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Opinion



Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Indeed, for Arabs, it is all 'soap'

THE Sykes-Picot Agreement was the final nail in the coffin of the Ottoman Empire. The Balfour Declaration then marked the next phase in the division of influence between Britain and France, leading to a significant increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Even before that fateful declaration was issued, when Jewish settlements began to be established in Palestine in 1908, Palestinian landowners were wary of this development. However, they did not actively prevent the new settlements.

As events accelerated after World War I, the Arabs lacked the military power needed to halt the process of Judaization.

Meanwhile, Europe provided financial support to the new settlers, who succeeded in establishing a network of settlements and forming a self-defense force.

After World War II, Europe and Germany, seeking to atone for the atrocities committed by Hitler against the Jews, facilitated the increased Jewish immigration to Palestine.

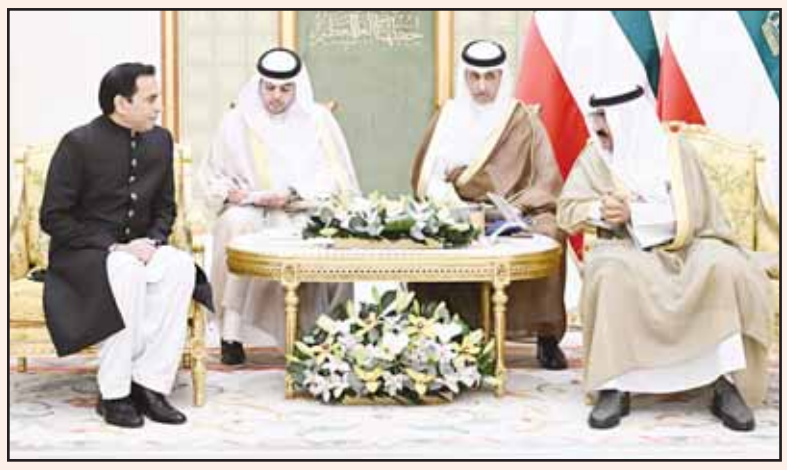
This historical context is crucial in countering attempts to displace Palestinians from their land, particularly in light of the Israeli Finance Minister's statement about relocating Gaza's population to a third country.

For nearly two decades, several Arab countries have witnessed civil wars and internal divisions. Yet, despite this, the slogan "Free Palestine" continues to be raised, while actions often move in the opposite direction, or as we say in Kuwaiti slang, "praying towards the east."

Since 1948, false accusations have been leveled against the late Egyptian King Farouk, claiming his

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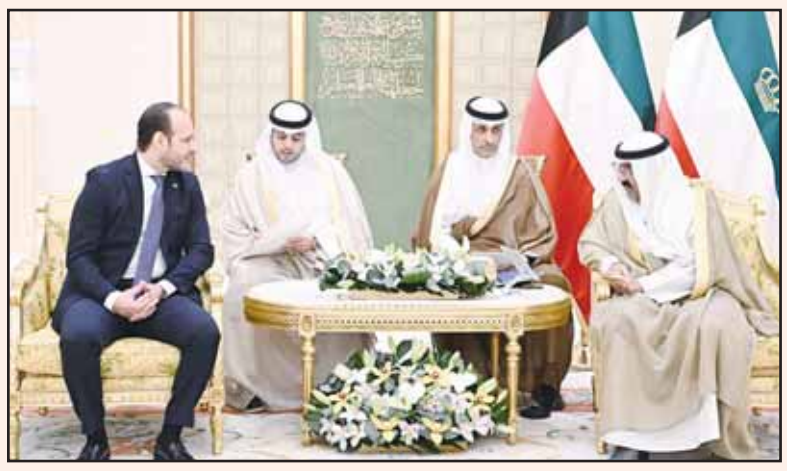
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HH the Amir receives Ambassador of Pakistan.



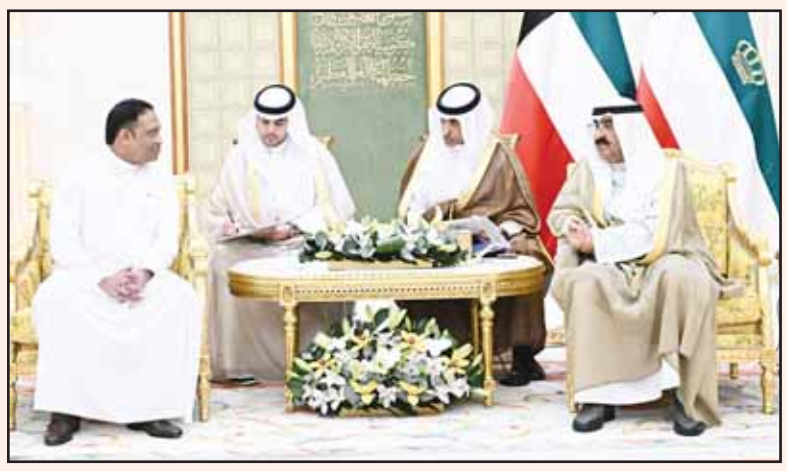
HH the Amir receives Ambassador of Cyprus.



HH the Amir receives Ambassador of El Salvador.



HH the Amir receives Ambassador of Armenia.



HH the Amir receives Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

Amiri Diwan photos

HH Amir receives credentials of several new ambassadors

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): A ceremony was held Monday morning at Bayan Palace where His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the credentials of the following new ambassadors to Kuwait: Dr. Zafar Iqbal of Pakistan, Andreas Panayiotou of Cyprus, Juan Carlos Staben Boillat of El Salvador, Arsen Alexander Arakelyan of Armenia, and Lakshitha Pradeep Ratnayake of Sri Lanka.

Senior state officials attended the ceremony.

Syrian President Al-Sharaa to visit Kuwait end of May

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa is scheduled to visit Kuwait at the end of this month, marking his first official trip to the country since assuming leadership during the transitional period, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting Syrian sources.

In an exclusive statement to the daily, sources said this visit will conclude Al-Sharaa's Gulf tour, which included stops in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain. Sources added he will visit the Sultanate of Oman before arriving in Kuwait.

During his visit, President Al-Sharaa will meet with the Kuwaiti political leadership to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation. He will also express Syria's gratitude for Kuwait's longstanding political and financial support; including its role in hosting multiple donor conferences, providing substantial humanitarian aid since 2011, and launching an emergency airlift following the fall of the former regime.

Sources revealed that a delegation of Kuwaiti businesspersons, led by Bader



Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa

Nasser Al-Kharafi, held a preliminary meeting last Tuesday to discuss potential investment opportunities. They said President Al-Sharaa is expected to meet with business leaders during his visit to explore avenues for economic collaboration.

In preparation for these discussions, President Al-Sharaa met earlier this

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Kuwait unveils 3-point plan for school reform

Vision for harmonized education gets GCC support

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Education Minister Jalal Al-Tabtabai announced three Gulf educational initiatives during the opening of the ninth meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Education in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries on Monday.

In his speech, Al-Tabtabai affirmed the commitment of Kuwait to support joint Gulf education; indicating that the meeting reflects the depth of partnership and integration among the GCC states in the field of education.

He said the three Gulf educational initiatives include the Gulf Youth Sports Initiative to promote physical activity and mental health among students, Unification of Academic Ladders among GCC States to enhance educational harmony and facilitate student mobility, and the Initiative to Promote a Common Gulf Identity in Educational Curricula.

He disclosed that these initiatives are in line with the Kuwait 2035 vision, the sustainable development goals and the Gulf Education Vision 2030. He confirmed the importance of adapting to contemporary challenges, specifically digital transformation and artificial intelligence.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Ministers of Education from GCC countries gather for a commemorative photo during the 9th committee meeting on Monday.

He pointed out that the meeting is a manifestation of the depth of Gulf ties and shared destiny, affirming the unity of path and the integration of aspirations toward an educational future that witnesses advanced coordination in the area of educational cooperation. "This future is based on an effective partnership that draws its strength from a cultural heritage and

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Committee for Regulating Humanitarian and Charitable Work held its third meeting Monday, chaired by Acting Prime Minister **Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah**, with participation from government representatives.

The meeting focused on improving efficiency and transparency of Kuwait's charitable efforts, aligning them with international standards and protecting the country's reputation.

The committee addressed major challenges and discussed recommendations to enhance coordination between government agencies and charitable organizations, to boost transparency and strengthen Kuwait's international credibility. (KUNA)

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TEHRAN: Nuclear talks between **Iran** and the **United States** will be doomed if **Washington** continues to urge Tehran to slash its uranium enrichment activities down to zero, a foreign ministry spokesman said on Monday.

Accusing Washington of "complicating negotiations," **Esmail Baghaei** told the press that the Islamic Republic's uranium enrichment program is not subject to discussion, underlining that Tehran is still "participating in discussions" with Washington. (KUNA)



2 'Ties strategic … $700b Kuwaiti stake in US'



8 NBK wraps up the closing activities of 2nd 'NBK RISE' cohort



9 Burgan Bank participates in the annual GUST Career Fair

Kuwait, Microsoft accelerate digital future

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar affirmed on Monday the ministry's commitment to accelerating digital integration and enhancing government innovation by implementing the terms of its strategic partnership with Microsoft.

In a speech during a high-level meeting with Microsoft's Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Judson Bezek-Althoff, Minister Al-Omar said that Kuwait is making steady progress toward building an integrated digital system capable of keeping pace with global developments, enhancing the quality of government services, and creating an environment conducive to innovation and investment.

He also noted that one of the most important gains of this partnership is the empowerment of national competencies through specialized training programs in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and advanced technologies, consolidating the role of Kuwaiti cadres in leading the transformation towards a competitive and sustainable digital economy.

In turn, Acting Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Sheikh Athbi Jaber Al-Sabah said that the launch of the AI-powered data center project, in partnership with Microsoft and with direct support from the CITRA, is a pivotal step in Kuwait's digital future.

Sheikh Athbi affirmed that the Authority has taken it upon itself to serve as a link between relevant government agencies and international partners, most notably Microsoft, to ensure the necessary environment is created to establish and operate advanced data centers that serve the country's needs and support its ambitions towards digital transformation.

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Day by Day

TO this day, a considerable number of people are being incarcerated for offenses related to "bounced checks" or "insufficient funds."

Dear Minister of Justice, or rather, dear Government, have mercy on these individuals, for there is no country in the world that treats a bounced check as a felony, nor does it imprison someone for such an act.

The government and its agencies are not debt collectors for creditors. We live in a civilized society. Therefore, the lender who fails to secure sufficient guarantees is responsible for the loss of their money, as stipulated by Islamic law and the principles upheld globally.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:23	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:54	Maghrib	18:35
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:03

Local

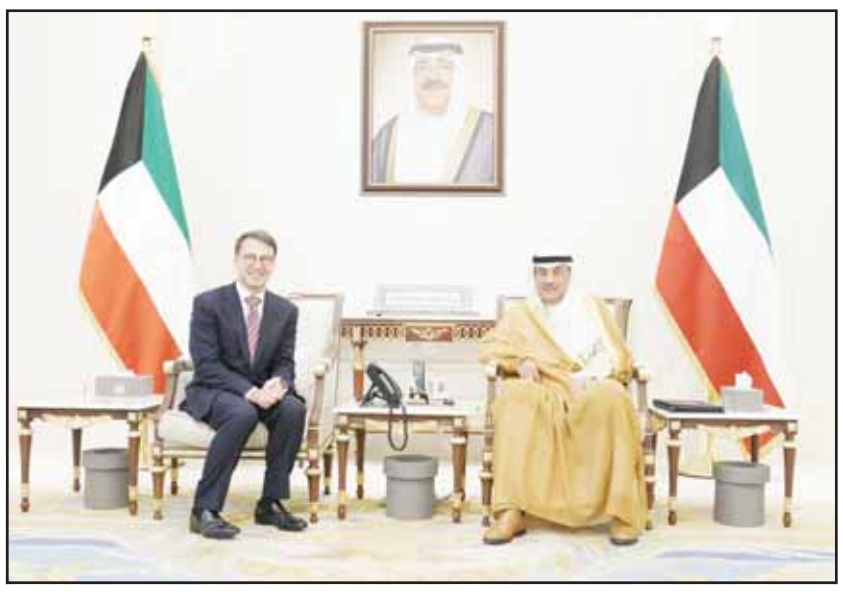
Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-50 km/h causing rising dust.
By Night: Rather hot and dust will subside gradually with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	46	23
Abdaly	45	25
Jahra	46	29
Salmiyah	39	32
Jal Aliyah	44	27
Nuwaisib	40	25
Wafra	43	23



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Under Secretary General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary A. DiCarlo and UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Iraq.



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Microsoft's visiting Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer Judson Althoff.

HH Crown Prince meets UN official, Microsoft executive VP

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received visiting UN Under Secretary General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary A. DiCarlo and UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Iraq Claudio Cordon at Bayan Palace on Monday.

His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Mazen Al-Issa and Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations, Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulaziz Saud Al-Jarallah attended the reception.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Microsoft's visiting Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer Judson Althoff and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace on Monday.

Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Saud Abdulaziz Al-Omar, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and KDIPA's Assistant Director General Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Humoud Al-Sabah were present at the reception.

Imports helped curtail load shedding in April

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The April report of the Statistics Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed that the electricity grid imported 599,151 megawatts or 832 megawatts per day last month; thereby, limiting the implementation of the programmed power cuts.

According to the report, the maximum electrical load reached 13,150 megawatts on April 26; while the minimum load reached 7,460 megawatts on April 1 and 18.

Meanwhile, with regard to freshwater statistics, the maximum net consumption reached 466.904 million imperial gallons on April 30, the maximum daily water storage reached 2,592.801 million imperial gallons on April 29, and the lowest daily storage reached 2,217.044 million imperial gallons on April 17.

Furthermore, the report indicated that the ministry connected electricity to 790 customers in various residential sectors in April. Private residential customers topped the list with 698, followed by the government sector with 40, investment sector with 16, commercial sector with 13, industrial sector with 12 and agricultural sector with 11.

The report indicated that the total load provided to new customers reached 94,245,020 kilowatts; while stating that 21 employees were added to the total number of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti employees, reaching 35,677 compared to 35,656 in March. It also disclosed that the percentage of Kuwaiti employees at the ministry reached 97.8 percent.

'Ties strategic ... $700b Kuwaiti stake in US'

Palestinian issue case of 'lost opportunities': Al-Jarallah



Abdulaziz Al-Dughaishem receives former Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber.



Guests pictured with the host.

Photos by Rizk Taufiq



Dean of Kuwaiti journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah at the gathering.



Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Abdulaziz Al-Dughaishem and guests.



Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber, Saud Al-Farhan, Mohammad Al-Barjas and Bassam Al-Qassas.



Ahmed Al-Jarallah speaking at the event.



Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Abdulaziz Al-Dughaishem, former Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber and guests.

By Bassam Al-Qassas
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Former Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber has affirmed that his experience in diplomatic and political work stemmed from the school of foreign policy of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad.

Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber made the statement during his recent visit at the Abdulaziz Al-Dughaishem Diwaniya during which he praised the firm values and principles that HH the late Amir instilled in terms of the management of Kuwaiti foreign policy.

He pointed out that the foreign affairs minister bears huge responsibilities, particularly building a big network of diplomatic relations with his counterparts around the world. He said "there are more than 200 foreign affairs ministers throughout the world, hence, building strong relationships with them requires tremendous efforts and vast experience."

He also stressed the importance of maintaining bilateral relations, especially with Arab and friendly countries. He stated that "the foreign affairs minister is one of the most important members of the government due to his vital role in overcoming obstacles and strengthening communication with the international community."

Moreover, Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber revealed that the volume of Kuwaiti investments in the United States of America is estimated at about $700 billion, describing them as a successful model for developing strategic relations between the two countries. He affirmed that US President Donald Trump sought to restore America's golden age in the Gulf region.

He pointed out that President Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia "is considered a pivotal moment in strengthening US relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries." He said the visit has important political dimensions, especially in light of disagreements over regional issues.

Dean of Kuwaiti journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah also attended the gathering. He said the country has had 46 governments, while underscoring the need to give the foreign affairs minister enough time to build strategic relationships in the interest of the State.

Al-Jarallah asserted that the foreign affairs minister or ambassador must be wise, intelligent and with an amiable personality; citing as an example former Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United Kingdom Khaled Al-Duwaisan who served for 30 years and was the 'Dean of the Diplomatic Corps' due to his distinguished relationships, even with the British royal family. On the Palestinian issue, he said Israel does not seek peace, "because it kills it." He described the Palestinian issue as a "case of lost opportunities;" given internal Palestinian divisions and the international community's inability to stop the war in Gaza despite multiple initiatives.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Wily neighbor ... and bid to take us back to square one

"In recent days, as Iraq has increased pressure on Kuwait and mobilized all popular and parliamentary forces, we have observed that the issue has shifted from an internal Iraqi dispute to an attempt to drag Kuwait into a situation where it has no involvement, either directly or indirectly", Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Iraqi leadership, represented by President Hussein Rashid and Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani, submitted two letters to the Iraqi Federal Court challenging its ruling that rejected the Iraqi parliament's vote on the international resolution regarding the division of Khor Abdullah between Kuwait and Iraq.



Hassan Karam

"Perhaps the clearest statement on this matter came from Nouri al-Maliki, the former Prime Minister, who has been a main figure in the case from the very beginning.

"Al-Maliki stated that he visited Kuwait with a ministerial delegation and agreed that the Khor Abdullah would be designated as an international waterway. He added that Iraq was not present during the discussions on dividing the border in Khor Abdullah between Kuwait and Iraq. Experts decided to split the Khor equally between the two countries, with the deeper side allocated to Kuwait and the shallower side to Iraq, with a commitment to eventually deepen the shallow side.

"The renewal of this case arises not only from the letters sent by the President and Prime Minister to the Federal Court, nor because Iraq is set to hold parliamentary elections next November, but there is something more significant at play . Iraq, which has established the Faw Port, is located far from Khor Abdullah, while Kuwait's Mubarak Port directly overlooks the creek, giving it a clear advantage over Faw Port.

"The Iraqis have constructed roads and tunnels from their new port, which is expected to become operational by the end of this year. In contrast, Mubarak Port, due to its proximity to the creek, requires no additional infrastructure, only the regular roads and tunnels.

"Therefore, the Iraqis are deeply concerned about Mubarak Port, fearing it could undermine the viability of Faw Port. However, these fears are based on speculation and unfounded illusions . The region is home to numerous large ports directly overlooking the Gulf, the most significant of which are the Iranian ports, which are in close proximity to the Faw ports. Iraq currently uses Iranian ports due to their proximity to Basra and their ability to accommodate large vessels.

"Iraq's escalation, along with the mobilization of parties, tribes, and paid media, is an unjustified approach to what is essentially a technical matter for which experts from both countries could resolve with a suitable solution. Unfortunately, this escalation, combined with the return of insults directed at Kuwait and claims of Iraqi ownership over its territory, does not bode well. This rise in tensions stems from the ill intentions of certain individuals, particularly Baathists, loyalists, and the remnants of Saddam's regime.

"In recent months, we have breathed a sigh of relief, thanks to football events and mutual visits between the youth of Kuwait and Iraq, particularly the dear people of Basra, Kuwait's closest and most beloved port of call.

"Any desperate attempts to change the Security Council resolutions regarding the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will only lead to disappointment . Therefore, Iraqis who harbor resentment toward Kuwait, and those who are sick in their souls, should not indulge in these notions and should not look back.

"Just as some ignorant individuals spread lies and nonsense to manipulate the minds of the naive, there is also history - books, records, and documents - that, if opened, would only magnify their losses.

"The Security Council resolutions regarding the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait were not issued for entertainment or to hide the crisis. They were made in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and they are irreversible."

Also:

"Personal priority is the goal that takes precedence in one's actions. It is something a wise person must strive to achieve first, before anything else. When a person's priorities become disturbed or confused, they inevitably live their life without a clear sense of purpose", Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Khaled Al-Jenfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Some of the causes and manifestations of this disturbed psychological and intellectual state, as well as how to determine personal priorities in today's turbulent world, include the following:

"Causes and manifestations: Excessive immersion in emotional thinking can prevent an individual from determining their personal priorities. Also, excessive dependency leads to wasting time and effort on things that offer no benefit (negative intellectual and psychological dependency).

"Manifestations of disordered priorities include preoccupation with matters that have nothing to do with the person, involvement in battles that are not their concern, pathological obsession with seeking approval from others at the expense of their own true goals, adherence to exploitative ideologies, and the reckless dedication of their time and energy to fulfilling the priorities of those who do not deserve such commitment.

"The more a person refuses to educate themselves about the realities of life, the more disordered their priorities become. Immersing oneself in tribalism, sectarianism, and factionalism only wastes time, energy, and effort on matters that are ultimately fruitless. Furthermore, spending excessive zeal defending an idea more than its original proponent, and associating with fools and failures, only distracts from what truly matters.

"Setting personal priorities: True personal priorities arise from the innate tendency of a psychologically healthy and intellectually mature person to achieve self-sufficiency and care for those they love. The clearer their vision in this regard, the better they understand their rights, obligations, and what they must focus on achieving. The more they concentrate on what serves their legitimate personal interests, the clearer their priorities become.

"Those who strive to acquire critical thinking and personal decision-making skills are better equipped to define their priorities. Engaging with wise people will further illuminate which matters truly deserve attention and which should be left aside. Reading insightful writings clarifies vision and enlightens the mind.

"So, take the time to define your true priorities before it becomes difficult. May your efforts be blessed."

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"Persuasion, not coercion, is the cornerstone of political and media discourse. Attempting to impose persuasion with weak arguments does not lead to sound opinions or accurate positions. Forcing people to engage with media and diplomatic discourse that lacks rhetorical skills only produces unproductive outcomes. The inevitable result is political failure", columnist **Khalid Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Kuwaiti delegation in Geneva took its seat at the United Nations Human Rights Council during the 49th session of the Universal Periodic Review, which focused on Kuwait's achievements in this regard. The session was full of surprises. The speeches lacked the skill to effectively direct the discourse, except for reciting the written text.

"Unfortunately, a traditional and rigid style dominated Kuwait's presentation, focusing excessively on the historical narrative and failing to break free from a cycle of weak arguments, arguments that, in fact, raised more questions than they answered.

"Main elements of effective discourse, such as eye contact and body language, were neglected. I can confirm that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is closely monitoring international publications on human rights in Kuwait, along with the questions and observations raised regarding freedom of expression and national identity.

"However, it seems the ministry has not approached these issues with sufficient thoughtfulness in its reading and analysis, nor has it been prepared to adopt a more unconventional approach to discourse. I have received feedback from academics and specialists criticizing Kuwait's speech in Geneva for its lack of professionalism, contradictions, and failure to understand the significance of foreign presence at the meeting, and its cultures.

"The Kuwaiti discourse deviated from political and media correctness when addressing the details of the revocation of citizenships, referring to them as "administrative decisions," not "decrees," and raising the legitimate question: What has the government done about all of this from both a legal and political standpoint?

"Does explaining these details serve or undermine the intended goal? Does it strengthen the political argument or weaken its credibility, especially when the picture remains unclear about who was responsible for the administrative error that led to the revocation of citizenship?



Dr. Al-Tarrah

"For instance, did the Fatwa and Legislation Department object to the administrative decisions to revoke citizenship? Did the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers raise any objections? No one knows. From a media and political perspective, every issue has its own reasons, justifications, and motives.

"Regarding free education, it would have been more appropriate to focus on explaining the mechanisms for updating and developing curricula to combat religious extremism and intellectual terrorism, rather than simply recounting the well-known history of free education in Kuwait, which is recognized worldwide.

"As for Kuwait's speech on illegal residents (Bedoun), it lacked a clear, objective argument explaining the factors that transformed the issue from a small problem into an inexplicable and unjustifiable political and legal crisis. Simply reciting written texts was not a commendable approach. The Kuwaiti discourse lacked the essential elements and skills needed to deliver an impactful political message, including effective communication, proper use of gestures, and the expressive tones of voice.

"As for the international consensus on the Kuwait report, publishing the recommendations, international observations, and any Kuwaiti pledges, if any, would provide a clearer picture of the global response to the report.

"It is well known that there are systematic, non-random international procedures during such reviews, even if the recommendations are not legally binding on Kuwait. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has placed promising young talent in a challenging position. The lack of preparation and prior training was evident."

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/ Simi K.Kutty



KUNA photo

The Third Gulf Housing Week (GHW) kicked off on Sunday in Kuwait and will run until Thursday.

Housing, sustainable development on agenda

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): The Third Gulf Housing Week (GHW) kicked off on Sunday in Kuwait and will run until Thursday, beginning with the 47th meeting of the GCC Technical Committee on Housing Affairs.

Deputy Director General for Planning at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Engineer Nasser Khuraibet said in a statement to KUNA that the meeting discussed enhancing regional cooperation in housing and sustainable urban development. Khuraibet explained that the meeting's agenda included reviewing and discussing the Gulf Joint Housing Action Plan (2024-2030), which aims to unify efforts and facilitate the exchange of expertise among GCC countries.

The meeting marked the official launch of the third Gulf Housing Week (GHW), which features a series of events and activities aimed at raising awareness and strengthening communication between housing authorities and local communities, Khuraibet added.

The activities also include the second edition of the Gulf Housing Hackathon, with the participation of students from architecture and planning faculties across GCC countries, aimed at encouraging youth innovation in smart and sustainable housing solutions.

Huge cache of drugs found on four 'Bedoun' residents – MoI

Expat duped ... phone, cash stolen

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Ministry of Interior announced that the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), arrested four Bedoun residents, identified only as M.A., A.J., S.S., and S.A, in possession of various quantities of narcotics and intoxicants, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Authorities discovered the following items in their possession: 15,000 Lyrica capsules, 100 grams of cocaine, 500 grams of Chemical drug, 250 grams of hashish, 80 psychotropic pills, a sensitive weighing scale, and KD 10,590, suspected to be profits from drug trafficking.

The ministry affirmed that the necessary legal procedures have been taken against the individuals, who have been referred to the competent authorities for further action.

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Phone, cash stolen: The Criminal Security Department at the Interior Ministry recently closed a robbery case titled, 'Forced Robbery', after apprehending the suspect -- a young Gulf national who was positively identified by the victim, an expatriate, in a police lineup, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, an expatriate born in 1982 filed a report at Hawally Police Station. In his report, the victim narrated "I signed a contract with a telecommunications company to purchase an iPhone. Since I no longer needed the device, I put it up for sale on social media. Two days later, someone interested in purchasing the phone contacted me.

We agreed on the price and I shared my location. The individual came to the basement of my building, asked to inspect the phone, and requested to see my civil identification card. The potential buyer then ran off with my phone and wallet." The victim reported that his wallet contained KD1,860.

The source affirmed that the case was immediately referred to detectives who traced the phone number used to contact the victim. A carefully planned entrapment led to the arrest of the suspect outside his residence in Jahra Governorate.

During questioning, the suspect confessed to the crime after being presented with the victim's statement and surveillance footage of the incident. He admitted to reselling the stolen iPhone to a store in the Capital Governorate and that he already spent the stolen money.

Crackdown leads to wanted people, criminals arrest

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Rescue Police General Department at the Interior Ministry continued its security campaigns to pursue wanted individuals and outlaws.

Last week's campaigns resulted in the arrest of 42 individuals who were referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD).

The weekly statistics revealed the implementation of 1,927 security operations; during which 147 wanted individuals, eight individuals with criminal convictions, and 87 individuals without identification were apprehended.

In addition, 104 absconding cases were recorded, while two individuals with theft reports against them and 149 individuals with expired residency permits were referred to the competent authorities.

Meanwhile, rescue officers dealt with nine fights, referred 36 wanted vehicles to the concerned authorities, and provided assistance to 674 individuals. The rescue patrols issued 3,026 citations for various traffic violations; including 33 violations related to the use of parking spaces designated for people with disabilities.

Woman granted divorce from promiscuous man

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Family Court granted a Kuwaiti woman a divorce to from her husband due to the harm she suffered from him, along with custody of her children.

The wife discovered her husband's infidelity after noticing a change in his behavior. She found photographs and conversations on his phone that confirmed he was involved with other women.

She then filed a case in the Family Court, seeking a divorce due to harm, while retaining all her financial rights and custody of the children.

In his defense, the husband claimed he had other wives, but it was proven that he was only married to the woman in question.

The court ruled in favor of the wife, based on the arguments presented by her legal counsel Lawyer Mohammad Safar.

Municipality asks eight charities to shift office

By Inaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Public Relations Department of the Kuwait Municipality announced that the supervisory team affiliated with the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Jahra Governorate has completed its third field inspection campaign to ensure compliance with the removal of violations by charitable committee owners located in residential areas.

The department explained that the campaign has led to the issuance of four citations for violations and eight removal warnings. Also, charitable committee owners have cooperated in evacuating seven charitable committees in private residential areas.

Driving in a sandstorm?

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Ministry of Interior announced driving guidelines during dust storms; such as using warning lights only as a warning, monitoring weather updates and maintaining a safe distance, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry stated "if visibility decreases, slow down. Do not use your mobile phone, close the windows and use the air recirculation feature. If visibility decreases, try to move to a secondary road."



‘New Kuwait’: Young architects and engineers building country’s future

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Empowered by Limak, over 549 Kuwaiti youths have received specialized training, contributing to the Kuwait International Airport Terminal 2 project and gaining exposure to global landmarks like the world’s longest suspension bridge and FC Barcelona’s new Camp Nou stadium

Kuwaiti youth are leading the way as the architects and engineers of ‘New Kuwait’ Vision 2035. They are building the country’s future, bolstered by the support of Limak İnşaat Kuwait S.P.C. and its efforts to champion initiatives that educate and empower the local workforce.

Established in October 2016 through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Foreign Direct Investment Law, Limak İnşaat Kuwait S.P.C. operates as an independent subsidiary of Limak Holding, implementing the company’s business model in Kuwait. Notably, it was the first construction company to be locally established under this law, and among the first ten companies overall.

Limak is guided by the principles of its sustainability strategy, which rests on the pillars of inclusive development, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. The company actively contributes to the communities in which it operates. Whether in Kuwait or abroad, Limak’s overarching mission remains the same: to create long-term societal value through youth empowerment, education, and training.

Since beginning operations in Kuwait, Limak has delivered world-class construction and engineering services while spearheading impactful initiatives in knowledge transfer, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability.



Limak’s young Kuwaiti engineer women with the officials.

To date, more than 549 Kuwaiti youths have benefited from over 52,000 hours and 21 months of specialized training provided by Limak. Additionally, the company has employed over 119 nationals in construction, engineering, and architecture roles on the Kuwait International Airport Terminal 2 project.

A key driver of this success is Limak’s proactive approach to human capital development. In collaboration with esteemed local institutions, Limak ensures that Kuwaiti graduates and professionals gain access to unparalleled training and career opportunities. These training sessions have included visits to iconic international projects that are built by Limak, including the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge, which holds the distinction of being the world’s longest suspension bridge, and FC Barcelona’s new Camp Nou stadium.

Mohammad Al-Omar, Board Member and General Manager at Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. said: “As a Kuwaiti, it is a great privilege to work with an internationally renowned company that is genuinely committed to the future of our people. Limak believes that real progress begins with opportunity; opportunities for our youth, women, and professionals to lead, innovate, and build.

Through educational initiatives like GEG, economic empowerment platforms such as KWEEP, and a range of hands-on roles and specialized training opportunities at T2, we are ensuring that Kuwaitis are not only entering the workforce but are equipped with the skills and experience needed to shape the country’s future with confidence and capability.”

Limak partners with the Ministry of Public Works and the Public Authority for Manpower to recruit Kuwaiti talent through job fairs and university career events. These platforms offer young nationals opportunities to join landmark projects and gain valuable early-career experience.

MoIA has projects glut on anvil

212 tenders in ’25-’26 procurement plan

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has launched its procurement plan for the 2025/2026 fiscal year, which includes approximately 212 tenders and projects of all sectors of the ministry.

The tenders aim to implement a variety of projects aimed at developing and expanding the ministry’s services in various religious, administrative, and technical fields.

The plan highlights the implementation of several major construction and service projects. Notable among them are the establishment of Quranic studies centers, residential facilities for imams and muezzins, and Quran memorization centers in various areas of Kuwait.

The plan includes the creation of an integrated Islamic cultural center in Adan.

It also includes a project to operate the fiber optic network infrastructure between the ministry’s locations, along with the supply and installation of integrated services for people with special needs at its headquarters.

Within the framework of awareness and media, the ministry will seek bids from companies to produce television spots aimed at enhancing the religious media system, reaching all age groups, and promoting Islamic values, ideals, and morals.

The ministry will also issue a tender to develop the electronic Hajj and Umrah portal. The portal will include comprehensive modules to serve pilgrims, Umrah performers, and campaigns, including units for electronic Hajj registration for pilgrims and campaigns, electronic Umrah registration for companies and individuals, managing Hajj campaign licenses, and overseeing companies organizing Umrah caravans. There will also be modules to manage Hajj and Umrah operations, as well as campaign-related complaints and evaluations.

The plan also includes a tender for automating the Islamic Studies Sector, aimed at completing the analysis, development, and maintenance of a modern electronic educational system for the Quran and Islamic Studies Sector.

In addition, the ministry will issue a tender for the development, updating, and maintenance of its electronic portal to automate government services provided through its official website.

This initiative aims to deliver practical outcomes, enabling transactions to be completed in the shortest possible time, and enhancing the ministry’s role in serving religious and administrative affairs in Kuwait.





Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah (right) during the meeting.

Coordination, mutual support vital to achieve goals: minister

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah confirmed that the ministry will present and explain its strategy within the framework of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Al-Huwailah said the ministry’s strategies are derived from the general approach of State and are continuously evaluated to determine what has been achieved and address any shortcomings or delays in projects and the overall productivity of the ministry.

On the sidelines of the presentation of the achievements of the ministry at the Ministries Complex on Monday, Al-Huwailah clarified that the new structure of the ministry was designed “in a streamlined manner” without posing an obstacle to achieving its goals.

She disclosed that the redistribution of tasks and the merger of some departments will give the new structure additional strength through integration between various departments. “Some departments had overlapping tasks and we will be clear on this point. Goals can be achieved through any sector as long as there is coordination and mutual support,” she added.

She pointed out that “we are entering a new era, even at the level of the ministry’s relations with governmental and private institutions. We are working hard to establish partnerships with all sectors, both governmental and private. We will not fear change, because we are confident in the capabilities of our experts in designing structures. This is a trend that encompasses all ministries, not just the Ministry of Social Affairs.”

She stressed the need to revise the country’s laws to align with the New Kuwait Vision and international laws and standards. She argued “the old legislation does not keep pace with the present. Kuwait has an international obligation that must be respected. We need a new legislative initiative that supports the national approach and frees institutional work from the old restrictions.”

Other Voices

Is fall of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood just a beginning?

By Ahmad alsarraf

In 1945, Abdul Latif Qura founded the Muslim Brotherhood in the Emirate of Transjordan, which later became the Kingdom of Jordan. Around the same time, the late Abdul Aziz Al-Ali Al-Mutawa established the same group in Kuwait.

alsarraf

Initially, both organizations started as peaceful charitable groups, focused on promoting good morals and avoiding political involvement. I don’t know anyone from my generation, or older, who was not once a member of this organization.

However, as the group became increasingly embroiled in political quagmires, some of its early founders, including Abdul Aziz Al-Mutawa, distanced themselves from it, leaving it in the hands of those more aligned with Al-Banna’s radical ideology. Over time, the organization collapsed.

In the early 1960s, the Muslim Brotherhood was revived, taking on a more hard line stance and increasingly infiltrating political life, with the backing of influential government agencies.

After the defeat in June 1967, the group’s influence grew, along with the other branches of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In this context, scholar Mohamed Metwally Al-Shaarawy famously remarked that he thanked God for the defeat of the “atheist” Soviet weapons used by his country’s army, which were countered by the “faithful” American weapons used by Israel in that war.

The Muslim Brotherhood, outside of Egypt, has always been a peculiar offshoot of the original organization. Evidence of this lies in the fact that, for 70 years, the Supreme Guidance Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has led the international organization, has never included any members from outside Egypt, except as symbolic figures, primarily to enhance financial gain.

The Muslim Brotherhood is notorious for its volatility and pragmatism. It can be seen supporting state authority one day, opposing it the next, and then aligning with the government again for years, depending on the laws that serve its interests and the ministries it controls.

One of the biggest dangers has been the Muslim Brotherhood’s control over education curricula for more than half a century.

It is ironic that the Muslim Brotherhood parties in Egypt and Jordan have long relied on funding from the Gulf, particularly Kuwait, and yet, they were the first to betray Kuwait when Saddam Hussein invaded the country.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s acceptance of billions in foreign funding stands as one of the most telling contradictions to their claims of independence. The dramatic 180-degree shift in their stance after Kuwait’s liberation serves as clear evidence of their true nature.

The ultimate goal of the Muslim Brotherhood is to seize power and establish a caliphate, with the caliph inevitably being the same as their Supreme Guide once they gain control in any country.

The Muslim Brotherhood has no homeland; they believe in a universal regime. Given this, how can any government genuinely accept or compromise with them, even reluctantly?

Jordan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia made no mistake in taking action against the Muslim Brotherhood in their societies.

Testimonies from senior officials in these countries reveal the group’s treachery, malicious intent, and the urgent need to prevent their activities.

Many intelligence reports have shown that the Muslim Brotherhood uses charitable organizations and associations as fronts to fund its operations and spread its ideology worldwide, extending beyond Arab and Islamic nations.

In response, the governments took decisive action by shutting down all fundraising websites that specialized in collecting donations for many, often fraudulent projects. The funds raised were frequently funneled to organizations or parties linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, and eventually ended up in their secret bank accounts.

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Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Left: Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Mohammad Al-Jassar delivers a speech. Center: EU-Kuwait Culture Forum in progress. Right: Anne Koistinen, EU Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, addresses the attendees.

Cooperation anchors 40 years of relations

Kuwait-EU forge deeper cultural ties at landmark forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Mohammad Al-Jassar on Monday stressed the significance of Kuwait-EU cultural cooperation.

Al-Jassar made the statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the EU-Kuwait Culture Forum, organized by the EU Delegation to Kuwait to celebrate the State of Kuwait becoming the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for 2025.

The first-ever event was held under the patronage of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Al-Jassar said that Kuwait-EU cooperation cultural cooperation plays a significant role in the promotion of bilateral relations in various domains, hailing their bilateral cultural relations as "fruitful and excellent".

He cited the continued visits of EU archaeological excavation teams to Kuwait as a resonant paradigm of fruitful cooperation between both sides.

He added that Kuwait always sends many students to EU countries to acquire knowledge and expertise in different fields so that they could contribute to developing their homeland and society.

He also cited existing architectural cooperation between Kuwait and the EU, particularly regarding the EU designing of special buildings and landmarks in Kuwait as another unequivocal proof of their significant cultural cooperation.

Al-Jassar considered that today's event reflects the fact that the State of Kuwait attaches much attention to bolstering and cementing cultural relations with world countries, especially the EU.

For her part, Anne Koistinen, EU Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, told KUNA that Kuwait's cultural and civilizational heritage is a valuable traditional treasure, pointing to EU archaeological missions in Kuwait.

She added that Kuwait-EU cooperation covers architecture, arts and human science, along with the sharing of movable museums.

Koistinen spoke highly of the first-ever EU-Kuwaiti cultural forum as clear-cut proof of deep cultural cooperation between the EU and the State of Kuwait, which are expected to mark 40 years since they forged their diplomatic relations early next year.

Prominent speakers from the EU and Kuwait participated in the forum to discuss the long-standing collaboration between European Union Member States and Kuwait to preserve and promote cultural heritage.

During the event, participants also exchanged ways to promote and increase EU-Kuwait cultural connections, as both sides strive to enhance their excellent relations and elevate them to a strategic level.

The discussions at the forum touched upon a wide range of topics, including initiatives such as the European Capitals of Culture, best European and Kuwaiti practices in preserving cultural heritage and building partnerships, as well as innovation and audiovisual practices or the role of museums in raising awareness and engaging the local communities in cultural heritage practices.

IICO constructs 175 houses for Rohingya refugees

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) constructed 175 houses with solar-powered utilities for 1,050 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, said a statement by the charity on Monday.

The IICO revealed in a statement that this charitable effort cost around USD 104,000, indicating that the aim was to protect Rohingya families and provide them with safe and environmental-friendly dwellings.

The design of the houses, made of bamboo, plastic, and cement, was meant to protect refugees from the elements, said the IICO, adding that each housing unit was built on an area of 16 square meters.

The Kuwaiti charity affirmed that it would to expand humanitarian partnerships with international organizations, saying that it signed with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2000 a MoU to help the Rohingyas and others across the globe.

Continued from Page 1

Indeed, for

involvement in the use of defective weapons during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. He was also accused of being reactionary and of collaborating with the West and the Zionist movement. These accusations were used to justify Major Jamal Abdel Nasser's coup against the king in 1952 and the secession of Sudan from Egypt. Such claims were also exploited by power-seekers in different Arab countries.

This period marked the beginning of a wave of revolutions (coups) that swept through the Arab world, starting with Iraq and Syria, followed by a failed coup attempt in Lebanon, Yemen, and Libya. In 1969, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi led a coup that ousted King Idris Al-Senussi in Libya.

I still remember the chants of the demonstrators in Tripoli that day, shouting, "The Devil is better than Idris." It is said that when King Idris Al-Senussi heard those chants, he prayed to God that Libya be ruled by the Devil.

We all know the history of Gaddafi after the success of his coup and how he adopted the liberation of Palestine as his slogan. However, Gaddafi went too far in threatening Arab rulers, intervening in the Lebanese civil war, and attempting to invade Chad, instead of directing his army to liberate Palestine.

In 2011, Muammar Gaddafi's regime collapsed, and he was killed in one of the most brutal ways. Following his death, militia leaders took control of various regions in Libya. Despite being a country rich in natural resources, with beautiful coastlines and fertile land, Libya has been reduced to ruins since 1969.

This is similar to what the Ba'ath Party regime did in Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, who also raised the slogan of liberating Palestine. Saddam even went so far as to declare the formation of the "Jerusalem Army." However, instead of marching into Palestine, he invaded Kuwait.

What has recently transpired in Libya, with Abdul Ghani al-Kikli, also known as "Ghaniwa al-Kikli," attempting to seize control of the country's resources and loot the central bank, mirrors what gangs in Somalia and Iraq have done.

It has become evident that the slogan of liberating Palestine is often nothing more than a justification or pretext for theft and the illegal assumption of power. Even Palestinian factions, who are supposed to be the most dedicated to their cause, are not exempt from this behavior.

This is why the proverb "It is all soap to the Arabs," which has been a hallmark of Arab culture since the year 800, when Ibn Khaldun referenced it in his book "Ibn Khaldun and the Arabs", seems especially relevant today.

What is happening in the Middle East is the result of a long history of division and discord, often at the expense of peoples and nations. In the end, as the saying goes, for Arabs, it is all "soap".

Kuwait unveils

an ambitious strategic vision, which responds to the priorities of sustainable development and the aspirations of our Gulf societies," he added.

He stated that "the meeting is being held amidst rapid global changes that require us to strengthen Gulf coordination and intensify efforts to formulate strategic visions for the educational future of our children, especially in light of the successive developments in the field of artificial intelligence and digital transformation. We have to expand educational paths and develop flexible educational models aimed at empowering students with the tools to innovate and adapt to the latest developments."

He asserted "we believe in the importance of developing the educational system to keep pace with 21st century standards, strengthening the common Gulf identity, and providing flexible and inspiring educational environments that develop students' creative thinking and innovation skills. We also confirm our strategic partnership with international institutions, and our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Joint Gulf Vision for Education 2030, which contribute to building a competitive and effective educational system at the regional and international levels."

On the other hand, Jassim Al-Budaiwi, GCC Secretary General, emphasized in a statement on the sidelines of the meeting the importance of the ministerial meetings held at the level of the ministers of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research as they are related to the future of GCC countries.

Al-Budaiwi stated that items in the agendas of both meetings are extremely important, considering their direct impact on joint Gulf action regarding public and higher education.

He added one of the important recommendations approved in the meeting is the unified Gulf strategy to combat drugs -- the great scourge that is devastating people. "It was agreed that the curricula in the GCC countries should include some elements of this strategy to educate our students about the dangers of drugs. The State of Kuwait presented three initiatives on youth sports and unifying the educational ladder; and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia put forward an important initiative related to the participation of the GCC countries in its approved strategy for education and how countries can develop their educational systems," he elaborated.

He went on to affirm that the agenda of the meeting of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research included many topics; as the GCC countries give importance to scientific research and GCC leaders always recommend this issue.

He pointed out that the GCC Charter consists of articles on the need to support scientific research, strengthen cooperation in this field, integration of young men and women in Gulf universities, admission process, and encouraging them to study in other Gulf countries.

He also expressed his pride in the achievements of the GCC countries in the fields of public and higher education. He added "the GCC countries' indicators are a testament to the strength of these countries. Our academic institutions have become prestigious, keeping pace with the times and providing outstanding academic outputs."

Syrian President

week with several ministers and heads of the concerned institutions to review the draft investment law and the proposed amendments.

Sources stated that the goal is to improve the business climate and align with Syria's new phase of economic openness and recovery.

On the political front, the President recently issued a decision to establish the National Commission for Transitional Justice, in accordance with the country's Constitutional Declaration.

This move reflects the commitment of the President to justice and reconciliation as foundations for a lawful and inclusive State. The mandate of the commission includes investigating human rights violations committed by the former regime, holding perpetrators accountable, compensating victims, and addressing the damage caused.

Sources also indicated that the commission will pursue legal accountability for former regime-linked businessmen who were involved in fraudulent activities, particularly those impacting Gulf countries. They affirmed that all proceedings will follow proper legal channels.

Describing Syria as a "land of justice and fertile ground for investment," the sources highlighted the country's pressing need for reconstruction. They pointed out that this process gained significant momentum after US President Donald Trump lifted sanctions on Syria at the request of Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman. "This development paves the way for renewed Gulf investment, especially from Kuwait, to take a leading role in rebuilding efforts and capitalizing on the range of opportunities in different sectors," source elaborated.

Sources stressed that "the new Syria is determined to reengage with its Arab neighbors. The visit of Al-Sharaa to Kuwait is also a gesture of appreciation for the Kuwaiti people's steadfast support throughout the Syrian crisis. This marks a turning point in the foreign policy of Syria, signaling a return to its Arab identity."

On the security front, sources confirmed that the Syrian leadership is focusing on maintaining stability. They revealed that Defense Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra recently called on small armed groups not yet integrated into the national security forces to do so within 10 days.

Kuwait, Microsoft

For his part, Althoff presented the agreement's key points and prospects for cooperation in a number of key areas, including accelerating investment in artificial intelligence technologies, developing data centers, and adopting Microsoft Copilot solutions.

This meeting is part of a series of coordination steps to implement data center projects, centers of excellence and innovation, and integrate Microsoft Copilot solutions into government operations, enhancing performance efficiency and raising the level of services provided to citizens and residents.

UK Embassy debuts quarterly 'Women's Diwaniya' in Kuwait

Platform empowers future female leaders

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: On Sunday, May 19, the British Embassy in Kuwait held its first-ever "Women's Diwaniya" in the presence of influential women leaders from various sectors to commemorate last Friday's Kuwaiti Women's Day.

According to a press release, the new initiative, which will be held on a quarterly basis, affirms the Embassy's keenness to strengthen ties with women leaders and create spaces for them to network, share ideas, and address important issues.

The launch of the Women's Diwaniya comes on the heels of the Embassy's successful "Women in Business" Ghabga event during Ramadan and complements other ongoing initiatives to empower women and girls. Among these initiatives is the "Future Female Leaders in Sport" programme, a collaboration with the UK's Safeguarding Alliance and Kuwait's Public Authority for Sport.

Speaking at the event, the British Ambassador to Kuwait , Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, said, "Kuwaiti Women's Day is a time to honor the remarkable accomplishments of women in Kuwait, both past and present, and to inspire the next generation of women leaders.

It is also an opportunity to reflect on the challenges women face globally, the progress we have made, and the barriers still to overcome. I am proud that tonight's Women's Diwaniya allows women leaders from various fields to connect, collaborate, and support one another."





Some photos during first-ever 'Women's Diwaniya' in the presence of influential women leaders from various sectors.

Al-Najat inaugurates new homes in Yemen

ADEN, May 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity inaugurated on Sunday a 30-residence hamlet (Alkhaiyereen-10) in Tor Albaha region in Lahj as part of the Kuwaiti ten-year relief campaign, "Kuwait on your side."

Omar Al-Samati, advisor to Lahj Governor, said in a press statement that construction of the small village was part of the efforts by the State of Kuwait and the association to support sustainable humanitarian projects in Yemen.

Such ventures largely help in improving Yemenis' living conditions and alleviate their hardships, particularly in rural regions where basic services are scarce, Al-Samati said.



KUNA photo

Photo during the inauguration.

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For some, it's too late

US reinstates records for int'l students

WASHINGTON, May 19, (AP): After the government terminated his legal status in the US, one student abruptly lost his laboratory job in Houston and, fearing detention, he returned to his home country in south Asia on a one-way ticket.

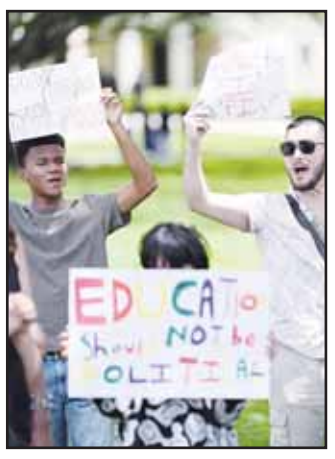
The Trump administration later reversed course in its expansive crackdown on international students, but there was a major obstacle. The student cannot return because his American visa was revoked.

Without it, he's "stranded," said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

As the government begins reinstating students' records, many face a daunting and complicated path toward rebuilding their lives. For those who left, there is no guarantee they can return. Others have faced challenges reenrolling in school and returning to jobs.

Mental anguish from their ordeals linger, as do feelings of vulnerability. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has expanded the grounds for terminating a student's legal status, leaving many to fear they could be targeted again.

A total of more than 4,700 international students had their permission to study in the U.S. canceled this spring, with little notice or explanation. In court hearings, Department of Homeland Security officials said they ran the names of student visa holders through an FBI-run database that contains the names of suspects and people who have been arrested, even if they were never charged with a crime or had charges dropped.



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

At a court hearing last week in Oakland, California, lawyers for international students sought a nationwide injunction they said would protect their clients and others across the country.

But government attorneys said that wasn't necessary because ICE was mailing status reactivation letters to affected students. It likely will take two weeks for all students to receive their letter, which can then be shared with universities and employers, assistant US attorney Elizabeth Kurlan said.

The plaintiffs' lawyers said the letter is meaningless, arguing ICE's new policy suggests student records can be terminated on a whim. There's also no evidence ICE has asked the State Department to restore revoked visas, the plaintiffs' attorneys said.

The man in Houston left within about a week of learning his legal status had been terminated. Around that time, he also received an email that the visa he used to enter the U.S. had been revoked. He believes his termination stemmed from a 2021 fraud case that was dismissed.

Trump's big bill advances in weekend vote as conservative holdouts secure changes

WASHINGTON, May 19, (AP): US Republicans advanced their massive tax cut and border security package out of a key House committee during a rare Sunday night vote as deficit hawks who blocked the measure two days earlier reversed course after gaining commitments on the package's spending cuts.

Speaker Mike Johnson met with Republican lawmakers shortly before the meeting, telling reporters that the changes agreed to were "just some minor modifications. Not a huge thing."

Democrats on the panel pressed for more details about the changes that Republicans had agreed to in the private negotiations. But Rep. Jodey Arrington, the chairman of the House Budget Committee, said he could not do so.

"Deliberations continue at this very moment," Arrington said. "They will continue on into the week, and I suspect right up until the time we put this big, beautiful bill on the floor of the House."

The first time Republicans tried advancing the bill out of the House Budget Committee, deficit hawks joined with Democratic lawmakers in voting against reporting the measure to the full House. Five Republicans voted no, one on procedural grounds, the other four voicing concerns about the bill's impact on federal budget deficits.

On Sunday evening, the four voicing concerns about the bill's impact on the deficit voted present, and the measure passed by a vote of 17-16. Johnson is looking to put the bill on the House floor before the end of the week.



US House Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, (right), speaks with ranking member Rep. Brendan Boyle, D-Pa., as Republicans work on a budget plan to advance many of President Donald Trump's top domestic priorities, including $4.5 trillion in tax cuts, on Capitol Hill in Washington on Feb 13. (AP)

"This is the vehicle through which we will deliver on the mandate that the American people gave us in the last election," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

The Republicans who criticized the measure noted that the bill's new spending and the tax cuts are front-loaded in the bill, while the measures to offset the cost are back-loaded. For example, they are looking to speed up the new work requirements that Republicans want to enact for able-bodied participants in Medicaid. Those requirements would not kick in until 2029 under the current bill.

We wish Joe a fast and successful recovery: Trump

Former US president Biden diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer

WASHINGTON, May 19, (AP): Former US President Joe Biden has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, his office said Sunday.

The finding came after the 82-year-old reported urinary symptoms, which led doctors to discover a nodule on his prostate. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer on Friday, with the cancer cells having spread to the bone.

"While this represents a more aggressive form of the disease, the cancer appears to be hormone-sensitive which allows for effective management," his office said. "The President and his family are reviewing treatment options with his physicians."

Prostate cancers are graded for aggressiveness using what's known as a Gleason score. The scores range from 6 to 10, with 8, 9 and 10 prostate cancers behaving more aggressively. Biden's office said his score was 9, suggesting his cancer is among the most aggressive.

When prostate cancer spreads to other parts of the body, it often spreads to the bones. Metastasized cancer is much harder to treat than localized cancer because it can be hard for drugs to reach all the tumors and completely root out the disease.

However, when prostate cancers need hormones to grow, as in Biden's case, they can be susceptible to treatment that deprives the tumors of hormones.

Outcomes have improved in recent decades and patients can expect to live with metastatic prostate cancer for four or five years, said Dr. Matthew Smith of Massachusetts General Brigham Cancer Center.

"It's very treatable, but not curable," Smith said. "Most men in this situation would be treated with drugs and would not be advised to have either surgery or radiation therapy."

Many political leaders sent Biden their wishes for his recovery.

President Donald Trump, a longtime political opponent, posted on social media that he was saddened by the news and "we wish Joe a fast and successful recovery."



US President Joe Biden speaks from the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on Sept 30, 2024. (AP)

Biden's vice president, Kamala Harris, said on social media that she was keeping him in her family's "hearts and prayers during this time."

"Joe is a fighter - and I know he will face this challenge with the same strength, resilience, and optimism that have always defined his life and leadership," Harris wrote.

Former President Barack Obama said his thoughts and prayers were with Biden, his former vice president, lauding his toughness. "Nobody has done more to find breakthrough treatments for cancer in all its forms than Joe, and I am certain he will fight this challenge with his trademark resolve and grace," Obama wrote on social media.

The health of Biden was a dominant concern among voters during his time as president. After a calamitous debate performance in June while seeking reelection, Biden abandoned his bid for a second term. Harris became the nominee and lost to Trump, a Republican who returned to the White House after a four-year hiatus.

But in recent days, Biden rejected concerns about his age despite reporting in the new book "Original Sin" by Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson that aides had shielded the public from the extent of his decline while serving as president.

In February 2023, Biden had a skin lesion removed from his chest that was a basal cell carcinoma, a common form of skin cancer. And in November 2021, he had a polyp removed from his colon that was a benign, but potentially precancerous lesion.

In 2022, Biden made a "cancer moonshot" one of his administration's priorities with the goal of halving the cancer death rate over the next 25 years. The initiative was a continuation of his work as vice president to address a disease that had killed his older son, Beau, who died from brain cancer in 2015.

His father, when announcing the goal to halve the cancer death rate, said this could be an "American moment to prove to ourselves and, quite frankly, the world that we can do really big things."



Incumbent Prime Minister and leader of the center-right Social Democratic Party Luis Montenegro reacts with his supporters, following Portugal's general election, in Lisbon on May 19. (AP)

Portugal election brings another minority govt, far-right rise

Portugal's president was due to convene the country's political parties for consultations on Monday, after a general election delivered another minority government as well as an unprecedented showing by populist party Chega (Enough) that added momentum to Europe's shift to the far-right.

The center-right Democratic Alliance, led by the Social Democratic Party, captured 89 seats in the 230-seat National Assembly to win Sunday's ballot. The outcome leaves it without a parliamentary majority, however, and vulnerable to opposition parties that ousted it two months ago in a confidence vote after less than a year in power.

Portugal's third general election in three years provided little hope for ending the worst spell of political instability for decades in the European Union country of 10.6 million people.

"The Portuguese don't want any more early elections," Luis Montenegro, the Democratic Alliance leader and incoming prime minister, said late Sunday in an appeal for opposition parties to let him serve a full four-year term. (AP)

Trump hopes for ceasefire progress in calls with Putin and Zelenskyy

WASHINGTON, May 19, (AP): US President Donald Trump is hoping separate phone calls Monday with Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will make progress toward a ceasefire in the war in Ukraine.

Trump expressed his hopes for a "productive day" Monday - and a ceasefire - in a social media post over the weekend. His effort will also include calls to NATO leaders.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed to the media on Monday that Putin and Trump will speak at 5 p.m. Moscow time (1400 GMT), about 10 a.m. Eastern, and called the conversation "important, given the talks that took place in Istanbul" last week between Russian and Ukrainian officials, the first such negotiations since March 2022.

Trump has struggled to end a war that began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, and that makes these conversations a serious test of his reputation as a dealmaker after having claimed he would quickly settle the conflict once he was back in the White House, if not even before he took office.

The Republican president is banking on the idea that his force of personality and personal history with Putin will be enough to break any impasse over a pause in the fighting.

"His sensibilities are that he's got to get on the phone with President Putin, and that is going to clear up some of the logjam and get us to the place that we need to get to," said Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff. "I think it's going to be a very successful call."

Still, there are fears that Trump has an affinity for Putin that could put Ukraine at a disadvantage with any agreements engineered by the U.S. government.

Bridget Brink said she resigned last month as the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine "because the policy since the beginning of the administration was to put pressure on the victim Ukraine, rather than on the aggressor, Russia."



This combination photo shows US President Donald Trump in a business roundtable on May 16, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, (left), and Russian President Vladimir Putin at a signing ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow on May 10. (AP)

Brink said the sign that she needed to depart was an Oval Office meeting in February where Trump and his team openly berated Zelenskyy for not being sufficiently deferential to them.

"I believe that peace at any price is not peace at all," Brink said. "It's appeasement and as we know from history, appeasement only leads to more war."

Trump's frustration about the war had been building before his post Saturday on Truth Social about the coming calls, which he said would begin first with Putin at 10 a.m. Monday.

Trump said his discussion with Putin would focus on stopping the "bloodbath" of the war. It also will cover trade, a sign that Trump might be seeking to use financial incentives to broker some kind of agreement after Russia's invasion led to severe sanctions by the United States and its allies that have steadily eroded Moscow's ability to grow.

Trump's hope, according to the post, is that "a war that should have never happened will end."

His treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Trump had made it clear that a failure by Putin to negotiate "in good faith" could lead to additional sanctions against Russia.

Bessent suggested the sanctions that began during the administration of Democratic President Joe Biden were inadequate because they did not stop Russia's oil revenues, due to concerns that doing so would increase US prices. The United States sought to cap Russia's oil revenues while preserving the country's petroleum exports to limit the damage from the inflation that the war produced.



Airplanes are parked on the tarmac at the international airport of Orly, in Orly, south of Paris on April 1, 2020. (AP)

Flights disrupted at Paris-Orly after ATC breakdown

PARIS, May 19, (AP): France's civil aviation authority said some flights were still being cancelled and others delayed on Monday at Paris-Orly airport, one day after air traffic control (ATC) systems suffered a breakdown that caused substantial disruption.

"The situation is improving," the authority, known as DGAC said, in a statement. Airlines have been asked to reduce flights by 15% on Monday - down from a 40% reduction on Sunday.

"Despite these preventive measures, delays are expected," the statement said.



The village of Blatten in the Loetschental, on May 18. (AP)

Landslide threatens Alpine village, authorities expand evacuation order

GENEVA, May 19, (AP): Swiss authorities on Monday expanded the evacuation of an Alpine village threatened by a possible landslide, ordering most of its people to leave.

More than 90 people were evacuated on Saturday night from their homes in Blatten, in the Lötschental - a valley above the larger Rhone valley in the southern Valais canton (state).

On Monday, authorities in Valais announced the complete evacuation of the village of some 300 people, with the exception of two areas, citing a risk of falling rocks and landslides.

Dissent, activist crackdown

Russia outlaws Amnesty Int'l

MOSCOW, May 19, (AP): The Russian authorities on Monday outlawed Amnesty International as an "undesirable organization," a label that under a 2015 law makes involvement with such organizations a criminal offense.

The decision by the Russian Prosecutor General's office, announced in an online statement, is the latest in the unrelenting crackdown on Kremlin critics, journalists and activists that intensified to unprecedented levels after Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

The designation means the international human rights group must stop any work in Russia and it subjects those who cooperate with it or support it to prosecution.



A Russian state flag waves on top of a hammer and sickle at the State Duma, lower parliament chamber, headquarters in Moscow, Russia on March 3, 2019. (AP)

S.Korea's Democratic Party candidate leads poll

'North Korea likely had Russian support for air-to-air missiles'

TOKYO, May 19, (Agencies): South Korea on Monday raised the possibility that North Korea received technological assistance from Russia in developing a new air-to-air missile following the North's test of the weapon last week, Yonhap News Agency reported.

"We believe there is an association," Col. Lee Sung-jun, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), told a press briefing in Seoul, when asked whether the North received arms and advanced technology from Russia in exchange for its troop deployment.

Lee said, however, that further analysis is necessary to determine the extent and scope of Russia's possible technological assistance.

"There have been many cases in which the North attempted to deceive or exaggerate issues in securing parts and material have led to delays in deployment," he said.

"We believe the weapons systems will also take considerable time (to be operational)."

On Saturday, the North's state media reported North Korean leader Kim Jong-un oversaw anti-air combat and air raid drills by an air force flight group earlier in the week, unveiling what appeared to be a live-fire drill involving a new air-to-air missile launched from a MiG-29 fighter jet.



South Korea's Democratic Party's presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung, (center), arrives for a presidential election campaign in Seoul, South Korea on May 19. (AP)

The North's latest drills came as Kim has been highlighting the importance of modernizing conventional weapons as he recently made a series of public visits to military units and munitions factories and emphasized stronger war preparations.

Also:

SEOUL: Lee Jae-myung, presidential candidate of **South Korea**'s majority liberal Democratic Party, led a poll for the June 3 presidential election, Flower Research survey showed Monday. Lee came out on top with a support rate of 52.1 percent, taking a big lead over **Kim Moon-soo**, the second-biggest conservative People Power Party's presidential candidate who garnered 29.5 percent of support. The human rights lawyer-turned-politician maintained his position as a presidential frontrunner in the June 3 election, triggered by the removal of former President **Yoon Suk-yeol** from office over his botched martial law imposition last December. Lee lost the 2022 presidential election to Yoon by the country's narrowest margin of 0.73 percentage points. The Democratic Party won an approval score of 50.3 percent, while 32.0 percent supported the People Power Party, the survey showed. The result was based on a poll of 2,007 voters conducted between Friday and Saturday. It had plus and minus 2.2 percentage points in margin of error with a 95-percent confidence level.



Tourists wait for sunrise at the Angkor Wat temple in Siem Reap province, Cambodia on Aug 2, 2024. (AP)

3 dead in lightning strike at Angkor Wat

Three people were killed and several others injured when they were struck by lightning while visiting Cambodia's famous Angkor Wat temple complex.

They had been seeking shelter around the main temple of the UNESCO site when the lightning struck late Friday afternoon.

Video posted on social media showed two ambulances arriving in the aftermath and onlookers and site officials carrying out some injured people and helping others out on foot. Other images showed multiple people being treated in the hospital.

The day after the incident, Cambodia's Minister of Tourism Hout Hak issued a statement telling people to take down online posts about it, saying the spreading of "negative information" could harm the country's tourism sector. (AP)

Nations vow to boost economic and defense ties

Thailand, Indonesia announce strategic partnership

BANGKOK, May 19, (AP): Indonesia and Thailand agreed Monday to elevate their relationship to a strategic partnership, during the first state visit by an Indonesian president in 20 years and agreed to push for greater trade and investment.

President Prabowo Subianto, who took power last year, was welcomed by Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra in intermittent rain at Government House in Bangkok. As is traditional, the two leaders reviewed an honor guard before heading inside to hold bilateral talks on the future shape of their relationship.

Subianto's visit also coincided with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Paetongtarn said that the two countries agreed to boost cooperation in various fields including trade and investment, tourism, and food security.

The decision to elevate the two countries' relations to strategic partnership "reflects our shared commitment to strengthen cooperation in several aspects on issues of mutual interest to the people of both countries," Paetongtarn said in a statement.

They also discussed defense and security issues, which include "enhancing maritime security collaboration, strengthening counterterrorism efforts, bolstering cybersecurity cooperation, increasing joint military exercises and fostering defense industry partnerships," Subianto said in his speech.

Paetongtarn said Thai and Indonesian police will strengthen cooperation in suppressing transnational crimes, especially online scams, human trafficking and drug trafficking.

Dozens of Indonesians earlier this year were freed from scam centers in Myanmar and repatriated through Thailand, in part of a large-scale regional crackdown effort. Hundreds of thousands of people are believed to have been lured to work in the region to commit global scams through false romances, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes. Many of the workers were recruited under false pretenses, only to find themselves trapped in virtual slavery.

Ministers from both countries also signed a memorandum of understanding on health cooperation in a number of fields including prevention and control of communicable diseases and medical tourism.

They also discussed the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, and Subianto praised Thailand's constructive role, especially in engaging neighboring countries to seek a peaceful solution in Myanmar and facilitating dialogue between all parties.

"We emphasized the importance of an inclusive national dialogue that can achieve peace and stability in Myanmar," Subianto said, "We also emphasized the importance of maintaining the unity and centrality of ASEAN."

The crisis in Myanmar has emerged as one of the bloc's biggest challenges since a military coup ousted an elected civilian government in February 2021, plunging the country into conflict. It has sparked an armed resistance movement, with rebel forces now controlling large parts of the country. The war has killed tens of thousands of people, and displaced millions.



Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, (second left), Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, (right on the red carpet), review an honor guard during a welcome ceremony at the government house in Bangkok, Thailand on May 19. (AP)



Legislators rally in favor of judicial reform at Congress, in Mexico City on Sept 12, 2024. (AP)

Mexico to elect new judges on June 1 after contentious process

MEXICO CITY, May 19, (AP): What do an activist searching for missing Mexicans, an attorney who once represented a drug lord and a university professor trying out TikTok have in common?

They are all campaigning for positions in Mexico's first judicial election on June 1.

More than 2,600 contenders are vying for 881 positions from Mexico's Supreme Court down to district courts across the country. In 2027, another election is planned to elect 800 more judicial positions.

Those on the June 1 ballots won a lottery after being screened by committees made up of people from the three branches of government. In order to qualify, they had to have a law degree, at least five years of professional practice, write an essay and collect letters of recommendation from friends and colleagues.

Foreign governments, including the United States, and civil society organizations in Mexico criticized the change, warning that it would lead to a politicization of the judiciary and weaken its independence.

Electing judges was former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's way to root out corruption. Make them accountable to the people, he said. The contentious reform's passage was among the last major acts of his presidency last September.

Here are some of the candidates:

Age: 41

What's she known for? She is among the hundreds of Mexicans searching for a missing relative, in her case a brother who disappeared in 2014.

Candidate for: District judge in the western state of Sinaloa.

Quiroa's experience has been different to most other candidates' in that she's more accustomed to being on the victims' side.

After her brother disappeared in the northern border state of Tamaulipas, Quiroa began searching and eventually founded a collective called "March 10" for the day he vanished.

She quickly realized there was little legal help available to help searchers like herself, so she left her engineering career and began to study law while continuing her search.

Quiroa gained notoriety a couple years ago when she proposed criminal groups consider a peace treaty to make it safer to search for the missing and she began selling a "Searcher Barbie" to raise money for her group's activities.

Late last year, she decided to return to her native Sinaloa state to compete to be a judge.

Quiroa knows the risks of being a judge in the violent state, home to a powerful cartel of the same name, but she said that there need to be more judges who empathize with those searching for missing loved ones.

"If I become a judge, I'm not going to send legal documents and wait for authorities to answer when they feel like it," Quiroa said. "I'm going to go out and look for the missing people."

Age: 40

What's he known for? He went viral as "Justice Pork Rinds."

Candidate for: Supreme Court.

Until the campaign started, Guerrero wasn't well-known outside of Mexico's National Autonomous University, where he has taught classes for more than a decade. He had also led Mexico City's public records agency and worked at the capital's electoral court.

But it was a homemade TikTok video that took off and launched Guerrero's campaign. In it, a student hands him a platter of a typical pork rind dish. Playing on the turn of phrase, he says he's "more prepared than a pork rind" to be a Supreme Court justice, before rolling into his qualifications.

Some grumps accused him of turning the race into a circus, but Guerrero said that his attempt at humor was far less harmful than having a corrupt justice on the highest court.

"You have to be colloquial sometimes in your use of language," he said, accepting that he has tried to run a "disruptive" campaign.

If elected, Guerrero said that he would push to have the court hold hearings around Mexico to have more contact with people.

Age: 51

What's she known for? She represented drug kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán in 2016.

Candidate for: Criminal court judge in northern state of Chihuahua.

Nine years ago, Silvia Delgado García was a member of Sinaloa cartel leader Guzmán's legal team when he was temporarily held in a prison in Ciudad Juarez before being extradited to the United States. He was eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to life in prison in the US.

She's still marked by the case.

Some critics of electing judges, and a human rights litigation group called Defensorxs, have labeled Delgado García "high risk," because "she defends alleged drug traffickers."

The group has also identified 17 other candidates that way for being prosecuted, being members of investigated organizations, for alleged human rights violations and deals with criminal groups.

"Everyone has a right to an effective defense," Delgado García said about her decision to represent Guzmán.

In win for far-right leader Milei, Argentines deal blow to centrists in local elections

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 19, (AP): What was once one the bastion of the center-right in Argentina fell on Sunday to the radical libertarian party of President Javier Milei, a dramatic result that could help the leader's chances in crucial midterm elections later this year as voters across the country's capital abandoned the main conservative party.

Milei's top candidate and official spokesperson, Manuel Adorni, swept to victory in the Buenos Aires elections, securing over 30% of the ballots and crushing the center-right party of former President Mauricio Macri in its stronghold.

Milei's La Libertad Avanza party, or LLA, said it racked up twice as many votes Sunday as it did in the last local election, in 2023.

As a brassy Argentine rock anthem blared at the post-election rally, Milei burst onto the stage, bouncing and pumping his arms to whip up the crowd.

"Today is a pivotal day for the ideas of freedom," he bellowed, reveling in the cheers of supporters.

The upset marked a bruising defeat for Macri's PRO (Republican Proposal) party, which has governed Buenos Aires uninterrupted for the past 18 years. The PRO candidate, Silvia Lospennato, came in third with 15.9% of the vote.

"The results are not as expected," Lospennato acknowledged. "We have a lot of work ahead of us."

Argentina's left-leaning populist Peronist party, which has governed the country for much of the past two decades, came second, scraping over 27% in a city where they normally fall short, a sign of how the splintered right-wing has benefited the opposition.



Argentina's President Javier Milei gives a thumbs-up after voting, accompanied by his sister Karina Milei, (right), during city legislature elections in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 18. (AP)

"The Peronist party is far from dead with this result," said Juan Cruz Díaz, a political analyst who runs the Cefeidas Group, a consultancy in Buenos Aires.

But the main takeaway from Sunday's vote, he said, "is the fight for dominance in the center-right and the strong victory over the PRO party."

Some 2.5 million people were eligible to vote in Sunday's election, in which half of the 60 legislative seats were up for grabs. Turnout was far lower than usual, hovering around 53%.

Widely seen as a power struggle between far-right Milei and center-right Macri, this local race reflected the shifts that hard-right factions have pulled off around the world, from Europe to the United States, squeezing the political center.

"It turned into a crucial battle for the political leadership," said Ignacio Labaqui, a senior analyst at research group Medley Global Advisors.

The result cements Milei's party as Argentina's main alternative to the left-leaning Peronist movement championed by former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who governed for eight years after succeeding her husband in 2007. Under her watch, Argentina became notorious for its unbridled state spending and massive budget deficits.

"What this election yielded is that society understands we're the best way to end Kirchnerism for good, which was nothing but a tragedy for Argentina," Adorni said in his victory speech, referring to the political movement of former President Kirchner.

Pakistan car bomb explosion kills four

QUETTA, Pakistan, May 19, (AP): A car bomb exploded near a market in Pakistan's restive southwest, killing four people and wounding 20 others, a government official said Monday, as violence intensifies in the region.

The attack occurred Sunday night in Qillah Abdullah, a city in Balochistan province bordering Afghanistan, said Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Riaz.

The blast also damaged several shops and the outer wall of a nearby building housing paramilitary forces, he said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

However, suspicion is likely to fall on ethnic Baloch separatists, who frequently target security forces and civilians in Balochistan and other parts of the country. Shahid Rind, a spokesperson for the Balochistan government, condemned the bombing and said an investigation is underway.

Balochistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks.

Militant attack on two villages in Nigeria kills 57 – witnesses

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 19, (AP): A suspected militant attack on two villages in Nigeria left at least 57 people dead and at least 70 missing on Thursday, witnesses said Sunday, in one of the deadliest incidents in the country's conflict-ridden northeast this year.



Samuel

Abdulrahman Ibrahim survived Thursday's attack on two villages in Baga in Borno State and participated in the burial of the dead. He told The Associated Press that the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) faction of the militant group Boko Haram gathered more than 100 residents of the neighboring villages of Mallam Karamti and Kwatandashi and marched them into the bush. Later on Saturday, 57 bodies were recovered there.

A spokesperson for the Borno government said he could not confirm the casualty counts. The Nigerian military did not respond to a request for comment.

According to Ibrahim, who is from Mallam Karamti, and another survivor from Kwatandashi who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals, the villagers were accused of acting as informants for the rival Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

"Without the capacity to attack the military like ISWAP, JAS is focused on terrorizing civilians," said **Malik Samuel**, an expert on northern Nigeria's conflicts with nonprofit Good Governance Africa.

Business

CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

With the participation of 25 exceptional female trainees from different professional backgrounds

NBK wraps up the closing activities of 2nd 'NBK RISE' cohort

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: In a special visit to its final training session at the IE Business School in Spain, National Bank of Kuwait successfully wrapped up the closing activities of the nine-month-long Global Women Leadership Initiative "NBK RISE" in its second cohort.

"NBK RISE" is a first-of-its-kind initiative specifically designed to empower women and increase their representation in higher leadership roles, which reflects the bank's commitment to achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion as per the highest international standards, and ultimately elevate women leadership institutionally, locally, regionally and globally.

The second cohort is comprised of 25 female participants from diverse professional backgrounds, including local and international NBK employees, as well as representatives from NBK Wealth and representatives from prestigious regional companies such as Kuwait Petroleum Company, Ooredoo, Kuwait Banking Association, Abyat, Gulf Bank, Kuwait Financial Centre-Markaz, J's Bakery, and Intervest Capital Partner-New York.

The program is divided into several training modules that aim to develop leadership and strategic skills, communication, and interaction, in addition to a focus on preparing participants to obtain exceptional leading roles in the future.

The fourth and final module, focused on behavioral and impact skills, was held in collaboration with IE Business School in Madrid. Various essential topics were explored, such as Leading Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Leading Strategically, Megatrends and Future of Work, Effective Decision Maing, Delegation & Empowerment, and overall Wellbeing.

Moreover, the participants had the ability to work with their executive coach from IE Business School, Madrid, to further develop their Capstone Projects in preparation for the presentations to Executive Management, reflecting the skills and knowledge gained throughout the program. In this cohort, not only did participants receive training for leadership skills, but they were also exposed to first-hand communication with global and diverse experiences, which contributed to enhancing overseas strategic collaboration and ultimately establishing a big network of women leaders across different sectors and locations.



Ambassador of Kuwait to Spain Ziyad Al-Anbai and Emad Al-Ablani in a group photo with NBK RISE program trainees.



Al-Ablani during a discussion session at IE University.



From left: Emad Al-Ablani, Lee Newman, Dean of IE University Madrid, and Anmar Aldarmi.

Joined by Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, Group Chief Human Resources Officer, the visit included a dinner banquet to honor His Excellency Mr. Ziyad Al-Anbai, the Ambassador of Kuwait to Spain along with several distinguished women leaders, with the attendance of Constantino De Zabala, the Director of Operations at IE Business School for the Middle East as well as the university leaders and Kuwaiti students.

On the sidelines of the program's closing activities, exclusive discussions were conducted covering Human Resources topics, by Mr. Emad Al-Ablani and moderated by Professor Kriti Jain from IE, where they explored visions and global insights on the latest leadership and human resources strategies. These activities posed a remarkable opportunity for the participants to be directly in touch with distinct diplomatic and academic figures, further widening their overseas professional network.

It should be noted that NBK is always keen on providing equal opportunities and promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace through various strategic initiatives and specialized programs that aim to develop women leadership, further contributing to increasing the representation of women in leadership roles.

In fact, increasing women's participation and providing them with decision-making opportunities are integral parts of international institutional strategies, especially as women are more involved in social contexts, which contributes to establishing an environment that promotes sustainable development and a positive social impact in the long run.

Therefore, the "NBK RISE" program aims to make a sustainable impact across different sectors where alumniguide ambitious future candidates, creating a sustainable cycle that enables the program to carry on and continue to make a positive impact. Moreover, it reflects NBK's commitment to enhancing gender diversity and women empowerment.

It is also noteworthy that the program, which aims to enhance gender diversity and women empowerment, has earned prestigious recognition and received several awards, including MERIT's Special Recognition for "Developing Women Leaders" and the Bronze Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion from the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) as part of the 2023 MENA Awards.

NBK prides itself in following equality principles throughout its international locations, where women already occupy 43.2% of its workforce and females occupy 29.7% of national higher management roles and above. Moreover, NBK is proud that it does not implement a gender wage gap. NBK RISE is a testament to NBK Group's continuous efforts to be a global leader in corporate community advancement.

In collaboration with the most prominent universities and training providers around the world, NBKis keen on providing specialized programs and workshops that aim to develop women leadership, raise awareness about gender inequality, and utilize them to increase productivity and innovation. Moreover, NBK is committed to expanding the range of diversity and inclusion to include customers, as it launched several services and products especially for female customers and entrepreneurs.

NBK is committed to in stilling the principle of women empowerment in the Group's professional culture by providing mentorship, continuous career development opportunities, and adopting innovative strategic insights in the field of human resources, in line with the bank's future aspirations and goals.

- "NBK RISE" is designed to empower women and increase their representation in higher leadership roles.
- This initiative goes hand in hand with NBK's strategy towards enhancing women leadership across all levels.
- The bank provides specialized programs tailored to support, develop, and enable women in leadership.
- "NBK RISE" aims to make a sustainable impact in all sectors by establishing a diverse community of women leaders.
- NBK's is committed to providing equal opportunities as well as promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- "NBK RISE" has earned prestigious recognition and received several awards.
- NBK is proud to be a pioneer in implementing equality in the workplace across its global locations.

Discounts, rewards, and travel ease

Weyay Bank & Emirates partner to empower student customers

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: In alignment with its vision to empower student customer base and keep pace with their lifestyle, Weyay Bank, the first digital Bank in Kuwait, offers discounts of up to 10% on economy and premium economy class tickets, and 5% on business class when booking flights on Emirates. This collaboration with Emirates Airline aligns with the Bank's belief in the importance of supporting and empowering youth.

Students will also benefit from an enhanced baggage allowance of an extra 10 kilograms or one additional piece of luggage (whichever is applicable), along with 2000 Skywards Miles upon enrolling in Emirates' loyalty program.

This partnership reflects Weyay Bank's dedication to understanding its customers' needs and providing them with convenience and value, particularly in travel, through collaboration with a globally respected partner like Emirates.

This initiative for student travelers complements Weyay Bank's digital prepaid Multicurrency Card, available to all Weyay customers across different segments. This card is the ideal travel companion, enabling customers to pay in 15 different currencies worldwide without any hidden fees. This feature saves students the hassle of traditional currency exchange and the volatility of exchange rates, granting them the ability to manage their expenses easily and transparently while abroad.

Weyay Bank is Kuwait's first digital bank, providing innovative banking solutions designed to keep up with the digital age we live in. Weyay offers a wide range of digital services and benefits via its easy-to-use app, focusing on speed, flexibility, and security.



Weyay Bank x Emirates

Kamco Investment Fund triumphs 2025 LSEG Lipper Fund Awards in 6 categories

For the third consecutive year

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced that the Kamco Investment Fund won the 2025 LSEG (London Stock Exchange Group) Lipper Fund Awards in 6 categories in recognition of the fund's exceptional performance and risk-adjusted returns. Lipper's quantitative and proprietary methodology in awarding funds is a truly independent and uncompromised assessment of each fund's performance.

The MENA market awards recognize funds with outstanding performance based on Lipper's rigorous assessment process. Kamco Investment Fund was named the MENA Markets and MENA Markets Domestic LSEG Lipper Fund Awards Kuwait 2025 Winner, "Best Equity Fund Over3 Years", "Best Equity Fund Over 5 Years", and "Best Equity Fund Over 10 Years".

The fund outperformed its respective benchmark during the mentioned periods with Kamco Investment Fund achieving 6.8% over 3-years (Benchmark -1.2%), 94.8% over 5-years (Benchmark 83.6%), and 138.5% over 10-years (benchmark 97.7%) as of 30 April 2025.

Commenting on the awards, Salah Al Wuhaib, Senior Executive Director of Equity and Fixed Income at Kamco Invest, said, "We are proud to once again be acknowledged for the periodic performance of our Kamco Investment Fund, one of Kamco Invest's flagship funds in Kuwait, at the LSEG Lipper Fund Awards. This recognition reflects the strength of the investment philosophy and active fund management approach that we implement when managing our funds. We will continue to uphold our disciplined investment strategy to deliver sustainable long-term value for our clients."



Salah Al Wuhaib



Mahmoud Tifouni

Mahmoud Tifouni, Director – Equity and Fixed Income, said, "This recognition by the LSEG Lipper Fund Awards highlights the fund's performance over the short-, medium-, and long-term periods.Our investment framework has proven resilient through favorable market cycles and periods of uncertainty. The Kamco Investment Fund, along with our other Kuwaiti funds, continue to deliver strong performances, ranking amongst the top performing conventional and Islamic funds in Kuwait."

Otto Christian Kober, Head of Lipper Research, LSEG Data & Analytics, said, "The 2025 LSEG Lipper Fund Awards are recognizing perhaps the most dramatic three-year period that the markets have seen in decades. Fund managers being recognized have steered their investors through a pandemic, a mild recession, rising geopolitical risks, skyrocketing inflation and dramatic central bank intervention.

He added, "Whether you've been investing for just the past 15 years and have seen only the easy money environment following the Financial Crisis – or you've been an investor for 50 years and feel as if you've seen it all, there is no way to have foreseen the range of fundamental and non-financial factors that impacted the markets these past few years."

Kober concluded, "We applaud the 2025 LSEG Lipper Fund Award winners such as Kamco Invest for delivering outperformance and the accompanying comfort of consistency to investors' portfolios through a cross-current of global market disruptions."

Al Wuhaib concluded by congratulating the Asset Management Team for their effort and diligent investment approach which have resulted in Kamco Invest's Kuwait Equity Funds being ranked amongst the top performing funds in 2024 and the first quarter of 2025.

It is worth mentioning that LSEG is one of the world's leading providers of financial markets infrastructure and delivers financial data, analytics, news, and index products to more than 40,000 customers in over 170 countries.They help organizations fund innovation, manage risk, and create jobs by partnering with customers at every point in the trade lifecycle: from informing their pre-trade decisions and executing trades to raising capital, clearing and optimization. Backed by more than three centuries of experience, innovative technologies, and a team of 25,000 people in over 60 countries, they are driving financial stability, empowering economies and enabling sustainable growth.

In line with its commitment to Diraya campaign

Kuwait Finance House warns against unverified online links

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to stay cautious about a new phishing scam targeting their bank accounts and stealing their funds. KFH warning is part of its continuous support for Diraya campaign, which aims to promote banking awareness, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

In its press release, KFH stated that the new form of online scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.

KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they are attempts to obtain customers' banking information to steal their funds or data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts byavoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones. Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank's application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.

KFH & Diraya logo.

In line with its dedicated human capital development strategy & commitment to investing in national talents

Burgan Bank participates in the annual GUST Career Fair

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Burgan Bank recently took part in Gulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST) 26th Career Fair alongside some of Kuwait's top employers across various sectors. The Bank's participation comes as part of its dedicated human capital development strategy and its unwavering commitment to investing in Kuwait's national talents.



Abdulraheem

"We are delighted to renew our participation in GUST's annual career fair, where we were pleased to meet some of the most aspiring and inspiring Kuwaiti talents who, with the right guidance, have great potential for leading successful and impactful careers," said Mr. Abdulwahab Jamal Abdulraheem, Executive Manager – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank. "As Burgan continues to grow in size and aspiration, we remain committed to attracting national calibers who share our dedication to innovation and creativity and who have an aptitude for learning and problem-solving."

Over the event's three-day span, Burgan representatives had the opportunity to engage directly with young talents interested in building a career in the banking and financial sector, whether as interns or employees. Besides introducing the career fair visitors to the Bank's different departments, the representatives also highlighted Burgan's leading learning and talent development program, which caters to employees' varying needs, interests, and learning styles, setting them up for a professional experience of holistic growth. In addition, interested candidates were able to inquire about Burgan's special employee benefits and inclusive work culture.



GUST honoring Burgan Bank for participating in the career fair.

In adherence to its committed support of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) campaign – launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) with the support of local banks – Burgan, represented by its human resources and talent acquisition team, shared vital banking awareness and financial literacy information with the event visitors. This included tips on secure digital banking and means to avoid the risk of fraud and scamming, as well as Burgan services and products tailored to the customers' different needs and aspirations – such as the upgraded Youth account, which caters to the modern lifestyles of young people aged 15-25.

It is worth noting that Burgan Bank remains committed to taking part in Kuwait's leading career fairs, such Watheefti, and the employment events hosted by prominent educational institutions across the country. As a certified Great Place to Work®, the Bank also exerts immense effort to invest in Kuwait's most promising talents through its robust talent development program, which includes Entelaqah for fresh hires, Ro'ya for leadership development, and a suite of educational programs tailored to specific departments and employment grades.

Marking strong turnaround

ACICO posts KD 6.2 million net profit in first quarter '25

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: ACICO Group today announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2025, recording a net profit of KD 6.2 million, a significant turnaround compared to a net loss of KD 0.77 million for the same period in 2024.

This improvement reflects the Group's continued success in strengthening its financial position and expanding its presence in local and regional markets, affirming the effectiveness of the Board of Directors' strategy in driving sustainable growth and positive performance.

Significant Financial Improvement

ACICO successfully reduced its accumulated losses to KD 17.7 million as of March 31, 2025, down from KD 23.9 million as of December 31, 2024. This achievement comes as a result of the decisive measures implemented as part of the Group's transformation plan, approved by the Board of Directors.

Commenting on the results, Group Chairman Mr. Emad Abdullah Al-Issa said:

"These results reaffirm the success of the company's strategy which is today tangible at the level of operational efficiency, financial restructuring and growing confidence in ACICO's products and services. The Group remains committed to supporting key developments, commercial and residential projects and is proud to play a leading role in advancing the industrial and construction sectors in Kuwait and across the Gulf."

He added:

"Our aim is to maximize shareholder value while preserving our leadership position in the regional industrial and construction sectors. We are equally committed to our role within our society and the environment. Through our marketing and CSR initiatives, we support Kuwait Vision 2035 as well as sustainable development, firmly believing that our impact goes beyond commercial growth to include empowering national talent and strengthening integration between the public and private sectors."



ACICO Chairman, Emad Abdullah Al-Issa.

Strong Performance and Continued Expansion

ACICO continued to deliver high efficiency in its operations during the quarter, signing new turnkey construction contracts with homeowners in newly developed residential areas. The Group also expanded its involvement in strategic infrastructure, industrial and real estate projects.

Sustainable Growth and Shareholder Value

ACICO remains committed to executing its comprehensive strategic plan, focused on sustainable growth, operational efficiency, and innovation in its product and service offerings. The Group continues to strengthen strategic partnerships and expand its regional footprint, reinforcing its position as a national industrial and construction leader with regional impact.

As part of its CSR program

KIB organizes its 4th workshop on investment fundamentals and real estate appraisal at KU

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), represented by its Real Estate Department, announced the delivery of its fourth specialized workshop on the fundamentals of investment and rveal estate appraisal at Kuwait University. The workshop is part of a series of training activities organized by the Bank in collaboration with the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University, under the framework of a joint collaboration between the two parties.

This initiative falls under the Bank's comprehensive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which emphasizes support for education, the transfer of practical knowledge, and the expansion of collaboration with academic institutions. It also reflects the Bank's commitment to upholding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, reinforcing its active role in community development.

The workshop featured the participation of KIB's Executive Manager of the Real Estate Appraisal Department, Eng. Ali Al-Shakhs, and Real Estate Expert at the Real Estate Department, Eng. Hossam Al-Kolak. The workshop was also attended by several university faculty members and a group of students from Kuwait University.

Commenting on the workshop, Al-Shakhs stated: "The organization of these workshops reflects the Bank's commitment to supporting the development of qualified national talent with advanced skills that align with the needs of the real estate market." He added: "The Bank will continue to launch more educational and training initiatives with Kuwait University, which aim to integrate practical experience into the university's academic curriculum."



KIB's Ali Al-Shakhs



KIB – KU real estate workshop.

Al-Shakhs added: "Our participation in these initiatives reflects KIB's longstanding position as a specialized institution in real estate appraisal and finance since its inception. Through this workshop, the Real Estate Department aimed to provide a comprehensive educational program covering all key aspects of real estate appraisal and investment, including international appraisal standards and the core factors influencing appraisals, such as the cost approach, the income capitalization approach, and the market sales comparison approach."

Emphasizing that the workshops offer a valuable opportunity to engage directly with students and share knowledge and expertise that enrich their academic journey, Al-Shakhs also noted that such initiatives reaffirm the Bank's commitment to its comprehensive CSR strategy, which embraces the application of ESG principles.

It is worth noting that the Real Estate Department at KIB provides integrated real estate services, backed by extensive and pioneering experience in the field since the Bank's establishment. It is also recognized as a trusted reference for leading government entities, banking institutions, as well as investment and real estate companies in Kuwait.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Tender for KOC oilfield road maintenance opens May 18, 2025

CAPT issues tender for maintenance of KOC road network

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has announced the issuance of a tender for maintenance services for the road network at Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) oilfields in the northern and western parts of Kuwait, at the request of KOC.

The tender opening date is May 18, 2025 and the closing date is Aug 17, 2025, according to the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm).

CAPT also invited those who have obtained the tender documents for the water separation facility at the Rawdatayn field, Gathering Center 25; and the pumping facility, Gathering Center 30 to download Appendix One from its website.

Furthermore, Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) announced an auction for the sale of surplus, consumable, used and disposed-off materials located at its general headquarters in Shuwaikh, the Marine Agency branch in Fahaheel, and the LNG filling branches in Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish.

Iraq proposes new initiatives on food security and trade cooperation

Arab League Chief calls for unity amid global economic turbulence

BAGHDAD, May 19, (KUNA): Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit said on Saturday that unity and vigilance were key factors to face the rapid and uncertain developments in the world of economy.

Addressing the inaugural session of the fifth Arab Development, Economic and Social Summit, he asserted that rapid and sometimes dangerous international developments made this summit very significant.

The world economy is passing through severe turbulences and the international commerce is facing emerging challenges, and the worst forms of protectionism, he added.

Abul-Gheit said he observed a trend for regional integration at the expense of globalization.

"I assume that the Arab states are warranted to interact effectively with these challenges through a collective vision and common strategies as well as bolstering integration and coordination in the economic sectors," he added.

Such an approach has become a necessity for serving the Arab nations' interests at time the world is gripped with turbulence and uncertainties, amid mounting hazards and threats, the Arab League Secretary General stated.

The Arab League chief said that the issue of food security was paramount issue not only for the Arab world, but also for countries across the globe, indicating that ensuring the smooth flow of global food supply was important and indicated that this summit must come up with a project to secure this resource for Arab citizens.

The summit is awaiting for an important Iraqi initiative on Arab food security for grains, indicated the Arab League chief who also alluded to an Iraqi proposal for establishing an Arab commerce ministers council within the League to exchange views on cooperation and also address challenges posed by possible global "trade wars".

The Arab League chief also touched on the Mauritanian initiative on "Blue Economy" as a solution to food and energy shortages.

According to the World Bank, Blue Economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem."

Abul-Gheit said that the Blue Economy initiative would utilize Arab nations capabilities in this field, which would be beneficial economically and environmentally.

The Arab AI initiative is also an important part of plans for technology pioneering and sustainable development, he affirmed, adding that AI should be utilized in various sectors to close the gap in this sector between the Arab world and other nations.

Abul-Gheit also asserted that overall Arab national security would not be achieved without boosting efforts within food security, health, education, marine security, energy, cybersecurity, and social security.

He called for utilize the vision of the founders of the Arab League some 80 years ago, saying that Arab agencies must be given every opportunity to fulfill their role in achieving the aspiration of the Arab people.

The youth in the Arab world are a majority and this demographic must be encouraged to use their full potential to serve their communities and develop them to the point of excellence, he asserted.

Despite the challenges with Palestine being brutally assaulted and Arab nations being targeted and taken advantage of, it is of utmost importance for Arabs to unit and find means to fend off adversaries and seek a better life for all, he concluded.

Nearly 60% of Arabs excluded from formal financial systems

By ESCWA

BEIRUT, May 19: Nearly 60% of adults in the Arab region remain excluded from formal financial systems, according to a new report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The Annual SDG Review 2025 paints a sobering picture of persistent financial exclusion that is undermining the region's ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline.

The report, which focuses on financial inclusion as a cross-cutting enabler of sustainable development, reveals those inequalities continue to lock millions out of economic opportunity.

"The Arab region cannot afford to treat financial services as a luxury," said Economic Affairs Officer at ESCWA Mario Jales, the lead author of the report. "Without inclusive finance, we cannot hope to lift people out of poverty, support small businesses, or achieve equitable growth."

Women remain among the most excluded, with only 29% having access to bank accounts or mobile money – making the Arab region the worst-performing globally on women's financial inclusion. The gender gap stands at a staggering 13 percentage points. Persons with disabilities fare no better: just 21% have access to financial services, often due to discriminatory practices, inaccessible infrastructure, or lack of supportive regulation.

The data also show sharp rural-urban divides. In many countries, rural populations are up to twice as likely to be unbanked compared to urban residents. Youth, informal workers, and refugees face additional barriers, compounding cycles of vulnerability.

Mobile finance has seen rapid growth, with mobile money accounts doubling between 2020 and 2023. Yet, the report warns of a "digital divide within the divide": poor connectivity, limited smartphone access, and weak digital literacy prevent the most marginalized from benefiting. In conflict-affected countries, mobile services are often disrupted or unavailable.

Access to credit also remains a major challenge. Fewer than one in five adults in the region have borrowed from a formal financial institution. For micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), this financing gap restricts innovation and job creation.

ESCWA calls for urgent reforms. These include strengthening consumer protection, promoting financial literacy, integrating gender and disability perspectives into financial regulation, and improving digital infrastructure. It also advocates for interoperable digital ID systems to facilitate safe and inclusive access to services.

The report places financial inclusion within the broader SDG context. With only 18% of global targets on track – and stagnation or regression in several Arab countries – ESCWA emphasizes that inclusive finance is essential for progress on poverty, education, gender equality, and decent work.

Despite the bleak statistics, the report identifies success stories. Countries like Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan have made strides in expanding digital finance and reaching underserved populations through regulatory innovation and targeted programs.

"The path forward exists," the report concludes, "but it requires political will, targeted investment, and a whole-of-society approach."

About ESCWA

One of five United Nations regional commissions, ESCWA supports inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Arab States, and works on enhancing regional integration.

Oil recovers after sliding from two-week highs on supply concerns

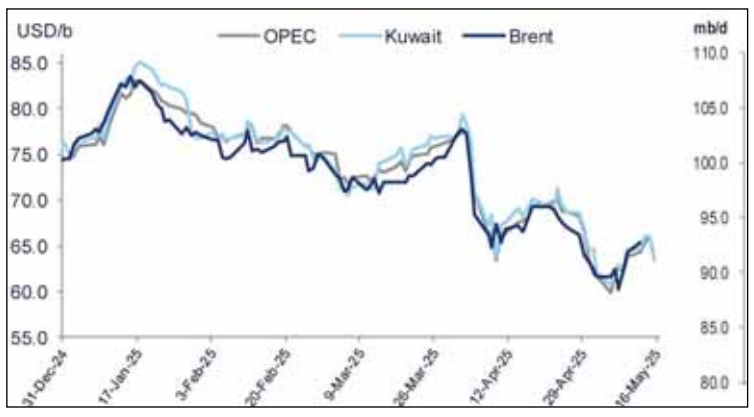
Kuwait crude export falls 6.7% in April as global demand wavers

By KAMCO Invest

The speculations surrounding talks between the US and Iran moved crude oil prices higher at the start of the week on indications of curbs. Talks continued between the two producers during the week resulting in volatile crude oil prices. Brent crude future prices traded around USD 63/b after declining by more than 5% during mid week but recovered by the end of week to reach USD 65.4/b. The volatility comes after consistent gains at the start of last week following a healthy gain of 4.3% during the previous week led by signs of improving market fundamentals. These gains were mainly led by talks of easing trade tensions between the US and China coupled with expectations of increasing oil demand in China. Supply side factors also supported gains that mainly included sanctions on Russia, Iran and Venezuela. The market also took cues from the softer-than-expected inflation numbers from the US pointing to a relatively smaller economic impact from the tariffs. A relatively weaker greenback vs. historical levels also supported crude oil prices while estimates of higher inventories in the US partially dented the rally. Meanwhile, the weekly crude oil inventory report from the US EIA pointed to an unexpected build of 3.5 million barrels during the week ended 9-May-2025 that was much higher than analyst forecasts. This was the biggest weekly increase in inventory since the week of 28-March-2025 that pushed total inventories to 441.8 million barrels, the highest since the week of 18-April-2025. The increase was led by an increase in imports, as per a Reuters report, from OPEC+ countries. On the demand front, the latest monthly report from the OPEC kept demand growth forecasts unchanged but maintained a cautiously optimistic tone related to trade developments, although the report showed a trimmed economic growth outlook for the world to 2.9% vs. its previous forecast of 3.0% growth. On the other hand, the monthly oil report from the IEA showed that oil demand is expected to slow during the remainder of the year due to economic headwinds. However, the report also noted the positive impact of lower oil prices on overall oil demand. The latest traffic data from China also showed a strong rebound in from the steep drop during the first week of the month. On the supply side, OPEC crude oil output declined last month to reach 26.7 mb/d, according to data from OPEC secondary sources. The decline was mainly led by lower output from Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria and Libya that was partially offset by an increase in output reported by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Meanwhile, the trend in oil production in the US remained mixed over the last few weeks owing to lower prices that was also reflected in the data for oil rig count. Production remained elevated at 13.4 mb/d but below the record reached at the end of March-2025.

Crude oil prices touched the highest level in more than two weeks at the start of last week but failed to sustain the momentum after news that the US President said that they are closer to a deal with Iran. A successful deal would pave the way for Iran to increase oil output which stood at 3.35 mb/d as of April-2025, according to Bloomberg, with a total capacity of 3.83 mb/d, indicating a spare capacity of close to 0.5 mb/d. The declines also came after the weekly oil inventory report from the EIA showed an unexpected build during the week ended 9-May-2025. As per the report, crude oil inventories in the US showed the biggest increase in six weeks to reach 441.8 million barrels. Meanwhile, a survey of oil drillers in the shale patch, quoted by Bloomberg, showed muted sentiments from oil drillers. As per the survey, respondents expect oil prices to trade at current levels by the end of the year at around USD 60/b for WTI.

In terms of monthly price trend, prices of all crude grades witnessed steep declines to reach multi-year low levels during April- 2025 reflecting the fears of demand impact from the tariffs imposed by the US government. This was also the third consecutive month of decline in average crude oil prices. Average spot Brent crude oil price declined by 6.6% to reach USD 67.8/b during April-2025, the lowest monthly average in four years as compared to an average of USD 72.5/b during March-2025. On the other hand, average OPEC reference basket price witnessed a



slightly bigger decline of 6.8%, the biggest decline in eight months, to reach USD 69.0/b while Kuwait export grade crude prices witnessed a similar decline of 6.7% to average at USD 70.3/b during April-2025. Meanwhile, the consensus estimate for Brent crude showed sharp downward revisions for the next four quarters with some recent forecasts suggesting prices going below USD 60/b this year. The median consensus forecast for brent crude grade for Q2-2025 stood at USD 67.0/b, according to data from Bloomberg, witnessing a downward revision of USD 6/b. Similarly, the forecast for Q3-2025 stood at USD 68/b, revised down by 4.75/b as compared to the consensus last month.

Global oil demand growth forecast for 2025 was kept unchanged by the OPEC in its latest monthly report. The agency expects oil demand to grow by 1.3 mb/d during the year and average at 105.0 mb/d. However, there were adjustments to forecasts for Q1-2025 reflecting actual data for the quarter. The adjustments were mainly made to demand estimates for the US which underwent an upward adjustment of 0.21 mb/d as well as OECD Asia Pacific with an upward adjustment of 0.05 mb/d. These increases were partially offset by downward adjustment to estimates for OECD Europe by 0.05 mb/d as well as 0.25 mb/d downward adjustment to demand estimate for the non-OECD region. Within the non-OECD region, demand estimates for India, China, Middle East Other Asi and Latin America were lowered that were partially offset by upward adjustment to demand estimates for the Africa region. On the other hand, demand forecast from the IEA showed a slight upward revision to demand forecast for 2025 backed by healthy demand growth in Q1-2025. According to the IEA monthly report, global oil demand growth is expected to come in at 740 tb/d in 2025, a slight upward revision from 730tb/d growth forecasted in the previous month's report.As per the IEA, demand growth stood at 990 tb/d y-o-y during Q1-2025 but is expected to slow significantly to reach 650 tb/d for the remainder of the year. The forecast for the rest of the year is expected to be affected by economic headwinds as well as record EV sales. The agency said that despite the trade deal with UK and the 90-day accord with China, oil demand is expected o be affected by the increased trade uncertainty that is expected to weigh on the world economy. The forecast for the rest of the year also reflect weaker-than-expected non-OECD delivery data, especially for China and India. Nevertheless, emerging economies are expected to remain the key driver of oil demand growth this year as well as next year, as per the IEA, with an expected demand growth of 860 tb/d this year followed by 1.0 mb/d growth next year. On the other hand, OECD countries are expected to see a demand decline of 120 tb/d this year followed by a decline of 240 tb/d next year. For 2026, the forecast from OPEC showed no change with an expected demand growth of 1.28 mb/d to reach an average of 106.3 mb/d during the year.

Non-DoC liquids supply growth forecast for 2025 was once again lowered marginally by 0.1 mb/d in OPEC's latest monthly report. The supply from the group is expected to grow by 0.81 mb/d this year and average at 54.0 mb/d. The downward revision mainly reflected lowered supply forecast for the OECD region with the US supply growth forecast lowered by 0.07 mb/d vs. previous forecast and is expected to average at 22.1 mb/d. The forecast for the overall Americas region was lowered by 0.09 mb/d, indicating cuts to supply forecast for Canada. The forecast also reflected the latest rig count data from Baker Hughes that showed 10 consecutive weeks of rig count decline in the North America region by the week ended 9-May

2025. For the US, overall rig count declined last week to reach 578 rigs, the lowest since January-2025. Supply forecast for the overall OECD region was also downgraded by 0.09 mb/d after a marginal downward revision for OECD Asia Pacific. The forecast for the non-OECD region was kept unchanged but there were minimal changes at the country level. Meanwhile, forecasts from the IEA showed that world oil supply is expected to grow by 1.6 mb/d to reach an average of 104.6 mb/d in 2025 mainly led by higher production growth from non-OPEC+ producers that are expected to add 1.3 mb/d in additional supplies this year.

For 2026, non-DoC liquids supply growth is expected to be in line with this year, as per the OPEC. The agency expects supply growth of 0.8 mb/d next year to reach an average supply of 54.81 mb/d after making a downward adjustment of 0.1 mb/d to the yearly forecast. The downward revision once again reflected lowered forecast for supplies from the US partially offset by an upward revision to forecast mainly from Latin America, China and Other Asia regions. As per the IEA, world oil supply is expected to increase by 970 tb/d next year with non-OPEC+ producers expected to increase supply by 820 tb/d and the remaining 150 tb/d of increase is expected to come from OPEC+ producers.

OPEC crude oil production declined for the second consecutive month during April-2025. As per Bloomberg data, average OPEC production stood at 27.24 mb/d during the month, the lowest in three months, registering a decline of 0.2 mb/d as compared to the previous month. The decline was mainly led by lower production reported by Venezuela, UAE, and Nigeria that was partially offset by marginal growth in production mainly in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Data from Bloomberg showed that OPEC production has declined in four out of the five previous months. On the other hand, data from OPEC secondary sources showed a relatively smaller production decline of 62 tb/d with production averaging at 26.7 mb/d during April-2025. The decline was led by a broad-based fall in production that was partially offset by an increase in production in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Output from the broader DoC producers group showed a production decline of 106 tb/d after output from the nonOPEC DoC countries showed an output decline of 45 t b/d during the month. This decline was mainly led by lower output from Kazakhstan and Malaysia partially offset by marginal growth in output from Russia and Oman.

Meanwhile, the OPEC+ announced to increase daily crude oil production by the group by another 411 tb/d for June2025. This along with the announced increases for May2025 and April-2025 to around 0.96 mb/d or 43.6% of the 2.2 mb/d in pledged cuts. The IEA expects OPEC+ supply growth of 310 tb/d this year reflecting the unwinding of production cuts followed by an increase of 150 tb/d in 2026.

Oil production in Venezuela declined during April-2025 after US renewed its sanctions on the country. This led to revocation of license issued to oil producer Chevron that produces around 0.2 mb/d of Venezuela's daily output through four joint ventures with the state owned oil company. The sanctions resulted in the company exiting their operations in the country before the 27-May-2025 deadline.

Oil production in Nigeria went below it OPEC+ quota to reach 1.47 mb/d during April-2025. The decline was led by structural issues in production as well as underinvestment in facilities, although the government has recently announced a new target to expand capacity to 2.5 mb/d by 2026.

Japan and Kuwait deepen business ties through strategic Diwaniya gathering

Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait organizes the 'Japanese-Kuwaiti Business Diwaniya' at his residence

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Mukai Kenichiro organized the 'Japanese-Kuwaiti Business Diwaniya' at his residence, with Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Jawhar Hayat, a group of Kuwaiti businesspersons, and representatives of the public and private sectors in attendance.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the economic and technological partnerships between Kuwait and Japan and expand the horizons of cooperation in various fields.

Mukai expressed his pride and gratitude for the presence of the guests, stressing that the Diwaniya is a strategic opportunity to revive the Japanese-Kuwaiti Business Committee at the governmental level and exchange views on the future of trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

He pointed out that the current phase is a turning point in economic relations between the two countries, calling for strengthening cooperation in sustainable development, social responsibility and the green economy.

He affirmed that Japan is one of the largest global investment markets, with capital investments reaching approximately $700 billion in 2023. He urged the Kuwaiti businesspersons to explore the available opportunities, particularly through the Kansai-Osaka Expo, which was launched in April and will continue for six months.

He revealed the Expo showcases advanced Japanese technologies, such as room-temperature hydrogen production devices, carbon dioxide capture and emission technologies, and industrial fuel production. He said these technologies are plausible solutions for the realization of Kuwait's goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. He also cited the perovskite solar cells developed by Panasonic, which can be installed on windows and are currently used in Toyota cars that charge while driving, making them ideally suited to the sunny environment in Kuwait.



Photos by Mohammed Morsi

Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Mukai Kenichiro poses with the Kuwaiti business men.



Mukai Kenichiro delivers a speech.



The Ambassador with some of the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

In the healthcare sector, he highlighted the regenerative medicine technologies using IPS cells, which offer advanced therapeutic capabilities, calling for investment in them and their use within the healthcare system in Kuwait.

He also talked about the contributions of major Japanese companies, such as Mitsubishi, Toshiba and JERA, to infrastructure and energy projects in Kuwait. He asserted that these projects are not merely commercial activities, as they are rather contributions to improving the quality of life. He was quick to add that these companies are facing challenges, such as the slow bidding process, delayed procedures, and lack of focus on reducing emissions.

He revealed the Japanese government is engaged in a serious dialogue with the Kuwaiti side to address these challenges, calling on decision-makers to support these efforts to improve the joint business environment.

He affirmed the embassy's readiness to provide all forms of support to Kuwaiti businesspersons, wishing to introduce Japanese products and technologies to the local market. He is hoping that Kuwait will become a regional center for adopting Japanese innovations and exporting them to the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On the other hand, Mubarak Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member of Al-Sayer Group, presented the history of the long-standing partnership with Japan, dating back to 1954, when the group became the first distributor of Toyota vehicles in the Middle East, thanks to his late father, Nasser Mohammed Al-Sayer.

Al-Sayer explained that this relationship has evolved into a strategic partnership spanning more than seven decades, making Al-Sayer Group the largest importer of Japanese goods in Kuwait, including major brands like Toyota, Lexus, Hino, Hitachi, Kawasaki, Yokohama, Akai, Sakai, JCB, and Canon.

He asked the Japanese government to facilitate entry for Kuwaitis by granting visas upon arrival, stressing that the Kuwaiti people's passion for Japan is growing in the fields of education, entertainment, and commerce.

He affirmed Al-Sayer Group's commitment to continuing its long-standing partnership with Japan for future generations, stating that "this partnership is not only a legacy we cherish, but a future we are working hard to consolidate.

Trump's tariff spree casts shadow over Euro economy, even in best case scenario

FRANKFURT, Germany, May 19, (AP): U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff offensive has led European officials to cut back their growth forecasts for this year and next - even in a best-case scenario in which the highest rates on most goods could be negotiated away.

The forecast for this year for the 20 countries that use the euro currency was cut to 0.9% from the previous forecast in November of 1.3%, the European Union's executive commission said Monday in its regular spring forecast.

The forecast for 2026 was cut to 1.4% from 1.6%.

One reason for the lower growth estimate was the stagnating economy in Germany, where growth is expected to be zero this year after two years of shrinking output. Germany's economy is heavily dependent on exports but has faced strong headwinds from higher energy costs after the loss of Russian natural gas due to the invasion of Ukraine as well from lack of pro-growth infrastructure spending and competition from China in autos and industrial machinery.

The proposal for a 20% U.S. tariff on imported goods from Europe in addition to its suspension for 90 days have meant uncertainty "not seen since the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Economy Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis.

Global shares slide, US futures and dollar drop

HONG KONG, May 19, (AP): Global shares fell Monday and U.S. futures and the dollar also weakened after Moody's Ratings downgraded the sovereign credit rating for the United States because of its failure to stem a rising tide of debt.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 1.2% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.8%. The U.S. dollar slipped to 144.92 Japanese yen from 145.65 yen. The euro advanced to $1.1254 from $1.1183.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury was at about 4.54%, up from 4.44% late Friday.

In Europe, Germany's DAX retreated 0.1% to 23,733.96 while the CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.5% to 7,851.46.

Britain's FTSE 100 declined 0.5% to 8,643.23.

Chinese markets fell after the government said retail sales rose 5.1% in April from a year earlier, less than expected. Growth in industrial output slowed to 6.1% year-on-year from 7.7% in March.

That could mean rising inventories if production outpaces demand even more than it already does. But it also may reflect some of the shipping boom before some of U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods took effect.

"After an improvement in March, China's economy looks to have slowed again last month, with firms and households turning more cautious due to the trade war," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.1% to 23,332.72 and the Shanghai Composite Index was nearly unchanged at 3,367.58.

E-commerce giant Alibaba's shares in Hong Kong skidded 3.4% following a report that U.S. officials are scrutinizing a potential Apple-Alibaba deal to integrate AI features into iPhones in China.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gave up 0.7% to 37,498.63 while the Kospi in Seoul dropped 0.9% to 2,603.43.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 0.6% to 8,295.10.

Taiwan's Taiex was 1.5% lower.

In oil trading early Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 47 cents to $61.50 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 50 cents to $64.91 per barrel.

Wall Street cruised to a strong finish last week as U.S. stocks glided closer to the all-time high they set just a few months earlier, though it may feel like an economic era ago.

The S&P 500 rose 0.7%. It has rallied to within 3% of its record set in February after it briefly dropped roughly 20% below it last month.

Gains have been driven by hopes that Trump will lower his tariffs against other countries after reaching trade deals with them.

'Nouvelle Vague,' a beautiful reimagination of Godard's era

Linklater's ode to French New Wave enchants Cannes

CANNES, France, May 19, (AP): When Richard Linklater first started thinking about making a film about the French New Wave, he figured he'd show it all everywhere except one place.

"I thought: They'll hate that an American director did this," Linklater said Sunday. "We'll show this film all over the world, but never in France."

But Linklater nevertheless unveiled "Nouvelle Vague" on Saturday at the Cannes Film Festival, bringing film about the making of Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" to the very heart of the French film industry. It was, Linklater granted, an audacious thing to do.

And "Nouvelle Vague" went down as one of the biggest successes of the festival. At a Cannes that's been largely characterized by darker, more portentous dramas, "Nouvelle Vague" was cheered as an enchanting ode to moviemaking.

"Nouvelle Vague" is an uncanny kind of recreation. In black-and-white and in the style of the French New Wave, it chronicles the making of one of the most celebrated French films of all time. With sunglasses that never come off his face, Guillaume Marbeck plays 29-year-old Godard as he's making his first feature, trying to launch himself as a film director and upend filmmaking convention.

Linklater's movie, which is for sale at Cannes and competing for the Palme d'Or, is in French. It not only goes day-by-day through the making of "Breathless," it endeavors to capture the entire movement of one of the most fabled eras of moviemaking. Truffaut, Varda, Chabrol, Melville, Rohmer, Rossellini and Rivette are just some of the famous filmmakers who drift in and out of the movie.

Linklater told reporters Sunday that he wanted audiences to feel "like they were hanging out with Nouvelle Vague in 1959."

"It was an old idea of some colleagues of mine," said Linklater. "Thirteen years ago we started talking about it. We're just cinephiles Austin, Texas, who love this era and it's meant so much to me in my filmmaking. It represented freedom and the notion of the personal film. I've made a lot of films and I've always felt if you do it long enough, maybe you should make one film about making films."



Aubry Dullin, (from left), director Richard Linklater, Zoey Deutch and Guillaume Marbeck pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Nouvelle Vague' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 18. (AP)

The stars of "Breathless" - Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg - are played by Aubry Dullin and Zoey Deutch, respectively, in "Nouvelle Vague." With precision, Linklater captures them making some of the most famous shots from "Breathless" with a visual style and camera movements typical of that time.

"We couldn't work quite as fast. We had sound and things," said Linklater, chuckling. (Godard dubbed sound after shooting.)

"It was a crazy idea and I haven't really ever seen a film exactly like this. I said: We're making a film from 1959 but it's not a Godard film," said Linklater. "You can't imitate Godard. You fail. But we could imitate the style of the time."

In "Nouvelle Vague," Godard is surrounded by doubts - Seberg is notably unsure of the project - but he stubbornly sticks to his instance on spontaneity. There's no real script, some shooting days just last a few hours and lines are improvised on the spot. In one fittingly moment where Godard tells his actors just to quote Humphry Bogart movie lines, he explains: "Not plagiarism. Homage."

Linklater's own homage in "Nouvelle Vague" brought him back to his early days as a filmmaker. His first films - "Slacker," "Dazed and Confused," "Before Sunrise" - have much of the independent spirit of the New Wave, he said.

"Making this film all these later, I felt like I erased my own history," said Linklater. "I was going back to being in my late 20s making my first film. I told a friend last night: I felt like was 28 years old making this film."



NBC 'Today' show anchor Deborah Norville visited with host David Letterman on 'Late Night with David Letterman,' Sept 5, 1990, in New York. (AP)

'Explore new horizons'

Norville wraps up 30-yr stint at 'Inside Edition'

NEW YORK, May 19, (AP): For a television news industry in a constant state of motion, Deborah Norville has been a model of stability. She began hosting the syndicated newsmagazine "Inside Edition" in 1995 and has remained there ever since.

Now that 30-year run is coming to a close.

Norville, 66, signs off on May 20. She's planning to celebrate with a long vacation through Europe with her husband, and try something new when she gets back. She will host "The Perfect Line," a trivia show that begins airing this fall. No successor has been named at "Inside Edition."

"I'm very excited about the game show," she said. "It's fun, and who doesn't want to give away somebody else's money to people who are happy to take it?"

Three decades ago, Norville left CBS News for a genre largely dismissed as tabloid television. She's proud of telling stories that add value to the audience's lives: A company that makes a device to aid choking victims says it has traced a thousand uses to people who say they learned about it through an "Inside Edition" story.

During COVID, the show began broadcasting from her kitchen almost immediately and never stopped, as she built a makeshift studio in her New York-area home.

"We were a familiar presence during a time when everything else was topsy-turvy," she said, "and I think the bond with our audience was made even stronger then."

As she prepares to adjust to a life no longer governed by news cycles, Norville paused to reflect on her time with The Associated Press.

Associated Press: You made the decision a while ago to leave "Inside Edition." Now that it's happening, how does it feel?

Norville: It really hit me today. It's the same day my daughter and husband came over (to the studio) for an in-person interview for a piece they're doing - a farewell Deb thing. My daughter was on "Inside Edition" the day she was born. Nine hours after I gave birth, the crew was in my hospital room taping "Inside Edition" because they couldn't find anyone else to do the show, which was ridiculous. To see her, this beautiful, 27-year-old grown woman, so statuesque and wonderful and lovely and perfect, to do an interview about what it's like having her mom work at this place for literally her entire life, it was like, oh my gosh, there's something major about to happen.

AP: When you first joined, tabloid shows were considered less respectable than networks. How do you think that's changed?

Norville: Remember Tom Shales of the Washington Post? Tom Shales actually put in the paper that I was selling my credibility. The old Deborah would have just gone into a fetal position and cried. The new me said, "Oh, I don't think so." I never knew my credibility had anything to do with the peacock or eyeball on my paycheck, because I had worked at NBC and CBS. My credibility had to do with the show that I stood in front of, the stories that I personally produced and reported on and what we put on television every day. All I was asking was that people watch.

AP: When you look back on it, what is the work you'll remember the most?

Norville: "Inside Edition" has evolved a lot in the 30 years that I've been here. When I got here, it was still the hard-core, tabloid, beach blanket bingo - a lot of girls on sandy beaches in tiny bikinis. We don't do that anymore. ... It has evolved in such a way that we as a program have become a companion to people - not just on television, but we're a companion on the internet, on social media, on YouTube. The content that we do is watchable, but also very relatable and meaningful.

AP: It's unusual these days to stay at the same job for a long time. Why did that appeal to you?

Norville: I came to "Inside Edition" because I was expecting my second child. I knew it was going to be a boy (Norville and her husband, Karl Wellner, have two boys and a girl). I turned down an offer from CBS News to be "Eye on America" correspondent four days a week and anchor the weekend news one night. I would have been teed up for the job that Katie Couric ultimately got. But those four nights a week were going to be on the road all over the country and I didn't think I could be the kind of mother I aspired to be, and certainly the kind of wife that I wanted to be, if I was on the road. I just didn't know how I could do it.

AP: Any regrets about paths not taken?

Norville: Oh, probably. But here's the antidote to that. You take a look at where the road has taken you and you take stock at what you see at that spot in the road where you find yourself. ... The biggest thing is that I look at my family, which is the most important thing to me. My husband and I have been married for 37 and a half years. I have three amazing children who actually enjoy being with us, who are solid citizens, who are kind and giving and industrious and entrepreneurial. I didn't mess up my kids. Coming to "Inside Edition" for the right reasons, turned out to be the right reason for me.

Cannes

Actress shines in postpartum role

Jennifer Lawrence sparks Oscar buzz in Cannes for 'Die, My Love'

CANNES, France, May 19, (AP): Last year, the Cannes Film Festival produced three best actress nominees at the Oscars. This year's edition may have just supplied another.

In Lynne Ramsay's "Die, My Love," Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Pattinson play a married couple with a newborn who move into an old country house. In Ramsay's messy and moving marital psychodrama, Lawrence plays an increasingly unhinged young mother named Grace whose postpartum depression reaches darkly hallucinatory extremes.

For Lawrence, the 34-year-old mother of two, making "Die, My Love" was an intensely personal experience.

"It was really hard to separate what I would do as opposed to what (Grace) would do," Lawrence told reporters Sunday. "I had just had my firstborn, and there's not really anything like postpartum. It's extremely isolating. She doesn't have a community. She doesn't have her people. But the truth is, extreme anxiety and extreme depression is isolating, no matter where you are. You feel like an alien."



Jennifer Lawrence, (left), and producer Justine Ciarrocchi pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Die, My Love' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 18. (AP)

Competition

"Die, My Love," which is in competition for the Palme d'Or at Cannes, was one of the most anticipated premieres of the festival. That was owed partly to the widely respect for Ramsey, the Scottish director of "Ratcatcher" (1999), "Movern Callar" (2002) and " You Were Never Really Here" (2017). Lawrence sought her out for the film.

"I've wanted to work with Lynne Ramsay since I saw 'Ratcatcher' and I was like, 'There's no way,'" said Lawrence. "But we took a chance, and we sent it to her. And I really, I cannot believe that I'm here with you."

In Ramsay's "Die, My Love," adapted from Ariana Harwicz's 2017 novel, is disorienting experience, pulsating with animalistic urges and manic spurts of violence. As a portrait of a marriage in trouble, it makes "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" look tame.

"Die, My Love" was quickly snapped up by Mubi on Sunday. In easily the biggest sale of the festival, the indie distributor plunked down $24 million for distribution rights to the film in the U.S. and multiple other territories.

Lawrence's performance, in particular, drew the kind of raves in Cannes that tend to lead to Oscar consideration. Lawrence has been nominated four times by the Academy Awards, winning once for 2013's "Silver Linings Playbook."



Marianna Brennand, (left), winner of the Women In Motion Emerging Talent 2025 award and Nicole Kidman, winner of the Women in Motion 2025 award, pose for photographers during the Kering Women in Motion dinner at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 18. (AP)

Since then, much has changed for Lawrence, including becoming a mother. On Saturday, Lawrence said parenthood has been such an enriching experience for her that, she joked, "I highly recommend having kids if you want to be an actor."

"Having children changes everything. It changes your whole life. It's brutal and incredible," Lawrence said. "I didn't know that I could feel so much."

"My job has a lot to do with emotion, and they've opened up the world to me," she added. "It's almost like feeling like a blister or something. So sensitive. So they've changed my life, obviously, for the best, and they've changed me creatively."

Pattinson, who recently had his first child with Suki Waterhouse, chimed in that he found having a baby "gives you the biggest trove of energy and inspiration."

Lawrence mockingly pounced on him: "You get energy?!"

Pattinson let out a sigh. "This question is impossible for a guy to answer correctly," he said, to laughter.

Meanwhile, stars in glamorous gowns often peacock on the Cannes Film Festival red carpet, but one attendee Saturday night literally came as a bird.

Ahead of the the premiere of Lynne Ramsay's "Die, My Love," with Robert Pattinson and Jennifer Lawrence, a man came fully dressed as bird, complete with a beak and feathers.

The costume had a purpose. It was a tie-in with the documentary "I Love Peru," which is playing in the Cannes Classics section. The costume was specifically a condor, which in Peru has been seen as a creature connecting heaven and earth.

The Cannes Film Festival recently banned nudity and "excessively voluminous" gowns. But it has no policy against condors.

'This victory is for you'

Austria welcomes Eurovision winner JJ with cheers, hugs

VIENNA, May 19, (AP): Austrian fans enthusiastically welcomed classically trained singer JJ back home at Vienna airport on Sunday after he won the 69th Eurovision Song Contest with "Wasted Love."

As JJ walked through the gate, hundreds of fans cheered, some played his song and others surrounded the new star, hugging him and asking for autographs.

The 24-year-old countertenor, whose winning song combines operatic, multi-octave vocals with a techno twist, and who also sings at the Vienna State Opera, held up his trophy in one hand and a big bouquet of roses in the other. He smiled, wiped away tears and told the crowd "that victory is for you."

JJ, whose full name is Johannes Pietsch, was Austria's third Eurovision winner, after bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst in 2014 and Udo Jürgens in 1966.

"This is beyond my wildest dreams. It's crazy," said the singer when being handed the microphone-shaped glass Eurovision trophy after his win in the Swiss city of Basel on Saturday night.

On Sunday night, JJ told reporters in Vienna that "I don't think you'll realize that you did it at all until you're on your deathbed."

Austria's president, Alexander van der Bellen, celebrated JJ in a video posted on X.

"What a success! What a voice! What a show!" he exclaimed. "All of Austria is happy."

Chancellor Christian Stoecker wrote on X: "What a great success - my warmest congratulations on winning #ESC2025! JJ is writing Austrian music history today!"

The Vienna State Opera also expressed joy over the win. "From the Magic Flute to winning the Song Contest is somehow a story that can only take place in Austria," opera director Bogdan Roscic told the Austrian press agency APA.

Several Austrian cities were quick to show their interest in hosting next year's contest. Innsbruck Mayor Johannes Anzengruber told APA that "not everything has to take place in Vienna. ... Austria is bigger than that," and the towns of Oberwart in Burgenland and Wels in Upper Austria also threw their hats into the ring.

JJ himself said he hoped that Vienna would get the next ESC which he would love to host together with his mentor, Conchita Wurst.

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, as well as a proudly queer winner.

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 three 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, which had been favorite to win with jaunty sauna ode "Bara Bada Bastu," came fourth.

The show was a celebration of Europe's eclectic, and sometimes baffling, musical tastes.

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



JJ from Austria smiles during a press conference in Vienna, Austria, on Sunday, May 18. (AP)

Museum



The grand staircase at the Grand Egyptian Museum.



An ancient Pharaonic sarcophagus inside one of the exhibition halls of the museum.



Tourists viewing unique artifacts inside the museum.



Statues, artifacts, and display screens narrating the history of ancient Egyptian civilization.

KUNA photos

GEM set to open, become world's largest museum

Grand Egyptian Museum: Cultural edifice telling unique civilization story

CAIRO, May 19, (KUNA): With a charming view of the world-famous Giza Pyramids and covering nearly 500,000 meters, the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) is expected to open its doors for visitors very soon as the world's largest museum.

Once visitors get into the 7,000-meter lobby of the modern museum, they come across the huge statue of King Ramses II, which stands out in a way as if it invites them to an expedition that reveals the secrets of the ancient civilization of Egypt, which the GEM, in fact, tells its story in an amazing mode.

The idea of establishing the new historic edifice emerged in the seventies and the ceremonial cornerstone of the museum was laid in early 2002. Construction works started at a strategic location just next door to the Pyramids in 2005.

The main contract for the design of the GEM was awarded to the Irish architectural firm Heneghan Peng in 2003 following an extensive international competition. But, in fact, a team of 300 people from 13 companies in six different countries contributed to the design phase.

The original cost of the great project was initially estimated to be around USD 500 million, but delays, changes and other factors have driven the final price tag for the complex to over one billion US dollars.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provided the necessary financial support for the project through a couple of official development aid loans at a value of 84.2 billion Japanese yen (around USD 800 million).

The GEM whose construction works were completed in 2021 is considered to be one of the greatest modern achievements of Egypt, becoming an integrated international cultural and entertainment facility and the first destination for all those interested in the great Egyptian civilization.

Once all relics and collections are finally transferred from the Egyptian Museum in central Cairo and other places to the Grand Egyptian Museum, it will host about 100,000 ancient artifacts, 4,549 of which will be from the tomb of the famous king of Tutankhamun.

The GEM is expected to welcome around 15,000 visitors per day, roughly three times the number of people who visit the current museum daily. They can see the facility's artifacts and the three famous Pyramids at the same time through modern technological tools.

The facility was mainly designed to preserve and maintain the Egyptian cultural and historic heritage, to organize temporary and permanent archaeological exhibitions in Egypt, and to hold cultural and scientific symposia, conferences and activities aiming at raising public awareness of the Egyptian civilization.

The GEM had opened 12 halls with exhibits about ancient Egypt in its main galleries in a trial run ahead of the announced official opening, coinciding with final arrangements and preparations for shops, cafeterias, restaurants, gardens and parks.

The GEM has adopted a clear-cut sustainable development strategy by means of using green building dimensions in all phases of the mega project through lobby ventilation and natural lighting.

The Egyptian government, in fact, is racing against time to complete all arrangements for officially opening the GEM for visitors on July 3.

In this context, Spokesman for the Egyptian Cabinet Mohammad Al-Homosani told KUNA that the government was doing its utmost to finish all preparations to inaugurate the museum at the previously announced time.



KUNA photo

The main hall of the Grand Egyptian Museum, featuring a massive statue of King Ramses II at its center.

He added that a large number of kings, presidents, emirs and senior officials from different world countries would be invited to attend the high-level opening ceremony.

He pointed out that works are in full swing to put the final touches for completing the development of surrounding areas involving corridors and main roads leading up to the facility, in addition to the underway development of the area surrounding the Giza Pyramids, thus becoming an integrated touristic destination.

The spokesman added that the GEM would be run in line with relevant international standards in order to be one of the most significant tourist attractions not only in Egypt but in the entire world as well.

Al-Homosani underlined that this mega project came within the framework of the Egyptian government's eagerness to promote the tourist sector and develop the country's main attractions with a view to drawing more tourists, boosting operation rates, creating job opportunities and raising foreign exchange reserves.

For his part, Dr. Mohammad Ghoneim, a professor of artifact restoration and conservation and vice-dean of Minia University's College of Fine Arts told KUNA that it was necessary to establish a grand modern-styled museum in order to deliver its all-out message of displaying, conserving and considering historic collections.

He added the mega project was mainly meant to ease the burden on the current Egyptian Museum, which was established in 1902 and is home to a large number of relics, and to introduce modern conservation and restoration methods as well as to promote cultural, educational and scientific activities and conferences.

He remarked that the location of the 500,000-meter GEM was carefully chosen in order to be on the Giza Plateau and next door to the world-famous Giza Pyramids.

The Egyptian professor elaborated that the GEM is home to tens of thousands of Egyptian artifacts, mainly the tomb of Tutankhamun, which is to be displayed for the first time since it was unearthed in 1922.

He commended the mega museum as being a cultural and civilizational beacon and an entertainment and business hub that would unquestionably contribute to the promotion of domestic and foreign tourism.

Variety

LONDON: **Gary Lineker**, the former England soccer player and now a media celebrity, will leave his role as a presenter for the BBC after facing criticism for reposting an Instagram story about Zionism which featured a picture of a rat.

The 64-year-old Lineker, who is the British national broadcaster's highest-paid presenter on about 1.3 million pounds ($1.7 million) a year, was set to leave flagship soccer highlights show "Match of the Day" at the end of this season but remain with the corporation to front other soccer coverage, including next year's men's World Cup.



Lineker

However, the BBC said in a statement that Lineker will step down from the BBC after final "Match of the Day" episode next weekend.

"Gary has acknowledged the mistake he made," BBC director-general Tim Davie said. "Accordingly, we have agreed he will step back from further presenting after this season."

Lineker had apologized last week for his conduct. Before Lineker's apology, Davie said the corporation needed people to be the "exemplars of BBC values and follow our social media policies" and that "when someone makes a mistake, it costs us."

"Football has been at the heart of my life for as long as I can remember - both on the pitch and in the studio," Lineker said. "I care deeply about the game, and about the work I've done with the BBC over many years. As I've said, I would never consciously repost anything bias - it goes against everything I stand for. (AP)

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NEW YORK: This year's winners of the Gotham Book Prize celebrate New York City as experienced on foot, bus and train.

Ian Frazier, author of "Paradise Bronx: The Life and Times of New York's Greatest Borough," and Nicole Gelinas, who wrote "Movement: New York's Long War to Take Back Its Streets from the Car," will split the $50,000 in prize money given for books that "encourage and honor writing about New York City," award officials announced Monday.

Philanthropists-political strategists Bradley Tusk and Howard Wolfson cofounded the Gotham prize in 2020 as a "way to uplift the creative community" during the pandemic.

In "Paradise Bronx," Frazier draws upon his years of walking about the New York City borough and weaves together everything from Revolutionary War history to baseball and hip-hop. Gelinas' "Movement" continues the tradition of such classics as Robert Caro's "The Power Broker" in documenting how New Yorkers have fought for the preservation and improvement of mass transit. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Libraries across the United States are cutting back on e-books, audiobooks and loan programs after the Trump administration suspended millions of dollars in federal grants as it tries to dissolve the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Federal judges have issued temporary orders to block the Trump administration from taking any further steps toward gutting the agency. But the unexpected slashing of grants has delivered a significant blow to many libraries, which are reshuffling budgets and looking at different ways to raise money.

Maine has laid off a fifth of its staff and temporarily closed its state library after not receiving the remainder of its annual funding. Libraries in Mississippi have indefinitely stopped offering a popular e-book service, and the South Dakota state library has suspended its interlibrary loan program.

E-book and audiobook programs are especially vulnerable to budget cuts, even though those offerings have exploded in popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think everyone should know the cost of providing digital sources is too expensive for most libraries," said Cindy Hohl, president of the American Library Association. "It's a continuous and growing need."

President Donald Trump issued an executive order March 14 to dismantle the IMLS before firing nearly all of its employees. (AP)

UN health agency faces 'existential crisis' amid US cuts

WHO chief defends $2.1b budget, compares it to war cost

GENEVA, May 19, (AP): Stripped of US funding, the World Health Organization chief on Monday appealed to member countries to support its "extremely modest" request for a $2.1 billion annual budget by putting that sum into perspective next to outlays for ad campaigns for tobacco or the cost of war.

After nearly 80 years of striving to improve human lives and health -- which critics say it has done poorly or not enough -- the UN health agency is fighting for its own after US President Donald Trump in January halted funding from the United States, which has traditionally been WHO's largest donor.

"Two-point-one billion dollars is the equivalent of global military expenditure every eight hours," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. "Two-point-one billion dollars is the price of one stealth bomber, to kill people."

"And $2.1 billion is one-quarter of what the tobacco industry spends on advertising and promotion every single year. Again, a product that kills people." he told the WHO's annual assembly. "It seems somebody switched the price tags on what is truly valuable in our world."

Tedros made no specific reference to the US cuts but has said previously the US pullout was a "mistake" and urged Washington to reconsider.

WHO has presented a budget for the next two years that is 22% less than originally planned, largely in response to US and other Western funding cuts, and says it has landed commitments for about 60% of that. But it still faces a budget gap of $1.7 billion.

"We know that in the current landscape, mobilizing that sum will be a challenge. We are not naive to that challenge," Tedros said.



Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus delivers his statement, during the opening of the 78th World Health Assembly at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, May 19. (AP)

"But for an organization working on the ground in 150 countries with a vast mission and mandate that member states have given us, $4.2 billion for two years — or $2.1 billion a year — is not ambitious. It's extremely modest," he said.

As a result of the cuts, the UN health agency this year has seen a plunge in its ability to carry out its sweeping mandate to do everything from recommend reductions in sugar levels in soft drinks to head the global response to pandemics like COVID-19 or outbreaks like polio or Ebola.

Tedros and his team have been grappling with a response to the US cuts as well as reduced outlays from wealthy European countries that are worried about an expansionist Russia and are putting more money toward defense, and less toward humanitarian and development aid.

Matthew Kavanagh, the director of Georgetown University's Center for Global Health Policy and Politics, said other countries have used the US cut in aid "as cover to do their maneuvering, with many countries in Europe reducing aid."

"The WHO faces an existential crisis that goes well beyond a budget gap to the question of whether this sort of multilateralism can succeed in addressing global health in this new era of nationalism and misinformation," he said, alluding to discord between many countries that could cost lives.

"Literally millions will likely die needlessly on the current trajectory and the world's health ministers do not seem capable of a coherent response," Kavanagh added.

On tap for the nine-day World Health Assembly are two major advances that are aimed to buttress WHO's financial strength and bolster the world's ability to cope with future pandemics.

Member countries are expected to agree to raise annual dues, known as "assessed contributions," by 20% to support WHO finances and reduce dependency on governments' voluntary contributions — which change each year and make up over half of the budget.

They are also expected to agree to a hard-wrought " pandemic treaty " that was born of a desire to avoid any replay of the patchy, unequal response to COVID-19 when the next — and inevitable, most experts say — pandemic hits.

Among other things, the treaty would guarantee that countries that share critical samples of viruses will receive any resulting tests, medicines and vaccines and give WHO up to 20% of such products to make sure poorer countries can have access to them.

"Every World Health Assembly is significant, but this year's is especially so," Tedros said. "This is truly a historic moment."

The treaty's effectiveness will face doubts when the U.S. — which poured billions into speedy work by pharmaceutical companies to develop COVID-19 vaccines — is sitting out, and because countries face no penalties if they ignore it, a common issue in international law.

Kavanagh said passage of the treaty "could be a significant victory — evidence that the U.S. government may no longer be indispensable in global health" and could offer an opportunity for developing nations in the "global South" over the longer term.

Trump has long derided WHO, including back in his first term when he pulled the United States out over its alleged kowtowing to China and other alleged missteps in the Covid pandemic. President Joe Biden put the US back in.

On his first day back in office in January, Trump signed an executive order to pause future transfers of US government funds to the WHO, recall US government staff working with it, and announce a formal pullout by next January — under a one-year timetable required under US law.

Other opponents continue to lash out at WHO. CitizenGo, an activist group that supports right-to-life and religious liberty issues, protested Monday against the pandemic treaty outside the UN compound in Geneva where WHO's meeting was taking place.

The rally included a balloon sculpture in the shape of the world and a banner inveighing against "globalist elites" and showing an image of Tedros and billionaire Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, a major WHO supporter, shaking hands while surrounded by dollars.

Health risks

EPA to roll back PFAS regulations

WASHINGTON, May 19, (AP): Last Wednesday, the Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to weaken limits on some harmful "forever chemicals" in drinking water roughly a year after the Biden administration finalized the first-ever national standards.

The Biden administration said last year the rules could reduce PFAS exposure for millions of people. It was part of a broader push by officials then to address drinking water quality by writing rules to require the removal of toxic lead pipes and, after years of activist concern, address the threat of forever chemicals.

President Donald Trump has sought fewer environmental rules and more oil and gas development. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin has carried out that agenda by announcing massive regulatory rollbacks.

Now, we know the EPA plans to rescind limits for certain PFAS and lengthen deadlines for two of the most common types. Here are some of the essential things to know about PFAS chemicals and what the EPA decided to do:

PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a group of chemicals that have been around for decades and have now spread into the nation's air, water and soil.

They were manufactured by companies such as 3M, Chemours and others because they were incredibly useful. They helped eggs slide across nonstick frying pans, ensured that firefighting foam suffocates flames and helped clothes withstand the rain and keep people dry.

The chemicals resist breaking down, however, which means they stay around in the environment.

Environmental activists say that PFAS manufacturers knew about the health harms of PFAS long before they were made public. The same attributes that make the chemicals so valuable - resistance to breakdown - make them hazardous to people.

PFAS accumulates in the body, which is why the Biden administration set limits for two common types, often called PFOA and PFOS, at 4 parts per trillion that are phased out of manufacturing but still present in the environment.

10 patients on waiting list

Kuwait gears up for historic first lung transplant surgery

KUWAIT CITY, May 19: Dr. Issa Al-Ghunaim, thoracic surgery consultant at the Chest Hospital, revealed that preparations are underway for Kuwait's first lung transplant, a process that has been in the works for over six months, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Dr. Al-Ghunaim explained that this significant procedure requires the collaboration of multiple specialties, including internal medicine, chest medicine, physical therapy, and other medical experts. An integrated team at the Chest Hospital is dedicated to making this historic lung transplant a reality.

In line with political directives and the Ministry of Health's guidance, a study was conducted to assess the cost of lung transplantation. The study revealed that the total cost for the operation and six months of follow-up abroad ranges from $1 million to $2 million. However, the procedure in Kuwait would cost approximately KD 100,000, including ongoing patient follow-up.

The majority of patients eligible for the procedure are those in the final stages of pulmonary fibrosis or those suffering from pulmonary obstruction due to smoking-related complications.

Dr. Al-Ghunaim revealed that there are currently around ten patients in Kuwait who are in the final stages of preparation for lung transplantation.

Chronic inflammatory

High-fat meals rapidly harm gut health, research shows

SYDNEY, May 19, (Xinhua): Even just a few high-fat meals can quickly weaken the gut's natural defenses, triggering inflammation long before any visible symptoms appear, a Melbourne-based medical institute revealed on Monday.

In pre-clinical trials, researchers discovered that just two days of consuming foods high in saturated fats significantly reduced levels of IL-22, a key protective protein that maintains gut health and helps control inflammation, said a study by the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI), Australia's oldest medical research institute.

Despite appearing healthy, test mice showed microscopic signs of inflammation and impaired gut function, according to the study published in the Journal of Immunity.

"Every meal we consume actively shapes our gut health," said WEHI's Cyril Seillet, senior author of the study.

"The more saturated fats we eat, the more inflammation that builds up, gradually weakening our gut defenses and increasing our susceptibility to chronic inflammation," said Seillet.

Chronic inflammatory conditions, such as coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, and rheumatoid arthritis, affect roughly one in three Australians. However, how these diseases develop has remained poorly understood, researchers said.

This study showed that high-fat diets not only spark inflammation but also suppress the body's ability to fight it by depleting IL-22. Encouragingly, researchers also found that unsaturated fats, like those in nuts, seeds, and avocados, had the opposite effect, boosting IL-22 and strengthening gut defenses.

"The gut's protective abilities can be compromised in just two days, even without any outward signs," said lead author Le Xiong from WEHI.

Over 2m people face severe malnutrition

Gaza on brink of famine as aid workers struggle with blockade

BEIRUT, May 19, (AP): Two cases pushed nutritionist Rana Soboh to wits' end. First, a woman was rushed to a Gaza emergency room after fainting while she breastfed her newborn. She told Soboh she hadn't eaten in days.

The next day at another medical facility, Soboh found a severely malnourished 1-year-old boy weighing 5 kilograms (11 pounds), less than half what's normal. He hadn't grown any teeth. He was too weak to cry. The mother was also malnourished, "a skeleton, covered in skin."

When the mother asked for food, Soboh started crying uncontrollably.

A feeling of powerlessness has overwhelmed her. Soboh said sometimes she gives a little money or a bit of her own food. But now she, too, is struggling.

"This is the worst feeling, wanting to help but knowing you can't. I wished the earth would crack open and swallow me," she said. "What more cruel scenes does the world need to see?"

After months of trying to raise alarm, humanitarian workers are overflowing with anger, frustration and horror over Israel's nearly three-month blockade. The Associated Press spoke to over a dozen aid workers, some with years of experience in emergencies around the world and Palestinians who have worked through this and other wars.

They say what is happening in Gaza is a catastrophe, among the worst they have ever seen. It's more painful, they say, because it's man-made, caused by Israel cutting off all food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to the territory nearly 11 weeks ago.

The world's top authority on food crises last week warned of famine unless the blockade ends. Almost the entire population of around 2.3 million is acutely malnourished, and one in five Palestinians are on the brink of starvation, it said.

Israel late Sunday said it would allow a "basic" amount of food into Gaza, saying it didn't want a hunger crisis to jeopardize its new military offensive. It was not immediately clear how much would be allowed in, or when, or how.



Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, Monday, May 19. (AP)

Israel says it imposed the blockade to force Hamas to release hostages, a decision that rights groups call a "starvation tactic" and a violation of international law.

Aid workers are also wrestling with moves by Israel and the U.S. to impose a new aid system, despite their objections. The system would limit distribution to a few locations and put it under armed private contractors - to prevent theft by Hamas, Israel says. Humanitarian workers say it won't meet Gaza's needs and violates humanitarian principles. The U.N. denies that significant aid diversion takes place.

The workers say they should be allowed to do their jobs. Some 170,000 metric tons of aid, including food, sits in trucks a few miles away, just inside Israel.

"The humanitarian community is well-experienced and well-versed in terms of treating malnutrition," said Rachel Cummings, emergency coordinator for Save the Children in Gaza. But "we need food into Gaza and to stop this, by design, attack on the children across the whole of Gaza."

Community kitchens are the last lifeline for most people, but more than 60% have shut down as supplies run out. Those still working can only produce 260,000 meals a day.

At his kitchen in Khan Younis, Nihad Abu Kush and 10 cooks prepare enough meals for about 1,000 people a day. More than 2,000 show up every morning, he said.

There are no lines, just a sea of people terrified of being among the half who will miss out. They push and shove, waving pots for portions from the vats of lentils, beans or peas in tomato sauce.

"I feel so helpless because the numbers grow every day," Abu Kush said. "I look at their faces and I am unable to do anything."

On a recent day, he gave up his own portion after he locked eyes with a child with an empty pot. "I was among the 1,000 who didn't get any," Abu Kush said.

Soboh, a nutritionist with MedGlobal, said her team stretches supplies of malnutrition treatments. Each can of baby formula is divided among several mothers. Therapy food portions are reduced by half. They give supplements only to children up to a year old, no longer up to 2.

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Gill scores 93 not out off 53 deliveries

Gujarat, Bengaluru and Punjab advance to IPL playoffs

NEW DELHI, May 19, (AP): Sai Sudharsan hit 108 not out off 61 balls as Gujarat Titans thrashed Delhi Capitals by 10 wickets and sealed its spot in the Indian Premier League playoffs.

Sudharsan shared a double-century unbeaten opening stand with skipper Shubman Gill - the third equal highest by runs in the IPL - as the Titans reached 205-0 in 19 overs.

Gill scored 93 not out off 53 deliveries.

Their stand canceled out Lokesh Rahul's 65-ball 112 not out - his fifth IPL century - in Delhi's 199-3 in 20 overs. It was Delhi's fifth loss in seven games.

Gujarat climbed to the top of the IPL points table with 18 points from 12 games. Its victory over fifth-placed Delhi also meant that Royal Challengers Bengaluru (second, 17 points) and Punjab Kings (third, 17 points) also advanced to the playoffs.

Delhi has 13 points and is a point behind fourth-placed Mumbai Indians, who occupy the fourth and final playoff spot, with two regular season matches remaining. Lucknow Super Giants is currently seventh with 10 points from only 11 games.

Punjab beat Rajasthan Royals by 10 runs earlier Sunday to secure its playoff spot.

Rahul scored his fifth IPL century overall as Delhi rode on a blistering knock to present a challenging score.

He hit 14 fours and four sixes, and put on a vital 90 off 52 balls with Abhishek Porel (30). Axar Patel and Tristan Stubbs also had cameos - but there wasn't a second major contribution alongside Rahul, who reached 100 off 60 balls.

In reply, Gujarat relied on its in-form openers to confirm a spot in the knockouts. The duo dominated Delhi's bowling, hitting 11 sixes and 15 fours altogether.

Gill scored 50 off 33 balls, including four sixes, and then added another three.

Sudharsan hit 12 fours and four sixes. Three of those sixes came after he scored 50 off 30 balls and helped him gallop to a second IPL century.

Nehal Wadhera scored 70 off 37 balls to lead Punjab Kings to a 10-run win over Rajasthan Royals.

Wadhera smashed five sixes and five fours in his second half-century of the season in Punjab's 219-5 in 20 overs. Shashank Singh's 59 not out off 30 balls also helped the Kings cross the 200-mark.

Left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar then took 3-22 in four overs as Rajasthan's chase lost momentum despite half-centuries from Yashasvi Jaisal and Dhruv Jurel. The Royals were restricted to 209-7 for a 10th loss this season.

Wadhera took charge of the innings after Punjab was down to 34-3 in 3.1 overs, rebuilding it with a 67-run partnership off 44 balls with skipper Shreyas Iyer, who scored 30 off 25 balls.

Wadhera reached 50 off 25 balls, and then added 58 off 33 with Shashank Singh which set up the base for a 200-plus score.

Singh hit five fours and three sixes, while also finding an able partner in Azmatullah Omarzai, who scored 21 not out off nine balls. The duo added 60 runs off the last four overs.

In reply, Rajasthan made a quick-fire start. Jaiswal took 22 runs off the first over, and added 76 off 29 balls with his teenage opening partner Vaibhav Suryavanshi.

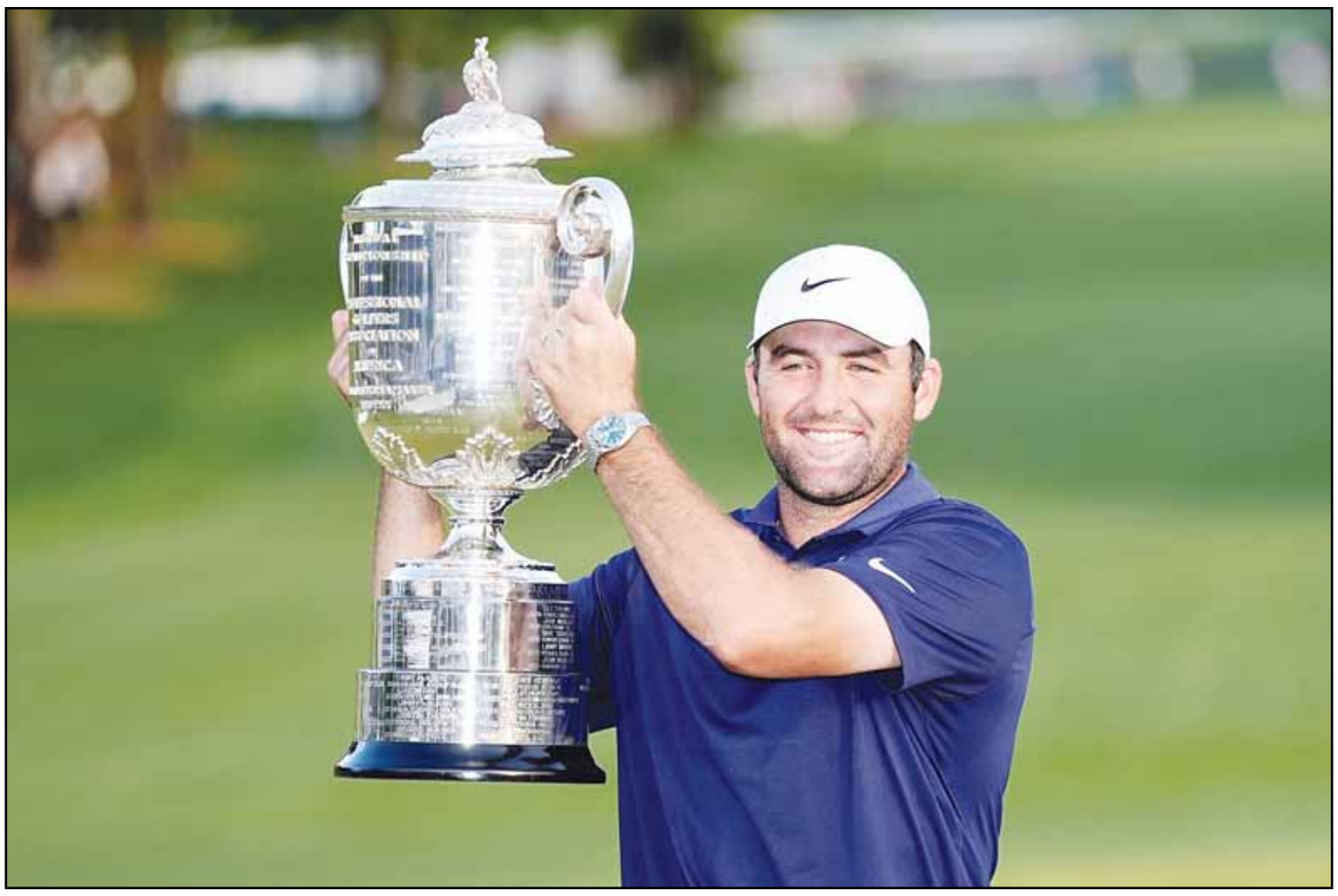
The latter scored 40 off 15 balls, with four sixes, before he was caught off Brar in the fifth over. Jaiswal carried on despite the breakthrough, scoring 50 off 25 balls, before he holed out too - again off Brar in the ninth over.

Rajasthan started losing steam afterward with Sanju Samson (20) and Riyan Parag (13) unable to keep up the momentum.



Gujarat Titans' Sai Kishore celebrates after the dismissal of Delhi Capitals' Abishek Porel during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Titans at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi, India. (AP)

Scheffler pulls away to win PGA Championship for 3rd major title



Scottie Scheffler holds the Wanamaker trophy after winning the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

Winner shows why he has been No. 1 for two straight years

CHARLOTTE, N.C., May 19, (AP): Scottie Scheffler had every reason to worry the PGA Championship was slipping away.

A five-shot lead on the front nine was gone in four holes. Every shot seemed to go left and he didn't know why. Jon Rahm was peeling off birdies and on the verge of tracking him down Sunday at Quail Hollow.

And that's when Scheffler showed why he has been golf's No. 1 player for two straight years, why he has compiled more PGA Tour titles quicker than anyone this side of Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus since 1950.

And why he now has the Wanamaker Trophy to go along with two Masters titles.

Scheffler turned a tense Sunday into another runaway by not missing a shot when the pressure was at its peak, giving himself another pleasant walk to the 18th green with another major title secure in the hands of golf's best.

There was nothing fancy about it, just fairways and greens and holing the putts that eluded Rahm in his first time in serious contention at a major since he won the 2023 Masters and left at the end of the year for LIV Golf.

Rahm's hopes ended when he failed to convert birdie chances on the two easiest holes on the back nine at Quail Hollow, and then finished bogey-double bogey-double bogey. By then the tournament was effective over. It only cost Rahm money.



Jon Rahm, of Spain, hits from the bunker on the fourth hole during the final round of the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

The only comfort for Scheffler was looking across the lake on the par-5 15th to see Rahm in a bunker, leading to bogey on the 16th that gave Scheffler a three-shot cushion. Scheffler recalls thinking, "If I birdie here, it's going to go a long way."

He drilled 3-wood just over the back of the green, and from the same spot where Rahm earlier that hit putter 12 feet by the hole, Scheffler cozied it up to a foot for birdie.

Scheffler closed with a bogey he could afford for an even-par 71, giving him a five-shot victory and his third major title. Scheffler became the first player since Seve Ballesteros to win his first three majors by three shots or more.

The margin doesn't match up with the grind. That much was clear when Scheffler raised his arms on the 18th green and then ferociously slammed his cap to the turf, a brand of emotion rarely seen by the 28-year-old Texas star.

It was a lot sweeter than last year, when he was arrested outside Valhalla Golf Club for charges later dropped that he wasn't following police instructions as they investigated a traffic fatality.

No change of that happening at Quail Hollow. He stayed close enough to walk.

Inside the ropes, this was no walk in the park the final margin might suggest.

Scheffler had a five-shot lead standing on the sixth tee. But with a shaky swing that led to two bogeys, and with Rahm making three birdies in a four-hole stretch around the turn, they were tied when Scheffler got to the 10th tee.

It looked like a duel to the finish, with Bryson DeChambeau doing all he could to get in the mix. Under the most pressure he felt all day, Scheffler didn't miss a shot off the tee or from the fairway until his lead was back to four shots.

Rahm wound up seven shots behind, but the two-time major champion was the only serious threat. After bogey on the 16th hole, he had to take on a dangerous pin at the par-3 17th. It bounded over the sunbaked green into the water for double bogey. And his last tee shot went left off the grassy bank and into the stream for another double bogey.

Lynx downs Sparks

Mystics stage methodical rally to beat Sun 90-85

UNCASVILLE, CT, May 19, (AP): Brittney Sykes scored 27 points and Kiki Iriafen recorded a double-double and the Washington Mystics spoiled the Connecticut Sun's season debut with a 90-85 win.

The Mystics (2-0) used a 30-point fourth quarter to overcome a 65-60 deficit at the end of three quarters and Stefanie Dolson gave Washington its first lead of the game with a 25-foot, 3-pointer to make it 75-74 with 5:38 left.

Olivia Nelson-Ododa countered with a layup to put Connecticut back ahead, but Sonia Citron responded with three-point play and the Mystics led the rest of the way.

Trailing 88-85, Marina Mabrey missed a deep 3 attempt from 27 feet and Citron clinched it with two free throws with 2.1 seconds left.

Nelson-Ododa's tip-in at the midway point of the first quarter gave the Sun a 14-2 lead in which they made six of their first 11-shot attempts and Nelson-Ododa scored six points.

Sykes made 11 of 13 foul shots, Iriafen scored 17 points on 7-for-10 shooting and grabbed 14 rebounds, and Citron and reserve Jade Melbourne each scored 15 points for Washington.

Tina Charles scored 23 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, Nelson-Ododa scored 18 and Mabrey, Jaciee Sheldon an reserve Bria Hartley each scored 11 points for the Sun (0-1).

Napheesa Collier scored 23 points, Alanna Smith added 18 points on 7-of-10 shooting and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Los Angeles Sparks 89-75.

Courtney Williams finished with 13 points and 10 assists and Jessica Shepard scored 11 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Lynx (2-0).

Azura Stevens led the Sparks (1-1) with 21 points. Dearica Hamby added 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Kelsey Plum finished with 18 points and five assists.

Williams hit a 3-pointer a little over a minute into the second half that gave Minnesota the lead for good at 49-47 and sparked a 9-0 run.

Plum's basket with 7:45 to play cut the deficit to 75-70 but Karlie Samuelsson and Smith each hit a 3-pointer during an 11-0 run as the Sparks went scoreless for more than 5 1/2 minutes.

The Lynx shot 48% (34 of 71) from the field and hit 10 3-pointers.

The Lynx play their home opener against Paige Bueckers and the Dallas Wings - who Minnesota beat 99-84 to open the season - on Wednesday. The Sparks visit Phoenix the same day.

Best of the Rest

Galatasaray wins title: Galatasaray won another Turkish league title on Sunday - and this one was sealed by a goal from its goalkeeper.

Uruguay 'keeper Fernando Muslera converted a penalty in the 89th minute to wrap up a 3-0 victory over Kayserispor that clinched a 25th league championship for Galatasaray.

It moved the team into an unassailable eight-point lead over second-placed Fenerbahce, managed by Jose Mourinho, with two rounds remaining. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Farioli resigns as Ajax coach: Ajax coach Francesco Farioli resigned on Monday, following his team's late-season collapse that saw bitter rival PSV Eindhoven crowned Dutch champion.

Ajax had seemed all but certain to win the league as it held a nine-point lead with five games remaining, but a dire run allowed PSV to make up the deficit in dramatic fashion and clinch a 26th Eredivisie title on Sunday.

"The management and I have the same goals for the future of Ajax, but we have different visions and timeframes about the way we should work and operate to achieve those goals," said Farioli, who was in tears after Sunday's match.

"Given these differences in the principles and foundations of the project, I feel deep in my heart that this is the best moment to part ways."

Farioli became Ajax's first Italian coach - and first non-Dutch one since 1998 - when he was appointed almost exactly a year ago.

The 36-year-old had a contract until the end of June 2027.

"I find this incredibly disappointing … we achieved our goal: qualifying for next season's Champions League," Ajax Technical Director Alex Kroes said. "Francesco also played a key role in enhancing the high-performance culture at Ajax, for which we are extremely grateful.

"This summer was already set to be a challenging transfer window, and it has now become even more so. It is up to us to ensure that a strong new coaching team is in place when pre-season preparations begin on 26 June." (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

6 Nations gets unusual start: The Six Nations rugby tournament will start on a Thursday night for the first time next season when France opens the defense of its title against Ireland in Paris.

The schedule for the 2026 tournament was released Monday, with the French getting the honor of launching it on Feb. 5 against its biggest rival in recent championships.

According to stats supplier Opta, the last time the tournament staged a match on a Thursday was back in 1948 - when it was the Five Nations. On that occasion, Ireland won away to France in Round 1 and went on to complete its first ever Grand Slam.

France will close against England, which finished in second place in the 2025 edition, as it goes in search of a third title in five seasons. (AP)

Third All-Star Race win for Joe Gibbs Racing

Bell beats Logano in action-packed NASCAR All-Star Race

NORTH WILKESBORO, May 19, (AP): Christopher Bell loves North Wilkesboro Speedway, and Joey Logano hates the "Promoter's Caution."

Those were the main takeaways from the top two finishers in an action-packed NASCAR All-Star Race at the 0.625-mile oval in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

In a slam-bang affair that set a record for lead changes, Bell beat Logano by 0.829 seconds to earn his first All-Star Race victory. Bell, who won three consecutive Cup Series races earlier this season but had a previous best All-Star finish of 10th, delivered the third All-Star Race win for Joe Gibbs Racing.

He also is a fan of Marcus Smith, the president and CEO of Speedway Motorsports that owns North Wilkesboro Speedway. In a new All-Star Race wrinkle, Smith was allowed to choose when to throw a " Promoter's Caution " that would bunch the field for a late restart.

Smith sent two-time Daytona 500 winner and Fox Sports personality Michael Waltrip to the flag stand to display the random yellow flag on Lap 217 with Logano leading by about a half-second over Bell.

Logano, who was trying to win his second consecutive All-Star Race, elected to stay on track rather than pit during the caution, and the decision proved costly. Bell pitted for two fresh tires, restarted in sixth and needed only five laps to catch Logano. After a battle for first that lasted a dozen laps, Bell took the lead for good on Lap 241 of 250.

It was a stark turnaround for the defending Cup Series champion, who recently said he supported the "Promoter's Caution" because "the All-Star Race presents the opportunity to try things outside of the box." But he was questioning its validity after Sunday's race.

Ross Chastain finished third, followed by Alex Bowman and Chase Elliott.

The "Promoter's Caution" was introduced to guarantee an exciting finish, but the All-Star Race hardly needed much help this year.

After lackluster showings in the first two outings, the All-Star Race delivered much more action in its third year at North Wilkesboro Speedway. There were 18 lead changes, breaking the mark of 13 (set in 2016) for the most in the event's 41-year history.

Pole-sitter Brad Keselowski and Logano traded the lead twice in the first 10 laps and often ran side by side for the lead. There were six leaders and 10 lead changes in the first half of the race, which topped the total number of leaders (four) and lead changes (five) in the past two All-Star Races combined.

After leading 62 laps, Keselowski's bid for his first All-Star Race victory ended with a crash on Lap 177.

Capitalizing on pit strategy, Carson Hocevar led the final 46 laps to win the All-Star Open earlier Sunday and advanced into the NASCAR All-Star Race.

Runner-up John Hunter Nemechek also advanced to the main event by finishing second in the 100-lap warmup race. Noah Gragson won an online fan vote to earn the final transfer spot to the All-Star Race, whose field will included 20 other drivers competing for $1 million.



Christopher Bell celebrates after winning the NASCAR All-Star auto race in North Wilkesboro, N.C. (AP)

Mbappé scores again for Madrid

Villarreal dampens Barcelona's title celebrations



Barcelona's team members celebrate winning the La Liga after the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Villarreal at Lluis Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

MADRID, May 19, (AP): Villarreal dampened Barcelona's title celebrations by handing the Catalan club its first defeat of 2025 in the Spanish league.

Barcelona, which clinched its 28th league title midweek, presented the trophy to its fans in the team's final home match of the season at Montjuic stadium. Players were announced one by one after the game, which Villarreal won 3-2, before lifting the trophy.

Barcelona's Spanish Super Cup and Copa del Rey trophies also were displayed at Montjuic, with players dancing around the silverware during the celebrations.

"We can be proud of this team for winning these titles and for how it did it," Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen said. "We had a great season in all levels."

Before the match, Villarreal players did a guard of honor for the new league champions, with its players lining up to congratulate Barcelona as the team entered the field.

Real Madrid won 2-0 at nine-man Sevilla, with Kylian Mbappé extending his league-leading tally to 29 goals with one round to go. Jude Bellingham also scored. Madrid reached 81 points, four fewer than Barcelona.

Villarreal's victory secured its return to the Champions League for the first time since reaching the semifinals in 2022.

It will join Barcelona, Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Athletic Bilbao in Europe's top club competition next season. Spain will have five clubs in the Champions League next season.

Real Betis clinched one of the Europa League spots. Celta Vigo, Rayo Vallecano and Osasuna will be chasing the final Europa League place and the Conference League spot.

Leganes, owned by former Houston Astros general manager Jeff Luhnow, and Espanyol will try to avoid the last relegation spot in the final round when Leganes is at last-placed Valladolid and Espanyol faces relegated Las Palmas.

Barcelona, Madrid, Atletico and Athletic will play in next year's lucrative Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

All 10 games were played at the same time on Sunday.

Barcelona hadn't lost in the league since a 2-1 defeat against Atletico on Dec. 21, with 15 wins and two draws since then. Villarreal's win was its fifth straight victory in the league.

Ayoze Pérez put the visitors ahead after a breakaway four minutes into the match. The hosts equalized when Lamine Yamal scored with yet another beautiful goal in the teenager's outstanding season, curling in a left-footed shot from outside the area.

Fermín López put Barcelona ahead in first-half stoppage time, but Santiago Comesaña scored for Villarreal in the 50th and Tajon Buchanan netted the winner in the 80th.

It was likely the last match Barcelona played at Montjuic stadium as the club plans to return to the Camp Nou Stadium next season even though renovation work at the venue is not expected to be fully completed until mid-2026.

Mbappé strengthened his chances of finishing as the league's top scorer this season with a goal from a low shot from outside the area in the 75th.

Mbappé now has 29 league goals. Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski (25 goals) is his nearest rival.

Alcaraz outclasses Sinner again to win Italian Open



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain, holds the trophy after winning the Italian Open tennis tournament at the Foro Italico in Rome. (AP)

Spaniard solidifies status as French Open favorite

ROME, May 19, (AP): There's only one player who is consistently beating Jannik Sinner.

Carlos Alcaraz defeated the top-ranked player again, beating Sinner 7-6 (5), 6-1 to win his first Italian Open and add another big clay-court title to his resume.

Since the start of last year, Alcaraz is the only player to beat Sinner more than once and now he's done it four straight times.

"Just proud about myself, the way that I approached the match mentally. Tactically think I did it pretty well from the first to the last point," Alcaraz said. "I maintained my level during the whole match."

Alcaraz's victory before Sinner's home fans at the Foro Italico snapped the Italian's 26-match winning streak, which stretched back to October - when Alcaraz beat him in the China Open final in a third-set tiebreaker. Alcaraz now leads the career series 7-4.

It was Sinner's first tournament back after a three-month doping ban.

"I'm just really happy to see Jannik back at this amazing level," Alcaraz said. "I'm sure it wasn't easy for him coming back from three months without playing. Making the final here is something insane."

Alcaraz also solidified his status as the favorite to defend his title at the French Open, which starts next Sunday.

Sinner was playing his first tournament since he won his third Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January.

In February, Sinner agreed to a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency that raised questions, since the three-month suspension allowed him not to miss any Grand Slams, and come back at his home tournament.

Sinner said he and his team went through "three months that were anything but easy, so achieving this result already here is really big" and that "we should be really proud."

He added: "We're bringing home a very special trophy, even if I wanted the other one."

Sinner was attempting to become the first home man to win the Italian Open since Adriano Panatta in 1976. He was also trying to complete a sweep of the Rome singles titles for Italy after Jasmine Paolini won the women's trophy on Saturday.

Paolini and partner Sara Errani also defended their women's doubles title earlier Sunday, making Paolini the first woman since Monica Seles in 1990 to sweep Rome's singles and doubles titles in the same year.

A large number of the 10,500 fans in Campo Centrale were decked out in orange - Sinner's theme color - and they were chanting Sinner's name before the match even began.

But Sinner wasted two set points on Alcaraz's serve when he led 6-5 in the first set and then Alcaraz jumped ahead in the tiebreaker with two aces and held on to seal it before cruising in the second set.

On Alcaraz's third match point, Sinner ran down a drop shot but Alcaraz was waiting for his reply and hit a stretch volley winner into the open court.

Alcaraz then held his hands out wide and flashed a wide smile.

Alcaraz, a four-time Grand Slam champion, will move back up to No. 2 in the rankings on Monday after his third final in three clay-court events this season. He won the Monte Carlo Masters and finished runner-up in the Barcelona Open before withdrawing from the Madrid Open because of injury.

Having also won the Madrid Open in 2022 and 2023, Alcaraz became the fifth man to win all three Masters 1000 clay events after Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Gustavo Kuerten and Marcelo Rios.



Jannik Sinner of Italy, returns to Carlos Alcaraz of Spain during their final tennis match in the Italian Open at the Foro Italico in Rome. (AP)

LA Galaxy draws with LAFC

Orlando shuts out Inter Miami, extends unbeaten streak to 11

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., May 19, (AP): Luis Muriel scored a goal just before halftime, Marco Pašalić added a goal early in the second half and Orlando City beat Inter Miami 3-0 on Sunday night in the Florida Derby to extend its unbeaten streak to 11 consecutive games. Orlando City (6-2-6) has not lost since it dropped a 2-1 decision to New York City FC on March 8.

Pedro Gallese finished with four saves for his sixth shutout of the season and had the second assist of his five-plus year career in MLS.

Luis Muriel opened the scoring in the 43rd minute. Gallese played a perfectly-placed ball ahead from the edge of Orlando's penalty area to a streaking Muriel, who slipped behind the defense, in the attacking third before his rolling finish from the right-center of the area made it 1-0 at halftime.

Pašalić scored on a first-touch shot from near the penalty spot to give Orlando a 2-0 lead in the 53rd.

Dagur Thorhallsson capped the scoring in the fourth minute of stoppage time, putting away a cross from Duncan McGuire with a one-touch shot from point-blank range. Marco Reus scored two goals for the LA Galaxy in a 2-2 tie with Los Angeles FC in the 20th playing of El Tráfico in the MLS regular season.

The Galaxy (0-10-4), the defending MLS Cup champions, have a minus-21 goal differential, worst in MLS, and are off to the worst start in MLS history.

Reus opened the scoring in the sixth minute. Hugo Lloris made a diving stop of a shot by Gabriel Pec on a breakaway but Reus tapped the rebound into a wide-open net from point-blank range. The 35-year-old slipped a free kick from the edge of the penalty arc inside the right post to make it 2-2 in the 87th.



Orlando City midfielder Joran Gerbet (35) controls the ball past Inter Miami midfielder Yannick Bright during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

Denis Bouanga tied it in the 13th minute when, on the left side, he cut back to evade a defender and ripped a shot from well outside the area that curled inside the back post to make it 1-1. The 30-year-old has scored in three consecutive games and has seven goals in the last seven matches for LAFC.

Nathan Ordaz scored his third goal of the season - and the fourth of the 21-year-old's career - to make it 2-0 in the 50th. Ryan Hollingshead played a perfectly-placed ball ahead that split two pairs of defenders before ripped a first-touch shot inside the near post from the left-center of the area. LAFC (6-4-4) is unbeaten in seven straight, including a 4-0 win over Seattle on Wednesday.





Club Secretary Mishaal Fulaitah crowns the Warriors team captain with the cup.

Sports

Warriors retain Kuwait Ice Hockey League title



KUNA photos

All the winners pose for group photo after the closing ceremony.

Al-Awadhi praises the tournament's high level of competitiveness

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Men's Ice Hockey League for the 2024–2025 season concluded on Sunday with the Warriors team securing their second consecutive title. The tournament, organized by the Kuwait Winter Games Club, spanned nine months and featured 20 competitive rounds, all held at the club's indoor arena in Bayan.

In a thrilling final match, the Warriors defeated their rivals Stars with a score of 10–6. The Stars finished as runners-up, while Camelz clinched third place. Five local teams participated in the tournament.

The final match was intense and action-packed. The Warriors stormed into the lead, ending the first half 6–1. However, the Stars came back strong in the second half, scoring four consecutive goals and narrowing the deficit to just one. In the third half, the Warriors regained control and added four more goals to seal their championship victory.

Following the conclusion of the tournament, Club Secretary Mishaal Fulaitah told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this season saw high levels of competition and showcased many young and promising players, who are expected to play key roles for the national team in the near future.

Fulaitah emphasized that the competitive nature of the league has positively impacted the development of Kuwait's national team. The team earned notable results at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China (February 2025) and secured third place at the Level IV Ice Hockey World Championship held in Armenia in April.

He also highlighted the club's commitment under Chairman Fahid Al-Ajmi to supporting all five sports under its supervision: ice hockey, curling, figure skating, and speed skating. Fulaitah congratulated the top three teams for their performances this season.

Speaking after the win, Warriors and national team captain Jassem Al-Awadhi praised the tournament's high level of competitiveness and noted the participation of several professional players. He credited the team's success to the dedication of the players and the technical and administrative staff. Al-Awadhi expressed pride in retaining the league title and acknowledged the Winter Games Club's board for its continuous support in developing the sport and helping Kuwaiti teams excel internationally.

The closing ceremony, attended by club treasurer Ahmed Al-Omran and other members, featured the honoring of the top three teams as well as individual awards for the best striker, defender, goalkeeper, and overall top scorer.

In addition, the Winter Games Club honored 34 members who successfully completed the referees' qualification training course for the current season—an important step in boosting officiating standards in the sport.

Al-Jahra crowned Zain First Division champion



KUNA photo

Al-Jahra celebrates winning the Zain First Division Football League title.

KUWAIT CITY, May 19, (KUNA): Al-Jahra celebrated winning the 2024–2025 Zain First Division Football League title after securing a 1-1 draw with Al-Sulaibikhat in the 20th and final round on Sunday. The result was enough for Jahra to finish top of the table with 26 points and earn promotion to the Kuwaiti Premier League (Zain League) next season.

Al-Shabab Club also secured promotion, finishing in second place with 22 points, following a strong campaign in the five-team competition. Meanwhile, Al-Sahel defeated Burgan 1-0 in their final fixture but finished in fifth and last place with 15 points.

The final standings placed Al-Jahra first (26 points), Al-Shabab second (22), Al-Sulaibikhat third (21), Burgan fourth (19), and Al-Sahel fifth (15).

As Jahra and Shabab prepare to rejoin Kuwait's top-tier football, Khaitan and Yarmouk have been relegated to the First Division after placing ninth and tenth, respectively, in this season's Zain Premier League.

Title race between Napoli & Inter goes to final day, possibly further

MILAN, May 19, (AP): The fight for the Serie A title will go into the final day, and maybe even further.

Napoli could have clinched its second Italian league title in three years but will have to wait after both Antonio Conte's team and second-placed Inter Milan were held to draws.

League leader Napoli drew 0-0 at relegation-threatened Parma, and Inter drew 2-2 against Champions League-chasing Lazio to remain one point behind Napoli.

Napoli hosts Cagliari in the final round, while defending champion Inter visits Como.

If they finish level on points, a playoff will be needed to decide the destination of the league title.

Apart from the title fight, there was still almost everything else to play for in Serie A. That was why all but one of the 10 matches in the penultimate round kicked off simultaneously on Sunday.



Napoli's Romelu Lukaku, foreground and Parma's Alessandro Circati vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Parma and Napoli at Parma's Ennio Tardini Stadium, Italy. (AP)

Inter was perhaps under the most pressure of the two rivals as it knew a loss would hand Napoli the title if the leader won at Parma.

Yann Bisseck was both hero and villain at San Siro. He scored the opener in first-half stoppage time but also gave away a late penalty to allow Lazio to snatch the draw that took the title fight out of Inter's hands.

Pedro had scored the first equalizer for Lazio in the 72nd minute before Denzel Dumfries headed Inter back in front seven minutes later.

That result would have sent Inter top of the table and left the Nerazzurri in control of their destiny.

However, Lazio was awarded a penalty when it was adjudged - on video review - that Bisseck had blocked Taty Castellanos' volley with his arm.

Pedro converted in the final minute.

Inter thought it had snatched the win deep in stoppage time but Marko Arnautovic's header was ruled out for offside.

Both Inter and Napoli coaches were sent off during the VAR check for the penalty. Conte and his counterpart were also sent off in Parma as there was late drama in their match too.

Napoli was initially awarded a penalty in stoppage time for a presumed foul by Mathias Løvik on David Neres but it was revoked on video review.

Napoli also hit the woodwork three times.

Top-seeded OKC dominates Nuggets in Game 7

SGA and Thunder roll into West finals

OKLAHOMA CITY, May 19, (AP): The Oklahoma City Thunder grew up on Sunday.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 35 points, Jalen Williams added 24 and the Thunder rolled into the Western Conference finals, beating the Denver Nuggets 125-93 in Game 7.

The top-seeded Thunder will host the sixth-seeded Minnesota Timberwolves starting Tuesday. It's Oklahoma City's first trip to the conference finals since 2016.

Oklahoma City went a league-best 68-14 in the regular season, becoming the youngest team to win at least 60 games. To back up their status as the best team in the league, the Thunder had to get past three-time MVP Nikola Jokic and a Denver squad that won the NBA title in 2023 and beat the Los Angeles Clippers in seven games in the first round this year.

Coach Mark Daigneault said his players handled the pressure well.

"There's not many games, you wake up in the morning and you know that you're going to remember the game for the rest of your life, and Game 7 is one of them," he said. "To be able to focus through that and perform the way these guys did today was very impressive."

Jokic had 20 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Nuggets. Aaron Gordon, a key player for Denver throughout the playoffs who hit the winner in Game 1 against the Thunder, started despite a strained left hamstring. He had eight points and 11 rebounds in 24 minutes.

"What he played with today, I don't know many people that would even attempt to go out there and run up and down," Nuggets interim coach David Adelman said. "And he did it in Game 7 against Oklahoma City on the road. That that was one of most incredible things I've ever seen. He was extremely close to not playing. I was surprised."

The Thunder fell behind by 11 in the first quarter, but took the lead early in the second. Oklahoma City outscored Denver 39-20 in the period to take a 60-46 lead at the break.

Gordon was called for a flagrant-1 foul for elbowing Gilgeous-Alexander in the face early in the third quarter. Gilgeous-Alexander made both free throws, and then Williams hit a short jumper to give Oklahoma City a 66-46 lead.

Cason Wallace got loose on a fast break and dunked on Jokic to put the Thunder up 78-57, sparking delirious roars from the crowd.

Oklahoma City cruised from there and now hopes to make another leap.



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) works to the basket against Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray, left, in the second half of Game 7 in the Western Conference semifinals of the NBA basketball playoffs in Oklahoma City. (AP)

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