several objectives -- attracting private sector expertise, alleviating the financial and operational burden on the electricity sector, reducing local dependence on fuel, lowering the overall costs incurred by the State for power generation, and increasing the capacity of renewable energy in the energy mix of the country.

It added that in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 39/2010 on establishing Kuwaiti joint-stock companies to build and implement power and water desalination plants, its amendments and executive regulations, and Law No. 116/2014 regarding public-private partnerships and its executive regulations; the qualification process begins from the date of publication of this invitation to all local and international companies, including companies listed on Boursa Kuwait.

Required

Office Admin Asst / Trading Department Secretary

- Drafting Official Emails / letters
- Coordinate meetings and appointments
- Maintain physical and digital filing
- Maintain projects list and contact list
- Ability to multi-task and have good organizational skills
- Knowledge in MS Office
- Good command in English
- Transferable Residence
- Preferred Male only

Please send your CVs to cltc@cltcq8.com

Walz criticizes Trump

Biden audio release pressures Democrats who would rather talk about Trump

PHOENIX, May 18, (AP): Joe Biden’s time in public office is now behind him, but his age and mental acuity have become a litmus test for the next leaders in his party.

Audio was published Friday from portions of interviews Biden gave to federal prosecutors in 2023, the latest in a stream of reports putting questions about Biden’s health back in the spotlight. Months after former Vice President Kamala Harris lost to President Donald Trump, a new book alleges that White House aides covered up Biden’s physical and mental decline.

Several potential Democratic contenders for the 2028 nomination have been asked in recent days whether they believe Biden was declining in office or whether he should have sought reelection before a disastrous debate performance led to his withdrawal.

Many Democrats would prefer to focus on Trump’s second term. Trump has done his best to prevent that - mentioning Biden’s name an average of six times per day during his first 100 days in office, ac-

cording to an NBC News analysis - and Republicans have followed his lead, betting that voters frustrated by Trump’s policy moves will still prefer him over memories of an unpopular presidency.

In the race for Virginia governor, one of this year’s highest-profile contests, Republican Winsome Earle-Sears is running a pair of digital ads tying Democrat Abigail Spanberger to Biden, with images of the two hugging and the former president calling her a friend.

“The stench of Joe Biden still lingers on the Democratic Party,” Democratic strategist Sawyer Hackett said. “We have to do the hard work of fixing that, and I think that includes telling the truth, frankly, about when we were wrong.”

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut told Politico this week that “there’s no doubt” that Biden, now 82, experienced cognitive decline as president.

Pete Buttigieg, the former transportation secretary, wasn’t nearly as blunt but still stopped short of defending Biden’s decision to run. He re-



Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and leaders of the Minnesota Legislature announce a budget deal during a news conference at the state Capitol on Thursday, May 15, 2025, in St. Paul, Minn. (AP)

sponded “maybe” when asked Tuesday whether the Democratic Party would have been better off if Biden hadn’t tried to run for a second term.

“Right now, with the advantage of hindsight, I think most people would

agree that that’s the case,” Buttigieg told reporters during a stop in Iowa.

Illinois Gov JB Pritzker said he didn’t see signs of mental or physical decline in his meetings with Biden.

“I saw him a few times,” he told

CNN this week. “I certainly went to the White House whenever there was an opportunity for me to make the case for something for people in my state. And I never had the experience of anything other than a guy who brought to the table a lot of good ideas about how to solve problems.”

The book “Original Sin,” by journalists Jake Tapper of CNN and Alex Thompson of Axios, revives a core controversy of Biden’s presidency: his decision to run for a second term despite voters, including Democrats, telling pollsters that he should not run again. Biden would have been 86 at the end of a second term had he won in November.

A spokesperson for Biden did not respond to a request for comment.

“We continue to await anything that shows where Joe Biden had to make a presidential decision or where national security was threatened or where he was unable to do his job,” the spokesperson has told many media outlets in response to the book.

Late Friday, Axios published portions from audio recordings of Biden’s six hours of interviews with

prosecutors investigating his handling of classified documents after his term as vice president ended in 2017.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Democratic Gov Tim Walz of Minnesota assailed Donald Trump in a law school graduation speech Saturday, accusing the Republican president of creating a national emergency by repeatedly violating the rule of law.

Walz, the vice presidential nominee in 2024, used his remarks at the University of Minnesota’s law school commencement ceremony to call on graduates to stand up to abuses of power. Lawyers, he said, “our first and last line of defense.”

“Right now, more than any other time in my lifetime, we need you to live up to the oath that you’re about to make. Because, I have to be honest with you: You are graduating into a genuine emergency,” Walz told the crowd, which greeted him with loud applause. “Every single day, the president of the United States finds new ways to trample rights and undermine the rule of law.”

Mexican tall ship strikes Brooklyn Bridge, killing two crew members

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): A Mexican navy sailing ship on a global goodwill tour struck the Brooklyn Bridge in New York on Saturday, snapping its three masts, killing two crew members and leaving some sailors dangling from harnesses high in the air waiting for help.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams said the 142-year-old bridge was spared major damage but at least 19 people aboard the ship needed medical treatment.

Two of the four people who suffered serious injuries later died, Adams announced on social media early Sunday.

The cause of the collision was under investigation.

In a scene captured in multiple eyewitness videos, the ship, called the Cuauhtemoc, could be seen traveling swiftly in reverse toward the bridge near the Brooklyn side of the East River. Then, its three masts struck the bridge’s span and snapped, one by one, as the ship kept moving.

Videos showed heavy traffic on the span at the time of the 8:20 p.m. collision. No one on the bridge was reported injured.

The vessel, which was flying a gi-

ant Mexican flag and had 277 people aboard, then drifted into a pier on the riverbank as onlookers scrambled away.

Sailors could be seen aloft in the rigging on the damaged masts but, remarkably, no one fell into the water, officials said.

Sydney Neidell and Lily Katz told The Associated Press they were sitting outside to watch the sunset when they saw the vessel strike the bridge.

“We saw someone dangling, and I couldn’t tell if it was just blurry or my eyes, and we were able to zoom in on our phone and there was someone dangling from the harness from the top for like at least like 15 minutes before they were able to rescue them,” Katz said.

Just before the collision, Nick Corso, 23, took his phone out to capture the backdrop of the ship and the bridge against a sunset. Instead, he heard what sounded like the loud snapping of a “big twig.” Several more snaps followed.

People in his vicinity began running and “pandemonium” erupted aboard the ship, he said. He later saw a handful of people dangling from a mast.

“I didn’t know what to think, I was

like, is this a movie?” he said.

The Mexican navy said in a post on the social platform X that the Cuauhtemoc was an academy training vessel. It said a total of 22 people were injured, 19 of whom needed medical treatment.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum regretted the loss of the two crew members.

“Our solidarity and support go out to their families,” Sheinbaum said on X.

The Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883, has a nearly 1,600-foot (490-meter) main span supported by two masonry towers. More than 100,000 vehicles and an estimated 32,000 pedestrians cross every day, according to the city’s transportation department. Its walkway is a major tourist attraction.

Traffic was halted after the collision but was allowed to resume after an inspection, city officials said.

It was unclear what caused the ship to veer off course. New York Police Department Special Operations Chief Wilson Arambolles said the ship had just left a Manhattan pier and was supposed to have been headed out to sea, not toward the bridge.



Tug boats assist the Cuauhtémoc, a masted Mexican Navy training ship, toward Pier 35 after it collided with the Brooklyn Bridge on May 17, in New York. (AP)

‘We can’t make demands, we’re squatters’

In Spain, homelessness crisis unfolds in Madrid’s airport

MADRID, May 18, (AP): Every morning at 6 am, Teresa sets out in search of work, a shower and a bit of exercise before she returns home. For the past six months, that has been Terminal 4 of Madrid’s international airport.

Teresa, 54, who didn’t want her full name to be used because of safety concerns, is one of the estimated hundreds of homeless people sleeping in the Spanish capital’s airport amid a growing housing crisis in Spain, where rental costs have risen especially fast in cities like Madrid, the country’s capital, and Barcelona.

She and others sleeping at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport - the third-busiest airport in Europe in 2023, according to Eurostat - described a situation where for months, authorities have neither helped them find other living arrangements nor have they kicked them out from the corners of the airport that they have occupied with sleeping bags unfurled on the floor as well as blankets, luggage carts and bags.

Soon, things could change.

Spain’s airport operator AENA this week said that it would start limiting who can enter Madrid’s airport during low-travel hours by asking visitors to show their boarding passes. AENA said that the policy would take effect in the next few days, but didn’t specify exactly when. It said that exceptions would be made for airport workers and anyone accompanying a traveler.

Teresa, a Spanish-Ecuadorian who said she has lived in Spain for a quarter-century, told The Associated Press



People sleep on the floor of Terminal 4 at Adolfo Suarez-Madrid Barajas Airport in Madrid, Spain on May 15. (AP)

on Thursday that she hadn’t heard of the new policy. She and her husband would be forced to sleep outside on park benches and other public spaces if they aren’t allowed back in.

“We can’t make demands. We’re squatters,” Teresa said, using a controversial term common in Spain. “Squatters in what is private property. We are aware of that. We want help from authorities, but not a single one has come here.”

For months, a political blame game between officials at different levels of government has meant that the homeless encampments in the airport have largely gone unaddressed. In recent

weeks, videos on social media and news reports of the airport’s homeless population put a spotlight on the issue.

Madrid’s city council on Thursday said that it had asked Spain’s national government to take charge and come up with a plan to rehabilitate every homeless individual sleeping in the airport. Spanish airports are overseen by AENA, a state-owned publicly listed company. A city council spokesperson said that Madrid’s city government had recently called for a meeting with officials from AENA, the regional government of Madrid and several national ministries that declined.

“Without them, there is no pos-

sible solution,” said Lucía Martín, a spokesperson for Madrid’s city council division of social policies, family and equality. She said that the national ministries of transport, interior, inclusion, social rights and health declined to participate in a working group.

A day earlier, AENA accused Madrid’s city authorities of providing inadequate help and said that the city government’s statements about the unfolding situation confirmed its “dereliction of duty” and abandonment of the airport’s homeless individuals.

“It’s like a dog chasing its tail,” said Marta Cecilia Cárdenas of the long list of authorities she was told could help her. Cárdenas, a 58-year-old homeless woman originally from Colombia, said that she had spent several months sleeping in Madrid’s airport.

It’s not known how many people are sleeping in Madrid’s airport, through which 66 million travelers transited last year. Spain’s El País newspaper reported that a recent count taken by a charity group identified roughly 400 homeless people in the airport, many of whom, like Teresa, had previously lived in Madrid and were employed in some capacity.

AP wasn’t able to confirm that number. Madrid city council officials, meanwhile, said that the Spanish capital’s social service teams had helped 94 individuals in April with ties to the city, 12 of whom were rehabilitated into municipal shelters, addiction treatment centers or independent living.



Pope Leo XIV, on his popemobile, tours St. Peter's Square at the Vatican prior to the inaugural Mass of his pontificate on May 18. (AP)

Pope Leo XIV vows to work for unity

VATICAN CITY, May 18, (AP): Pope Leo XIV, history’s first American pope, vowed Sunday to work for unity so that the Catholic Church becomes a sign of peace in the world, offering a message of communion during an inaugural Mass in St Peter’s Square before an estimated 200,000 pilgrims, presidents, patriarchs and princes.

Leo officially opened his pontificate by taking his first popemobile tour through the piazza, a rite of passage that has become synonymous with the papacy’s global reach and mediatic draw. The 69-year-old Augustinian missionary smiled and waved from the back of the truck, but didn’t appear to stop to kiss babies and the crowd.

During the Mass, Leo appeared to choke up when the two potent symbols of the papacy were placed on him - the lambswool stole over his shoulders and the fisherman’s ring on his finger - as if the weight of responsibility of leading the 1.4-billion strong church had just sunk in.

He turned his hand to look at the ring and seal and then clasped his hands in front of him in prayer.

US Vice President JD Vance, one of the last foreign officials to see Pope Francis before he died, led the US delegation honoring the Chicago-born Leo after paying his respects at the Argentine pope’s tomb upon arriving in Rome late Saturday.

In his homily, Leo said he wanted to be a servant to the faithful through the two dimensions of the papacy, love and unity, so that the church could be a force for peace in the world.

“I would like that our first great desire be for a united church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a haven for a reconciled world,” he said. “In this our time, we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth’s resources and marginalises the poorest.”

His call for unity was significant, given the polarization in the Catholic Church in the United States and beyond.

Francis’ radical 12-year pontificate, which emphasized care for the poor and marginalized and disdain for the capitalist economic system, often alienated conservatives and traditionalists. Leo’s May 8 election, after a remarkably quick 24-hour conclave, appears to have pleased conservative Catholics who seem to appreciate his more disciplined, traditional style and Augustinian background, emphasizing core truths of Catholic doctrine.

Leo drove that message home further by wearing the formal red cape of the papacy, or mozzetta, to receive Vance and official government delegations in the basilica. Francis had eschewed many of the formalities of the papacy as part of his simple style, but Leo’s return to the traditional garb has pleased conservatives and traditionalists who cheered when he came out of the loggia on May 8 wearing the red cape.

Strict diplomatic protocol dictated the seating arrangements at the inaugural Mass, with both the United States and Peru getting front-row seats thanks to Leo’s dual citizenship. Vance, a Catholic convert who tangled with Francis over the Trump administration’s mass migrant deportation plans, was joined by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who arrived in Rome ahead of time to try to advance Russia-Ukraine peace talks.

Peruvian President Dina Boluarte is one of around a dozen heads of state attending, as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Europe

Poles vote for new president: Poles were voting Sunday in a presidential election at a time of heightened security concerns stemming from the ongoing war in neighboring Ukraine and growing worry that the U.S.

commitment to Europe’s security could be weakening under President Donald Trump.

The top two front-runners are Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, a liberal allied with Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and Karol Nawrocki, a conservative historian with no prior political experience who is supported by the national conservative Law and Justice party.

Recent opinion polls show Trzaskowski with around 30% support and Nawrocki in the mid-20s. A second round between the two is widely expected to take place on June 1. (AP)

□ □ □

Portugal holds third general election: Voters in Portugal returned to the polls on Sunday for a third general election in three years, as the country’s increasingly fragmented political landscape defies efforts to unite behind policies on pressing national issues such as im-



Tusk

migration, housing and the cost of living.

Hopes that the ballot might end the worst spell of political instability in decades for the European Union country of 10.6 million people could be dashed, however. Polls suggest the election is poised to deliver yet another minority government, leaving the Portuguese back where they started.

“What the polls indicate is that there will not be major differences from the last election results,” said Marina Costa Lobo, head researcher at Lisbon University’s Institute of Social Sciences. That outcome could bring another scramble to build political alliances in Parliament, she said. (AP)

□ □ □

Romanians vote in presidential runoff: Romanians were voting on Sunday in a tense presidential runoff between a hard-right nationalist and a pro-Western centrist in a high-stakes election rerun that could determine the geopolitical direction of the European Union and NATO member country.

The race pits front-runner George Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, against incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan. It comes months after the cancellation of the previous election plunged Romania into its worst political crisis in decades.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. local time and were to close at 9 p.m. By noon, more than 4.6 million people - or about 25% of eligible voters - had cast ballots, according to official electoral data. (AP)

Zelenskyy meets US, EU leaders in Rome

KYIV, Ukraine, May 18, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with top US officials and European leaders in Rome on Sunday, part of stepped-up diplomatic efforts ahead of a high-stakes phone call Monday between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin on ending the war in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy spoke with US Vice President JD Vance and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the US ambassador’s residence, while German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he had spoken both to Zelenskyy and to Rubio on the sidelines of the new pope’s inauguration.

Merz said that he had also agreed with the leaders of France and Britain “that we will speak again with the American president in preparation for this conversation.”

Asia

Construction magnate surrenders: A construction magnate, builders, designers and engineers surrendered to police Friday on criminal negligence charges for the deadly collapse of a Bangkok high-rise in the March 28 earthquake that hit Myanmar.

Premchai Karnasuta, the president of Italian-Thai Development Co, the main Thai contractor for the building project, as well as designers and engineers were among 17 charged with the felony of professional negligence causing death, Bangkok deputy police chief Noppasin Poonsawat said.

Noppasin said those who met police on Friday formally denied the charges. Several have previously issued public denials in response to allegations in the media.

Ninety-two people were confirmed dead in the rubble of the building that had been under construction and a small number of other people remain unaccounted for. The building, which was to become a new State Audit Office, was the only one in Thailand to collapse in the earthquake that was centered in neighboring Myanmar. The search for victims at the site has been halted, though efforts to identify remains through DNA will continue.

Noppasin said at a news conference that evidence and testimony from experts suggested the building plan did not meet standards and codes. The Bangkok Post newspaper said police had also determined the project showed “structural flaws in the core lift shaft and substandard concrete and steel.” (AP)



Basketball player held for ‘drug smuggling’: An American basketball player for the Indonesian league was arrested for allegedly attempting to smuggle illegal drugs to the country, police said Thursday.

The Southeast Asian country has extremely strict drug laws, and convicted smugglers are sometimes executed by firing squad. Jarred Dwayne Shaw, 34, from Dallas, Texas, was arrested May 7, after police raided his apartment in



Premchai Karnasuta, the president of Italian-Thai Development Co arrives on a wheelchair at Bang Sue Police Station in Bangkok, Thailand on May 16 to surrender to police on criminal negligence charges for the collapse of a Bangkok high-rise during a March 28 earthquake. (AP)

Tangerang regency, just outside the capital, Jakarta, and seized 132 pieces of cannabis candies, said Ronald Sipayung, the Soekarno-Hatta Airport police chief.

The arrest followed a tip from the airport’s customs that reported Shaw had received a suspicious airway package from Thailand, Sipayung said. Cannabis has been decriminalized in Thailand since November 2024. Under Indonesia’s anti-drug laws, Shaw faces up to life sentence or death penalty if found guilty, Sipayung said.

A video circulating on social media purportedly showed Shaw, wearing a black T-shirt and shorts, resisting as he’s being pushed away by police and shouting “Help ... help!” when he was about to be arrested.

Shaw has played for several clubs in the Indonesian Basketball League since 2022, and signed a contract with Tangerang Hawk last year. He told police during interrogation that he wanted to share the cannabis candy with fellow basketball players, according to Sipayung. (AP)



Boats move through flooded streets after heavy rains in Campana, Argentina on May 17. (AP)

Heavy rainfall floods Argentine highways, forces evacuations

More than 2,000 people were ordered to evacuate rural areas north of Argentina’s capital after several days of heavy rainfall flooded highways, farmlands and entire neighborhoods.

A bus with 44 passengers was stranded overnight for more than 10 hours on one of the roadways connecting Buenos Aires to the interior.

Between 8 and 15 inches (300 and 400 mm) of

rain has fallen in the past 72 hours when the average monthly precipitation is about 1.7 inches, officials said. More wet weather followed by heavy wind is expected and authorities are urging residents, especially the 275,000 near the city of Zarate along the Parana River, to remain indoors.

Authorities likened the storm to one in March that killed at least 16 people. (AP)

Mexican security consultant who worked for US State Dept killed

MEXICO CITY, May 18, (Agencies): A Mexican security consultant who recently did contract work for the U.S. State Department has been shot and killed in what appears to have been a cartel ambush at a restaurant in Guadalupe.

The brazen killing took place Friday night after 9:00 p.m. as the man, César Guzman, was dining with two fellow instructors with whom he had just completed a security and intelligence training course for police from Jalisco state, according to Arturo Fontes, a retired FBI agent who worked with Guzman.

Fontes, in a message posted on LinkedIn, said he and Guzman over the past two years taught counter-drug classes to Mexican police officers for the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement in Mexico City and Queretaro state.

Carlos Amador, the former under-secretary of security for Hidalgo state, was also killed, Fontes said. A third instructor, Pablo Cajigal, the former secretary of security for Chihuahua state, is in critical condition. “They were true heroes - some of the bravest individuals I have ever known,” Fontes wrote,



A truck burns on a street in Culiacan, Sinaloa state on Jan 5, 2023. (AP)

saying that he had just celebrated Guzman’s 50th birthday a week ago.

Local news reports said the men were dining at a local taco joint when unidentified gunmen shot at them before fleeing in a red Nissan.

The U.S. consulate in Guadalupe,

in a statement, said the men were not currently working for the diplomatic mission. It declined to provide further details about their past affiliation with the State Department, citing security and privacy limitations.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: At least 12 alleged criminals were killed and nine detained in an operation by Mexican federal forces against a criminal cell in the town of Huitzontla in the western state of Michoacan, the country’s security ministry said on Saturday. The detainees are allegedly linked to various high-impact crimes, including homicide, extortion and illegal deprivation of liberty, said Omar Garcia Harfuch, Mexico’s secretary for security and citizen protection. “After repelling the strong assault, 12 aggressors lost their lives and three Navy colleagues were injured,” he said on the social media platform X. Michoacan is one of the regions most affected by violence linked to organized crime in Mexico, where security forces carry out constant actions to dismantle criminal groups.

Hundreds of Rwandans who fled to Congo after '94 genocide return in UN repatriation

GOMA, Congo, May 18, (AP): Hundreds of Rwandan refugees who were living in eastern Congo since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda were repatriated on Saturday, the U.N. refugee agency said, after Rwandan-backed rebels seized key parts of the region.

Most of the refugees were women and children, and 360 of them crossed the border in buses provided by Rwandan authorities and were escorted by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and aid group Save the Children, local authorities said. The goal is to repatriate 2,000 people, UN-HCR said. “We are happy to welcome our compatriots. They are a valuable workforce for the country’s development,” said Prosper Mulindwa, the Rwandan mayor of Rubavu, during a brief ceremony at the border.

The returnees were transported to a transit center where they will receive emergency assistance and support for reintegration.

They were among the hundreds of thousands of Hutus who fled Rwanda after the state-sponsored 1994 genocide that left up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus dead. Most had returned when Tutsi-led Rwandan troops first invaded Congo in 1996. But Rwandan authorities said thousands of Hutu militiamen and ex-soldiers had stayed and joined Congo’s army to destabilize Rwanda.

For decades, mineral-rich eastern Congo has been ripped



Rwandan refugees who were living in eastern Congo since the 1994 Rwanda genocide are repatriated by bus from Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on May 17. (AP)

apart by violence from government forces and different armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23, whose recent resurgence has escalated the conflict and worsened an already acute humanitarian crisis.

The rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to UN experts.

One dead, 19 missing in Indonesia floods

Lewotobi erupts, triggers aviation warning

JAKARTA, May 18, (Xinhua): Mount Lewotobi in Indonesia’s East Nusa Tenggara province erupted multiple times on Sunday, prompting the country’s Volcanology and Geology Disaster Mitigation Center to issue its highest aviation alert. The strongest eruption occurred at 14:05 local time, sending a massive ash column up to 6,000 meters into the sky. Thick gray volcanic clouds spread northward, northeastward, westward, and north-westward from the crater. Authorities raised the Volcano Observatory Notice for Aviation (VONA) to red level, the highest warning, advising aircraft to avoid flying below 6,000 meters near the volcano due to hazardous ash. Airlines were also cautioned about potential flight disruptions caused by the ash plume. To protect nearby communities, officials established a 6-kilometer danger zone around the crater, prohibiting tourists and visitors from entering. Residents on the slopes were warned of potential lahars (volcanic mudflows) triggered by heavy rains, as rivers originating from the summit could channel debris.

Also:

JAKARTA: One person died, at least 19 others went missing, and four sus-



Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki spews volcanic materials in the air in East Flores, Indonesia on March 21. (AP)

tained serious injuries after flash floods and landslides struck Indonesia’s West Papua province, a top rescuer said on Sunday. Heavy rainfall triggered the natural disaster in Catubow village, Gunung Arfak Regency, according to Yefri Sabaruddin, head of the search and rescue office in West Papua Province. Sabaruddin stated that the disaster occurred on Thursday night, but due to poor communication access, his

office received the information days later. “One resident was killed, and we will evacuate the body. As many as 19 people are confirmed missing. We also received additional reports about other missing persons, but I still need to confirm the precise number,” he told Xinhua. “We will also comb the surrounding areas to determine whether there are more victims of the flash floods,” Sabaruddin said, adding that four survivors suffered injuries.

2 dead in Delhi house collapse

Massive fire in India’s Hyderabad kills 17

NEW DELHI, May 18, (Agencies): At least 17 people were killed and many others injured Sunday after a massive fire broke out in a building in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, officials said.

The fire broke out in the morning inside a residential building in Gulzar House near the iconic Charminar area of the city.

“The fire broke out around 6:00 am and by 6:16 am, the fire department was present at the spot.

They tried to save people trapped inside, but the fire had engulfed the entire building,” local government minister Ponnampal Prabhakar told media.

Officials said most of the victims were killed in their sleep and the efforts to douse the fire are underway. Preliminary investigations carried out by the police suggest that a short circuit might have caused the fire.



A young child, who was injured when a building caught fire near the Charminar area in Hyderabad, is carried by a rescuer on an ambulance, India on May 18. (AP)

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the loss of lives in the fire incident and announced monetary compensation for the victims. Chances of fire in Indian houses are usually high as people ignore safety standards and store combustible material haphazardly.

Several people were found unconscious and rushed to various hospitals, according to local media. They said the building housed a jewelry store at ground level and residential space above.

“The accident happened due to a

short circuit and many people have died,” federal minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader G Kishan Reddy told reporters at the site of the accident.

More details were awaited.

Prime minister Narendra Modi announced financial compensation for the victims’ families and said in a post on X that he was “deeply anguished by the loss of lives.”

Fires are common in India, where building laws and safety norms are often flouted by builders and residents.

Also:

NEW DELHI: At least two people died and a few others were trapped under the debris of an under-construction house which collapsed in Delhi’s Paharganj area on Saturday, according to Delhi Police. While two dead bodies had been recovered, efforts were on to bring out those still trapped under the rubble, said the local police. The Delhi Fire Service rushed four fire brigades to the site of the incident to carry out relief and rescue work. Further details were awaited.



Vehicles back up on the Pan-American Highway, blocked by anti-government protesters opposing social security reforms and a Panama-U.S. memorandum concerning the Panama Canal, in El Piro, Panama on May 14. (AP)

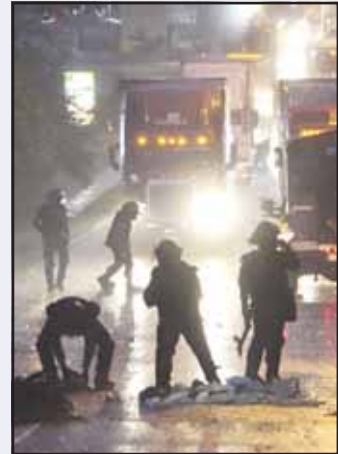
Planned water reserve intended to ease shortages in Panama Canal fuels protest

PANAMA CITY, May 18, (Agencies): Dozens of boats carrying around 200 people, mostly farmers waving Panamanian flags, traveled along the country’s central Indio River on Friday to protest a planned reservoir in the Panama Canal intended to solve water shortages in the waterway that have threatened international trade flow.

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) says building the reservoir is the best way to provide an additional water source for over 2 million people in Panama City and to ensure the canal operates efficiently in the coming decades.

The canal, which needs around 189 million liters (50 million gallons) of freshwater for each ship crossing, faced severe water shortages in 2023 due to lack of rain, forcing authorities to cut crossings by 20% and delay traffic. The proposed reservoir, which would take four years and \$1.6 billion to build, could allow 12 to 13 more ship crossings per day and support new water treatment facilities being built, authorities say.

But protesters say building the reservoir using the Indio River, in the canal’s watershed, would also force 2,000 people to be relocated from their homes because their communities would be flooded.



Police clear a highway blocked by anti-government demonstrators protesting the recently signed Panama-U.S. memorandum concerning the Panama Canal and a law that overhauls the social security agency, in Santiago, Panama on May 13. (AP)

Other areas downstream could also be affected by reduced river flow.

Iris Gallardo, a teacher from the Guasimo community and a member of the “No to Reservoirs” movement, was among the group of mostly farmers waving Panamanian flags. She told the Associated Press

they held the boat protest to show their rejection of the project and forced relocations.

“We are demanding that the multipurpose reservoir proposed by the ACP not be built without consulting and getting permission from the affected communities,” Gallardo said.

Instead, protesters suggest using the nearby Bayano Lake, located east of the capital. Authorities dismissed that idea due to logistical, legal challenges and cost, and said that such a project would displace 200,000 people - far more than the current plan. They said the project would also offer jobs to communities and that the resettlement plan is being developed with the community.

Former Panama Canal administrator Jorge Luis Quijano said opponents of the project don’t understand how serious the water problem is.

“The only way to have water is to store it,” he said.

Protests in Panama have entered their third week, challenging several recent actions by President José Raúl Mulino.

Demonstrators are opposing a recently enacted law that overhauled the country’s pension system, a security memorandum of understanding signed with the United States that critics say undermines Panama’s sovereignty over the canal.

Boursa Kuwait general index slips 0.14%

KUWAIT CITY, May 18, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday with a slight dip in its general index, down 11.48 points or 0.14%, settling at 8,077.22. A total of 397.9 million shares were exchanged in 20,195 transactions valued at KD 67 million (approx. USD 205.6

million). The Main Market Index gained 26.66 points (0.38%) to close at 7,040.95, with 285 million shares traded through 13,076 transactions worth KD 34.15 million (USD 104.8 million).

Business

Faisal Al-Adsani highlights Gulf Bank’s vital role in funding sustainable development at the 3rd Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Gulf Bank’s General Manager of Corporate Banking, Mr. Faisal Al-Adsani, reaffirmed the Bank’s unwavering commitment to supporting Kuwait’s Vision 2035 by financing developmental and sustainable projects that drive economic competitiveness, improve quality of life, and create job opportunities.

Mr. Al-Adsani delivered these remarks during the third Kuwait Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Conference, held under the theme “Partnership Projects: A Promising Start to a New Era,” and under the patronage of Her Excellency Eng. Noura Al-Fassam, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, and Chair of the Higher Committee for PPP Projects.

What we have accomplished so far marks only the beginning – the best is yet to come,” said Al-Adsani. “As long as we continue working together in the spirit of collaboration and maintain our optimism for the future, we can achieve even greater milestones.” He emphasized that Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects have become a fundamental pillar in driving Kuwait’s comprehensive and sustainable development.

Since its establishment in 1961, Gulf Bank has been a key partner in Kuwait’s development journey, leveraging its capabilities to finance projects that deliver tangible benefits to the community. The Bank’s contributions have consistently supported the country’s strategic vision,



Minister Noura Al-Fassam visits the bank’s pavilion and meets with Gulf Bank officials and employees.

responding proactively to the changing needs of the country and its people.

Mr. Al-Adsani highlighted several key projects Gulf Bank has contributed to financing:

- Al-Shaheed Park Phase III: More than a public park, it is a national space integrating nature, history, and culture while offering a sophisticated educational and recreational environment.
- Cultural Infrastructure: Gulf Bank provided financing for the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre and the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre – two iconic landmarks that

reflect Kuwait’s dedication to creativity, knowledge, and the preservation of national identity. The Bank also supported the development of facilities at Kuwait University Shadadiya campus, contributing to the enhancement of the higher education environment.

- Healthcare Sector: Gulf Bank financed the construction of the new Farwaniya Hospital and the Ahmadi Hospital for the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), supporting the national initiative to modernize healthcare infrastructure and enhance the quality of medical services across the country.
- Industrial Development: Gulf

Bank financed the new headquarters of EQUATE, setting a benchmark in seamlessly integrating real estate development with modern institutional requirements.

- Transportation and Road Development: Gulf Bank supported major infrastructure projects such as the Al-Wafra and Al-Mutlaa roads, enhancing geographic connectivity and logistics.
- Government Services: The Bank provided financing for the Ministries Complex, a centralized hub designed to enhance operational efficiency and simplify access to government services for citizens.



Faisal Al-Adsani receives honorary award from Minister Noura Al-Fassam.

- Major Infrastructure: Gulf Bank contributed to the iconic Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al Sabah Causeway, one of Kuwait’s modern engineering marvels that connects the country’s coasts and symbolizes national ambition and progress.
- Housing Projects: The Bank supported the Wafra Living residential project in Jabriya as a model for modern living. Additionally, financed 587 residential units and related infrastructure in East Sabah Al-Ahmad City, the Sabah Al-Ahmad City – S3 project featuring a hotel and commercial complex with a distinct Kuwaiti identity,

- and the J3 residential and commercial project in Jaber Al-Ahmad City.
 - Sports Infrastructure: Gulf Bank financed the new Fahaaheel Football Stadium, a significant addition to Kuwait’s expanding sports facilities.
- Al-Adsani concluded, “These projects are not just numbers or structures – they are investments in the people of Kuwait, in their future, and in their quality of life. They reflect the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors, driving us toward new opportunities for sustainable and meaningful partnerships.”

Platinum Sponsor of the 3rd Kuwait PPP Conference

KFH reiterates commitment to financing strategic development projects in Kuwait



Al-Othman and Dr. Yahchouchi with Al-Musaibeeh and Zain’s team at the company’s booth.

Company recently partakes in AUM’s Career Expo

Zain recognized for empowering national talent in private sector

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Zain received a recognition from the American University of the Middle East (AUM) in appreciation of its ongoing efforts to empower the local job market with skilled national talent capable of leading Kuwait’s digital future. The recognition was presented during the university’s annual Excellence Awards ceremony honoring leading companies, held at the Cultural Center on its Egaila campus.

During the event, Tareq Al-Othman, Chairman of HumanSoft Holding, presented the award to Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, Corporate Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait, in recognition of the company’s continuous support of the AUM Career Expo. Zain recently sponsored the expo’s 11th edition, which was also attended by AUM President, Prof. Dr. Georges Yahchouchi.

The award highlights the strength of the long-standing partnership between Zain and AUM, and Zain’s strategic role in consistently attracting and developing national talent for the private sector. This contribution helps strengthen the presence of local competencies in the job market, especially in skillsets related to STEM.

Zain expressed its gratitude to AUM for this recognition, viewing it as a meaningful acknowledgment from one of the country’s leading academic institutions of the company’s role in supporting the development of both education and human capital, two key pillars for advancing Kuwait’s economy.

Zain recently participated in the 11th AUM Career Expo, organized by the university’s Career Development and Placement Center (Tawteen),



Al-Othman honors Al-Musaibeeh in recognition of Zain’s excellence in attracting national talents to the private sector.

under the theme “We Believe in Talents, We Create Opportunities”. The event stands as one of the largest and most prominent career fairs in Kuwait, with participation from over 55 local and international organizations offering more than 300 job opportunities for graduates and job seekers.

At its dedicated booth, Zain showcased its recruitment policy and available career opportunities, while also introducing university students to its Future University Network (FUN) internship program, aimed at providing hands-on experience from the actual workplace environment.

Through such initiatives, Zain aims to energize the local labor market, foster the exchange of knowledge and expertise, and enable young people to find career paths that match their ambitions and capabilities, ultimately contributing to the national economy and boosting national talent participation in Kuwait’s private sector.

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated as a Platinum Sponsor of the 3rd Kuwait Public Private Partnership conference (PPPW3), affirming its standing as a key partner in financing strategic development projects. This sponsorship reflects KFH’s commitment to supporting initiatives that advance major projects contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Kuwait.

The two-day event, taking place on May 18 and 19, is titled: “Partnership Projects: Promising Leap in the New Era”. The conference is held under the patronage of Kuwait Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Affairs and Investment, and Chair of the Higher Committee for Public-Private Partnership Projects, Noura Al-Fassam.

Addressing the audience, KFH Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Alterkait, said in his speech: “Our participation emanates from KFH’s national and economic commitment in supporting the State’s development plans, capitalizing on its capabilities to enhance the economic environment, promote green financing, and uphold Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.”

Alterkait pointed out that KFH enjoys robust solvency and is well-positioned to finance mega projects across key sectors such as energy, water, electricity, and infrastructure. “This is supported by the KFH’s extensive experience, solid financial position, high-quality credit portfolio, and its position as the largest bank in Kuwait and the largest listed company on Boursa Kuwait by market capitalization, amounting to approximately KD 13.7 billion,” he added.

Alterkait underscored the significance of the Public-Private Partnership Projects in strengthening the national economy, generating employment opportunities, improving quality of life and maintaining service quality. He emphasized the private sector’s expertise in financing, building, and operating projects in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, expressing confidence in the government’s ability to build a better future for Kuwait.

The conference aims to accelerate the implementation of development projects and Kuwait’s vision by engaging the private sector in execution plans. This aligns with the global trend, where both developed and developing countries adopt the PPP model as a means of concerted efforts for national progress. The model ensures optimal utilization of



Minister Noura Al-Fassam at the bank’s pavilion.



Haytham Alterkait receiving the honor from Minister Noura Al-Fassam.

both sectors’ capabilities.

The conference also seeks to promote capacities across various technical domains and clarify the responsibilities of each sector. Adhering to international standards, the PPP approach enables the attraction of top global, regional, and local expertise, enhancing the execution of projects with best-in-class tools and frameworks for professional, technological, and legal development, in line with international specifications and sound governance.

Meanwhile, the conference successfully brought together prominent leaders and experts in the PPP space, along with key institutions from

both the public and private sectors. Participants benefited from the conference program, including lectures, panel discussions, side meetings, and an exhibition featuring sponsoring companies and specialized institutions showcasing their services and partnership solutions.

It serves to note that KFH offers top-tier financing solutions for projects in vital sectors in Kuwait and the region. Leveraging its rooted experience in the financing markets and strong relationships with leading regional and international banks, KFH is well positioned to serve as the ideal Lead Arranger in syndicated financing initiatives.

UPAC reports Q1 financial results

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC), a commercial real estate and facilities management company, today announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2025. The company reported a net profit of KD 480 thousand, down 26% from 2024, or 1.19 fils per share. The company’s recorded revenue for the quarter was KD 2 million, down 11% from 2024.

Eng. Hamad Malallah, Chief Executive Officer at UPAC, said: “UPAC’s results are in-line with our expectations. The reduction in revenue is mainly attributable to airport-related services. We remain committed to identifying and pursuing strategic business opportunities within our industry that drive growth and create value for the company and its shareholders.”

Malallah continued: “Planning for the Al Messilah Beach Project (Plage-2) site has been progressing, where our teams are working on preparing the project for its opening and operation, meeting the relevant partners, and potential vendors who we will be working with on this exciting new project.”

Al Messilah Beach, one of Kuwait’s prime family entertainment destinations, was developed by Touristic Enterprises Company as part of its role in spearheading growth of Kuwait’s tourism sector. UPAC is managing all aspects of the site including leasing,



Hamad Malallah

ing, entertainment activities, facility management, and overall project operations.

UPAC is also a co-investor in Abu Dhabi’s \$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Reem Island. The mall is the region’s first fully integrated omnichannel retail ecosystem with digital, e-commerce, and logistics capabilities. It brings together all consumer and retail services to ensure a seamless customer experience. To date, 198 units are trading, and almost 80% of Gross Leasable Area (GLA) is committed.

In Kuwait, UPAC manages operations of Kuwait International Airport’s real estate and parking facilities at the Sheikh Sa’ad Airport Terminal (T3), and the development of Al Messilah Beach.

Dollar flat as inflation cools, tariff truce fades early gains

By National Bank of Kuwait

This week, financial markets experienced notable shifts influenced by easing inflation data, a temporary U.S.-China tariff truce, and evolving expectations for Federal Reserve policy. The U.S. Dollar Index experienced modest fluctuations, trading around 100.98 by week’s end.

Early optimism from a U.S.-China trade truce buoyed the dollar, but softer inflation data and slowing retail sales tempered gains, keeping the DXY relatively flat for the week. Gold prices declined notably, with spot gold falling approximately 3.3%, marking the steepest weekly drop since November 2024. The decrease was driven by reduced safe-haven demand amid easing trade tensions. Meanwhile, U.S. equity markets posted strong gains, with the S&P 500 nearing its February record high. The rally was fueled by easing inflation concerns, and optimism over trade negotiations. Finally, Moody’s downgraded U.S. credit rating from AAA to Aa1, citing elevated government debt, high interest payments, and political dysfunction.

United States
U.S. and China Lower Tariffs
Global stock markets jumped on Monday after the U.S. and China agreed to pause their trade war for 90 days by cutting tariffs. On the week, the S&P 500 surged 5.3%, erasing all its losses for 2025, whilst the Nasdaq Composite rose 7.2%. DXY strengthened 1.5% – its largest single-day gain since November 2024.

The U.S. will lower taxes on Chinese goods from 145% to 30%, and China will reduce its taxes on U.S.

imports from 125% to 10%. China also agreed to ease limits on rare earth minerals, which are key for tech products. However, key problems remain unsolved, like the trade gap between the two countries and U.S. requests for China’s help in stopping the fentanyl problem. While President Trump said the deal shows his strong trade policies are working, critics claim the U.S. backed down by lowering its tariffs. Businesses were happy about the pause but asked for clearer long-term plans, with experts warning that 90 days isn’t enough to fix bigger issues like China’s subsidies.

Existing tariffs on electric cars, solar panels, and older taxes stay in place, which could keep prices high for consumers. Experts believe that fixing the U.S.-China trade dispute will take years, not months, showing this break might not last.

CPI Inflation Cools
U.S. inflation cooled more than expected in April, dropping to 2.3%, its lowest rate since February 2021, despite concerns that President Trump’s aggressive tariffs would drive prices up. Monthly inflation rose just 0.2%, below forecasts of 0.3%. While some goods categories did show early signs of tariff-related price increases – such as furniture and electronics – these were offset by weaker services inflation, likely due to declining consumer demand. The core CPI, excluding food and energy, also rose 0.2%, holding steady at 2.8% year-over-year. Although tariff effects were still limited in this data, early signs of price pressure in goods are emerging. Despite inflation nearing the Federal Reserve’s 2% target, the Fed remains cautious, especially given Trump’s broader trade and fiscal policies. Markets now anticipate two

rate cuts by the end of the year.

PPI Inflation Declines
Producer prices in the U.S. unexpectedly dropped by 0.5% in April – the largest decline in five years – mainly due to shrinking profit margins, as companies absorbed rising costs instead of passing them on to consumers. Core PPI, excluding food and energy, fell 0.4%, the sharpest drop since 2015, while a broader core measure also declined for the first time in five years. Year-over-year, producer prices were up 2.9%. The data suggests that businesses, facing steep tariffs and uncertain policy shifts, are choosing to absorb higher import costs to avoid weakening consumer demand for now.

Retail Sales
U.S. retail sales growth slowed significantly in April, rising just 0.1% following a strong 1.7% gain in March, as the earlier boost from pre-tariff vehicle purchases faded and consumers cut back amid economic uncertainty. Core retail sales – which exclude autos, gas, building materials, and food services and closely align with GDP consumer spending – fell 0.2% after a 0.5% increase in March. Year-over-year, overall retail sales were up 5.2%. While some categories like food services (+1.2%), building materials (+0.8%), and electronics (+0.3%) saw gains, others, such as sporting goods (-2.5%) and miscellaneous retailers (-2.1%), experienced sharp declines.

Jerome Powell Speaks
Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said the Fed is reassessing its approach to monetary policy due to the evolving economic landscape, marked by recent inflation and the growing likelihood of more frequent supply shocks.

Revenue rises to \$195 mln, up 1% y-o-y and 17% q-o-q

EKH achieves 44% y-o-y growth in normalised earnings for Q1, while advancing strategic transformation and geographic expansion plans

CAIRO, May 18: Egypt Kuwait Holding Company (EKHO.CA and EKHÖA.CA on the Egyptian Exchange and EKH.KW on Boursa Kuwait), one of the MENA region’s leading investment companies, reported today its consolidated results for the quarter ended 31 March 2025.

EKH recorded revenues of USD 195million for 1Q 2025, marking a 1% y-o-y increase and a solid 17% sequential growth, driven by strong growth momentum across the portfolio, particularly in the fertilizer and petrochemical sectors, underpinned by operational efficiency and favourable market dynamics. The Group maintained healthy profitability, with gross profit and EBITDA margins recording 39% and 38% respectively, supported by efficient cost management and sustained operational strength of core business segments. Meanwhile, net profit recorded USD 39.5 million compared to USD 72.0 million in 1Q 2024, the latter of which was boosted by FX gains amounting to USD 40.2 million. Excluding the impact of FX gains, net profit for the first quarter of 2025 grew by a normalised 24% y-o-y. Net profit margin came in at 20% during 1Q 2025. Net profit attributable to equity holders amounted to USD 34.1mn in 1Q25, compared to USD 62.6mn in 1Q24 which included 39.0mn in FX gains. Excluding 1Q24 FX gains, attributable net profit grew by a normalised 44% y-o-y in 1Q25.

Commenting on the Group’s performance and business outlook, EKH Chairman Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi: “I am pleased to report that we started off 2025 with continuous momentum, delivering resilient performance amid a fluid macroeconomic backdrop.

This quarter, we successfully advanced our transformation agenda while maintaining healthy contributions across key sectors, including fertilizers, petrochemicals, and utilities. Our revenue base continues to benefit from meaningful USD-linked income, providing natural resilience to currency risk. Diversifying and growing our FX profile remains a core strategic priority, supported by our expanding international footprint and focus on export-oriented sectors.

Strategically, we have made notable progress. We are set to kickstart commercial operations in Saudi Arabia by the end of 2Q25, this marks our first fully owned investment in the Kingdom as well as a key milestone in our regional expansion plans. Our MDF project, Nilewood, is in the final commissioning phase and remains on track to commence operations shortly. Meanwhile, we are nearing closure of our first investment in Northern Europe — a greenfield project representing a strategic entry into a high-growth and hard currency-generating sector.

During the OGM in April, our shareholders approved the Board’s recommendation for the distribution of both cash and stock dividends for FY24, in line with our commitment to delivering value while maintaining flexibility for recycling capital.

As we continue to develop EKH into a more globally oriented investment platform, we remain focused on disciplined execution, responsible investment, as well as sustainable growth and return generation”

Commenting on the Group’s 1Q2025 results, EKH CEO, Jon Rokk: “I am proud to share that EKH’s first quarter results reflect disciplined execution and solid underlying growth throughout key businesses, supported by operational resilience across our portfolio and continued progress on strategic priorities.

Revenue rose 1% y-o-y and 17% q-o-q, supported by



EKH Chairman, Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi

strong operational performance. AlexFert delivered double-digit top-line growth across both comparable periods, driven by improved urea export pricing and a more stable gas supply during the quarter. Sprea posted robust EGP-denominated revenue growth, supported by higher sales volumes on the back of the company’s strategy to grow its market share. NatEnergy’s EGP-based revenue recorded solid growth, driven by rising household connections and improved profitability. Kahraba, now reported as a standalone business within our portfolio, continued to post strong growth in electricity distribution volumes. At ONS, we witnessed a temporary reduction in output due to planned maintenance work that was finalized in February, with operations now reverting to normal run rates.

The divestment of Shield Gas in the UAE marked another milestone in our portfolio optimisation strategy. Meanwhile, the Delta Insurance sale process remains on track, with bidders currently in the due diligence phase. As we continue to recycle capital with the aim of value creation, we remain focused on unlocking higher returns and aligning our portfolio with our long-term strategic priorities.

Our upcoming corporate rebrand will go beyond a mere change in visual identity; rather, it will reflect our shift towards a more agile, global investment company, better positioned to scale proven platforms across borders. We continue to optimise our organisation to render it fit for purpose as well as invest in our people, equipping them with the necessary tools and frameworks to consistently deliver exceptional results.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on executing with discipline, investing for growth, and accelerating our transformation.”

Fertilizers | AlexFert

AlexFert booked USD 67 million in revenues during 1Q 2025, reflecting a solid 10% y-o-y and 13% q-o-q increase. Revenue growth was supported by upward trending urea export prices as well as higher total volumes brought on by improved gas availability during the quarter. Both gross profit and EBITDA margins expanded by 4pp y-o-y in 1Q 2025, partially driven by favourable FX translation effects on EGP-denominated costs. Net profit came in at USD 24.6 million, translating into a 3pp y-o-y expansion in net profit margin to reach 37% in 1Q 2025.

The outlook on AlexFert remains optimistic, supported by sustained recovery in urea export prices, which increased a total of 35% since 2Q 2024 to reach an average



EKH Managing Director, Jon Rokk

of USD 410/ton in 1Q 2025. Additionally, local fertilizer quotas are expected to be revised upward by the government, offering upside potential to local quota pricing.

Petrochemicals | Sprea Misr

Sprea Misr reported revenues of EGP 2.42 billion in 1Q 2025, marking robust increases of 42% y-o-y and 58% q-o-q, driven by higher sales volumes as a result of management’s strategy to grow market share. In USD terms, revenues posted a modest 1% y-o-y growth, due to the impact of the 2024 EGP devaluation, and rose by a strong 55% q-o-q, reflecting sustained improvement in performance. Gross profit improved significantly on a sequential basis, increasing by 16% q-o-q in EGP terms and 14% q-o-q in USD terms, supported by higher sales volume. Meanwhile, net profit totalled EGP 494 million in 1Q 2025, implying a net profit margin of 20%.

Sprea remains on track to achieve its FY25 net profit guidance, supported by continued recovery in local pricing, which is gradually adjusting in response to the EGP devaluation, rising demand for SNF driven by the resumption of construction activity in Egypt, and further top-line growth from highersales of liquid glue anticipated with the start of operations at Nilewood.

Utilities | NatEnergy

NatEnergy reported revenues of EGP 882 million in 1Q 2025, marking a 40% y-o-y increase, primarily driven by increased connections to residential customers. In USD terms, revenues stood at USD 17.5 million, reflecting the impact of the EGP devaluation. On a sequential basis, gross profit and EBITDA margins expanded by 3pp q-o-q and 2pp q-o-q, respectively, to land at 26% and 25%, respectively, reflecting improved profitability driven by a more favourable revenue mix, as management continues to prioritise margin-accretive residential and industrial customers. Net profit came in at EGP 249 million in 1Q 2025, compared to EGP 583 million recorded in 1Q 2024, with a net profit margin of 28% for 1Q 2025. Excluding the impact of FX gains booked in 1Q 2024, earnings would have grown by a normalised 18% y-o-y.

NatEnergy’s outlook remains promising, supported by the anticipated adjustments of natural gas connection prices, which will help ease current margin pressures. Management continues to optimise revenue mix by expanding its customer base in high-potential residential areas, further enhancing blended margins as well as overall profitability.

Utilities | Kahraba

Kahraba’s revenues rose 37% y-o-y to EGP 679 million, driven by continued growth of its electricity distribution business, with distribution volumes surging 43% y-o-y, reflecting robust performance delivered by the 10th of Ramadan concession zone. In USD terms, revenues stood at USD 13.4 million due to the impact of the EGP devaluation. Net profit recorded EGP 65.2 million in EGP terms and USD 1.29 million in USD terms, reflecting the impact of higher input costs as well as one-off gains recorded in 1Q 2024.

Kahraba is currently investing in a second substation within its 10th of Ramadan concession area to meet rising demand, as industrial activity in the zone continues to accelerate. Additionally, the recent government decision to unify natural gas tariffs for all electricity generators will enhance the competitiveness of Kahraba’s generation business.

Oil and gas | ONS

ONS reported revenues of USD 14 million in 1Q 2025, impacted by the temporary planned shutdown for pipeline repairs as well as the turbine exchange that was finalised during February 2025. Net profit amounted to USD 6.5 million in 1Q 2025, translating into a net profit margin of 45%, in line with the broader trend observed across gross profitability and operating margins, which was a result of the temporary pause in production due to planned maintenance works.

ONS is set to deliver growth in 2025, supported by key operational milestones including the commercial production at its two newly drilled wells, KSE2 and Aton-1. These developments are expected to sustain gas output at a steady rate of 55 MMSCFD through the end of 2026, translating into higher volume sales. ONS also continues to benefit from the 10-year extension to its Concession Agreement, approved by the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC) in Q3 2024, reinforcing operational continuity and long-term growth prospects.

NBFS & Diversified

The Diversified segment delivered strong growth in EGP terms, with revenues increasing 30% y-o-y and 46% q-o-q. In USD terms, revenues posted significant improvement sequentially, rising 44% q-o-q. Gross profitability improved notably, with gross profit margin expanding by 4 pp y-o-y to 57%, supported by the reassessment of insured asset values and premiums along with strong portfolio returns driven by the high-interest rate environment. Delta Insurance reported an attributable net profit of EGP 105 million compared to EGP 121 million in 1Q 2024. Excluding the impact of EGP 19.1 million booked in FX gains in 1Q 2024, earnings would have grown by a normalised 3% y-o-y. Mohandes Insurance posted a 71% y-o-y increase in attributable net profit and Bedayti recorded a 5% y-o-y growth in attributable net profit, reaching EGP 15.7 million.

Looking ahead, management remains confident in the insurance sector’s momentum, supported by consistent premium growth and ongoing increases in the valuation of insured assets. Additionally, Nilewood remains on track to begin commercial operations, with the plant currently in its final commissioning phase.

EKH’s standalone and consolidated financial statements and full earnings release for the period ended 31 March 2025 are available for download at ir.ekholding.com

EPS hits 4.65 fils

Agility reports Q1 net profit of KD 12 mln

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, today reported Q1 2025 net income of KD 11.6 million, equivalent to 4.65 fils per share. EBITDA stood at KD 67.6 million on revenue of KD 389 million.

Note Q1 2025 figures are not comparable to Q1 2024 due to distribution of 49% shares in Agility Global as in-kind dividends that occurred in May 2024.

Performance update

Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan said: “We are pleased to report that the year has started on a positive note from an operational perspective. While market conditions remained somewhat challenging, our operating entities continued to demonstrate good organic growth. This performance reflects the strength of our diversified portfolio and the commitment of our teams across the business.”

Agility KSCP’s performance in the first quarter was primarily driven by Agility Global PLC, which reported an EBIT of USD 92 million and revenue of USD 1,143 million in Q1 2025. These results were supported by strong contributions from its three largest businesses: Menzies, Tristar, and Agility Logistics Parks (ALP). Financial performance for Agility Global in the period was impacted by higher depreciation and interest expenses associated with ongoing investments to support future growth.

“Other businesses in Kuwait remain committed to executing their growth strategies while



Tarek Sultan, Agility Vice Chairman



Agility logo

actively pursuing opportunities to enhance value and returns for shareholders,” Sultan said. “GCS remained focused on driving operational efficiency and growth, while MRC achieved a significant milestone by securing the contract to develop and operate a Metal Reclamation Facility (MRF) for KNPC and KIPIC refineries — an important addition to our industrial services portfolio.”

He added: “We’re also pleased with the steady progress at ALP Kuwait’s S2/South Village project, a strategic commercial and logistics hub designed to serve the growing needs of Sabah Al-Ahmad City. The project is ad-

vancing as planned, with first deliveries scheduled for 2025.”

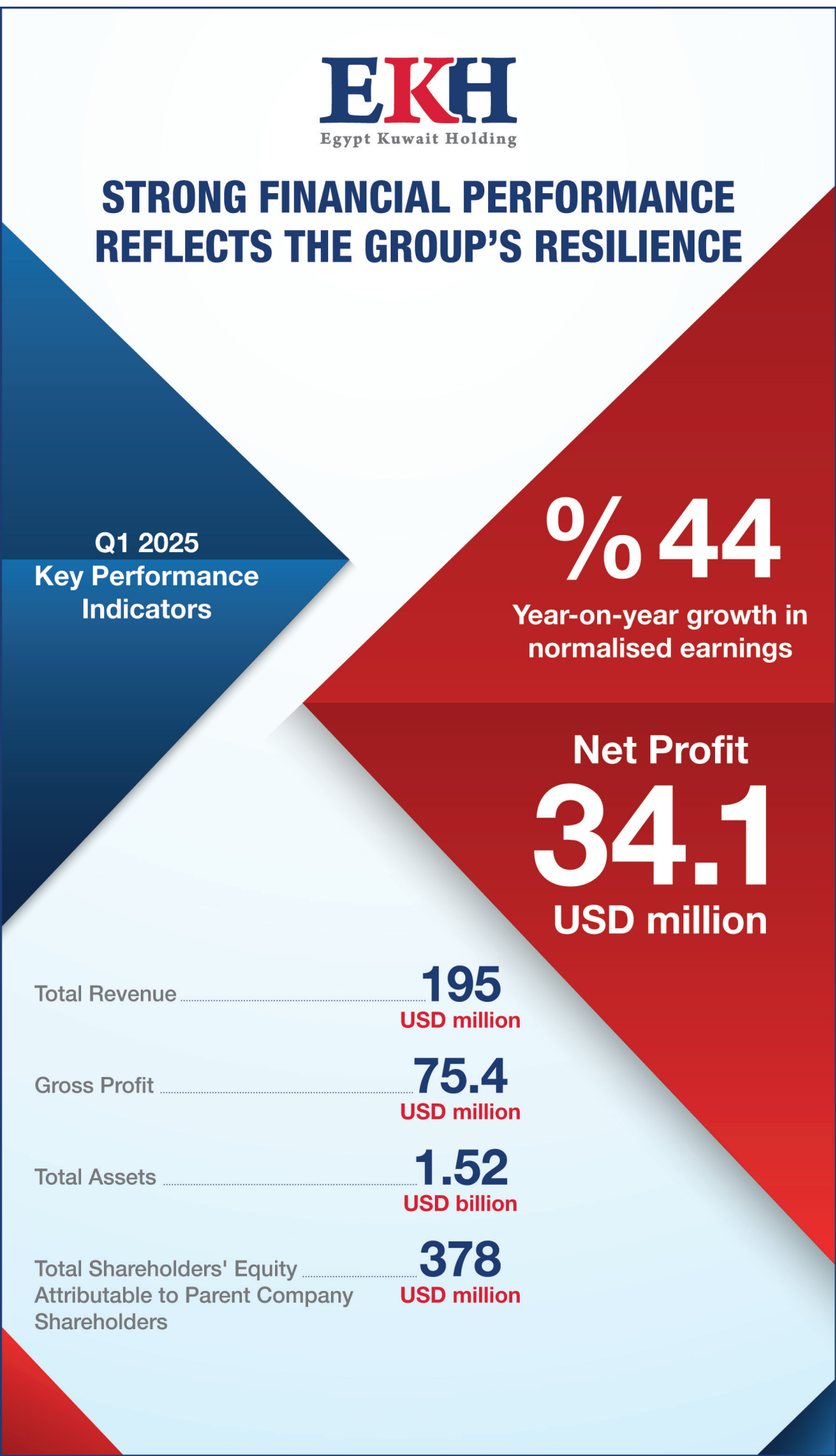
Recap of Agility Q1 2025 Financial Performance

- Agility’s net profit was KD 11.6 million and EPS was 4.65 fils.
- Agility’s EBIT stood at KD 40.6 million and EBITDA KD 67.6 million.
- Agility’s revenue increased 16% to KD 389 million and net revenue increased 11%.
- Agility enjoys a healthy balance sheet with KD 4.2 billion in assets.
- Agility reported an operating cash flow of KD 56 million for the first quarter of 2025.

About Agility

Agility is a global leader in supply chain services, infrastructure, and innovation with +59,000 employees across six continents. Listed in Kuwait and Dubai, Agility specializes in growing and scaling operating businesses. Agility’s portfolio of companies include the world’s largest aviation services company (Menzies Aviation); a global fuel logistics business (Tristar); and a leading logistics parks developer and operator across the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa (Agility Logistics Parks). Other Agility companies offer customs digitization services, remote-site infrastructure services, defense and government services, e-commerce-enablement and digital logistics, and waste management and recycling. Agility invests in supply chain innovation, sustainability, and resilience, and has minority holdings in a portfolio of listed and non-listed companies.

	Q1 2025 (Million KD)	Q1 2024 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	389.0	336.3	+15.7%
Net Revenue	247.4	222.4	+11.2%
EBITDA	67.6	69.2	-2.4%
EBIT	40.6	46.0	-11.7%
Net Profit for equity holders	11.6	18.7	-38.0%
EPS (fils)	4.65	7.5	-38.0%



She delivered a keynote speech at the opening of the ‘Third Kuwait PPP Conference’

Shaikha Al-Bahar: Public-Private Partnership is a national necessity and a key pillar in realizing Kuwait Vision 2035



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar delivers her speech at the opening of the conference.



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar at the Conference.



Minister of Finance Noura Al-Fassam honors Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar.

- NBK Stands as a Key Partner in Shaping Kuwait’s Long-Term Development Journey
- NBK financed and supported the largest infrastructure and public sector projects in Kuwait’s history
- We leverage our extensive experience, deep understanding of the local market, and a strong network of international partners to ensure the success of PPP initiatives
- We stand ready to back future partnerships, especially those focused on sustainability – one of the top priorities in NBK’s strategic agenda
- Our contribution goes beyond financing; it involves combining regional expertise, investor confidence, and collaborative efforts to support national economic growth
- We are committed to mobilizing capital, enabling innovation, and driving sustainable development in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035
- Kuwait’s PPP model presents promising opportunities across energy, infrastructure, logistics, and healthcare sectors
- Public-private partnerships contribute to economic diversification, unlock new growth prospects, and create job opportunities for young Kuwaiti talent
- Ongoing dialogue and cooperation between government and private sector stakeholders is essential to foster a supportive environment for successful partnerships
- Partnership frameworks must extend beyond traditional infrastructure to include education, digital transformation, and healthcare technology
- Recent regulatory reforms and the advancement of bankable partnership models are crucial steps toward enhancing Kuwait’s regional competitiveness
- It is time to work together to build a stronger, more diversified, and inclusive Kuwaiti economy

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) stated that Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has become a national necessity, emphasizing that it represents the cornerstone of Kuwait’s future economic and developmental trajectory.

Al-Bahar noted that PPP projects are a key pillar in realizing Kuwait Vision 2035 and the country’s broader development objectives, contributing to the creation of sustainable value for the national economy.

Her remarks were delivered during the opening of the “Third Kuwait PPP Conference (PPPKW3)” held under the patronage and in the presence of Eng. Noura Al-Fassam – Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Chair of the Higher Committee for Public-Private Partnership Projects – with the participation of public and private sector institutions, alongside key regulatory authorities.

In her address, Al-Bahar highlighted that Kuwait’s PPP model offers promising opportunities, particularly in the energy, infrastructure, logistics, and healthcare sectors. She pointed out that such partnerships can play a vital role in diversifying Kuwait’s economy by fostering cooperation in sectors such as renewable energy, technology, and tourism – opening new avenues for growth, generating job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth, and enhancing Kuwait’s regional competitiveness.

Long-term Partnership

“At NBK, we take pride in being a long-standing partner in Kuwait’s national development journey, having financed and supported some of the largest infrastructure and public sector projects in the country’s history. As Kuwait’s leading financial institution, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing partnership initiatives by leveraging our deep market insight, decades of experience, and robust network of international part-

ners to drive successful project financing and execution.”

She explained that NBK’s role is not limited to financing but extends to combining regional expertise, investor confidence, and collaborative efforts to propel the progress and prosperity of the national economy. She emphasized the bank’s unwavering commitment to this role, noting its contribution to facilitating the success of partnership projects through innovative financing solutions, advisory services, and capital markets offerings. She also reiterated NBK’s full readiness to support upcoming partnership initiatives – particularly those focused on sustainability, which the bank considers among its top strategic priorities.

Huge Potential

Despite Kuwait’s abundant financial resources, Al-Bahar emphasized that navigating the accelerating global complexities requires an innovative approach and a strong framework that leverages the private sector’s efficiency, expertise, and capital to fund world-class infrastructure, enhance public services, and drive economic diversification. She underscored Kuwait’s immense potential to build a future-ready economy underpinned by cutting-edge infrastructure.

She added that partnership projects have the potential to take the lead in key sectors, including transportation, smart cities, social development, healthcare, education, housing, renewable energy, technology, and tourism.

Regulatory Framework

“To ensure the continued success of partnership projects and to maximize their effectiveness in driving national economic growth, it is essential to develop a solid regulatory framework, and a supportive environment built on streamlined decision-making, well-defined legal structures, and

transparent procedures,” Al-Bahar stated. She stressed that ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the public and private sectors are vital to improving these frameworks and fostering an environment conducive to successful partnerships.

Furthermore, Al-Bahar praised the recent regulatory reforms and Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Authority’s efforts to streamline procedures and foster viable partnership models. She recognized that these advancements are crucial for enhancing Kuwait’s competitiveness, while also highlighting challenges related to regulatory clarity, governance, and risk-sharing. She called on all relevant stakeholders to act swiftly and collaboratively to address these issues and attract both local and international investments.

She further stated that PPPs should evolve beyond traditional infrastructure to encompass areas such as education, digital transformation, healthcare technology, and renewable energy. She reaffirmed NBK’s commitment to playing a central role in this journey by mobilizing capital, fostering innovation, and advancing sustainable development in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Al-Bahar concluded her speech by addressing attendees from both the public and private sectors, stating: “Let us seize this opportunity as a starting point for collective responsibility in shaping a future where innovation flourishes and the well-being of our beloved country is safeguarded. Together – government, private sector, and financial institutions – let us work to build a stronger, more diversified, and inclusive Kuwaiti economy.”

Kuwait 3rdConference for Public-Private Partnership, held over two days, brings together a wealth of international, regional, and local expertise. The event’s program provides valuable insights into best practices, industry standards, and practical experiences in PPPs, equipping stakeholders to address potential challenges and empowering relevant authorities to identify and implement effective solutions.



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar visited the National Bank of Kuwait’s pavilion during the exhibition accompanying the conference.



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar arrives for the opening of the Third Kuwait PPP Conference.

AlJasem: ‘Fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity’

Burgan Bank reiterates commitment to women empowerment at Kuwait Women’s Day Forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: As part of its unwavering dedication to employee empowerment, gender equity, and sustainable development, Burgan Bank recently participated in a forum celebrating Kuwait Women’s Day. Representing the Bank at the event, titled “Strategies to Empower Kuwaiti Women in Accordance with the Fifth Goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5)” and held under the patronage and in the presence of H.E. Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, was Ms. Danah Faisal AlJasem – General Manager of Corporate Communications at Burgan Bank

Ms. Danah Faisal AlJasem – General Manager of Corporate Communications at Burgan Bank

Danah AlJasem participating in the second session of the forum titled ‘Kuwaiti Women in the Private Sector’.

Vision 2035.”

She also highlighted Burgan’s ongoing commitment to gender equity and employee empowerment, saying: “At Burgan Bank, fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for long-term success. Driven by our overall ESG strategy, we believe that true equity provides a work environment with equal opportunities and adheres to fulfilling the employees’ needs. Accordingly, Burgan Bank actively supports women in the workplace by expanding opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and financial independence, empowering them to grow on a personal level, support their families, and positively impact the wider economy. This commitment is reflected in equal benefits for women and men,



Danah AlJasem participating in the second session of the forum titled ‘Kuwaiti Women in the Private Sector’.



A group photo of female leaders at Burgan Bank who participated in Kuwait Women’s Day forum.



Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, honors Burgan Bank for its participation in the forum, represented by Danah AlJasem.

flexible working hours, work-life balance initiatives, and additional self-care leave.”

Ms. AlJasem also underscored the importance of translating strategy into measurable progress, highlighting Burgan’s achievements in female representation and inclusive workplace practices, noting: “We view female empowerment as a collaborative effort, shaped by contribution from relevant stakeholders. Within the workplace, we are committed to fostering an environment where women have equal opportunities to thrive and lead. Across society, we actively support initiatives that promote gender equality and provide women with the resources and support they need to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential. Women currently represent 46% of the Bank’s employees and 34% of leadership

positions, making Burgan Bank a leading financial institution in the local Kuwaiti market. Our current position aligns with the national vision for boosting female representation in public and private sectors.”

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank continues to invest in initiatives that support the growth of female employees at all levels. In 2024, employees received an average of 33 hours of training, delivered through both digital and in-person platforms. Programs like Empower Her and Lean-In Circle for Women Empowerment provide dedicated mentorship, professional skills, and networking opportunities to help women work toward their goals. Burgan Bank remains committed to enabling more women to pursue leadership positions and guide younger generations of women professionals to follow their lead.



Winners of LuLu World Food Festival.

LuLu Hypermarket felicitates winners of LuLu World Food Festival

LuLu Hypermarket, the regional retail heavyweight, held a heart-warming prize-distribution ceremony at their Al-Rai outlet on 15 May, to congratulate and present prizes to winners of the LuLu World Food Festival competitions.

The competitions were held during the two-week long LuLu World Food Festival that was launched on 30 April across all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait. The cookery contests were held for different ages and skill levels and spanned Indian, Arabic, Continental and Filipino cuisines, as well as a separate dessert competition for those with a sweet touch.

The culinary contests pitted young ‘wannabe chefs’ showing off their skills in imaginatively titled competitions, such as Wow the Master Chef, Mom & Me healthy salad-making contest, and the spirited Master Junior Chef. Other competitions included the Barista Competition, the Cake Challenge, Biryani Battles, and the mysterious Blindfold Food Taste challenge,

The first prize winners of each competition received gift vouchers worth KD100, while the second and third prizes winners were awarded KD75 and KD50 worth of gift coupons respectively. The prizes were handed over to the winners by LuLu Kuwait management.

Interestingly, none of the competitors had to walk away bare-handed, all the participants in the contests were presented with valuable consolation prizes, highlighting the fact that everyone is a winner at LuLu Hypermarket.

Fares starting from KD 19 one way

Summer getaways start at KD 19 with Jazeera Airways

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait’s leading low-cost airline is inviting travelers to experience a summer like never before with an exclusive limited-time sale featuring one-way fares starting from just KD 19 to Bahrain, Iran, Jordan, UAE, KSA (Jeddah and Taif) and Qatar. Flights to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, will start from KD 25 and Egypt (Cairo, Sharm El-Sheikh and Sphinx) from KD 30, while Lebanon, Oman, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Armenia will be from KD 29. One-way fares to European destinations such as Hungary and Czech Republic will start from as low as KD 32.

The sale, open for booking from May 19th to 22nd, is valid for travel until August 31st, offering travelers the perfect chance to reconnect with loved ones or explore new destinations – without straining their budgets – with direct flights from Kuwait, passengers can avoid lengthy layovers and maximize their time at their destination. Featuring over 700,000



Jazeera Airways plane soars in the skies.

seats and access to more than 60 destinations across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, Jazeera Airways is making it easier than ever to plan a well-deserved getaway.

Paul Carroll, Chief Commercial Officer at Jazeera Airways highlighted: “This summer, we’re making travel more accessible than ever with incredibly low fares across our network of over 60 destinations. With 700,000 seats to offer, it is the perfect time to book that long-awaited trip – whether it’s to reconnect with family, explore

somewhere new, or simply take a well-deserved break. Our economical fares also make it easy for to plan multiple trips this summer. At Jazeera, we’re committed to delivering great value without compromising on comfort or convenience, making every journey not just affordable, but truly memorable.”

To book seats and avail of these special fares, visit www.jazeeraairways.com, the Jazeera Airways mobile app or call 177.

Director returns with new playful and poignant thriller

Anderson rolls into Cannes with ‘The Phoenician Scheme’

CANNES, France, May 18, (AP): Wes Anderson isn't driving the bus. Laurent is. That's the name of the driver who's bringing Anderson, and his bus, to the Cannes Film Festival.

As they drive from his home in Paris to the South of France, Anderson explains by phone: "I don't drive the bus. You have to have, like, four years of training and an EU bus driver's license. The thing is, if you're going to drive a bus like this, you've got to be able to drive it in reverse, too."

For years, Anderson has, in favor of the normal festival cars that shuttle guests, brought his own bus to Cannes so his whole cast can arrive together at the premiere. On Sunday, Anderson and company (including Benicio del Toro, Mia Threapleton, Michael Cera, Scarlett Johansson and Bryan Cranston) will pile in for the premiere of Anderson's latest, "The Phoenician Scheme."

It's another example of how Anderson has made something quite unusual into a regular tradition.

With remarkable regularity, Anderson has been crafting movies uniquely his own since his 1996 debut, "Bottle Rocket." There are variations. Some are expansive family dramas ("The Royal Tenenbaums"). Some are more intimate ("Rushmore"). Some are more densely layered ("Asteroid City").

"The Phoenician Scheme," a leaner tale which Focus Features will release May 30, is Anderson working in high comic gear. A playful and poignant kind of thriller, it stars Del Toro as the tycoon Zsa-Zsa Korda, who decides to

name his daughter, a novitiate (Threapleton) heir to his dubiously accrued fortune.

The wheels keep turning for the 56-year-old Anderson. But there are signs of time passing, too. The Cinémathèque in Paris is hosting an Anderson retrospective, as well as an exhibition of props, costumes and artifacts from his expansive personal archive.

Anderson, who has a 9-year-old daughter with his wife, the costume designer Juman Malouf, spoke about those things and others on his way to Cannes to unveil "The Phoenician Scheme," a movie that adds yet another fitting mantra to the world of Wes: "What matters is the sincerity of your devotion."

AP: How was it to dig through all the things you've saved from your movies?

Anderson: We've been keeping this stuff for so long. The experience of doing it was kind of great. I'd sort of get pulled over there to approve things. And my reaction was, "Well, we have more stuff." So we kept adding things. My daughter has lived with a lot of this stuff. The "Fantastic Mr. Fox" puppets have been in our apartment in New York ever since we made the movie in boxes. Over the years, she takes them out and plays with them.

AP: Jason Schwartzman once told me your movies aren't for kids but it's "like they're for kids when they grow up." Do you agree?

Anderson: (Laughs) Jason, and Bill, have a way of catching you off guard with a turn of phrase. But I like that

description. It's kind of an amazing experience to have had Jason involved in our movies for so long given that he was 17 when I met him. It's fun and a strange feeling. The decades have to elapse for you to have had that much time together. And it's quite shocking that they do. But there it is.

AP: The sweetest parts to "The Phoenician Scheme" are its father-daughter moments. Were you at all inspired by your own experience as a father?

Anderson: I didn't have something I thought I wanted to communicate about what it's like to be a father. The story really came out of an idea for Benicio and for this character. But I don't think he would have had a daughter if I didn't. That's my hunch. He's a special kind of a father, in all the worst ways. But nevertheless, there's something we related to. That's probably somewhere in the DNA of the movie.

AP: What drew you to Del Toro?

Anderson: If I were to say what is the first idea of the movie, it is that face. It's not an image of the setting, it's an image of Benicio in a close-up as this character. His face is just so expressive and interesting. It's a special advantage he has. He's quite mesmerizing just looking at him on camera, his chemistry with the exposure of film. In "The French Dispatch," there were electric moments on the set. But the electricity was amplified when we went back into the cutting room. The wheels started turning. When we showed "The French Dispatch" however many years ago in Cannes, I did mention to Benicio there,



Director Wes Anderson poses for portrait photographs for the film 'The Phoenician Scheme' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 17. (AP)

"Just be aware, there's something else coming."

AP: Is that a common way for you to start imagining a movie? I can see "Rushmore" starting with Murray's face with a cigarette dropping from his mouth, "The Royal Tenenbaums" with Gene Hackman's smile and "The Grand Budapest Hotel" with Ralph Fiennes as a concierge.

Anderson: Essentially, you've put your finger on the movies that were

written for a specific actor, along with Jason in "Asteroid City." Owen and I were talking about Gene Hackman by the time we had 10 pages of a script. Ralph was the idea for the character in "Grand Budapest" before there was even one page. But I never had one where I thought of someone in such a tight close-up. With this movie, somehow it's the face and the eyes and the closest close-up.

AP: After Gene Hackman's death, Bill Murray and others talked about the tough time he gave you while making "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

Anderson: First of all, Gene Hackman, one of the greatest movie actors ever. He did enjoy the movie, I think, between action and cut. He said, "That's when I have a good time." But he really didn't enjoy the parts in between, which is most of the time. He wasn't wildly taken with the script in the first place. I don't think he loved the idea of being that guy. I think he thought: "There's a lot of things I don't like about this man and I'm not sure I want to live as him."

Also, I was very young. He was shy and reserved, though he could also get quite explosive. We didn't know each other well. Sometimes, when we had conflict, we often had open conversations about what just happened. And I felt like I learned so much about him in those times. And he would often become much more gentle.

I don't want to assume a great friendship because I don't think he would have ever have referred to our relationship (laughs) in those terms.

But I really liked him. He just carried so much tension and he used in the work, but it was sometimes bordering on a little abusive, especially to me. (Laughs)

AP: Given how good he is in the film, it makes me wonder if the best parts for actors are the ones they resist.

Anderson: I think that's the case sometimes. When he saw the movie, he told me, "I didn't understand what we were making." But he totally understood it when he saw the movie. It worked for him. He liked it, and I think he liked what he had done it. I later thought: I wish I had paused for three days of shooting, edited some of the scenes carefully and then shown him: Here's what you're doing and here's what we're doing. I think maybe if I had done that, we might have had a gentler time.

AP: You've managed to continue making movies for adults at some scale when hardly anyone can do that. Are you happy to avoid the changes in the industry or do they concern you?

Anderson: The path that I've had as a movie director, I don't know if that's totally available right now. I don't know if the kind of movies I started out making would have been made on the same scale or with the same support or with any audience available. To get to the point where I can make the movies I make I now, I just don't know what route that would take. I think some things have changed fundamentally. But I'm not 25 years younger than myself, so I just do what I do.

Cannes



Rosie Huntington-Whiteley poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Nouvelle Vague' at Cannes, May 17. (AP)



Zoey Deutch poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Nouvelle Vague.' (AP)



Zhou Ye poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Nouvelle Vague.' (AP)



Zhou Ye poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Nouvelle Vague.' (AP)



Jennifer Lawrence poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Die, My Love' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 17. (AP)

'Chronology of Water' makes emphatic splash at Cannes

Stewart was always ready to direct

CANNES, France, May 18, (AP): Kristen Stewart has been talking about directing as long as she's been acting. Not many people encouraged it.

"I spoke to other actors when I was really little because I was always like: 'I want to direct movies!'" Stewart recalls. "I was fully set down by several people who were like, 'Why?' and 'No.' It's such a fallacy that you need to have an unbelievable tool kit or some kind of credential. It really is if you have something to say, then a movie can fall out of you very elegantly."

You wouldn't necessarily say that Stewart's feature directing debut, "The Chronology of Water," elegantly fell out of her at the Cannes Film Festival. She arrived in Cannes after a frantic rush to complete the film, an adaptation of Lidia Yuknavitch's 2011 memoir, starring Imogen Poots. Sitting on a balcony overlooking the Croisette, Stewart says she finished the film "30 seconds before I got on an airplane."

"It was eight years in the making and then a really accelerated push. It's an obvious comparison but it was childbirth," says Stewart. "I was pregnant for a really long time and then I was screaming bloody murder."

Yet however dramatic was the arrival of "The Chronology of Water," it was emphatic. The film, an acutely impressionistic portrait of a brutal coming of age, is the evident work of an impassioned filmmaker. Stewart, the director, turns out to be a lot like Stewart, the actor: intensely sensitive, ferociously felt.

For Stewart, the accomplishment of "The Chronology of Water," which is playing in the sidebar Un Certain Regard and is up for sale in Cannes, was also a revelation about the mythology of directing.

"It's a such a male ... thing," she says. "It's really not fair for people to think it's hard to make a movie insofar as you need to know things before going into it. There are technical directors, but, Jesus Christ, you hire a crew. You just have a perspective and trust it."

"My unexperience made this movie."

Stewart's first steps as a director came eight years ago with the short "Come Swim," which she also premiered in Cannes,



Director Kristen Stewart poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'The Chronology of Water' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 16. (AP)

in 2017. The festival, she says, generates the kind of questions she likes around movies. It was around then that Stewart began adapting Yuknavitch's memoir.

In it, Yuknavitch recounts her life, starting with sexual abuse from her father (an architect played by Michael Epp in the film). Competitive swimming is one of her only escapes, and it helps get her away from home and into college. Blissful freedom, self-lacerating addiction and trauma color her years from there, as does an inspirational writing experience with Ken Kesey (Jim Belushi in the film). Stewart calls the book "a lifesaver - like, actually, a flotation device."

"The book was this call to arms invitation to listen to your own voice, which, if you're walking around in a girl body, is really hard to do," says Stewart. "It fragments in a way that feels truer to my internal experience than anything I've ever read."

"I really wanted to make something that wasn't about what

happened to this person, it's about what she did with what happens to her, and what writing can do for you," adds Stewart. "It's like the most meta, crazy experience to have also cracked myself open at the same time."

That goes for Poots, too, the 35-year-old British actor who, in "The Chronology of Water," gives one of her finest, most wide-ranging performances.

"It's Lydia's life story and the cards that were dealt her, but in terms of the reactive nature, that's the female experience," says Poots. "How you're surveilled, how you're supposed to respond, conform, how that's repulsive, and how you sabotage something good - all of these things are just very, very female."

Together, Stewart and Poots have been clearly bonded by the experience. Stewart calls Poots "a sibling now." In Stewart's best experiences with directors, she says, it becomes such a back-and-forth exchange that the separate jobs disintegrate, and, she says, "You're kind of sharing a body."

"But I'm positive I said nothing useful to her ever, and I talked way too much," says Stewart. Poots immediately disagrees: "That's not true, Kristen!"

"Kristen is incredibly present but at the same has this ability, like a plant or something, to pick up on a slight shift in the atmosphere where it's like: 'Wait a minute,'" Poots says, causing Stewart to laugh. "There is this insane brain at play and it's a skill set that comes in the form of an intense curiosity."

That curiosity, now, includes directing more movies. "The Chronology of Water" may signal not just a new chapter for one of American movies' most intrepid actors, but an ongoing artistic evolution.

"Our production was a shipwreck, so basically we had to put the boat back together," Stewart says of the editing process. That reassembling, Stewart believes helped make "The Chronology of Water" something less predetermined, where "the emotional, neurological tissue that occurred between images was real."

"There was no way to make this movie under more normal circumstances," says Stewart, "because then it would have been more normal."

Season finale more reflective than festive

Johansson wraps SNL’s 50th season on quiet note

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): “Saturday Night Live” was more reflective than festive in the final episode of its 50th season.

Scarlett Johansson, who set a record for a woman with her seventh appearance as host, used her monologue to lead most of the current cast of the NBC sketch institution in a song sung to the tune of Billy Joel’s “Piano Man.”

The performance looked back on an eventful year that included an election, an epic anniversary special and a star-studded concert.

“Sing us a song, it’s your monologue, the 50th season is through,” Johansson sang, along with Bowen Yang, Ego Nwodim, Mikey Day, Heidi Gardner and others. “It’s lasting forever, we did it together, and we got to spend it with you.”

Johansson teased, then took back, a guest appearance that would have been in keeping with the season’s excess of guest stars.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Billy Joel!” she shouted, before adding, “wrote this song.”

No post-season cast departures have been announced, so no emotional farewells were necessary, but Johansson and the cast joked in the song that Sarah Sherman would be gone.

“It’s been a great season and Sarah is leaving, we’re all gonna miss you next year!” they sang. A stunned Sherman replied, “Wait, what? Did you guys hear something?”

Johansson’s husband, Colin Jost, is a writer on the show and anchor of the “Weekend Update” segment.

Jost and co-anchor Michael Che returned to their annual season-finale tradition of writing and being forced to deliver wildly inappropriate jokes for each other.

Johansson is the subject of many of the Che-written jokes, so this year Jost compelled Che to bring her out and apologize for once comparing part of her body to “Costco roast beef.”

The 50th season brought much media discussion of who might run the show should 80-year-old creator Lorne Michaels ever step down.

Some have suggested Jost might replace Michaels and Che forced Jost to address the issue with one of the jokes written for him.

“It’s SNL’s 50th season, so I want to take a moment to say something to our boss,” Jost said. “Lorne, retire, bitch! let me run the show.”

Jost also appeared in a pre-recorded, behind-

the-scenes bit where Johansson has torrid sex with Yang after she confesses to Nwodim and Gardner that she has a crush on him, and learns he has only been publicly pretending to be gay “for the clout.”

Johansson has her heart broken when she learns Yang also has been hooking up with Nwodim, Gardner and guest star Emily Ratajkowski.

In another behind-the-scenes digital short made by the three members of comedy group Please Don’t Destroy, Johansson treats the trio to a first-class flight that becomes a luxe hip-hop video until the men panic when they learn they are landing at the troubled airport of Newark, New Jersey.

Musical guest Bad Bunny appears as an air traffic controller, working alone on his first day.

As in nearly every episode of this season, James Austin Johnson did his impression of President Donald Trump in the cold open segment, which had him “finding love” with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Johnson’s Trump broke the fourth wall and walked into the audience at the end of the bit.

“It’s the ‘SNL’ finale, season 50 - worst one yet!” he said. “See you again in the fall if we still have a country. It’s a coin toss.”



Scarlett Johansson, (left), and Colin Jost attend ‘SNL50: The Anniversary Special’ at Rockefeller Plaza on Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025, in New York. (AP)

Variety

PARIS: Rapper Werenoi, France’s biggest-selling music artist in recent years, has died at the age of 31, his producer and record company said.

The artist, whose real name was Jérémy Bana Owona, was the number 1 album seller in France in 2023 and 2024 according to the ranking of the National Union of Phonographic Industry, which includes in-store and e-commerce sales as well as plays on streaming services.



Werenoi

“It’s with immense sadness that we’ve learned of Werenoi’s passing,” his record company Believe said on Instagram. “All our thoughts are with his family, loved ones, his team and everyone who knew him.”

“Rest in peace my brother, I love you,” his producer Babs posted on X. French media report Werenoi died early Saturday in a Paris hospital. The cause of his death has not been made public.

Werenoi first became known to the French public in 2021 when he posted his song “Guadalajara” on YouTube and it was viewed hundreds of thousand times.

He released three albums, “Carré” in 2023, “Pyramide” the next year and “Diamant Noir” last month, making him one of the biggest names in French rap.

Several French rappers posted tributes on social media. French-Malian pop star Aya Nakamura, who featured on his second album, wrote : “Rest in peace my dude. A news that saddens me and courage to the loved ones especially.”

“He made a difference for the quality of his songs, his melodies and his punchlines,” singer Pascal Obispo, who had accompanied Werenoi on the piano at a 2023 Paris concert, told French newspaper Le Parisien. (AP)

□ □ □

MIAMI: Antonio Brown was briefly detained by police early Saturday following an altercation in which gunshots were fired outside a celebrity boxing event in Miami, according to the former NFL star and video posted to social media.

Miami police confirmed in a written statement that officers responded to the area at about 3 a.m. after receiving an alert from the gunshot-detection system Shot-Spotter. Officer Kiara Delya, a department spokeswoman, said police questioned several people but made no arrests. No injuries were reported at the scene.

The investigation continues, Delva said, and she could not confirm the names of anyone involved.

Video posted to social media showed Brown involved in a fight with several people at the boxing event, which was hosted by popular streamer Adin Ross. He was seen apparently holding a black pistol as he pursued someone. Shots could be heard off camera shortly thereafter.

Additional video showed Brown, hands behind his back, being escorted from the venue by an officer.

Brown posted on social media that he had been “jumped by multiple individuals who tried to steal my jewelry and cause physical harm to me.” (AP)

□ □ □

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: A man who attacked Salman Rushdie with a knife in front of a stunned audience in 2022, leaving the prizewinning author blind in one eye, was sentenced Friday to 25 years in prison.

Hadi Matar, 27, stood quietly as the judge pronounced the sentence. He did not deny attacking Rushdie, and when he was invited to address the court before being sentenced, Matar got in a few last insults at the writer. He said he believed in freedom of speech but called Rushdie “a hypocrite.”

“Salman Rushdie wants to disrespect other people,” said Matar, clad in white-striped jail clothing and wearing handcuffs. “He wants to be a bully, he wants to bully other people. I don’t agree with that.”

Rushdie, 77, did not return to western New York for the sentencing but submitted a victim impact statement in which he said he has nightmares about what happened, Chautauque County District Attorney Jason Schmidt said. The statement was not made public. Rushdie, through his agent, declined to comment after the sentencing. (AP)

Music



Winner of the Eurovision Song Contest JJ from Austria holds up the trophy onstage, he won with the song ‘Wasted Love’ during the Grand Final of the 69th Eurovision Song Contest, in Basel, Switzerland, early Sunday, May 18. (AP)

First Eurovision winner with Filipino heritage

Austria’s JJ wins Eurovision contest

BASEL, Switzerland, May 18, (AP): Classically trained Austrian singer JJ won the 69th Eurovision Song Contest in Switzerland on Saturday with “Wasted Love,” a song that combines operatic, multi-octave vocals with a techno twist.

JJ, whose full name is Johannes Pietsch, was Austria’s third Eurovision winner, and the first since bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst in 2014. The 24-year-old countertenor, who sings at the Vienna State Opera, has called Wurst a mentor.

“This is beyond my wildest dreams. It’s crazy,” said the singer after being handed the microphone-shaped glass Eurovision trophy.

JJ won after a nail-biting final that saw his opponent scoop up a massive public vote from her many fan.

At a post-victory press conference, JJ said the message of his song about unrequited romance was that “love is the strongest force on planet Earth, and love persevered.

“Let’s spread love, guys,” said JJ, who added that he was honored to be the first Eurovision champion with Filipino heritage. He said his message was “acceptance and equality for everyone.”

Political leaders in Austria, which will host the contest next year, congratulated JJ on his win.

“What a great success - my warmest congratulations on winning #ESC2025! JJ is writing Austrian music history today!” Chancellor Christian Stocker posted on X.

The world’s largest live music event, which has been uniting and dividing Europeans since 1956, reached its glitter-drenched conclusion with a grand final in Basel that offered pounding electropop, quirky rock and outrageous divas.

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

Estonia’s Tommy Cash came third with his jokey mock-Italian dance song “Espresso Macchiato.” Swedish entry KAJ, who had been favorite to win with jaunty sauna ode “Bara Bada Bastu,” came fourth.

Several highly praised singers who had been tipped to win fell short, including French chanteuse Louane and soulful Dutch singer Claude.

Celebration

The show was a celebration of Europe’s eclectic, and sometimes baffling, musical tastes. Lithuanian band Katarsis delivered grunge rock, while Ukraine’s Ziferblat channeled prog rock and the UK’s Remember Monday offered country pop.

Italy’s Lucio Corsi evoked 1970s glam rock, while Icelandic duo VABE rapped about rowing, Latvia’s six-woman Tautumeitas offered gorgeous, intertwined harmonies and leather-clad Finn Erika Vikman belted out the innuendo-filled electro-pop song “Ich Komme.”

There were divas aplenty, including Spain’s Melody, Poland’s Justyna Steczkowska, participating in Eurovision for a second time after a 30-year gap, and Malta’s outrageous Miriana Conte, who performed the saucy “Serving” on a set including a glitter ball and giant lips.

Dean Vuletic, an expert on the history of Eurovision, said the competition has become more diverse over the

years, and the days are gone when the key to winning was “a catchy, innocuous pop song, usually in English.”

“An entry needs to be memorable and it needs to be authentic in order to succeed these days,” he said.

This year’s contest was roiled for a second year by disputes over Israel’s participation.

Swiss broadcaster SRG SSR said a man and woman were stopped as they tried to climb over a barrier to the stage at the end of her song. It said a crew member was hit by paint thrown by the pair.

Dozens of former Eurovision competitors, including last year’s winner Nemo of Switzerland, have called for Israel to be excluded, and several of the broadcasters that fund Eurovision sought a review of the country’s participation.

Pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel protests both took place in Basel, though on a much smaller scale than at last year’s event in Sweden, where thousands marched in the streets and tensions spilled over backstage, leading to the expulsion of Dutch contestant Joost Klein.

Hundreds of people marched through Basel just before the competition, waving Palestinian flags and chanting “Boycott Israel.”

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

Eurovision director Martin Green told reporters that the organizers’ goal was to “re-establish a sense of unity, calm and togetherness this year in a difficult world.” He said all 37 national delegations “have behaved impeccably.”

Road dispute

‘Blair Witch’ star at heart of feud

FREEDOM, Maine, May 18, (AP): Heather Donahue is walking through the woods once again. The star of the successful low-budget horror movie “The Blair Witch Project” has an on-screen history of getting into scary situations in a forest.

But this time she is merely picking up an old soda can someone carelessly left on a trail. And she wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

“For me, reading fairy tales, I always wanted to live in the forest,” said Donahue, 51, who moved on from acting long ago and now lives in rural Maine. “It is absolutely as magical as it seemed in those storybooks.”

But the last several months of Donahue’s time in the Maine woods have been anything but magical, or peaceful.

In a twist of fate harkening back to her movie career, Donahue has been embroiled in a spat with locals in her tiny, 700-resident town of Freedom that hinges on her marking trees with the kind of orange blazes that help people find their way in the dense forests.

Donahue had been a member of the town’s governing body, its Select Board, but lost a recall election recently after a controversy about whether a rural road that cuts through the woods is public or private. The matter remains unresolved, with the town and abutting landowners fighting it out in court.

Activities

The road in question is Beaver Ridge Road, a narrow, partially hilly stretch flanked by wild plants and songbirds that goes from paved to gravel to dirt as it stretches deeper into the forest. Several abutters of the road say the unimproved section is private and to use it for activities such as all-terrain vehicle riding constitutes trespassing. Donahue, and the town itself, hold that the entire road is public.

Donahue painted the orange blazes using historical maps to show what she holds is the center of a public easement. Abutting property owners were incensed and the first successful recall petition drive in the town’s 212-year history followed. Donahue was removed in April and an election to pick her successor is planned for next month.

Tyler Hadyniak, one of the abutting property owners, said the recall wasn’t just about the orange blazes or the woodland trail. He said it addressed a pattern of behavior by Donahue that chafed longer-established residents in the year since she took office.

“I was relieved that the recall was successful. I thought Heather’s demeanor and behavior toward others was just unbecoming of a town official,” Hadyniak said.

Donahue, who is originally from Pennsylvania and has spent long stretches of time living in California and traveling abroad, said she is aware of her status as what she called “a lady from away.”

She arrived in Maine after a winding journey in which she struggled with alcoholism, left acting, became a medical marijuana farmer and wrote a memoir.

Donahue said she came to the Pine Tree State eight years ago, overcame her addiction and bought land in Freedom in 2020. Recently, she has worked as a life coach and shared her passions for gardening and medicinal plants with anyone who will listen.



Heather Donahue, the star of the 1999 low-budget hit movie The Blair Witch Project, poses next to a ‘posted’ sign in on a rural road, Tuesday, May 13, in Freedom, Maine. (AP)

Kevin Hart brings laughs to BET’s big night

Lil Wayne, GloRilla, Taylor to perform at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES, May 18, (AP): Kendrick Lamar extends his dominant musical reign, entering next month’s BET Awards as the leading nominee.

The rap megastar earned 10 nominations earlier this month, including an album of the year for his highly-acclaimed project “GNX.” His ubiquitous diss track “Not Like Us,” emanating from the Drake feud, received nominations for video of the year and viewer’s choice award.

Lamar made waves with his Grammy triumph, winning song and record of the year for “Not Like Us.” He followed up with a groundbreaking halftime show, becoming the first solo hip-hop performer to headline the coveted slot. He is currently on the Grand National Tour with SZA.

Doechii, Drake, Future and GloRilla tied for the second-most nominations with six. Metro Boomin pulled in five nods, while SZA and The Weeknd each scored four.

Here’s more to know about the show.

Rap icon Lil Wayne, rapper GloRilla and singer Teyana Taylor will hit the BET Awards stage.

On Thursday, the network revealed the first lineup of performers, which also includes rapper Playboi Carti and singer Leon Thomas.

Kevin Hart is expected to bring the funny as host of the awards show, celebrating its 25th anniversary.



Kendrick Lamar performs during halftime of the NFL Super Bowl 59 football game between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles, Feb. 9, 2025, in New Orleans. (AP)

The comedian-actor, who hosted the BET Awards in 2011, called this year’s ceremony a “black-tie affair.”

“It’s a chance to reflect, cherish and honor life’s unforgettable moments,” Hart said in a statement. He has a history with the network, hosting “Comic View: One Night Stand” in 2008. He was an executive producer and one of the stars of “Real Husbands

of Hollywood” and launched adult animated comedy “Lil Kev” on BET+.

The BET Awards will offer tributes to former popular hosts and performances, including the network’s once-flagship program “106 & Park.”

“‘106 & Park’ was more than just a music countdown show; it was the heartbeat of Black youth culture and one of the highest-rated BET programs for over a decade,” said Scott Mills, BET’s president and CEO. The weekday show launched in 2000 and lasted for more than a decade.

The show thrived with a video countdown, interludes and performances.

“From Freestyle Friday to unforgettable live performances, it launched careers, influenced fashion, and became a platform where voices, style, and sound converged,” Mills said. “‘106 & Park’ both celebrated and fueled many of the most important musical and culture evolutions that occurred during its two-and-a-half-decade tenure.”

The show will reunite past hosts A.J. Calloway, Free, Julissa Bermudez, Keshia Chanté, Rocsi Diaz and Terrence J. The tribute will feature performers such as Bow Wow, Amerie, B2K, Jim Jones, Mya, T.I. and Mr. 106 & Park.

The awards will air live on June 9 from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles at 8 p.m. EDT.

Tips to debunk medical myths online

Why we fall for fake health info ... and how it spreads

By Angshuman K. Kashyap
University of Maryland

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

In today’s digital world, people routinely turn to the internet for health or medical information. In addition to actively searching online, they often come across health-related information on social media or receive it through emails or messages from family or friends.

It can be tempting to share such messages with loved ones - often with the best of intentions. As a global health communication scholar studying the effects of media on health and development, I explore artistic and creative ways to make health information more engaging and accessible, empowering people to make informed decisions.

Although there is a fire hose of health-related content online, not all of it is factual. In fact, much of it is inaccurate or misleading, raising a serious health communication problem: Fake health information - whether shared unknowingly and innocently, or deliberately to mislead or cause harm - can be far more captivating than accurate information.

This makes it difficult for people to know which sources to trust and which content is worthy of sharing.

Fake health information can take many forms. For example, it may be misleading content that distorts facts to frame an issue or individual in a certain context. Or it may be based

on false connections, where headlines, visuals or captions don’t align with the content. Despite this variation, such content often shares a few common characteristics that make it seem believable and more shareable than facts.

For one thing, fake health information often appears to be true because it mixes a grain of truth with misleading claims.

For example, early in the COVID-19 pandemic, false rumors suggested that drinking ethanol or bleach could protect people from the virus. While ethanol or bleach can indeed kill viruses on surfaces such as countertops, it is extremely dangerous when it comes into contact with skin or gets inside the body.

Another marker of fake health information is that it presents ideas that are simply too good to be true. There is something appealingly counterintuitive in certain types of fake health information that can make people feel they have access to valuable or exclusive knowledge that others may not know. For example, a claim such as “chocolate helps you lose weight” can be especially appealing because it offers a sense of permission to indulge and taps into a simple, feel-good solution to a complex problem. Such information often spreads faster because it sounds both surprising and hopeful, validating what some people want to believe.

Sensationalism also drives the spread of fake health information. For instance, when critics falsely claimed that Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the chief medical adviser to the president at the time, was responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, it generated a lot of public attention.

In a study on vaccine hesitancy published in 2020, my colleagues and I found that controversial headlines

in news reports that go viral before national vaccination campaigns can discourage parents from getting their children vaccinated. These headlines seem to reveal sensational and secret information that can falsely boost the message’s credibility.

The internet has created fertile ground for spreading fake health information. Professional-looking websites and social media posts with misleading headlines can lure people into clicking or quickly sharing, which drives more and more readers to the falsehood. People tend to share information they believe is relevant to them or their social circles.

In 2019, an article with the false headline “Ginger is 10,000x more effective at killing cancer than chemo” was shared more than 800,000 times on Facebook. The article contained several factors that make people feel an urgency to react and share without checking the facts: compelling visuals, emotional stories, misleading graphs, quotes from experts with omitted context and outdated content that is recirculated.

Visual cues like the logos of reputable organizations or photos of people wearing white medical coats add credibility to these posts. This kind of content is highly shareable, often reaching far more people than scientifically accurate studies that may lack eye-catching headlines or visuals, easy-to-understand words or dramatic storylines.

But sharing content without verifying it first has real-world consequences. For example, studies have found that COVID-19-related fake information reduces people’s trust in the government and in health care systems, making people less likely to use or seek out health services.

Whether health care consumers come across health information

on social media, in an email or through a messaging app, here are three reliable ways to verify its accuracy and credibility before sharing:

- Use a search engine to cross-check health claims. Never rely on a single source. Instead, enter the health claim into a reputable search engine like Google and see what trusted sources have to say. Prioritize information from established organizations like the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations Children’s Fund or peer-reviewed journals like The Lancet or Journal of the American Medical Association.
- If multiple reputable sources agree, the information is more likely to be reliable. Reliable fact-checking websites such as FactCheck.org and Snopes can also help root out fake information.
- Evaluate the source’s credibility. A quick way to assess a website’s trustworthiness is to check its “About Us” page. This section usually explains who is behind the content, their mission and their credentials. Also, search the name of the author. Do they have recognized expertise or affiliations with credible institutions? Reliable websites often have domains ending in .gov or .edu, indicating government or educational institutions. Finally, check the publication date. Information on the internet keeps circulating for years and may not be the most accurate or relevant in the present context.

- If you’re still unsure, don’t share. If you’re still uncertain about the accuracy of a claim, it’s better to keep it to yourself. Forwarding unverified information can unintentionally contribute to the spread of misinformation and potentially cause harm, especially when it comes to health. (AP)



This photo released by Indian Space Research Organization shows the EOS-09 Earth observation satellite on board the PSLV-C61 launch vehicle at Sriharikota space center in southern India, Saturday, May 17. (AP)

Tech glitch

India’s rocket launch fails

NEW DELHI, May 18, (Agencies): The Indian space agency’s mission to launch into orbit a new Earth observation satellite failed after the launch vehicle encountered a technical issue during the third stage of flight, officials said Sunday.

The EOS-09 Earth observation satellite took off on board the PSLV-C61 launch vehicle from the Sriharikota space center in southern India on Sunday morning.

“During the third stage ... there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case, and the mission could not be accomplished,” said V. Narayanan, chief of the Indian Space Research Organisation. Active in space research since the 1960s, India has launched satellites for itself and other countries, and successfully put one in orbit around Mars in 2014.

China’s Tianwen-2 probe is scheduled for launch at the end of May, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Sunday.

The probe has been transported to its launch area, after completing its scheduled assembly, testing and fueling at the technical area of the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China’s Sichuan Province.

It will subsequently conduct functional checks and joint tests.

Workplace abuse fuels anxiety, depression

How to spot, escape ‘toxic’ work

NEW YORK, May 18, (AP): One week into a new job, Lisa Grouette discovered something missing come Sunday night: the sinking feeling of dread she used to experience before going to work every Monday.

Grouette spent 10 years at an insurance agency with a boss whom she alleges screamed at her, slammed his hands on the desk, insulted her appearance and punched things. He falsely accused her of taking money and threatened to withhold an employment recommendation if she quit, she says.

Fearing she wouldn’t land another job if she left the toxic workplace, she stayed. “It was this implied, ‘You’re stuck,’” Grouette, 48, recalled.

But eventually, she found a way out. When a full-time job opened up at a newspaper where she worked a part-time photography job, she resigned from the insurance agency. The new position paid \$400 less per month, but Grouette reduced her expenses to make it work.

“You can’t put a price tag on it,” she said. “It was the best 400 bucks a month I’ve ever spent, worth every penny. I was a little tight at first, but it didn’t matter because I was happy.”

As mental health awareness increases, so are conversations about what constitutes unhealthy behavior and the kinds of treatment people will not - or should not - tolerate for a steady paycheck.

“We’re developing language now around things like toxic workplaces,” said Jennifer Tosti-Kharas, a professor of organizational behavior at Babson College in Massachusetts.

Younger generations entering the workforce, including millennials and members of Generation Z, are less willing to endure bullying behavior from colleagues and managers, and better at establishing boundaries, she said.

Encountered

At the start of her own career, “if I encountered toxicity in the workplace, I had more of a ‘Suck it up’ attitude,” said Tosti-Kharas, who identifies as a member of Generation X. “I don’t think we were as vocal about taking care of our mental health as we should have been.”

Conflicts and difficult relationships may be inevitable in any work environment. But there’s a difference between an occasional disagreement and persistent abuse.

“What makes something toxic: it’s more pervasive, more consistent over time,” Tosti-Kharas said. “You may have tried some things and it’s not getting better. ... It’s very deeply entrenched.”

Possible indications of an emotionally harmful workplace include a widespread lack of trust and fear of being shot down if you speak up, she said.

Loud screamers aren’t the only kind of toxic co-workers and supervisors. There are quieter forms of toxicity, such as passive-aggressive behavior by leaders who use sarcasm, backhanded compliments, indirect criticism and exclusion to control their employees, according to Alana Atchison, a clinical psychologist based in Chicago.

“It is a relationship where you can’t communicate clearly or directly, so you have to silence yourself. You

can’t say truly what you need to say and feel safe,” Atchison said.

To spot a potentially toxic environment when applying for a new job, follow your gut instincts and consider warning signs. For example, frequent ads for the same position may reflect high turnover resulting from a negative environment. You can also search employee reviews online.

“I’m reading Glassdoor reviews like crazy to see what the environment is like, what the culture is like, on any place I’m applying to, because I can’t lose my hair again over a job,” said Grouette, who recently was laid off after several successful years at the newspaper.

When on the receiving end of toxicity, consider whether the offending behavior says more about the person perpetuating it than the recipient.

Smokescreen

“It’s almost like a smokescreen to hide their deficits,” Atchison said. “If someone feels insecure about their role or fears being overshadowed, they might resort to undermining others, gossiping or sabotaging projects to regain a sense of control or safety.”

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Atchison’s clients have increasingly complained about toxic work environments. She attributes that in part to the social isolation that accompanied lockdowns and restrictions on public activities.

“Socializing is a skill set, and that skill set has declined,” she said.

If you find yourself in a toxic work situation, talking about it with a trusted friend or professional therapist can help you process what is happening and develop a plan to deal with it, instead of letting it fester in your mind.

Stephanie Strausser, 42, a video production manager, said she sought support from friends and family members when she worked under an extreme micromanager who made her feel unsafe and whose decisions she considered unethical.

“Don’t hide it or keep it in. Talk to people. Even if you’re talking to ChatGPT,” Strausser advises those who find themselves in similar circumstances. “Don’t internalize it. And don’t take someone’s perception as fact.”

Amanda Szmuc, a Philadelphia lawyer who considers some of her past work environments to have been toxic, recommends documenting your concerns in case it becomes necessary to escalate them.

Writing down the details of troubling interactions as they happen and keeping copies of inappropriate messages or approved meeting recordings may come in handy if the human resources department gets involved, for example.

Maintaining a record may also help you avoid gaslighting and reinforce your determination to protect yourself.

If leaving a toxic environment isn’t financially possible or you want to try to make your circumstances more bearable, think about exploring ways to limit your interaction with the difficult party may be an option.



Health and safety agents setting up disinfection barriers to contain the first confirmed case of bird flu in commercial poultry, in the municipality of Montenegro, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, Saturday, May 17. (AP)

Nations halt imports

Brazil confirms 1st bird flu outbreak in poultry farm

SAO PAULO, May 18, (AP): Mexico, Chile and Uruguay have halted poultry imports from Brazil after the country confirmed its first bird flu outbreak on a commercial farm, authorities said Saturday.

On Friday, Brazil’s Agriculture and Livestock ministry said China and the European Union had halted poultry imports from Brazil.

Mexico’s National Service for Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality said in a statement Saturday that it suspended temporarily the import of chicken meat, fertile eggs, live birds and other poultry products from Brazil as a precautionary measure. Chile and Uruguay have also halted poultry imports, Luis Rua, secretary of international trade at Brazil’s Ministry of Agriculture, told local news service Broadcast Agro.

Brazil is one of the world’s leading producers and exporters of poultry, accounting for 14% of global chicken meat production, according to the US Department of Agriculture. An egg shortage in the United States following a bird flu outbreak there boosted Brazilian egg exports to the US, rising by more than 1,000% between January and April 2025, compared to the same period the previous year, according to trade data from the Brazilian government.

Brazilian authorities said Friday the virus was found at a facility in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, adding that a contingency plan has been implemented “not only to eliminate the disease but also to maintain the sector’s productive capacity, ensuring supply and, consequently, food security for the population.”

The agriculture ministry also said it notified the World Organization for Animal Health, the Ministries of Health and the Environment and Brazil’s trade partners.

Restriction on poultry exports follows rules agreed on with each importing country, based on international health certificate requirements, the Agriculture and Livestock ministry added. Depending on the type of disease, some deals apply to the whole country while others involve limits on where products can come from - for example, a specific state, city or just the area of the outbreak.

Brazilian chicken exports have previously faced resistance over sanitary concerns. In 2018, the European Union temporarily banned imports of chicken from 20 Brazilian plants due to concerns about salmonella. Brazil brought the case to the World Trade Organization.

Brazil, one of the world’s largest producers and exporters of poultry, confirmed Friday the country’s first bird flu outbreak on a commercial farm. The virus was found at a facility in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, the country’s agriculture ministry said in a statement. It said a contingency plan has been implemented “not only to eliminate the disease but also to maintain the sector’s productive capacity, ensuring supply and, consequently, food security for the population.”

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Martínez powers NYCFC past Red Bulls in Hudson River Derby

Bernardeschi, Corbeanu score twice, lead Toronto to thrashing of Montreal

MONTREAL, May 18, (AP): Federico Bernardeschi and reserve Theo Corbeanu each scored two goals and Toronto FC dismantled CF Montreal 6-1.

Tyrese Spicer opened the scoring when he broke away on the left sideline and converted a left-footed shot from left of the box past defenseless keeper Sébastien Breza for a 1-0 lead at 14 minutes.

At the 21st minute, Ola Brynhildsen drew a red card on Montreal's Joel Waterman after Waterman took him down on the Toronto (4-7-4) side of the field.

Nine minutes later, Bernardeschi took a pass from Deybi Flores, outran a defender and scored with the right boot from the right side of the box.

Toronto broke it open at 33 minutes when Brynhildsen scored with the right foot from the center of the box. Bernardeschi scored at 55 minutes with a left-foot laser from the right-half space outside the box which found the top left corner.

Alonso Martínez had a goal and an assist and New York City FC defeated New York Red Bulls 2-0 at Citi Field in the 26th edition of the Hudson River Derby.

NYCFC took the early lead when Martínez scored with a right-footed shot from the central position out-

side the box to the top left side in the 13th minute.

In the 50th minute, Maxi Moralez made it 2-0 when he scored with a left-footed shot from the center of the box to the lower left central zone. Martínez assisted.

Brian Gutiérrez had two goals and an assist and Chicago defeated Charlotte 4-1 for the Fire's third straight MLS game without a loss.

Slumping Charlotte has lost five in a row in MLS play.

In the 42nd minute, Jonathan Bamba opened the scoring with a right-footed shot from the left half-space outside the box to the lower left central zone. Gutiérrez assisted.

Gutiérrez and Philip Zinckernagel added back-to-back goals in a four-minute stretch of the second half, giving Chicago a commanding 3-0 lead. In the 60th minute, Gutiérrez scored with a right-footed shot from the center of the box to the bottom right corner. In the 64th, Philip Zinckernagel followed with a left-footed shot from the center of the box to the central bottom zone. Andrew Gutman assisted.

League scoring leader Tai Baribo recorded his 11th goal on a penalty kick in the second half to give the Eastern Conference-leading Philadelphia Union a

1-0 win over Atlanta United FC.

Baribo's goal at the 59th minute occurred after Luis Abram was given a yellow card for a handball. The penalty occurred when Atlanta keeper Brad Guzan came off his line and misplayed the ball attempting a kick to clear.

Tani Oluwaseyi and Joaquín Pereyra each had a goal and an assist on Saturday night, Dayne St. Clair made four saves and Minnesota United beat St. Louis City 3-0.

St. Louis (2-7-5) is winless, with two ties, in its last 10 games dating to a 1-0 victory against Seattle on March 15 and has been shut out seven times this season.

Oluwaseyi flicked in a back-heel shot from point-blank range to open the scoring in the 33rd minute. Nicolás Romero played a centering header, off a corner kick by Pereyra, to set up the finish. Oluwaseyi, who has six goals this season, scored for the first time since April 6.

St. Clair has seven shutouts this season for Minnesota (7-3-4).

Oluwaseyi, near the penalty spot, tapped a pass back to Pereyra for a one-touch finish from the top of the area to make it 2-0 in the 62nd.



CF Montreal's Dante Sealy, left, challenges Toronto FC's Tyrese Spicer (16) during the first half of a MLS soccer game in Montreal. (AP)



Horses compete during the 150th running of the Preakness Stakes horse race at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore. (AP)

Journalism storms to Preakness glory with Rispoli masterful ride

First Italian jockey to win a Triple Crown race

BALTIMORE, May 18, (AP): Journalism jostled with horses down the stretch, shrugged off the contact, burst through the lane and came from behind to win the 150th running of the Preakness Stakes.

The odds-on favorite was bumped by Goal Oriented near the quarter pole, and it looked like another second-place finish was coming two weeks after being the runner-up to Sovereignty in the Kentucky Derby. Journalism instead ran right by Gosger to give trainer Michael McCarthy his second win in a Triple Crown race.

"A lot of bouncing around there," McCarthy said. "When I saw that, I kind of resigned myself to the fact it was another fantastic effort and maybe come up a little bit short. But it just goes to show the testament that this horse has. Couldn't be prouder of him."

Gosger was second by a half-length. Sandman was third and Bob Baffert-trained Goal Oriented fourth. Journalism went 1 3/16 miles in 1:55.37.

Umberto Rispoli became the first jockey from Italy to win any of the



Umberto Rispoli kisses the Woodlawn Vase after riding Journalism to win the 150th running of the Preakness Stakes horse race at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore. (AP)

Triple Crown races.

"When I crossed the wire, the first things that comes up to my mind, it's all of the 20 years of my career that pass in front of me," Rispoli said. "I had to wait so long to be on a champion like that."

Journalism handled the adversity and thrived on a warm day that dried out the track after torrential rain fell at Pimlico Race Course for much of the

past week. Those conditions suited him better than the slop at Churchill Downs in the Derby.

"This victory symbolizes so much about life," co-owner Aaron Wellman said. "It took guts for Umberto Rispoli to power his way through a seemingly impossible hole getting side-swiped and threading the needle and powering on through. And it took guts from an incredible horse to somehow win this

way to victory."

Journalism paid \$4 to win, \$2.80 to place and \$2.40 to show.

"He's a remarkable horse," Baffert said of Journalism. "I wanted to be on the lead and was behind horses. I knew (Goal Oriented) was intimidated. He's never run that way. He ran well, but he's still too green for that."

Sovereignty did not take part after his owners and trainer Bill Mott decided to skip the Preakness, citing the two-week turnaround, and aimed for the Belmont on June 7. That made this a fifth time in seven years that the Preakness, for various reasons, was contested without a Triple Crown bid at stake.

But Journalism staked his claim for 3-year-old horse of the year by winning the \$2 million American classic race run at the old Pimlico Race Course for the last time before it's torn down and rebuilt. While work went on around him before the postrace news conference, Wellman asked, "Are they already tearing this place down?"

Not yet, and not before Journalism could add a memorable chapter by squeezing through the space he had to win.

"I still can't realize what this horse did," Rispoli said. "It's all about him. It's a pleasure and privilege to ride a horse like him."

Gyokeres helps Sporting win second consecutive Portuguese league title

LISBON, Portugal, May 18, (AP): Star striker Viktor Gyokeres helped to lead Sporting Lisbon to its second consecutive Portuguese league title after Benfica was held off on the final day of the season.

Gyokeres and Pedro Goncalves delivered goals in a 2-0 home win over Vitoria SC to ensure the title stayed with the green and black of Sporting and leave its crosstown rival as runner-up.

Benfica drew at 10-man Braga 1-1. That left Sporting with 82 points and Benfica with 80 after 34 rounds.

Goncalves opened for Sporting in the 53rd and Gyokeres sealed the win in the 82nd when he controlled a loose high ball in the box and dribbled around a defender and the goalkeeper before slotting inside the post. The Sweden striker yanked his shirt over his head and flexed his muscles while shouting out as the home fans celebrated.

His goal took his massive tally to 39 goals in 33 league appearances, to go with another six goals

in the Champions League. He is in the running for the European Golden Boot award for top domestic league scorer.

That tally improved on last season's 29 league goals to lead Sporting to the 2024 title. He is considered one the hottest prospects in European soccer for a big money move this offseason. Arsenal has been reported in Portugal to be a front-runner for him.

"It was our goal all season and to finish it off on the last day is incredible," Gyokeres said, while adding about his future that "you never know what is going to happen."

It was Sporting's 21st league title.

Sporting and Benfica arrived to the final round level on points but with the defending champion owning the head-to-head tiebreaker. Sporting needed only to match Benfica's result, while Benfica needed Sporting to stumble and then to better its result.

The title race went to the last day after Sporting

and Benfica drew 1-1 in a derby last weekend when both had a chance to clinch the title.

Sporting's and Benfica's games on Saturday were played simultaneously.

Benfica fell behind early at Braga when Rodrigo Zalazar converted a penalty in the 23rd. Vangelis Pavlidis leveled for Benfica in the 63rd after substitute Angel Di Maria set him up shortly after going on.

Braga was reduced to 10 men three minutes later when midfielder João Moutinho got a second yellow card, but Benfica couldn't get a winner.

The league ended a day before Portugal holds national elections.

Sporting and Benfica will meet again in the Portuguese Cup final next weekend. That could be Gyokeres' last game for Sporting with bigger European clubs eager to get his goals.

"We want to win that game but right now we want to celebrate right," Gyokeres said about the cup final.

Bengaluru climbs atop table

Kolkata eliminated as IPL returns with a damp squib

BENGALURU, India, May 18, (AP): The Indian Premier League's much-anticipated restart was delayed for another day after the Royal Challengers Bengaluru-Kolkata Knight Riders game was washed out on Saturday.

Both teams received a point each but it wasn't enough for defending champion Kolkata, which was eliminated from top-four contention with only one game remaining.

Bengaluru climbed atop the table and needs only one more point to secure a place in the knockouts.

The IPL was suspended for a week to Friday due to the military showdown between India and Pakistan. The Pakistan Super League also resumed.

The IPL final, originally scheduled for May 25, was moved to June 3.

Saturday's game also marked an emotional return to the playing arena for India great Virat Kohli, who announced his test retirement last

Monday.

Fans arrived in great numbers wearing a white jersey to honor the ace batter, who played 123 tests for India and finished just short of 10,000 test runs.

Kohli has 505 runs in this IPL, for fourth highest. However, he never stood a chance of batting at home thanks to incessant rain in Bengaluru since Friday evening.

The Royal Challengers have two remaining round-robin games against Sunrisers Hyderabad on May 23 and Lucknow Super Giants on May 27.

Kolkata's last game is against already-eliminated Hyderabad on May 25.

Sunday's doubleheader features Rajasthan Royals hosting Punjab Kings in Jaipur, and Delhi Capitals taking on Gujarat Titans in New Delhi.

Rajasthan is out of knockouts contention, while the other three sides are still alive.



A digital display announces that the Indian Premier League cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru is abandoned due to the rain, at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

New-look Mercury beats Storm

Clark leads Fever past Sky as tempers flare after hard foul

PHOENIX, May 18, (AP): Satou Sabally scored 27 points, Alyssa Thomas added 20 and Phoenix never trailed as the Mercury beat the Seattle Storm 81-59 in the season opener for both teams.

Thomas, who also had seven rebounds and six assists, and Sabally came to Phoenix in the offseason by way of sign-and-trade deals from Connecticut and Dallas, respectively.

Eight players made their debut for the Mercury, the most to do so in the same game for the franchise since nine did so in 1999 - the WNBA's inaugural season.

Skylar Diggins scored 21 points on 7-of-14 shooting and Nneka Ogumike made 5 of 10 from the field and finished with 12 points for the Storm. The rest of the team combined to shoot 23% (9 of 39).

Monique Akoa Makani made a layup - her first WNBA points - and Kalani Brown followed with another to give the Mercury a 73-53 lead with 4:29 to play and spark a 12-1 run.

Phoenix shot 52% (30 of 58) from the field.

Sabally scored 17 points and Thomas added 13 to help the Mercury take a 41-30 lead at halftime.

Dominique Malonga, the No. 2 pick in last month's draft, made her debut for the Storm. The 6-foot-6 19-year-old finished with two points in nearly 10 minutes.

Kahleah Copper (knee) and Natasha Mack (back) did not play for Phoenix. Copper averaged 21.1 points per game last season, third most in the WNBA.

Caitlin Clark opened the season with the third triple-double of her career, and the new-look Indiana Fever dominated the final 16 1/2 minutes to pull away from the revamped Chicago Sky 93-58.

Last season's WNBA Rookie of the Year finished with 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists while blocking a career-high four shots. Aliyah Boston added 19 points, 13 rebounds and five blocks, while Natasha Howard scored 15 points in her Fever debut.

DeWanna Bonner also scored seven points to move into third on the WNBA's career scoring list, passing Tina Thompson. Bonner now has 7,489 points.

Indiana's victory margin matched the second-largest in franchise history.

Angel Reese had 12 points and 17 rebounds for the Sky, who lost three of four last season to Indiana. Ariel Atkins added 11 points.

But the game was defined by the newest chapter in the Clark-Reese rivalry. This time, it came on a hard foul from Clark across Reese's arm, which jarred the ball loose and knocked Reese to the floor with 4:38 left in the third quarter. When Reese jumped up to confront Clark, Fever center Aliyah Boston stepped between the two players as Clark walked away from the skirmish.

The referees upgraded Clark's foul to a flagrant 1 and assessed technical fouls to Reese and Boston following a replay review.

But after Reese made one of two free throws and Courtney Vandersloot made a layup on the ensuing possession, Indiana closed the third quarter on a 9-0 run to take a 65-45 lead. The Sky never really threatened Indiana's lead.

Fever coach Stephanie White earned the first win of her second coaching tenure in her first game back in the state where she won Indiana's 1994-95 Miss Basketball Award and led Purdue to the 1998-99 national championship.



Participants pose for a group photo.

Kuwait hosts Kung Fu sports day

The Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Committee, in collaboration with the Ding Kung Fu Institute led by Master Khader Ding, organized a special sports day featuring demonstrations of various kung fu styles. The event included performances of Tao Luo forms, traditional weapons techniques, and practical self-defense demonstrations.

At the conclusion of the event, Master Khader Ding highlighted the vital role of martial arts in building both physical and mental strength. He emphasized the importance of cultivating skilled athletes capable

of competing and achieving success in Arab, Asian, and international championships.

Master Ding also expressed his appreciation to Nasser Al-Loughani, Chairman of the Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Committee, as well as committee members Abdulrahman Al-Turki, Dhari Al-Tamimi, Abdulrahman Al-Muqaddam, and Abdullah Al-Mahjan. He praised their efforts in nurturing young talent and advancing the presence of Wushu Kung Fu both locally and abroad.

Kuwaiti rhythmic gymnastics team wins gold and two silvers in Poland

‘A testament to the steady progress’

GDYNIA, Poland, May 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti girls’ rhythmic gymnastics team delivered an impressive performance at the Polish International Championship held in Gdynia, securing a total of three medals – one gold and two silver – amid strong competition from 23 participating countries.

The Kuwait Gymnastics Federation hailed the team’s achievement as a testament to the steady progress of rhythmic gymnastics in the country. The medal-winning athletes included Fawzia Al-Abdulkarim, Raya Al-Qassar, Nabila Al-Kharafi, and Sarah Al-Bannai, whose performances stood out on the international stage.

The Federation emphasized the significance of competing in a tournament that featured top-tier athletes from across the globe, including countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the host nation, Poland. Other participating countries included the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Luxem-



Gymnastics champions celebrate their victories with coaches.

bourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Turkey, New Zealand, Brazil, Egypt, and Kuwait.

Participation in such high-cal-

iber competitions, the Federation noted, is part of its broader strategy to develop a team capable of competing in continental and world championships.

The Federation congratulated the athletes and acknowledged the key role of Ukrainian national coach Viktorija Vsyuk in guiding the team to success.

Coco Gauff beaten in straight sets

Paolini breaks 40-year drought at Italian Open

ROME, May 18, (AP): Jasmine Paolini got the party started at the Foro Italico. And now the stage is set for Jannik Sinner to cap it off.

Paolini took advantage of the crowd’s support and beat Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-2 to become the first home player to win the Italian Open in 40 years.

The last Italian woman to win the open was Raffaella Reggi in 1985 in Taranto. The last local man to raise the trophy was Adriano Panatta in 1976.

When Paolini hit a big serve down the T on her second championship point and Gauff couldn’t get it back, she celebrated with a big smile and raised her arms as she spun around in joy.

“It doesn’t seem real to me,” Paolini said. “I came here as a kid to see this tournament but winning it and holding up this trophy wasn’t even in my dreams.”

Before the trophy ceremony, the crowd chanted “Ole, ole, ole, Jasmine, Jas-mine,” and Paolini responded by forming her hands into a heart shape.

“The crowd has been incredible,” she said.

Paolini and partner Sara Errani are also in the women’s doubles final and will play Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens for that trophy, too, on Sunday.

“It’s been two incredible weeks and it’s not finished yet,” Paolini

said.

With the country’s tennis boom in full force, Italy President Sergio Mattarella attended the women’s final on Campo Centrale.

Numerous fans held aloft Italian flags and they constantly shouted “Vai Jasmine!” (“Go Jasmine”).

The fifth-ranked Paolini was the runner-up at the French Open and Wimbledon and led Italy to the Billie Jean King Cup title last year. She and Errani also won gold in doubles at the Paris Olympics.

Paolini will move up to No. 4 in the rankings on Monday, which will improve her position in the

draw for the French Open starting next weekend.

At age 29, Paolini is achieving much more than she did earlier in her career.

“I played her a long time ago in Adelaide,” Gauff said, referring to a match that the American won in 2021. “I remember her playing a little bit more of a passive game style. Now she’s more aggressive.”

Indeed, despite her height of 5-foot-4 (1.63 meters), Paolini is able to produce powerful groundstrokes and she often outhit Gauff.

“Today was my best match of the week,” she said, “and I needed that

to beat Gauff.”

Despite her success last year, Paolini recently made a coaching change and replaced Renzo Furlan with Marc Lopez. Errani is also almost always with her, too, and acts as an unofficial coach.

“She is capable of playing top-two, No. 1-in-the-world tennis,” Gauff said.

Gauff, the 2023 U.S. Open champion who was ranked No. 3, made a whopping 55 unforced errors to Paolini’s 20 and hit seven double faults to Paolini’s none.

“Maybe I could have served better and put more balls in the court,” Gauff said. “I definitely could and can. But she played to win today and she deserved to win. ... With the double-faults, it’s something I know I have to improve.”

It’s the second time in two clay-court tournaments that Gauff has finished runner-up. She lost the Madrid Open final two weeks ago to Aryna Sabalenka.

Gauff was coming off the longest match of her career, a 3 1/2-hour victory over Zheng Qinwen in the semifinals that ended in the early Friday morning.

Paolini also beat Gauff at a clay-court event in Stuttgart, Germany, in April.

Monica Seles in 1990 was the last woman to sweep Rome’s singles and doubles titles in the same year.



Jasmine Paolini of Italy, poses with the trophy after winning the Italian Open tennis tournament at the Foro Italico in Rome. (AP)

Best of the Rest

PSV wins Dutch soccer title: One of Europe’s most staggering and turbulent title races culminated Sunday in PSV Eindhoven being crowned Dutch champion at the expense of big rival Ajax, whose late-season meltdown couldn’t be saved by a win in the final round.

PSV retained the title by beating Sparta Rotterdam 3-1, with United States midfielder Malik Tillman scoring the third goal to settle any nerves with Ajax playing - and winning - its match taking place at the same time.

Ajax won 2-0 at home to FC Twente but that wasn’t enough for the Amsterdam club, which finished a point behind PSV despite holding a nine-point lead with five games remaining. (AP)



Chelsea wins Women’s FA Cup: With tennis great Serena Williams in attendance, Chelsea completed a trophy treble in an unbeaten domestic season in English soccer by defeating Manchester United 3-0 in the Women’s FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium on Sunday.

Williams watched the match at England’s national soccer stadium in London while sitting alongside her husband, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, who announced on Wednesday he had bought a stake in Chelsea’s women’s team. It’s reportedly a 10% stake for about 20 million pounds (\$26.5 million).

Ohanian is now part of a club that is the dominant force in the English women’s game, adding the FA Cup to its League Cup and a sixth straight Women’s Super League this season. Chelsea has achieved the domestic treble for the second time in five years - and did it this time without losing a game in any of the three competitions. (AP)

Handball Premier League fixtures moved to Tuesday amid Cup final

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: The Kuwait Handball Association has announced the postponement of the third round matches of the Premier League Second Division, initially scheduled for today, to tomorrow (Tuesday), in consideration of the Crown Prince’s Cup final between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi.

The rescheduled matches will take place at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex as follows:

- 4:30 pm – Burgan vs. Kazma
 - 6:00 pm – Kuwait Club vs. Al-Arabi
 - 7:30 pm – Salmiya vs. Sulaibikhat
- Kuwait Club currently leads the standings with a perfect 40 points, followed by Burgan with 33, Kazma with 28, Salmiya with 21, and both Sulai-bikhat and Al-Arabi with 18 points each.

Meanwhile, the Association has also revised the match schedule for the First Division League. The ninth round kicks off today, with Al-Qurain playing Khaitan at 5:00 pm and Fahaheel facing Al-Sahel at 6:30 pm.



A file photo of players in action.

Qadsia led the First Division table with 26 points, closely followed by Al-Qurain (24), Al-Nasr (23), Khaitan and Fahaheel (18 each), Yarmouk (6), Al-Tadamon (5), and Al-Sahel (0).

In earlier matches, Khaitan defeated Fahaheel 40-29, while Al-Qurain beat Al-Tadamon 32-25.

Greenwood ties top scorer Dembelé

10-time French champ Etienne relegated

PARIS, May 18, (AP): Saint-Etienne, one of Ligue 1’s most storied clubs, was relegated as Paris Saint-Germain celebrated its title with its fans on the final matchday.

Despite support from 38,000 buoyant spectators at sold-out Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, Saint-Etienne lost to Toulouse 3-2 and could not avoid the drop.

Saint-Etienne, which dominated French soccer during the 1960s and ’70s, joined last-placed Montpellier as the demoted teams. Saint-Etienne immediately returns to Ligue 2.

Le Havre avoided their fate by winning at Strasbourg 3-2 thanks to a penalty from Abdoulaye Touré late in added time. Touré, who completed a brace, converted the spot kick with a panenka, allowing his team to leapfrog Reims in the standings and remain in the top flight.

Reims will face Metz in the promotion-relegation playoff. Second-division side Metz edged Dunkerque to secure a spot in the two-leg playoff against Ligue 1’s 16th-placed team.

In Paris, coach Luis Enrique fielded a full-strength squad as PSG celebrated its title at home against Auxerre.

PSG was caught cold by a first-half goal from Lassine Sinayoko and turned things around after the interval with efforts from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, who scored twice, and captain Marquinhos, to win 3-1.

PSG won a record-extending 13th Ligue 1 title with six games to spare and is hoping for its first ever treble. In addition to the Champions League final against Inter Milan on May 31, Enrique’s team plays Reims in the French Cup final on May 24.

“It’s the best way to get ready for the other matches left,” PSG midfielder Vitinha said.

With 84 points, PSG set a new record

for the most points in a 34-match season. It shared the previous record with Saint-Etienne, which achieved 81 points in the 1969-70 season.

Nice won the fourth and final spot in Champions League, a ticket to the third preliminary round, by thrashing Brest 6-0.

Lille ended fifth and qualified for the Europa League group stage.

In his final match with Lyon, Alexandre Lacazette scored his 200th and 201st goals for his boyhood club. Lacazette returned to Lyon in June 2022 and will leave as his contract expires. He left the seven-time French champion in 2017 for a then-club record 60 million euros (\$64 million) after joining at age 12.

Lacazette scored from the penalty spot and a tap-in as Lyon beat Angers 2-0 to finish sixth.

Lacazette’s brilliance was a rare satisfaction for Lyon fans as the club again missed out on Champions League football. The club’s future remains unclear after it was hit in November by a decision to provisionally relegate the side to Ligue 2 following an audit of the club’s finances by the French league’s soccer watchdog. The DNCG decided Lyon’s financial situation must improve by the end of the season.

Mason Greenwood scored twice and delivered an assist as Marseille sealed a second-place finish by beating Rennes 4-2.

Marseille finished four points ahead third-placed Monaco, which lost to Lens 4-0.

Former Manchester United forward Greenwood’s 20th and 21st goals helped him finish joint top-scorer in the league with PSG’s Ousmane Dembélé. Under the league rules, Dembélé will take the trophy because he scored less penalties than Greenwood.



Paris Saint Germain players pose with the trophy as they celebrate PSG’s French League One title after the League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Auxerre at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)

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Chelsea's Millie Bright, center, lifts the trophy with teammates following victory in the English Women's FA Cup Final soccer match against Manchester United at Wembley Stadium, London. (AP)

Sports

Crown Prince attends, patronizes Cup final

New challenge as Kuwait Club takes on Al-Arabi

KUWAIT CITY, May 18: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will patronize and attend the final match of the 31st edition of the Crown Prince Cup this evening. The much-anticipated clash between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi will kick off at 7:00 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Kuwait Club enters the final with the aim of reaffirming its superiority over Al-Arabi, having defeated them twice in the Zain Premier League this season – most recently with a 2-1 comeback win last week in the championship group's final round. The "Whites" also secured a 2-0 victory in the first phase of the league before playing to a goalless draw in the return match.

Kuwait Club has been dominant this season, successfully defending their league title for the fourth consecutive year – the 20th in the club's history. They also clinched the Super Cup earlier in the season by overcoming Al-Qadsia on penalties (7-6), after a 1-1 draw.

Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovovic is hoping to continue his strong run with the team and claim his third title with Kuwait Club. However, he acknowledges the difficulty of the task ahead, especially against an Al-Arabi side determined to bounce back and secure its first domestic title this season.

Jovovic will rely on a talented roster that includes Saud Al-Hoshan, Fahad Al-Hajri, Malek Zola, Amin Abu Al-Fath, Mishari Ghannam, Mohammed Farih, Reda Hani, Yahya Jabran, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Amr Abdel-Fattah, Yassin Al-Khenisi, Yousef Nasser, and Mohammed Marhoon.

The fitness of key players Sami Al-Sanea and Ali Hussein remains uncertain, as both missed recent training sessions due to injury. Nonetheless, the coach remains confident in his squad's depth and ability to fill any potential gaps.

On the opposing side, Al-Arabi is eager to secure victory after narrowly missing out on the league title in the final round. Head coach Nasser Al-Shatti is well aware that winning tonight requires relentless effort and focus, especially against a seasoned opponent.

Despite the absence of Hassan Hamdan (suspension) and Khaled Al-Marshed (injury), Al-Shatti has a



In this file photo Al Arabi player shoots the ball as Kuwaiti player defends during the league game.



Al-Shatti, Jumaa Abboud, media coordinator Mishaal Al-Abkal, and colleague Walid Al-Nayef address the media.

strong lineup at his disposal. The likely starting eleven includes goalkeeper Suleiman Abdul Ghafoor, along with Jumaa Aboud, Hamad Al-Qallaf, Sufyan Bouchar, and either Abdullah Ammar or Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi in defense. Midfield options include Mohammed Khaled, Hussein Ashkanani, Ali Aziz, Kamil Al-Aswad, and Jumaa Aboud in a defensive role. The attacking line could feature Hamza Khaba, Emmanuel Iwala, Christopher John,

Ali Khalaf, Bandar Al-Salama, and Yousef Majed.

Jovovic affirmed that the upcoming Crown Prince Cup final against Al-Arabi will be a completely different challenge compared to their recent Zain Premier League encounter.

Speaking during a press conference held at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, Jovovic stated, "Every match has its own character and context. We've already closed the chapter



Nebojsa, Hussein, and media coordinator Omar Al-Zamel speak during the press conference.

on the league, and now our full focus must be on winning the Cup."

Jovovic stressed that clinching the title would require top-level performance from all players, highlighting the importance of team readiness. "Statistics matter in football. Both teams are tied in the number of Cup wins, and this final will determine who leads."

He also expressed optimism that their recent league triumph would

serve as a motivational boost, enabling the players to maintain their momentum and pursue more trophies.

Jovovic extended his appreciation to Kuwait Club Honorary President Marzouq Al-Ghanim and Club Chairman Khaled Al-Ghanim for their unwavering support, noting their regular presence at training sessions as a source of motivation for the players.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club's Ali Hussein reaffirmed the team's deter-



mination, saying, "We are fully prepared for the final and eager to claim the title."

Al-Shatti congratulated Kuwait Club on winning the Zain Premier League title and expressed his strong desire to win the Crown Prince Cup.

Speaking at a press conference held yesterday at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, Al-Shatti said, "I would like to thank the Al-Arabi players for their remarkable performance throughout the league. They competed fiercely from the very first rounds, and we came close to winning the title." He added, "Competing for every title until the end is never easy."

He noted that Kuwait Club has maintained a distinguished system over the past 20 years, while Al-Arabi has been following a similar path over the last five years, aiming to crown its efforts with a championship.

"I hope to win the Crown Prince Cup," Al-Shatti stated, emphasizing that his main goal is to compete strongly, introduce modern tactics, and help Al-Arabi's young players excel and win titles.

"My objective is to win the title to please the fans and compensate for the league loss," he continued, explaining that football is often decided by small details that ultimately cost Al-Arabi the league crown.

Al-Arabi player Juma Aboud described the upcoming match as a "big" one with intense competition between the two teams. He added, "Our goal is to win the title by following and executing all of the coach's instructions."

Al-Sulaiteen brothers win double gold at the Abu Dhabi Jiu-Jitsu Grand Slam

ABU DHABI, May 18, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athletes Zaid and Abdulaziz Al-Sulaiteen secured a double gold triumph at the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam Jiu-Jitsu Championship, further cementing their dominance on the international stage.

Zaid Al-Sulaiteen claimed gold in the under-14 category, overcoming a competitive field of 16 athletes from various countries. His younger brother, Abdulaziz, captured gold in the under-12 category, which featured 21 international competitors.

With their latest victories, the Al-Sulaiteen brothers have



Zaid and Abdulaziz Al-Sulaiteen display their medals.

now amassed a remarkable total of six gold medals in Jiu-Jitsu Grand Slam tournaments. Their previous wins include top finishes in London, Istanbul, Moscow, and Rome – making them the first Kuwaiti athletes to achieve this milestone in the sport.

Speaking to KUNA, their father Mohammad Al-Sulaiteen expressed his immense pride in their accomplishments. "This achievement is not only for our family, but for all of Kuwait. We hope to see continued support for our athletes in Jiu-Jitsu and other sports in the future," he said.

Farewell, Goodison Park

Everton wins last game at home of 133 years

LONDON, May 18, (AP): Everton bade an emotional farewell to Goodison Park, its home of 133 years, with a 2-0 win over Southampton in the Premier League on Sunday in front of dozens of the club's greatest players and a tearful, scarf-waving crowd.

Ilman Ndiaye will go down as Everton's final scorer in its atmospheric, long-time ground, with the Senegal forward grabbing both goals in the first half and walking off with the match ball on an occasion that turned into a party for the team's fans.

"Very special," Ndiaye said. "I wanted to give them something today."

Everton will move from one of English soccer's classic stadiums to a 53,000-seat waterfront arena at nearby Bramley-Moore Dock for the start of next season. Goodison Park was going to be demolished but, after a feasibility study, will continue to operate instead in the women's game as the new home



Everton's Jarrad Branthwaite, left, and Southampton's Kamaldeen Sulemana battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Southampton at Goodison Park, Liverpool, England. (AP)

of Everton Women from next season. Plumes of blue smoke filled the air

around the streets outside Goodison as fans gathered before kickoff.

Verstappen wins Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix to end Piastri's streak



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands celebrates on the podium after winning the Italian Emilia-Romagna Formula One Grand Prix, as McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain looks on, at the Enzo and Dino Ferrari racetrack in Imola, Italy. (AP)

IMOLA, Italy, May 18, (AP): Max Verstappen gave his Formula 1 title defense a big boost with victory at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix on Sunday after a daring overtake on standings leader Oscar Piastri at the start.

The Dutch driver built a commanding lead which was wiped out when the safety car bundled the field back up. He still held on to win ahead of Lando Norris, who overtook his McLaren teammate Piastri for second with five laps remaining.

Verstappen took his second win of the season, and first since last month's Japanese Grand Prix, and denied Piastri - who finished third - what would have been his fourth win in a row.

Verstappen praised his Red Bull team's "fantastic execution all round" as the team marked its 400th F1 race with a win.

"The start itself wasn't particularly great, but I was still on the outside line, or basically the normal (racing) line, and I was like, 'Well, I'm just going to try and send it round the

outside,' and it worked really well." Verstappen said of his crucial overtake. "That, of course, unleashed our pace because once we were in the lead, the car was good."

Norris' late-race move on Piastri was almost a copy of Verstappen's, though Norris had the advantage of being on fresher tires than his teammate.

"We had a good little battle at the end between Oscar and myself, which is always tense, but always good fun," Norris said, admitting that Verstappen and Red Bull were "too good for us today."

Piastri's lead over Norris in the standings was cut to 13 points, with Verstappen nine behind Norris.

Lewis Hamilton recovered from 12th on the grid to finish fourth in his first race for Ferrari in Italy.

Hamilton profited from a late-race fight between his teammate Charles Leclerc and Alex Albon of Williams.

Albon complained Leclerc had pushed him off the track as they battled for fourth, and Hamilton passed both drivers before Ferrari eventually asked Leclerc to yield fifth to Albon.

George Russell was seventh for Mercedes, ahead of Carlos Sainz, Jr. in the second Williams. Isack Hadjar was ninth for Racing Bulls and Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Yuki Tsunoda was 10th after starting last following a crash in qualifying.

Overtaking was expected to be rare in what could be F1's last race for the foreseeable future at Imola. Instead, the Italian fans were treated to Verstappen's spectacular move at the start and plenty of other overtakes.

The narrow, bumpy Imola track has been a favorite among drivers, who have relished its old-school challenge since it returned to the F1 schedule during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, its status as Italy's second race - only the United States also hosts more than one - makes its position vulnerable.

"If we don't come back here, it is going to be a shame," Piastri said Saturday.

Sunday's race was the last under Imola's current contract, and while it isn't officially goodbye yet, there has been no word about next year.