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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

SOON after a warning from U.S. President Donald Trump's administration about withdrawing support if Israel did not cease its war on Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly announced his acceptance of Trump's proposed aid plan. What does this tell us?

Today, a new U.S. administration under Trump is emerging, different not only from his first-term administration but also from the Biden administration. Trump now appears focused on achieving peace in the Middle East, recognizing the region's strategic importance for cross-border trade and industrial cooperation that could benefit the United States.

The Gulf states, and the Arab world in general, hold immense potential for development. This makes the pursuit of peace a necessity for both the U.S. and the region.

From his earliest statements in this second term, Trump emphasized the need to secure lasting peace in the Middle East, and find solutions to the chronic problems.

At the same time, the Trump administration has come to the realization that Israel's continued retaliatory war in response to the events of October 7, 2023, is counterproductive. It hinders the possibility of joint accomplishments between the United States and its Gulf allies, and also undermines efforts to curb terrorism in the region and emboldens globally controversial regimes to pursue nuclear weapons, thus posing a direct threat to international peace.

Prolonged conflict risks turning the Middle East into a marketplace for weapons of mass destruction, often controlled by leaders who lack awareness.

The United States has long aimed to prevent hostile economic powers from gaining access to strategic markets, particularly those traditionally aligned with

it. In pursuit of this goal, America has worked to position the Arab region as a free trade zone for U.S. industries and trade, capitalizing on its unique geographic location and proximity to global supply lines.

This vision dates back to 1953, when then-Secretary of State John Foster Dulles led efforts to expand U.S. influence in the region, and contributed to the rapid end of the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956.

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A man watches an art show on interactive screens during a celebration organized by the Al-Sadu Society in Kuwait City on May 19, 2025. (Xinhua)

Youth-centered campaign launched to preserve heritage

Kuwait named 'World Crafts City' for Sadu weaving

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Al-Sadu Society organized a celebration on Monday to mark Kuwait being named a "World Crafts City" for Sadu weaving by the World Crafts Council (WCC), in recognition of its efforts to preserve this traditional craft.

The festival is held under the patronage of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and will continue until next Thursday.

The ceremony was attended by Al-Asimah Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Mohammad Al-Jassar, General Supervisor of the "Shft Al-Kuwait" compe-

titution Sheikh Athbi Salem Al-Salem Al-Sabah, as well as several ambassadors and diplomats, along with representatives of the World Crafts Council (WCC).

Sadu Society's chairman, Sheikh Bibi Duaij Al-Sabah, expressed her honor at Kuwait being named a "World Crafts City."

She emphasized that this craft reflects the Kuwaiti soul and showcases the skill of Kuwaiti women in transforming natural resources into artistic masterpieces, preserved in human memory.

Al-Jassar said in a statement that the international recognition of Kuwait demonstrates its ability to preserve its cultural heritage and conveying it to

future generations.

WCC delegation head President Saad Al-Qaddoumi, told KUNA that he was very happy about this announcement, and he appreciated the role of the Sadu Society and its honorary leader, Sheikh Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, as well as the role of NCCAL.

The ceremony also announced the launch of the competition "Shft Al-Kuwait," organized by Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award. This year, the competition is designed to raise awareness about the Sadu craft and strengthen its presence in the society, especially among youth.

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Kuwait skirts extreme heat

Near 50 degrees temp pushes grid to the edge

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Kuwait will witness further scorching heat during the coming days amid northwesterly winds, the Meteorology Department said on Tuesday.

The acting director of the department, Dhirar Al-Ali, told KUNA that the temperature would be hot at nighttime in the coming days, adding that waves of dust would lower visibility in undeveloped regions.

Kuwait is under the influence of the seasonal Indian low depression, bringing to the region hot blows that would push the heat upwards, he said noting that recorded temperature has fluctuated between 33 minimum and 48 to 51 degrees maximum in most Kuwait's territories.

He forecast further high heat in the coming days, with rise of the waves at sea to more than six feet.

Meanwhile, temperatures soared to nearly 50 degrees Celsius at noon on Tuesday, causing the electricity load index to approach critical levels; reaching 15,881 megawatts.

So far, this is the highest power consumption index this summer -- up from 14,850 on Monday, an increase of 1,031 megawatts.

Sources from the ministry stated that such a significant rise in electricity load is a natural consequence of higher temperatures, which usually lead to increased energy consumption, particularly during the peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Sources pointed out that load levels remain below the total output of all power stations, which is around 18,600 megawatts.

Sources affirmed that the ministry is closely monitoring



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

A man shields his face from the blazing sun as temperatures soar, braving the extreme heat sweeping across Kuwait.

load levels daily and it is coordinating with various government agencies to implement energy-saving measures during peak times.

They urged citizens and expatriates to adopt energy-saving practices, such as setting air conditioners to specific temperatures and turning off lights in unoccupied areas.

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Crypto crackdown intensifies through inter-agency action

Coordination among ministries powers Kuwait's progress

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): The path of joint coordination between ministries and government entities in Kuwait has witnessed a notable increase within the framework of strategic transformations in managing the governmental system and services offered to public.

This coordination has led to tangible successes across several vital areas, enhancing the country's ability to open new development and service horizons.

The outcomes of institutional integration among state entities contributed to advancing major projects, unifying efforts to rationalize electricity consumption, combating illegal cryptocurrency mining activities, accelerating the pace of digital transformation and giving strong momentum to infrastructure maintenance nationwide.

An example of high-level coordination is the ac-

tivation of memoranda of understanding (MoU) between Kuwait and China, particularly regarding strategic projects such as the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, as it displays coordinated efforts between relevant government bodies.

Kuwait has intensified efforts through cooperation between the Ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Public Works, amongst others, to push bilateral cooperation with China toward more advanced phases, aiming to expedite the implementation of mega projects that align with Kuwait Vision 2035.

The housing sector has also received special attention, via the launch of the Coordinating Committee in March to follow up on the provision of services related to housing projects. The committee consists of eight government bodies.

The committee is responsible for taking all neces-

sary measures to complete housing-related projects, coordinating efforts among participating bodies to develop joint plans and mechanisms for the provision, operation and maintenance of services in existing and future cities and residential areas. It also identifies the entities responsible for receiving buildings in line with project timelines.

Members of the committee include representatives from the Ministries of Finance, Public Works, Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Communications, as well as Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources and the Kuwait Credit Bank, reflecting the government's keenness to unify efforts in developing this vital sector.

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NBK's Shaikha Al-Bahar only Kuwaiti on Fortune's 100 list

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (Agencies): Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Shaikha Al-Bahar is the only Kuwaiti who made it to the 2025 100 Most Powerful Women in Business List that Fortune released on Tuesday.

The list consists of a hundred influential businesswomen in the finance, technology, health care, telecom, retail, energy and other industries.

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Shaikha Al-Bahar

Kuwait Commerce, Interior Ministries ink MoU to combat money laundering

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism General Department at the Ministry of Interior on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in the fight against money

laundering and terrorist financing. Various officials from both ministries attended the signing ceremony.

The objectives of the MoU are to facilitate the exchange of information and data, improve integration in regulatory processes, and enhance the efficiency of managing reports and suspected cases.

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Day by Day

BEFORE you sleep, say: "O Allah, awaken me to a provision I did not expect, to good things I never imagined, and to the fulfillment of wishes I thought were impossible.

O Allah, You who will gather all people on a day about which there is no doubt. Grant me happiness, success, and peace of mind."

... Yet tomorrow is a new day.

Zahed Matar

Cheat? You're out

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Education announced Tuesday that around 212,000 students in intermediate level and Grades 10 and 11 in Science and Literature sections will begin their end year exams for the current academic year (2024/2025) on Wednesday.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait moves to align airport safety with global benchmarks

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Chairperson of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday affirmed that achieving the highest safety standards at Kuwait International Airport is a strategic pri-

ority.

This policy is in the shadow of the government instructions to overhaul the infrastructure and boost the country's status as a regional hub for air navigation.

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KUNA photo

Fifth meeting of the national committee for security aviation facilities chaired by the Chairperson of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of condolences to the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq on demise of his mother-in-law Khalsa bint Nasr Albousaidia.

His Highness the Amir expressed solace to the bereaved, gracious family. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Tuesday the State of Kuwait's condemnation of the Israeli occupation's targeting of the Hamad hospital in the Gaza Strip, saying that the act was a blatant violation of international and humanitarian laws and norms.

In a statement, the ministry warned of the deliberate military escalation carried out by the Israeli occupation, which was committing systematic war crimes against the Palestinian people without any repercussions or accountability. (KUNA)



2 Editor-in-Chief
receives tourism of-
ficial from Switzerland



5 Embassy of India hosts
'Rihla-e-Dosti' exhibi-
tion to celebrate 250
years of India-Kuwait
relations

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:23	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:53	Maghrib ..	18:36
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:04

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h causing rising dust.
By Night: Rather hot with light

Weather			
to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	48	32	
Abdaly	50	29	
Jahra	50	32	
Salmiyah	41	31	
Jal Aliyah	50	29	
Nuwaisib	44	28	
Wafra	48	25	

Kuwait's Amir congratulates Nigeria, Cameroon on their nat'l celebrations

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of Nigeria Bola Ahmad Tinubu on the advent of his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed deep wishes of good health and welfare to the President and his people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent cable to the President of Nigeria Bola Ahmad Tinubu, congratulating him on his country's national day.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed wishes of good health to the President and more development to the people of Nigeria.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Nigeria

Bola Ahmad Tinubu on the advent of his country's national day.



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the PM

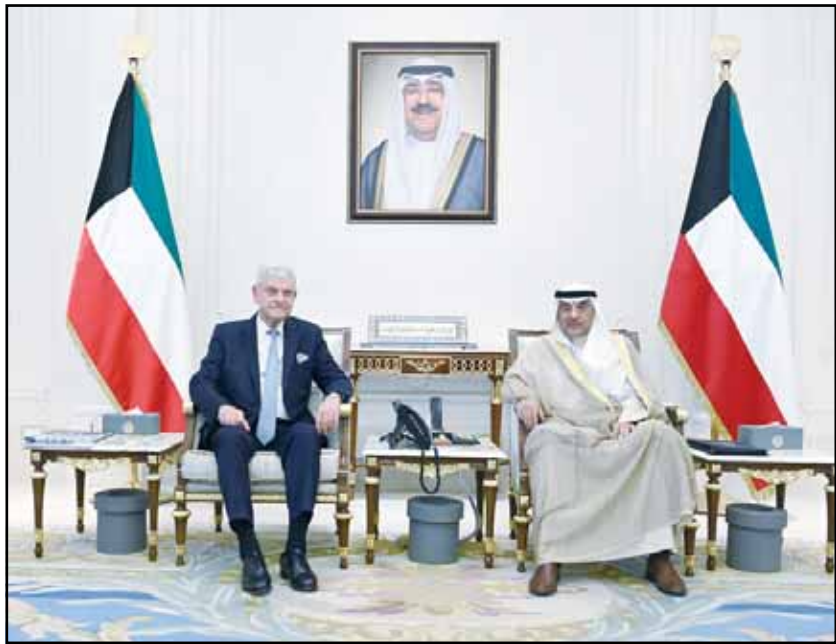
Cameroon

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of Cameroon Paul Biya on the advent of his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed deep wishes of good health and welfare to the President and his people. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable to the President of Cameroon Paul Biya, congratulating him on his country's national day.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed wishes of good health to the President and more development to the people of Cameroon.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Cameroon Paul Biya on the advent of his country's national day.



Crown Prince Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Limak Company board members on their visit to the country.

Crown Prince receives Limak officials

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Tuesday Limak Company board members on their visit to the country.

Kuwait Direct Investment Promo-

tion Authority (KDIPA) Director General Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Mazen Al-Issa attended the meeting.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives Tamara Loffel-Jager, Head of Business Development at Graubünden Ferien in Switzerland. Managing Editor of Arab Times and Managing Editor of Al-Seyassah were present at the occasion.

Editor-in-Chief receives tourism official from Switzerland

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers on Tuesday met in his office Tamara Loffel-Jager, Head of Business Development at Graubünden Ferien in Switzerland.

Al-Jarallah welcomed the guest, praising the efforts of Graubünden Ferien in promoting sustainable tourism in Switzerland. He emphasized the importance of strengthening media and tourism cooperation between the two sides, especially in light of Kuwaitis' interest in European tourism in general and Swiss tourism in particular.

Also present at the meeting were Managing Editor of the Arab Times Mar-

lon Aquino Malinao and Managing Editor of Al-Seyassah Faisal Al-Matni.

Loffel-Jager gave a detailed presentation of the most prominent tourism factors that distinguish Graubünden, including hotels, events, cultural and recreational activities, as well as its picturesque nature, local cuisine, and health and recreation programs. She pointed out that the region represents a distinguished destination for visitors from around the world.

Graubünden Ferien is the official tourism marketing organization for the canton of Graubünden in Switzerland. Its main role is to promote and develop tourism in the region by working with local partners to create and advertise travel experiences and services.

Crown Prince to represent Amir at economic forum in Malaysia

Cabinet urges PAHW to expedite housing projects

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah chaired the weekly meeting of the Cabinet at Bayan Palace on Tuesday.

In a statement after the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sherida Abdullah Al-Muasherji disclosed that the Cabinet was informed at the beginning of the meeting that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assigned His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, to represent His Highness the Amir at the second summit and economic forum of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the People's Republic of China that will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on May 26-28, 2025.

His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, met with the heads of several brotherly and friendly countries to discuss ways to strengthen



PM Diwan photo
The Cabinet session in progress.

bilateral relations and activate joint cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the aforementioned countries in various fields.

During the meeting, the Cabinet reviewed the letters from the Amiri Diwan addressed to His Highness the Amir.

The Cabinet also decided to name the building of the Citizenship and Passports Affairs General Department after the late Sulaiman Mishaan Al-Mishaan, in appreciation and recognition of his efforts during his tenure and his role in developing work systems in the Citizenship and

Passports Sector at the Ministry of Interior.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Saud Al-Omar briefed the Cabinet on the meeting of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah with Judson BezekAlthoff -- Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer of Microsoft Corporation -- during the latter's visit to the State of Kuwait on Tuesday.

The meeting focused on the implementation of the strategic partnership between the State of Kuwait

and Microsoft Corporation with the aim of 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.

They discussed the empowerment of national cadres through specialized training programs in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and advanced technologies, thus, strengthening the role of the Kuwaiti workforce in leading the transformation towards a competitive and sustainable digital economy.

Moreover, based on the government's commitment to monitor housing projects, the Cabinet reviewed the periodic report submitted by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) regarding the implementation status of the work of government agencies involved in providing housing project services.

The Cabinet assigned PAHW, in cooperation with the relevant government agencies, to proceed with the implementation of housing projects and the relevant services according to the timetable prepared for this purpose.

It then reviewed a number of topics on the agenda and decided to approve them. It also decided to refer a number of items to the concerned ministerial committees for study and preparation of reports on them to complete the necessary procedures for their implementation.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Kuwait and Spain representatives after signing agreement to upgrade trade and development ties.

Impetus eyed for mutual investment

'Kuwait, Spain economic and trade ties heading for boost'

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Relations between Kuwait and Spain were formed on a bedrock of joint interests and common visions towards prosperity and sustainable development, a finance ministry official said on Tuesday.

Bilateral cooperation has been on an upward trajectory and encompasses various fields ranging from the economy and finance to trade and investment, Kuwaiti Finance Ministry Undersecretary Aseel Al-Munaifi told KUNA on the sidelines of joint Kuwaiti and Spanish committee talks to discuss these relations.

These ties have allowed Kuwait to get acquainted with Spanish experiences on economic diversification efforts, a matter that has grown in significance on a national level, the official underlined, citing Kuwait's geographical location as a catalyst towards luring greater Spanish investments.

On the purpose of the joint committee, the Kuwaiti finance ministry undersecretary said that the group was formed with an "earnest desire" to propel bilateral ties to loftier levels, while emphasis will be placed on sectors of common concern, said the official.

Addressing the gathering, Spanish state secretary for trade Amparo Lpez Senovilla said that the talks represent a "viable opportunity" to look into matters of mutual concern, in addition to any existential obstacles that could encumber the progress of bilateral investment.

Another objective of the joint committee is to ratchet up dialogue as part of efforts to further bolster relations, hailing the group as having been instrumental in ushering "tangible growth" in relations between Kuwait and Madrid, added the official.

The Spanish official also led a high-level trade delegation during separate talks with Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in which opportunities for joint investment was the core matter discussed, according to a statement by the Kuwaiti business group.

Spanish-based firms have forayed successfully into the Kuwaiti market, where they are active in key road infrastructure projects, said the statement, emphasizing that Kuwait is increasingly turning to Madrid as a trusted partner in national efforts to forge a multi-faceted economy.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez.

Kuwait, Turkiye seek ties boost

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Monday with the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez.

According to a statement from the Minis-

try of Foreign Affairs, the meeting focused on ways to strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation between the two countries in various fields, and touched on several regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Kuwait eyes technology, AI boost – Ahmadi Gov.

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday affirmed the State of Kuwait interest in developing the sector of computing and artificial intelligence and other technological realms.

Sheikh Humoud, in remarks to KUNA as he attended the final session of the Kuwaiti Robotics Omplypic 2025, affirmed that the support and encouragement lent by all participating official departments is in line with advocacy that is necessary to stay abreast of the changes and catch up with development to press ahead with sustainable development in diverse fields.

He underscored necessity of aiding the young generation to find solutions depending on information technology in a manner that would attain sustainable development and render "our life better and much easier"

The Olympic organizer, Hamida Rhaimi, said preparations for the season began in January last year in 100 countries, adding that four teams were qualified to partake in the finals of the Olympic due in Singapore and 11 others for partaking in regional competitions.



Sheikh Humoud

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Change of mindset vital ..., Kuwait neighbors win race

“IT is well known that an open invitation has been extended to U.S. President Donald Trump to visit Kuwait. However, during his regional tour, he visited three Gulf countries, none of which included Kuwait, indicating that a visit to Kuwait was not on his agenda. Whether or not he chooses to visit is not the issue. The door remains open, and he is welcome at any time”, Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Hassan Ali Karam

“I had little opportunity to follow Trump’s Gulf tour, except through a few brief video clips on my phone. What stood out most were the billion-dollar deals secured by American companies.

“As for the rumors of trillion-dollar deals, they originated from malicious media outlets fueled by envy that distort facts and portray America and President Trump as enemies of Islam and the Arab world.

“Only someone ignorant and spiteful, who fails to understand that international relations are built on mutual interests, would believe such claims. These billions won’t go into Trump’s personal pocket or bankroll. What’s needed is goodwill, and trust in others.

“I wonder if we are truly prepared in case President Trump were to surprise us with an unannounced landing at Kuwait International Airport. It is true that Kuwait has long been the most established, cultured, and globally connected among the Gulf states. But today is not yesterday... things have changed.

“We have become entangled in concerns that often have no real foundation such as fears about security and potential external threats, as well as racist issues like “this one is a true Kuwaiti, that one is not.”

“Every citizen who loves their homeland has the right to ask: Why have we drifted from the path of progress and development that much of the world, especially our Gulf neighbors, are experiencing? We now admire them and see them as examples to follow, whereas Kuwait was once the one others admired.

“Are they being reckless while we are cautious and wise? Or are they boldly moving forward into the future while we remain stuck in the past, clinging to a false sense of safety?

“Trump is not the issue, and whether he visits Kuwait or not is irrelevant. What matters is recognizing that our Gulf neighbors are far ahead of us in terms of progress, because they act, and move forward without overanalyzing, without paranoia, and without fear.

“Frankly, in Kuwait, we are held back by reactionary religious parties that have managed to gain control and steer the country to serve their narrow interests. They behave as though Islam belongs solely to us, rather than understanding it as a humane, universal message open to all.

“We must shed this outdated mindset and let go of the empty slogan, “we are different.” We are neither angels nor perfectly righteous. Let us live like others do, rationally, openly, and with minds ready for change.”

Also:

“Everyone has heard of the “New Kuwait 2035” vision. We have heard about the Kuwait Islands Development Authority and the government’s expropriation of Failaka Island for the public good”, Doctor of Law and Kuwaiti Lawyer **Dr. Nayef Al-Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Yet, to this day, these beautiful islands remain undeveloped and have not been utilized as tourist investment facilities that could generate billions of dinars for the public treasury.

“The islands offer many advantages and aesthetic appeal, making them highly attractive to investors to develop them for tourism, all at no cost to the state through the Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) system. These islands are small and medium-sized, except for Boubyan, and are geographically well-positioned. Investing in these islands would significantly boost tourism and entertainment in Kuwait, attracting tourists from the Gulf and beyond. This is especially viable considering Kuwait’s advantages, such as affordable hotel and restaurant prices, as well as the imminent completion of the new Kuwait International Airport, which is designed to accommodate millions of passengers.

“In addition, there are many neglected beaches, such as Sulaibikhat Beach, Doha, where some old chalets have been demolished, as well as Doha Port and the Subiya Chalets. The latter, being ideally situated near the Jaber Bridge and close to vast desert landscapes, is perfect for marine and desert tourism. With its potential for safari tourism, sand skiing, tourist camping, and camel riding competitions, the area holds immense untapped potential.

“What is needed now is a quick decision from the Council of Ministers to allow global and Gulf investors to transform these islands into vibrant tourist destinations within a few years.

“The Ministry of Interior has already begun facilitating entry procedures, the airport is ready, and the ports can be developed to accommodate cruise ships. All that is required is immediate action.”

□ □ □

“The balance of war has shifted today with the advent of electronic warfare. Strong arms wielding swords and throwing arrows and spears are no longer the primary factors in military strength”, Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Hamoud Al-Hattab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“We also warn our Iraqi political brothers about this. The size of armies alone no longer instills fear in opponents or guarantees the conquest of nations.

“Whoever controls the enemy’s weapons code can bring down dozens of their warplanes like insects. This statement was made on Egyptian radio during the war between Egypt and Israel in 1967. I heard it with my own ears and “believed” it. I was seventeen years old at that time, and in high school. But that is a different story.

“I am not suggesting that war today is solely for those who possess the codes to control the enemy’s forces and their advanced aircraft. However, there is a weapon even more powerful than all of these: the political weapon. It is everything in war, and only rational politicians truly wield it.

“In just a few days, the President of the United States, Donald Trump, took control of the political and military game - early and at the right time. He managed to halt three wars simultaneously, all while reclining on his couch.

“After the shocking imbalance in Pakistan’s military superiority was revealed, the American President intervened miraculously before India was on the verge of falling into Pakistan’s hands. He realized that Pakistan was using electronic warfare against India, specifically exploiting the codes of its Indian adversary.

“This is where rapid intervention became crucial, prompting India to astonish the world with the speed at which it agreed to end the conflict.

“At the same time, President Trump decided to put an end to, what he referred as, the “stupid” war between Russia and Ukraine, effectively removing the fuse from the hands of the Ukrainian president, who lacked both political and military experience.

“Simultaneously, Trump used his influence to stop Israel from continuing its war, which was totally humiliating in the face of Hamas, making it appear much like Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. Neither was he capable of defeating Hamas militarily, nor could he salvage the criminal image created by the withdrawal from Gaza.

“Trump successfully orchestrated the release of the Israeli prisoner and facilitated the entry of aid into Gaza, sidelining Israel. He managed the peace process in Gaza without the involvement of the Israeli statelet, though we had hoped he had intervened sooner, before the conflict stretched into its second year.

“So why did he wait over the bodies of Gaza’s children, women, elderly, and youth? There are multiple considerations, beyond what has been mentioned, that cannot be fully explained here, yet their importance cannot be overlooked.

“A very important observation: Hamas did not possess the electronic codes to manage the war between itself and Israel. So, what did it have to miraculously stand up to the might of Israel and limit its influence?

“Finally, I thank the Arab audience who watched the Gaza-Israel match.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty



A team of KFF personnel visited the Arab Media Forum headquarters.

KFF photo

KFF delegation visits Arab Media Forum HQ

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: A delegation from the Public Relations and Media Department of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) visited the Secretary-General of the Arab Media Forum Madi Al-Khamis at the headquarters of the Arab Media Forum in Dasman.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the delegation, led by the Director of the Public Relations and Media

Department Brigadier General Mohammad Badr Al-Gharib, discussed several topics of mutual interest related to media and professional fields.

The visit aimed to enhance communication and strengthen media relations, boost the exchange of expertise, and promote transparency. It also sought to create new opportunities for fruitful collaboration to achieve common goals.

All party to crime... 10 years jail for smuggling drug pills

Jail upheld for student in libel case

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Abdullah Al-Othman, sentenced an officer, a fire department personnel and a customs inspector to 10 years in prison and dismissed them from their jobs for smuggling one million Lyrica pills worth KD1 million through Kuwait International Airport.

The court acquitted another customs inspector, canceling the 10-year prison sentence imposed by a lower court.

Case files indicate that the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Criminal Security Department at the Ministry of Interior arrested the defendants (two of whom work at Kuwait General Administration of Customs) after receiving information that they smuggled the pills in seven bags. It has been reported that Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf personally monitored and supervised the seizure.

The ruling conveyed an important message: the spread of psychotropic substances requires the urgent development of a new, comprehensive legislative policy that includes the introduction of deterrent penalties commensurate with the seriousness of the perpetrators’ action; while imposing harsher penalties on any employee whose job duties include controlling or combating psychotropic substances and who deliberately fails to fulfill his duties.

□ □ □

Jail for student upheld: In a final ruling, the Court of Cassation on Monday upheld the three-year prison sentence imposed on a university student for insulting the country and broadcasting false news on the ‘X’ platform after she was arrested by the State Security officers.

The court upheld her acquittal on the charge of inciting to overthrow the regime, but ordered the closure of her account on the ‘X’ platform for one year.

Furthermore, the Court of Cassation upheld the cancellation of police surveillance of the defendant for five years after serving the prison sentence.

During the trial, the student denied writing the news articles in question, asserting that “an expatriate outside the country threatened her and wrote the articles under her name.”

□ □ □

‘Erase citizen’s case data’: The Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Dr. Nayef Al-Mutairi, upheld the ruling to overturn the negative decision to refrain from erasing a citizen’s case data from the automated records of the ministries of Interior and Justice.

The lawsuit was filed by Attorney Abdullah Mohammad Amin, who represented the plaintiff -- a citizen. He requested that the data of a previous case be erased from all the records and devices of the ministries of Justice and Interior.

According to the citizen, he obtained a final acquittal in a previous misdemeanor case, but the data remained in the records of the two ministries, causing him significant harm.

Amin argued that the continuous storage of his client’s case data in the systems of the two ministries harms his reputation and it is unjustified in view of the acquittal. He added this is also a violation of the Constitution, which guarantees his client’s right to privacy.

He pointed out that the basic principle of innocence is established in Article 34 of the Constitution, stating an accused person is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a fair trial.

The court accepted the lawyer’s defense and ruled to overturn the negative decision to refrain from erasing the plaintiff’s case data from the records of the ministries of Interior and Justice, with all the resulting consequences. This decision was upheld by the Court of Appeals.

Two arrested for stealing 2kg gold

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Under the supervision of an investigator from Jahra Police Station, two expatriates were arrested and banned from traveling for allegedly stealing two kilograms of pure gold -- valued at more than KD60,000 -- from a jewelry company in Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source confirmed that the individual who reported the theft will also be subject to investigation following their arrest, in order to address allegations made in a counter-report filed against them.

Case details revealed that an expatriate manager of the jewelry company reported the theft of approximately one kilogram of gold. He accused two expatriate employees of committing the crime and specified the dates and times of the incidents: April 9 at 9:00 am and April 15 at 11:00 am.

It remains unclear whether the informant submitted video evidence to support his claims, particularly since he provided precise dates and times for both alleged thefts.

Furthermore, he did not clarify why there was a delay in reporting the incidents to the authorities.



Sheikh Abdullah

Governor honors ‘Rescue’ officers

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali honored the Capital Rescue Police Department at the governorate’s headquarters in recognition of its outstanding efforts in maintaining security, stability, and public safety throughout the governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ceremony was attended by Director of the Capital Rescue Police Department Brigadier General Hamlan Al-Hamlan, Assistant Director Brigadier General Mishal Al-Shahman, Head of the Capital Rescue Patrols Section Major Khalifa Al-Sabah, First Lieutenant Talal Al-Shalimi, and Corporal Abdullah Hamid Al-Rashidi.

The governor praised the department’s vital role, highlighting the professionalism and dedication of its members in fulfilling their national duties with efficiency and preparedness.

He also appreciated their contribution to protecting lives and property and ensuring a secure and peaceful environment in the capital.

The governor affirmed that the recognition reflects the directives of the political leadership, which is committed to honoring exemplary models in various sectors, and believing in their role in reinforcing national pride and inspiring greater dedication and service.

Non-filers of assets to lose jobs and face fine

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has issued a warning regarding delays by the concerned parties in submitting financial disclosure statements in accordance with Law No. 2/2016 within the legal deadlines, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It affirmed that these disclosures serve as a preventive measure to promote transparency, ensure oversight of public positions and their holders, and protect public funds.

On its X account, Nazaha explained that delaying the submission of the first disclosure after a warning, for more than 90 days, could result in a fine of at least KD 500, with the possibility of dismissal from the position.

Failure to update the disclosure within the specified deadlines, if the delay exceeds 90 days after the warning, could result in a fine of up to KD 10,000, imprisonment for up to one year, and the potential for dismissal from the position.

Delaying the submission of the final disclosure for more than 90 days could result in fines of up to KD 30,000 and imprisonment for up to three years.

After the disclosures are submitted, the relevant inspection committees verify the accuracy of the data and prepare necessary reports. If there is any suspicion of illicit gain, the case is referred to the competent authorities for appropriate legal action.

It is worth noting that in February, the government announced amendments to Law No. 2/2016, which expanded the categories required to submit financial disclosures. These now include chairpersons and members of boards of directors of charitable and civil society organizations, executive directors, financial controllers, administrators in cooperative societies, members of legal departments in certain government agencies, and customs inspectors.

The amendments also expanded the scope of corruption crimes to include the embezzlement of cooperative society funds, as well as the crimes already covered by the law. The goal is to protect shareholders’ funds and strengthen oversight of these societies.

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Kuwait team takes part in Ataturk Sports Day

Farwaniya governor praises twinship deal with Turkish city of Samsun



Some pictures from Farwaniya Governor's visit to the Turkish City of Samsun.

By Osama Al-Saeed

ANKARA, May 20, (KUNA): Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of the twinship deal with Turkish city of Samsun and the deep-rooted ties between both sides

The governor made the statement to KUNA after partaking in the celebrations for May 19, the Commemoration of Ataturk, Youth and Sports Day in the city of Samsun.

Relations between Kuwait and Turkiye are exemplary, he said, wishing Turkiye further progress, development and prosperity as well as everlasting stability and security.

ing stability and security.

The organizers of this event expressed gratitude to Sheikh Athbi for accepting this invitation and attending the celebrations, a dear occasion of Turkish people, he noted.

They affirmed that Kuwait has a special position for the Turkish government and people as both sides have exceptional ties, he stated.

Turkish people are keen on reviving the deal mainly in such official occasions and sharing expertise in all fields to bear fruits to both countries, he affirmed.

The governor took part in planting a tree in the name of Kuwait in a city's national park, in the presence of Samsun's mayor Halit Dogan and

Kuwait's Ambassador to Turkiye Abdulaziz Al-Adwani, which symbolizes friendship and collaboration bonds between two countries.

The Kuwaiti governor met with Dogan and discussed topics on boosting relations.

Dogan thanked Sheikh Athbi for participation in these celebrations and expressed happiness for continued collaboration which contributes to sharing expertise and opening horizons of cooperation in all fields.

A twinship agreement was signed between Kuwait's Farwaniya Governorate and Turkiye's City of Samsun in April 2016 to promote joint investments and exchange of expertise.



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Amir offers condolences over demise of ex-Uruguay leader

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences Monday to the President of Uruguay Yamandu Orsi, on the demise of former president Jose Mujica.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of condolences to the President of Uruguay Yamandu Orsi, on the demise of former president Jose Mujica.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of condolences to the President of Uruguay Yamandu Orsi, on the demise of former president Jose Mujica.

Contest highlights talent of partially blind people

Bid to merge disabled in society

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The First Al-Baghli Competition for Distinguished Blind People was announced on Monday under the patronage of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah; and in the presence of Nafisa Charitable Foundation Chairman Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli.

This event, the first of its kind in the State of Kuwait, showcases the talent and inventive capacities of visually impaired individuals in a diverse spectrum of disciplines.

Al-Baghli said this endeavor embodies the foundation's unwavering dedication to the integration and empowerment of persons with visual impairments, giving them an esteemed platform to showcase their respective talents. He added that this emphasis on philanthropic and voluntary activities aims to fortify the enduring commitment of the foundation to propagate fundamental principles in the civil society.



Dr Al-Huwailah

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait Blind Association Fayez Al-Azmi expressed deep appreciation to the minister for her gracious sponsorship of the competition, and to Al-Baghli for supporting the competition.

The competition consists of the following categories: Technological Excellence, Sports Excellence, Media Excellence, Literary Excellence and Creative Excellence.

The Creative Excellence category is for visually impaired individuals who present innovative concepts or projects with substantial cultural or societal influence.

The panel of judges will commence official deliberations on July 6, 2025 at the headquarters of the association.

On the other hand, Murtadha Al-Jadi, Vice Chairman and General Manager of the foundation, expressed his happiness over the humanitarian and social role the foundation plays in encouraging the blind to showcase their abilities and potential, starting with the Al-Baghli Quran Competition for the Blind at the GCC level and continuing with the Al-Baghli Award for Distinguished Blind People.

Al-Jadi revealed the competition's conditions as follows: participation shall be restricted to living individuals, participation is open to both members of the association and those residing outside the State of Kuwait, and participation is open to both Kuwaiti citizens and officially registered residents of Kuwait.

He said the registration for the competition will open on May 25 and it will continue until June 30; indicating the prizes for each of the five categories are as follows: KD400 for the first place, KD350 for second place and KD300 for the third place.

Jaber Stadium all set for final match

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Kuwait Municipality, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Sports, has completed all cleaning arrangements at Jaber International Stadium ahead of the final match of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah Cup between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi Club, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Director of the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department at Farwaniya Municipality Mohammed Al-Jabaa explained that Kuwait Municipality has intensified cleaning efforts

around the stadium and the surrounding roads. As part of the preparations, 14 waste containers with a capacity of 1,100 liters have been placed, along with the deployment of 65 cleaning workers for manual sweeping, four robotic sweepers, and various other equipment.

He added that field teams have been formed to monitor and control street vendors outside the stadium, and warnings have been issued regarding abandoned trucks and heavy equipment in the area, pending their removal.

Embassy of India hosts ‘Rihla-e-Dosti’ exhibition to celebrate 250 years of India-Kuwait relations

A legacy of trade, trust and ties on display at the National Library

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times/Al-Seyasssah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Embassy of India in Kuwait is organizing an exhibition and talk series titled “Rihla-e-Dosti: 250 Years of India-Kuwait Relationship” from May 19 to 24 at the National Library of Kuwait.

According to a press release, the event is being held in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) and the Kuwait Heritage Society, along with the National Archives of India and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of India.

The exhibition was inaugurated on May 19 by the Ambassador of India to Kuwait Dr. Adarsh Swaika, and Director General of NCCAL Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar.

The opening ceremony included speeches by Dr. Al-Jassar, Ambassador Swaika, and the President of the Kuwait Heritage Society Fahad Ghazi Al-Abduljaleel.

A panel discussion followed, with representatives of prominent Kuwaiti merchant families with longstanding historical ties to India. Panelists included Ibrahim Abdullatif Al-Ibrahim, Sulaiman Abdulmohsen Al-Khamees, and Abdullatif Abdulrazzaq, who shared personal insights into their families’ deep-rooted connections with India during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The exhibition offers a rich and diverse collection of items that highlights the deep-rooted and shared history between India and Kuwait. It features rare manuscripts, historical documents, books, and personal letters, along with coins and the Indian rupee, which remained legal tender in Kuwait until 1961. Also on display are photographs and videos of significant bilateral VVIP visits, as well as artifacts and other cultural items that reflect the longstanding diplomatic and cultural ties between the two nations.

To mark the occasion, a special commemorative booklet was jointly released, documenting selected manuscripts and photographs that illustrate the rich history of India and Kuwait, and the high-level visits by leaders between the two countries.

The event was attended by over



Some photos during an exhibition and talk series organized by the Embassy of India titled ‘Rihla-e-Dosti: 250 Years of India-Kuwait Relationship’ at the National Library of Kuwait.

Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

200 guests, including prominent Kuwaiti dignitaries from the government, business, media, cultural, academic, and research sectors, ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps; and a wide cross-section of the Indian community in Kuwait.

The Indian Ambassador Swaika inaugurated the exhibition and delivered a speech in the presence of Dr. Muhammad Khalid Al-Jassar, Secretary General of NCCAL, members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait, and mem-

bers of the Indian community.

In his speech, the Ambassador expressed his gratitude to Dr. Al-Jassar for partnering with the embassy to jointly organize this exhibition and talk series. He also extended heartfelt gratitude to President of the Kuwait Heritage Society Fahad Abduljaleel, describing him as a main pillar and major contributor to the event.

The Ambassador revealed that Abduljaleel had mentioned the idea of organizing such an event to the Hon-

orable Prime Minister of India during his visit to Kuwait last December. That conversation, he noted, became the driving force behind bringing this initiative to life.

He emphasized the deep-rooted and historic bonds between India and Kuwait, which date back to well before the formation of the modern nation-states of both countries.

The ambassador explained that as early as the 18th century, Kuwaiti merchants sailed to Indian port cities, car-

rying goods such as pearls, dates, and Arabian horses, and returning with Indian products like rice, spices, timber, and textiles, not only for use in Kuwait but also for trade in the region.

The exhibits on display represent just a small glimpse of the rich, shared heritage between the two nations, much of it from a time before the establishment of their modern identities. This connection is a testament to the historical depth and mutual benefit of India-Kuwait relations.

Continued from Page 1

Mr. Trump,

However, the wars and political upheavals that unfolded during that period delayed the realization of America’s vision. Efforts for peace and reconciliation between Arabs and Israelis have consistently collided with personal political ambitions, sometimes from Israeli leaders, and at other times from Arab factions.

Today, we are witnessing an unprecedented shift, marked by the U.S. President’s announcement that his administration is prepared to distance itself from Israel. This signals a dramatic change in Washington’s stance. The agreements signed in Riyadh, Doha, and Abu Dhabi during President Trump’s recent visit, particularly the joint statements on a two-state solution, reflect a significant policy shift that could expedite the path toward lasting peace.

At the same time, most Arab countries condemned Hamas’s actions on October 7, 2023, and denounced the targeting of civilians.

Meanwhile, growing sentiment within Gaza indicates a desire to see Hamas removed from power, with increasing support among Palestinians for governance under the Palestinian National Authority. However, this vision remains unattainable as long as Israel continues its campaign of destruction and disproportionate military force. Persisting on this path will kill the two-state solution, an outcome accepted by the Arab world, and will severely undermine U.S. efforts to broker peace in the region.

There is no doubt that this new American development presents an opportunity to chart a different course, one that recognizes the Arab region’s vast potential. Home to hundreds of millions of people, the majority of them youth, the region could be transformed into a prosperous region that serves both American and Western interests. Most importantly, it offers the promise of ending a 77-year-old conflict and securing peace and stability for both Arabs and Israelis.

Kuwait named

The Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award launched the 10th edition of its pioneering cultural competition “Shift Al-Kuwait” (meaning did you see Kuwait) in collaboration with Sadu House, as part of its silver jubilee celebration.

Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee of the Award, Bassam Al-Shammari told KUNA on Tuesday that this year’s edition features engaging questions posted daily for ten days on the Award and Sadu House’s Instagram and Facebook accounts, attracting participation from thousands inside and out-

side Kuwait.

The competition format requires participants to answer six questions focused on the traditional Sadu weaving craft, and those who respond correctly will enter a draw for the chance to win.

Al-Shammari added that the competition offers a total of USD 50,000 in prizes, awarded to 50 winners, each receiving USD 1,000.

Competition supervisor Sheikh Salem Athbi Al-Sabah told KUNA that the partnership between the Informatics Award and Sadu House marks a vital addition to the competition, symbolizing an inspiring integration of culture and technology.

He emphasized that the collaboration helps shed light on the Sadu craft as a deeply rooted Kuwaiti heritage, presented in an interactive format designed to engage younger generations.

Sheikh Salem added that the initiative reflects Kuwait’s strong network of cultural institutions, which collaborate to launch national initiatives that elevate the country’s regional and global standing.

He noted that the award aims to pursue further cooperation on future projects supporting digital culture and Kuwait’s authentic heritage.

Launched in 2010, the “Shift Al-Kuwait” competition has used social media platforms to present enriching cultural content and award incentives, continuing its mission to spread knowledge and awareness.

NBK’s Shaikha

In 1977, Al-Bahar joined NBK where she proved her leadership capabilities as she rose through the ranks over the years. At present, she is the only woman in the executive management team of the bank. She currently heads NBK-France and Egypt; in addition to her post as board member of NBK (International) -- the subsidiary of the bank in the United Kingdom.

Al-Bahar was the brain behind the launching of NBK RISE, a program that aims to empower women leaders and train them within nine months to assume leadership posts.

NBK is one of the largest financial institutions in Kuwait and one of the leading banks in the region. The total value of its assets as at the end of March reached more than \$135 billion.

Group CEO of First Abu Dhabi Bank in the United Arab Emirates Hana Al-Rostamani joins Al-Bahar as the only two women from the Gulf on the list, ranking 76th and 92nd respectively.

The Fortune editors compiled the list based on company size and health; in addition to an executive’s career path, influence, innovation and efforts to make business better.

The 2025 list includes 52 women

from the United States of America and 48 from other countries as follows: eight from China; seven each from France and the United Kingdom; three each from Germany, Singapore and Brazil; two each from Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and Spain; and one each from Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

Chief Operator at Costco and merchant Claudine Adamo, who ranked 43rd, is one of 16 newcomers. She helped millions of Americans navigate inflation by keeping prices low on essentials; and the next-gen execs such as ByteDance CFO Julie Gao (81st), who steered the finances of the TikTok owner through its tangles with the US government.

Following are the top 10 Most Powerful Women in Business in 2025:

1. Mary Barra, Chair and CEO, GM (U.S.)
2. Julie Sweet, Chair and CEO, Accenture (U.S.)
3. Jane Fraser, CEO, Citigroup (U.S.)
4. Lisa Su, Chair and CEO, AMD (U.S.)
5. Ana Botín, Executive Chairman, Banco Santander (Spain)
6. Tan Su Shan, Deputy CEO and Group Head of Institutional Banking, DBS Group (Singapore)
7. Thasunda Brown Duckett, President and CEO, TIAA (U.S.)
8. Marta Ortega, Chairperson, Inditex (Spain)
9. Abigail Johnson, Chairman and CEO, Fidelity Investments (U.S.)
10. Meng Wanzhou, Deputy Chairwoman, Rotating Chairwoman, and CFO, Huawei (China)

Kuwait Commerce,

It aims to aid in bolstering the national framework for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, while adhering to the best international standards.

Both parties highlighted the significance of this collaboration in achieving the country’s strategic objectives and improving institutional coordination among regulatory and enforcement bodies; thereby, increasing the effectiveness of efforts to combat all forms of financial crimes.

Kuwait moves

Sheikh Humoud was speaking to KUNA after the fifth meeting of the national committee for security aviation facilities, discussing means of strengthening the security measures and updating the facilities at Kuwait International Airport.

He has added that the Civil Aviation department is keen on applying top international practices for avia-

tion security and safety, elaborating that the commission broached the applied procedures for ensuring harmony of the measures at Kuwait airport with those issued by the international organizations, namely ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The directorate president indicated that the participants in the meeting examined some relevant treaties and agreements among local and external parties, backing the legal and regulatory systems to enhance security and safety of the passengers and air installations.

Kuwait skirts

The ministry also reported that four sub-feeders at the main Khalidiya B transformer station were out of service, leading to power outages in some parts of Adailiya.

It then confirmed that the emergency teams on-site worked hard to restore power as quickly as possible.

Cheat?

In a press statement, the ministry confirmed that all the relevant sectors have completed the necessary preparations for the start of the final exams; reiterating that the schools and examination committees are fully prepared to receive 212,755 students who will take the exams. These students include 128,263 in intermediate level; 43,623 in Grade 10 and 40,869 in Grade 11.

The ministry also affirmed its full commitment to provide an appropriate environment for exams; asserting that all technical and human resources are being mobilized to prepare examination committees and facilitate the conduct of exams according to the highest educational and organizational standards, while ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for all students.

It provided learning resources to support students, such as the e-library and the ‘With Hamad Chat’ service, available on its website and app.

It added that it is fully cooperating with parents by strengthening communication channels and providing support to motivate the students to confidently pass the exam period.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a decision regulating the operation of examination committees and the report of those barred from taking exams.

Article One of the decision stipulates that the Inspection and Audit Office should be provided with copies of the following during the exams period:

1. A detailed list of barring decisions issued daily, approved by the First Deputy General Head of Examinations or his representative in the Science and Literature Exams Con-

The manuscripts displayed in the exhibition include documents related to trade at Indian ports, Kuwaiti books on pearls that were printed in India in Arabic and Indian languages such as Gujarati, currency notes and coins that served as legal tender in Kuwait for over a century until 1961, as well as stamps printed in India. Another important section of the exhibition features photographs and memorabilia from high-level visits exchanged between the two countries over the past six to seven decades.

The ambassador also highlighted the strong personal ties of Kuwaiti leaders with India, noting that some, particularly Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, used to spend extended periods, even months, in India.

He highlighted the significance of the highly successful visit of the Prime Minister of India H.E. Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December, noting that it marked the end of a long pause in high-level exchanges. He added that India now looks forward to welcoming a visit from the Kuwaiti leadership in the near future.

The Indian Ambassador emphasized that the primary objective of organizing the exhibition was to raise awareness among the youth of both Kuwait and India about the rich and longstanding history shared by the two nations.

He expressed appreciation for the strong response from Kuwaiti universities and schools, as many had arranged student visits to the exhibition over its four-day duration to explore the valuable historical items on display.

The ambassador extended an open invitation to the public, encouraging everyone to visit and enjoy this unique cultural experience.

He expressed heartfelt gratitude to the National Library of Kuwait, the Kuwait Heritage Society, the National Archives of India, and the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India for their valuable contributions in making the exhibition possible.

Looking ahead, Ambassador Swaika expressed hope that the embassy, NCCAL, and other stakeholders would continue to collaborate on similar initiatives to showcase the multifaceted and unique partnership between India and Kuwait.

He concluded by offering special gratitude to the dedicated teams from NCCAL, the National Library, and the Embassy of India for their tireless efforts over the past month in bringing the exhibition to life.

protocols with the Ministry of Electricity, and forming teams to inspect buildings and facilities.

In early May, the Higher Committee for Energy began reviewing the National Energy Transformation Document of 2024, prepared by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), which serves as a key reference for developing the country’s energy sector.

This committee includes representatives from relevant government bodies and institutions such as Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, the Ministry of Finance, the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), the Public Authority for Industry, the Environment Public Authority and Kuwait Municipality.

In a related context, joint coordination among government ministries led to a successful security campaign to combat illegal cryptocurrency mining activities. This was part of the state’s efforts to counter unlawful use of electricity and practices that negatively impact power networks.

The campaign, conducted last April by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and the Public Authority for Industry, resulted in the discovery of several non-compliant residences, the seizure of mining equipment, and the initiation of legal procedures against violators.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecution began investigating 31 reports concerning the illegal use of electricity for cryptocurrency mining in 59 houses, questioning 116 individuals involved.

In efforts to accelerate digital service integration and simplify procedures for citizens and residents, a wide-scale coordination workshop was held last April. It brought together representatives from 38 government bodies that offer services through the unified government smartphone services app (Sahel).

A workshop reviewed key performance indicators and achievements, with more than 91 million services delivered since Sahel’s launch in September 2021. The number of users has also risen to 2.7 million.

Government bodies are now working in harmony to reengineer their services in accordance with digital journey standards to improve efficiency, reduce red-tape, and enhance user experience based on data and indicators provided by Sahel.

Regarding the role of governors in development and service improvement, coordination between governors and various government authorities has accelerated through joint meetings and field visits to unify teamwork.

‘Ramifications for hundreds of thousands of people affected aren’t yet clear’

Supreme Court allows WH to revoke protected status for Venezuelan migrants

WASHINGTON, May 20, (AP): The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Trump administration to strip legal protections from 350,000 Venezuelans, potentially exposing them to deportation.

The court’s order, with only one noted dissent, puts on hold a ruling from a federal judge in San Francisco that kept in place Temporary Protected Status for the Venezuelans that would have otherwise expired last month. The justices provided no rationale, which is common in emergency appeals.

The status allows people already in the United States to live and work legally because their native countries are deemed unsafe for return due to natural disaster or civil strife.

The high court’s order appears to be the “single largest action in modern American history stripping any group of non-citizens of immigration status,” said Ahilan Arulanantham, one of the attorneys for Venezuelan migrants.

“This decision will force families to be in an impossible position either choosing to survive or choosing stability,” said Cecilia Gonzalez Herrera, who sued to try and stop the Trump ad-

ministration from revoking legal protections from her and others like her.

“Venezuelans are not criminals,” Gonzalez Herrera said.

“We all deserve the chance to thrive without being sent back to danger,” she said.

The ramifications for the hundreds of thousands of people affected aren’t yet clear, Arulanantham said.

Mariana Moleros, her husband and their daughter left their native Venezuela in September 2005 after receiving death threats for their open political opposition to the socialist government. They came to the United States hoping to find peace and protection and requested asylum, but their application was denied.

They were temporarily granted TPS but now they live in fear again - fear of being detained and deported to a country where they don’t feel safe.

“Today we are all exposed to being imprisoned in Venezuela if the US return us,” said Moleros, a 44-year-old Venezuelan attorney who lives in Florida. “They should not deport someone who is at risk of being assassinated, torture and incarcerated.”



The Supreme Court is pictured, Jan 10 in Washington. (AP)

A federal appeals court had earlier rejected the administration’s request to put the order on hold while the lawsuit continues. A hearing is set for next week in front of US District Judge Edward Chen, who had paused the administration’s plans.

In a statement, Homeland Security called the court’s decision a “win for

the American people and the safety of our communities” and said the Biden administration “exploited programs to let poorly vetted migrants into this country.”

“The Trump administration is re-instituting integrity into our immigration system to keep our homeland and its people safe,” said spokeswoman Tricia

McLaughlin.

The case is the latest in a string of emergency appeals President Donald Trump’s administration has made to the Supreme Court, many of them related to immigration and involving Venezuela. Earlier this month, the government asked the court to allow it to end humanitarian parole for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, setting them up for potential deportation as well.

The high court also has been involved in slowing Trump’s efforts to swiftly deport Venezuelans accused of being gang members to a prison in El Salvador under an 18th century wartime law called the Alien Enemies Act.

The complex economic and political crisis in Venezuela has driven more than 7.7 million people to leave the South American nation since 2013. Venezuela’s most recent economic troubles pushed year-over-year inflation in April to 172%. The latest chapter even prompted President Nicolás Maduro to declare an “economic emergency” last month. Maduro, whose re-

election last year to a third term has been condemned internationally as illegitimate, also has cracked down on his political opponents.

In the dispute over TPS, the administration has moved aggressively to withdraw various protections that have allowed immigrants to remain in the country, including ending the temporary protected status for a total of 600,000 Venezuelans and 500,000 Haitians. That status is granted in 18-month increments. Venezuela was first designated for TPS in 2021; Haiti, in 2010.

Last week, DHS announced that TPS for Afghanistan, first provided in 2022, would end in mid-July.

The protections for Venezuelans had been set to expire April 7, but Chen found that the expiration threatened to severely disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and could cost billions in lost economic activity.

Chen, who was appointed to the bench by Democratic President Barack Obama, found the government hadn’t shown any harm caused by keeping the program alive.



This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows buildings along Natural Bridge Avenue that were damaged by a tornado on May 18, in northwest St Louis. (AP)

More severe weather pummels central US

More tornadoes plowed through the central US on Monday, ripping apart buildings and knocking out power as people from Texas to Kentucky continued to clean up from days of severe weather that killed more than two dozen people and destroyed thousands of homes and buildings.

At least four tornadoes were con-

firmed in Oklahoma and Nebraska on Monday evening, according to a preliminary report from the National Weather Service.

Across Oklahoma, at least 10 homes were destroyed and multiple buildings were damaged, including a fire station that was wiped out, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

A spokesperson for the agency said they have not received any reports of injuries or deaths.

Around 115,000 customers were without power in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri, according to PowerOutage.us.

Parts of several highways were also closed due to flooding or storm damage. (AP)

‘They’ve long been source of misinformation’ Trump order targets barcodes on ballots

ATLANTA, May 20, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s executive order seeking to overhaul how US elections are run includes a somewhat obscure reference to the way votes are counted. Voting equipment, it says, should not use ballots that include “a barcode or quick-response code.”

Those few technical words could have a big impact.

Voting machines that give all voters a ballot with one of those codes are used in hundreds of counties across 19 states. Three of them -- Georgia, South Carolina and Delaware -- use the machines statewide.

Some computer scientists, Democrats and left-leaning election activists have raised concerns about their use, but those pushing conspiracy theories about the 2020 presidential election have been the loudest, claiming without evidence that manipulation has already occurred. Trump, in justifying the move, said in the order that his intention was “to protect election integrity.”

Even some election officials who have vouched for the accuracy of systems that use coded ballots have said it’s time to move on because too many voters don’t trust them.

Colorado’s secretary of state, Democrat Jena Griswold, decided in 2019 to stop using ballots with QR codes, saying at the time that voters “should have the utmost confidence that their vote will count.” Amanda Gonzales,



People vote at voting booths in the Georgia’s primary election at Park Tavern June 9, 2020, in Atlanta. (AP)

lez, the elections clerk in Colorado’s Jefferson County, doesn’t support Trump’s order but believes Colorado’s decision was a worthwhile step.

“We can just eliminate confusion,” Gonzalez said. “At the end of the day, that’s what I want -- elections that are free, fair, transparent.”

Whether voting by mail or in person, millions of voters across the country mark their selections by using a pen to fill in ovals on paper ballots. Those ballots are then fed through a tabulat-

ing machine to tally the votes and can be retrieved later if a recount is needed.

In other places, people voting in person use a touch-screen machine to mark their choices and then get a paper record of their votes that includes a barcode or QR code. A tabulator scans the code to tally the vote.

Election officials who use that equipment say it’s secure and that they routinely perform tests to ensure the results match the votes on the paper records, which they retain.



People walk along a street with a news ticker in the background reporting on a phone call between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, on the facade of the TASS news agency building in Moscow, Russia on May 19. (AP)

With little progress after phone calls and talks, Ukraine’s allies hit Russia with new sanctions

KYIV, Ukraine, May 20, (AP): Kyiv’s European allies slapped new sanctions Tuesday on Moscow, a day after a phone call between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin failed to produce a breakthrough on ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine.

“We have made clear again and again that we simply expect one thing from Russia now: namely, a ceasefire, unconditional and immediate,” German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said in addressing the sanctions. “We welcome the fact that Ukraine is still prepared to do this. We note with disappointment that Russia has not yet taken this decisive step, and we will have to react to this.”

Diplomatic efforts have seen little progress in halting the fighting, including Monday’s phone call between Trump and Putin, and Friday’s direct talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul. In the phone call, Putin promised Trump that Russia is “ready to work with” Ukraine on a “memorandum” outlining the framework for “a possible future peace treaty.”

“It appears that Putin has devised a way to offer Trump an interim, tangible outcome from Washington’s peace efforts without making any real concessions,” said Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, in a post on X.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks to students and teachers of the new Secondary Special Music School at the Sirius Park of Science and Art after his phone talks with US President Donald Trump, outside Sochi, Russia, on May 19. (AP)

Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel that “it is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time to continue the war and occupation. We are working with partners to put pressure on the Russians to behave differently.”

The new European Union sanctions targeted almost 200 ships from Rus-

sia’s “shadow fleet” illicitly transporting oil to skirt Western restrictions. It also imposed asset freezes and travel bans on several officials as well as on a number of Russian companies.

Ukrainian officials have said about 500 aging ships of uncertain ownership and safety practices are dodging sanctions and keeping oil revenues flowing to Moscow.

The UK also targeted the shadow fleet with 100 new sanctions and also aimed at disrupting the supply chains of Russian weapons, officials said.

“Putin’s latest strikes once again show his true colors as a warmonger,” British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said.

Trump has threatened to step up sanctions and tariffs on Russia but hasn’t acted so far.

Ukraine has offered a comprehensive 30-day ceasefire, which Moscow has effectively rejected by imposing far-reaching conditions, and Zelenskyy proposed a face-to-face meeting with Putin last week but the Russian leader spurned that offer.

Trump, who had pledged during his campaign to end the war in one day, said his personal intervention was needed to push peace efforts forward. He held separate phone calls with both Putin and Zelenskyy, and said the two countries would “immediately” begin ceasefire negotiations, but there were no details on when or where such talks might take place.

Lithuania takes Belarus to UN court over alleged smuggling of migrants

VILNIUS, Lithuania, May 20, (AP): Lithuania is asking the International Court of Justice to rule that Belarus breached its obligations by allegedly organizing the smuggling of migrants to its territory and award compensation.

The Foreign Ministry in Vilnius said Lithuania filed its case to the court in The Hague on Monday. It revolves around alleged breaches by Belarus of its obligations under the UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

The number of migrants arriving at the borders of European Union member countries from Belarus increased sharply last year, and European authorities have accused Belarus of helping migrants to get across. In December, the EU gave a green light to Poland and other countries on its eastern flank to temporarily suspend asylum rights when they believe that Belarus and Russia are “weaponizing” migrants to destabilize the bloc.

Lithuania said evidence it has collected confirms the direct involvement of Belarus in organizing migrant flows, including an increase in flights from the Middle East and elsewhere by Belarusian state-owned enterprises.

It alleges that after arriving in Belarus many migrants were escorted to the Lithuanian border by Belarusian security forces and forced to cross illegally. It added that Belarus’ border services



In this file photo taken on Aug 4, 2021, Migrants stand behind a fence inside the newly built refugee camp in the Rudninkai military training ground, some 38km (23.6 miles) south from Vilnius, Lithuania. (AP)

refused to work with Lithuania to stop illegal crossings.

The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Vilnius is appealing to the ICJ to hold Belarus accountable under international law for violations of the migrant-smuggling protocol. Its claims include full compensation for the damage allegedly caused, including the cost of reinforcing the border. It did not specify a figure.

There was no immediate reaction

from the Belarusian government.

Lithuania, which pointed to an influx of migrants dating back to 2021, said it made its move after bilateral negotiations failed to resolve the dispute.

“We are taking this case to the International Court of Justice to send a clear message: No state can use vulnerable people as political pawns without facing consequences under international law,” Justice Minister Rimantas Mockus said.

Europe

Second man charged with arson: A second man was charged Tuesday over a series of fires that targeted properties linked to U.K. Prime Minister **Keir Starmer**, police said.

Romanian national Stanislav Carpiuc, 26, from Romford, east London, is accused of arson with intent to endanger life, the Metropolitan Police said. He had been arrested at Luton Airport, north of London, on Saturday.

Last week, Roman Lavrinyovych, a Ukrainian national, appeared in court on charges of setting fire to Starmer’s family home, along with a property where he once lived and a small SUV he had sold. Lavrinyovych, 21, didn’t enter a plea Friday at Westminster Magistrates’ Court to three counts of arson with intent to endanger life but denied the charges in a police interview.

An unnamed 34-year-old was also arrested Monday in Chelsea, west London, on suspicion of conspiracy to commit arson with intent to endanger life, the Met said.



Starmer

He remains in custody.

No injuries were reported from the fires, which occurred on three nights in north London between May 8 and May 12.

Starmer and his family had moved into the prime minister’s official Downing Street residence after he was elected in July. (AP)

□ □ □

Germany arrest suspect in bar attack: A suspect who allegedly attacked and injured five people outside a bar in the western German city of Bielefeld was arrested after a search of almost two days, German news agency dpa reported Tuesday.

“The detailed work paid off and we were able to arrest the surprised perpetrator,” the state interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, Herbert Reul, told dpa after an arrest of a man late Monday evening in the western town of Heiligenhaus near Düsseldorf.

According to police, the suspect is a 35-year-old Syrian living in Germany. Early Sunday, five men between 22 and 27 were attacked by a suspect wielding a sharp object outside a bar in downtown Bielefeld - four of them seriously.

Reul said that “after the shocking crime in Bielefeld” investigators had “picked up and pursued every last lead on the perpetrator” with all the resources available.

“Now we need answers as to what motive led the perpetrator to commit the crime,” the minister added. (AP)

Asia

Car runs red light, kills 3 in Taiwan: A stream of people in Taiwan left flowers and bags of snacks on Tuesday near the intersection where a driver plowed through pedestrians the previous day, killing three people including two 12-year-old girls.

The crash, which left the 78-year-old driver in a coma, saddened many on this self-governing island of 23 million people off China's east coast.

A video posted on X by Taiwan's Central News Agency showed people praying and bowing their heads in front of rows of colorful flowers and bags of snacks. Taiwanese often place snacks as offerings, sometimes those that were the favorites of the deceased.

A small group of family members waved pieces of clothing - a small blouse and what appeared to be a T-shirt - in a ritual meant to help the souls of the deceased find their way home.

President Lai Ching-te, who visited injured victims in the hospital on Monday night, opened a major policy speech by offering his "deepest condolences" to the families of the deceased. He said the government would work as quickly as possible to determine the cause of the accident and assess ways to prevent such accidents in the future. (AP)

Laos, Cambodia strengthen border peace efforts: Laos and Cambodia will continue to cooperate in maintaining peace along their shared border to build a boundary marked by peace, friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation. Officials from the two countries gathered in southern

Laos' Champasak province on Monday for the third meeting of the Laos-Cambodia Border Security Cooperation Committee, Lao People's Army News reported on Tuesday.

During the meeting, participants noted improvements in peace and order, enhanced border security, and progress in sustainable development, along with a significant decline in criminal activity along the border compared to previous years.

Over the past year, people from Laos and Cambodia have regularly crossed the border for travel and trade, with the most movements conducted following established laws and regulations. Local authorities have enhanced information sharing and collaborated to prevent illegal activities, including cross-border entry and exit, terrorism, transnational crime, human and drug trafficking, illegal hunting, environmental exploitation, deforestation, and trade in antiquities and weapons. (Xinhua)

About 2,000 attend 'Day of Remembrance': About 2,000 people attended Cambodia's annual Day of Remembrance Tuesday to mark half a century since Cambodia's communist Khmer Rouge launched a four-year reign of terror that caused the deaths of about 1.7 million people.

Some three dozen student actors from a Phnom Penh art school re-enacted brutalities under the Khmer Rouge, which held power from 1975-1979, when an estimated one-quarter of Cambodia's population was wiped out due to tortures, executions, starvation and misuse.

The official ceremony honoring the victims of what a UN-backed tribunal judged to be genocide was held at Choeung Ek, site of a Khmer Rouge "Killing Field" about 15 kilometers (10 miles) south of the capital Phnom Penh. Several dozen Buddhist monks were among those attending. (AP)

Philippine Prez Marcos open for reconciliation with Duterte family

MANILA, May 20, (Agencies): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr Monday expressed openness to reconcile with the family of former president Rodrigo Duterte. "I don't need enemies. I need friends," Marcos said in a podcast posted on social media, adding he wants stability and a peaceful environment, so that his administration can continue its job.

His remarks came one week after the midterm elections. Only six senatorial candidates backed by Marcos made it to the Senate, a performance that fell short of expectations. Marcos and Duterte's daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte, formed a coalition in the 2022 elections, achieving a landslide victory. However, in 2024, their partnership unraveled, as the vice president resigned from the Marcos cabinet after she stepped down as education secretary due to differences in opinion.

The Marcos-Duterte rift deepened in March this year when Rodrigo Duterte was arrested in Manila and transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands. Despite his detention, Rodrigo Duterte won the Davao City mayoral race in the recently concluded elections.

The midterm election outcome provided unexpectedly strong backing for Duterte and boosted his daughter



In this file photo, Rodrigo Duterte (left) takes his oath as president of the Philippines before Philippine Supreme Court Associate Justice Bienvenido Reyes during inauguration ceremony in Malacanang Palace, June 30, 2016 in Manila. Holding the bible is Duterte's daughter Veronica, while his other children look on. (AP)

ahead of her impeachment trial in the Senate in July.

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

Five of the 12 Senate race winners were endorsed by Sara Duterte, including the president's sister, Imee Marcos, and Camille Villar, another Marcos alliance candidate from a wealthy political family.

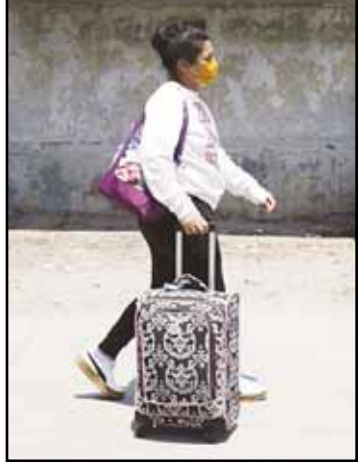
United States sends 68 migrants back to Honduras and Colombia

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras, May 20, (AP): The United States sent 68 immigrants from Honduras and Colombia back to their countries Monday on the first government-funded flight of what the Trump administration is calling voluntary deportations.

In the northern Honduran city of San Pedro Sula, 38 Hondurans, including 19 children, disembarked from the charter flight carrying \$1,000 debit cards from the US government and the offer to one day be allowed to apply for legal entry into the US.

US President Donald Trump has promised to increase deportations substantially. Experts believe the self-deportation offer will only appeal to a small portion of migrants already considering return, but unlikely to spur high demand. The offer has been paired with highly-publicized migrant detentions in the US and flying a couple hundred Venezuelan migrants to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador.

Kevin Antonio Posadas, from Te-



A Honduran migrant who returned voluntarily from the United States walks after arriving at Ramon Villeda Morales Airport in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on May 19. (AP)

gucigalpa, had lived in Houston for three years, but had already been considering a return to Honduras when the

Trump administration announced its offer.

"I wanted to see my family and my mom," said Posadas, who added that the process was easy.

"You just apply (through the CBP Home app) and in three days you've got it," he said. The flight left Houston early Monday. "It's good because you save the cost of the flight if you have the intention of leaving."

Posadas said he hadn't feared deportation and liked living in the US, but had been thinking for some time about going home. He said eventually he would consider taking up the US government's offer of allowing those who self-deport to apply to enter the United States legally.

In a statement about the flight Monday, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said, "If you are here illegally, use the CBP Home App to take control of your departure and receive financial support to return home. If you don't, you will be subjected to fines, arrest, deportation and will never be allowed to return."

Venezuela suspends flights to and from Colombia over bomb plot

CARACAS, Venezuela, May 20, (Agencies): Venezuela has suspended all flights to and from Colombia after authorities said they have uncovered a plot to smuggle explosives into the country via Colombian airports on Monday. Interior Minister **Diosdado Cabello** said the move is in response to an uncovered destabilization plan that included bombing foreign embassies, police stations and healthcare facilities in Venezuela. "We have decided to immediately suspend all air traffic between Venezuela and Colombia," Cabello said, adding that the move is a security measure to prevent further infiltration. The minister said that the plot aims to disrupt the national and regional legislative elections scheduled for May 25.

Authorities detained more than 30 people who were allegedly plotting activities to destabilize the country ahead of Sunday's election.

The arrests were announced just as an independent panel of experts backed by the Organization of American States released a report documenting serious human rights abuses in Venezuela as the government tightened its grip on dissent after the July 28 presidential election.

Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello on state television said the flight ban was "immediate" and would last beyond Sunday, when voters across the country are expected to elect governors and National Assembly members. But Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement said Venezuela's government had notified it that flights would resume the day after the election.

Cabello said the anti-government plans involved placing explosives at embassies and other facilities in Venezuela. He said authorities had detained 21 Venezuelans and 17 foreigners, some of whom hold Colombian, Mexican and Ukrainian citizenship.



Cabello



British mountain guide Kenton Cool, left who scaled Mount Everest Sunday for the 19th time breaking his own record for the most ascents of the world's highest mountain by a non-Sherpa guide is welcomed by a friend as he arrives at the airport in Kathmandu, Nepal on May 20. (AP)

British climber to scale Everest again next year

KATHMANDU, Nepal, May 20, (AP): A British climber who scaled Mount Everest for the 19th time, breaking his own record for the most ascents of the world's highest peak by a non-Sherpa guide, returned from the mountain on Tuesday and said he is already planning his next attempt.

Kenton Cool, 51, from southwest England, scaled the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit on Sunday before flying on a helicopter with his clients back to the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu.

"I am 51 now, and I have been coming here since 2004 to climb Everest," Cool said at Kathmandu's airport on Tuesday. "I have at least one more climb for next year - maybe 20 or 21 (total). After that I'll start climbing other mountains in Nepal."



This image taken from video by Taiwan's EBC shows investigators on the scene of a fatal car crash in New Taipei City on May 19. (AP)

Australia's conservative opp'n splits following election defeat

CANBERRA, May 20, (Xinhua): Australia's conservative Coalition has split after the National Party announced it would not re-enter a partnership with the Liberal Party following a historic defeat at the federal election. David Littleproud, leader of the Nationals, on Tuesday said that the party has made the decision not to enter into a new Coalition agreement for the 48th parliament after a breakdown in negotiations with new Liberal leader Sussan Ley.

It comes after the May 3 election for the 48th parliament, at which the governing center-left Labor Party was re-elected in a historic landslide. "The National Party will sit alone on a principle basis," Littleproud told reporters in Canberra. "On the basis of looking forward, not having to look back, and to try and actually regain important policy pieces that change the lives of the people we represent." It marks the first time since 1987 that the Coalition has split.

Since re-forming after the 1987 election, the Coalition governed Australia between 1996 and 2007 and again from 2013 to 2022, with the urban-focused Liberal Party serving as the senior partner and the rural-focused National Party as the junior. The terms of the agreement



Australian Liberal Party leader Peter Dutton makes a concession speech following the general election in Brisbane, Australia, on May 3. (AP)

have been renegotiated after each general election but have always been kept secret. Littleproud said on Tuesday that he and Ley, who was elected as Liberal leader by party members on May 13, could not reach an agreement on policy positions including nuclear power and divestiture powers for major super-market chains.

However, he said that he would work with Ley "every day" to re-

build the relationship with a goal of re-entering a coalition agreement before the next general election. The Australian Electoral Commission said that, as of Tuesday, Liberal and National candidates were leading the vote count in 42 of the 150 seats that will comprise the lower house of the 48th parliament, where the government is formed, down from the 58 seats the Coalition won at the 2022 election.



A view of the Peace Palace, which houses the International Court of Justice, or World Court, in The Hague, Netherlands, on Jan 26, 2024. (AP)

Equatorial Guinea prevails in dispute with Gabon over oil-rich islands

Judges at the top UN court sided with the West African country of Equatorial Guinea in a fight with neighboring Gabon over which treaty settled the ownership of three largely uninhabited oil-rich islands.

The decision effectively hands the islands to Equatorial Guinea.

The countries brought their dispute to The International Court of Justice in 2021, asking judges to determine what legal agreement settles the possession of the oil-rich islands.

The 15-judge panel found a 1900 treaty between Spain and France,

which divided up colonial holdings, to be the ultimate authority.

A later agreement, known as the 1974 Bata Convention, which gives the islands to Gabon, was dismissed as "not a treaty having the force of law," Judge Julia Sebutinde said. (AP)

Africa

Tanzania opp'n leader appears in court: Tanzania's most prominent opposition leader appeared in court Monday to face treason charges after calling for electoral reforms ahead of October's general election.

A conviction for treason carries a death penalty. But a high-spirited **Tundu Lissu** wore a T-shirt reading "no reforms, no election" - echoing the call that led to his April 9 arrest after addressing a public rally.

Lissu had embarked on a hunger strike to protest making a virtual court appearance instead of being allowed to show up in person.

The politician, chair of the opposition Chadema party, survived an assassination attempt in 2017 and has spent part of his time in exile since then over threats to his life.

Lissu during his court appearance encouraged supporters not to be afraid, and made victory gestures.

Investigators asked for two more weeks to complete investigations. The trial will proceed on June 2.

Supporters of Lissu have faced a crackdown. A Kenyan opposition politician, Martha Karua, who arrived



Lissu

in Tanzania ahead of the hearing, was deported. A former Kenyan chief justice, Willy Mutunga, and three Kenyan activists were detained.

Kenya's foreign ministry secretary Korir Sing'oei on Monday called for the release of Mutunga and his delegation. (AP)

Sudan army chief appoints first PM: Sudan's army chief on Monday appointed the country's first prime minister since it plunged into civil war two years ago and following months of steady advances by the military against its paramilitary rival.

Kamil al-Taib Idris will be tasked with forming the country's transitional government, a move long touted by military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, particularly after the army regained control of Khartoum in March and ousted the Rapid Support Forces from the capital.

The war in Sudan broke out in April 2023 when the military and the RSF turned against each other in a struggle for power. Their battles spread from Khartoum to around the country. At least 20,000 people have been killed, but the real toll is probably far higher. Nearly 13 million people have fled their homes, 4 million of them streaming into neighboring countries. Half the population of 50 million faces hunger.

The last prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, resigned in 2022 during a political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests. (AP)

Kuwait oil price up 49 cents to \$64.66 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 49 cents to USD 64.66 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 64.17 per barrel last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

The price of Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate globally went up each by 13 and 20 cents, reaching respectively USD 65.54 per barrel and USD 62.69 pb.

Business

Main market index slides 0.27%

Boursa Kuwait general index dips 0.11%

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday's session with its General Index slipping 8.74 points, or 0.11%, to 8,043.13. A total of 335.6 million shares were traded across 19,369 transactions, with a turnover of KD 83.8 million (approx. USD 257.2 million).

The Main Market Index declined 19.07 points (0.27%) to 6,997.99, with 172.7 million shares exchanged through 9,012 deals valued at KD

23.9 million (USD 73.3 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index edged down 6.6 points (0.08%) to close at 8,701.32, as 162.8 million shares changed hands in 10,357 transactions worth KD 59.8 million (USD 183.5 million).

In contrast, the Major 50 Index posted a slight gain of 0.10 points to finish at 7,296.59, with 117.8 million shares traded through 6,281 transactions totaling KD 18.3 million (USD 56.18 million).



Kuwait issues New Public Debt Law to support development projects.



New Public Debt Law aims to boost financing and liquidity

MoF highlights diversified funding & strong fiscal discipline

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi has emphasized the core objectives of the newly issued Public Debt Law -- Financing and Liquidity; highlighting its role in providing the State with diversified financial resources, both locally and internationally, to support development projects.

In a media briefing on Monday, Al-Munifi explained that the law is designed to strengthen domestic financial markets, stimulate the banking sector, and reflect the State's capacity to borrow responsibly. She stressed that access to liquidity will enhance the financial reserves of the country, helping it to meet obligations amid evolving global economic conditions.

Al-Munifi stated that the Public Debt Law will play a pivotal role in advancing numerous development initiatives, ultimately driving economic growth and supporting Kuwait's vision of becoming a regional financial hub. "Among the key projects to be financed under this law are strategic initiatives in infrastructure, housing and health cities, which form a cornerstone of the national development agenda," she revealed. She added that the law provides flexible and sustainable financial instruments, reinforcing the government's commitment to diversifying funding sources.

In this context, Al-Munifi revealed that a sukuk



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq
Faisal Al-Muzaini, Director of the Public Debt Department.

issuance law will soon follow, pending final procedures.

She affirmed that the law is sovereign in nature, with the Ministry of Finance authorized to mandate the Central Bank or Kuwait Investment Authority to act on its behalf in securing financing. The ministry, she added, remains committed to developing a robust legislative framework to enhance the country's fiscal environment.

Faisal Al-Muzaini, Director of the Public Debt Department at the ministry, confirmed that borrowing from both domestic and international sources is incorporated into the 2025/2026 budget, with estimated borrowing expected to range between KD3 and KD6 billion.

He pointed out major differences between the current and previous debt laws, indicating the new legislation raises the borrowing ceiling from KD10 billion to KD30 billion; and extends the borrowing term from 10 to 50 years. "It also introduces specific expenditure guidelines, a new element compared to the earlier framework," he stated.

He stressed the importance of leveraging local markets alongside global ones, explaining that the new debt law will positively influence Kuwait's credit rating by showcasing its fiscal discipline and ability to manage development financing effectively. He described the law as "one of the most significant financial reforms in Kuwait's history."

He also revealed that a flexible financing strategy has been developed to engage confidently with global markets, focusing on minimizing borrowing costs and diversifying the investor base across regions and institutions. He said the main goal is to develop a local debt market by establishing a reliable yield curve, which will serve as a benchmark for domestic investors.

He added Kuwait's debt-to-GDP ratio stands at just 2.9 percent, significantly lower than international benchmarks, where this ratio often exceeds 50 percent or 60 percent. He confirmed this low ratio positions Kuwait advantageously to enter capital markets after an eight-year hiatus.

Asked whether public debt could be used to repay existing obligations, he confirmed that the law does not prohibit such use and that it will be considered within the broader financing strategy.

Although no specific timeline has been set for the initial borrowing, he stated that preparations are underway and that the ministry is nearing the final stages before entering the markets.

Regarding borrowing models, he clarified that Kuwait will follow a strategy tailored to its unique fiscal position, leveraging its sovereign reserves and national standards rather than adopting any predefined international model.

NBK Silver Sponsors Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East Conference 2025

DUBAI, May 20: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was a Silver Sponsor and participated in a senior panel discussion at the Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East Conference 2025, held on May 20-21 at the Madinat Jumeirah Conference Centre in Dubai. The event brought together senior finance leaders from both regional and international financial institutions to examine the shifting landscape of the syndicated loan markets in the Middle East, with particular attention to pricing developments, sustainability considerations, and heightened competitive dynamics.

Mr. Zaid Al-Sager, Deputy CEO of the International Banking Group at NBK, joined an expert panel of global financial leaders to examine the critical factors shaping syndicated lending activity in 2025.

The panel began with a market pulse survey to gauge expectations for the rest of the year. Sentiment was largely cautious due to the current macro-economic headwinds and geopolitical uncertainty, both of which have continued to weigh in on deal volumes. The conversation, however, quickly transitioned toward addressing practical solutions, including strategic positioning and adaptability to the current environment.

Panelists observed that over the past year, the syndicated loan markets have contended with higher liquidity among financial institutions that has resulted in margin compression, which has led regional lenders with a footprint in Europe and the US to search for higher yields in those markets that supports bolstering their P&Ls. Meanwhile, borrowers in the region, while facing reducing funding costs over the last few quarters, also maintain higher liquidity as a result of de-leveraging post-COVID. As such, much of the syndicated borrowing during the last 12 months has been related to GRE-related entities requiring support on large-scale infrastructure projects in the region.



NBK's Deputy CEO joins expert panel on syndicated loan market trends.

Another key point of discussion was the growing complexity of competition between regional and international lenders. Despite the continued expansion of global liquidity, particularly from Asia, regional financial institutions retain a competitive advantage in the region given their deep regulatory insight and strong relationships with clients in the region.

The panel also explored the integration of ESG principles into syndicated loan structures. Although frameworks remain in development, there is a growing convergence between lenders and borrowers around sustainability-linked targets. These considerations are progressively influencing underwriting standards, as banks align their portfolios with broader responsible finance goals.

Currency diversification also emerged as a central topic. Amid ongoing US dollar volatility, borrowers are increasingly exploring alternative funding currencies to better manage exposure and optimize pricing. The conversation further examined the growing role of Islamic finance in loan syndications, supported by structural innovation that is broadening market participation.

Looking forward, participants identified

to 0.69 mb/d by the agency. OPEC forecasts for oil demand for 2025 was lowered marginally by 0.15 mb/d from its previous forecast to a growth of 1.28 mb/d reflecting actual data for Q1-2025 as well as expected impact of the tariffs on demand for the rest of the year. In terms of budget balance, UAE is budgeted to breakeven, while the rest of the GCC countries are expected to report deficits this year. It is expected that the actual deficit in 2025 may be significantly lower than the budgeted deficit due to the conservative estimate of budgeted oil prices.

Kuwait

Kuwait's Ministry of Finance unveiled the draft budget for 2025/2026 with a 11.9% increase in forecasted deficits at KWD 6.3 Bn (USD 20.60 Bn) as compared to an estimated deficit of KWD 5.6 Bn (USD 18.22 Bn) for the fiscal year 2024/2025. The budget snapshot came in line with the bulk of the GCC economies that are also expected to report deficit.

According to the budget document, revenue is expected to reach KWD 18.2 Bn (USD 59.4 Bn) during the fiscal year 2025/2026 as compared to KWD 18.9 Bn estimated for the fiscal year 2024/2025, down by 3.6%. The revenues are calculated with a budgeted crude oil price of USD 68/b, and the volume of production is 2.500 million / barrel per day. This could mean that the actual revenues could be slightly higher as oil price is expected to average at a slightly higher level while oil production is expected to be around the budgeted level. Brent crude averaged at USD 65.3/b since the start of the current fiscal year (2025/2026), while Kuwait crude oil and OPEC crude basket averaged at USD 67.5/b and USD 66.9/b, respectively, according to EIA and Bloomberg.

In terms of revenues, crude oil will continue to account for the bulk of the budgeted revenues in the fiscal year 2025/2026. However, the share of oil revenues to total revenues is expected to decline from 85.8% estimated for fiscal year 2024/2025 to 84.0% budgeted for the fiscal year 2025/2026, according to data from Kuwait's Ministry of Finance. This would imply non-oil revenue share of 16.0% for the fiscal year 2025/2026 as compared to 14.2% estimated for the previous fiscal year. The estimates for 2025/26 clearly shows the impact of oil prices on states finances. Total revenues during 2025/2026 are expected to decline by 3.6% to KWD 18.2 Bn solely led by 5.7% expected decline in oil revenues, whereas non-oil revenues are estimated to increase by 9.0% to KWD 2.9 Bn from KWD 2.7 Bn during the previous fiscal year. Oil revenues are expected to come in at KWD 15.3 Bn vs. KWD 16.2 Bn in 2024/25 mainly due to the decline in oil prices during the year coupled with curbs on production as part of the OPEC+ agreement. Crude oil production in Kuwait stood at 2.41 mb/d during April-2025. Based on the expected revenues and expenditure, the state would require a breakeven oil price of USD 90.5/b to balance the budget, according to Ministry of Finance. Based on the recent IMF data, the fiscal break even price of oil is expected to be USD 80.2/b for 2025 and USD 76.7/b for 2026.

'AI literacy lags behind adoption'

Public split on trust in AI, calls for stronger regulation: KPMG study

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: In a bid to better understand the general sentiment towards artificial intelligence (AI), KPMG, in collaboration with Melbourne Business School, conducted a comprehensive public study, Trust, attitudes and use of Artificial Intelligence: A global study 2025. The research captures the views of ~48,000 people from 47 countries and explores the evolving landscape of AI and its impact on society, work, education and economies.

With businesses looking to adopt newer and more efficient ways to up their productivity and growth, AI technologies are advancing fast; however, AI literacy and responsible governance are unable to keep the same pace. As a result, there is a clear divide in terms of AI's obvious benefits and perceived risks.

The report found that fewer than 40% have received AI training or education and 54% are exercising cautious optimism and concern when it comes to trusting AI.

Majid Makki, Partner and Head of IT Advisory, KPMG Kuwait, addressed the slowness in AI adoption and said:

"The transformative effects of AI are far-reaching. Tapping into that will require sustained public trust, supported by collective and well-orchestrated efforts from businesses, educators, regulators and the people themselves. Once appropriate regulations are in place, together with strong organizational practices, they will pave the path to mitigate the gap between trust and AI literacy to enable ethical deployment of AI."

The report emphasized the short-



Majid Makki, Partner and Head of IT Advisory, KPMG Kuwait

comings in the present regulatory landscape with respect to AI as nearly 87% of the respondents called for stronger laws and more rigorous fact-checking to combat AI-generated misinformation. Additionally, it highlighted there already exists clear public support for stronger AI regulation, with both people and organizations hoping for a well-coordinated, multi-faceted approach on national and international levels, coupled with active backing from key industry players.

Although AI-driven performance boosts are undeniable, the KPMG research further underlined that 47% of the participants have used AI at work in a complacent or inadequate way, with another 61% avoiding revealing the instances where they used AI tools at work.

One of the welcome findings from the study was people in emerging

economies reported higher adoption of AI in terms of work as well as personal use, are more trusting and accepting of AI, and feel more optimistic and excited about its use as compared to advanced economies. This was supported by the fact that three in five people trust AI systems in emerging countries, whereas in advanced countries only two in five trust them.

Talking about the state of AI use in Kuwait and the potential benefits it can unlock, Majid added:

"To facilitate AI adoption at scale, we must ensure AI is rooted deep in trust, supported by a strong ethical framework. That's why, larger organizations and policymakers will have a distinct part to play in ensuring that, especially considering the people need to trust an AI system before they can realize its full potential."

Majid further explained that, for this very reason, KPMG developed its Trusted AI approach to make trust tangible and measurable for clients.

The study cautions that even though the age of working with AI is here, there needs to be adequate guidance and governance around the use of AI by students and in educational institutions. This reflected 76% of the students who relied on AI without evaluating its output, and 81% who used it to perform tasks rather than learning how to do them independently.

Given extensive use of AI is imminent, the publication called for robust governance and training to support responsible AI use in educational organizations just as places of work.

For more details, visit kpmg.com/kw

Al-Marzouq: Banks are strategic partners in leading the digital transformation of public-private partnership projects

Al-Gharabally highlights transparency and collaboration as keys to success at third Kuwait Public-Private Partnership conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Gulf Bank concluded its platinum sponsorship and active participation in the third Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Conference, held at the Jumeirah Hotel, under the patronage of Her Excellency Eng. Noora Al-Fassam, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, and Chair of the Higher Committee for PPP Projects.

Themed “Partnership Projects: A Promising Start to a New Era,” the event gathered key stakeholders to discuss the shifting dynamics and growing importance of Public-Private Partnerships in driving Kuwait’s development agenda.

On the second day, speaking during a panel discussion titled “Shaping the Future of Partnership Projects in Kuwait to Ensure Success” Mr. Faisal Al-Gharabally, General Manager of

International Banking at Gulf Bank, emphasized the importance of public sector confidence in proposed projects as a key enabler for banking sector engagement. He emphasized that encouraging all parties to participate in open and transparent discussions about concerns and solutions fosters trust and lays a solid foundation for successful financing.

Mr. Al-Gharabally also pointed to other critical factors influencing banks’ willingness to finance Public-Private Partnerships, including project payment structures, legal and contractual frameworks, and risk allocation – emphasizing that the party managing the risk must also bear it. Transparency, he noted, remains the cornerstone of successful partnerships, along with granting banks the right to intervene if significant developments arise.

Adding to the conversation, Ms.



Faisal Al-Gharabally speaking during one of the conference sessions.

Shamayel Al-Marzouq, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Banking at Gulf Bank, delivered a presentation

titled “Beyond Financing: How Banks Can Lead the Digital Future of Public-Private Partnership Projects.” She advocated for the banking sector to shift its role from conventional financing to becoming a catalyst for innovation, digital advancement, and sustainable growth, fully aligned with the vision and goals of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Ms. Al-Marzouq stressed that the next phase of infrastructure development calls for banks to evolve from “silent funders” into active digital partners in national infrastructure projects. She highlighted the necessity of integrating banks within the digital ecosystem of Public-Private Partnerships to enable smooth digital connectivity, drive innovation, and boost operational efficiency.

She also outlined key strategic actions banks can take in collaboration with government entities, including

aligning financing approaches with national priorities – particularly for major projects like Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and the Al-Dabdaba Renewable Energy Project. Other initiatives include establishing centralized digital platforms for bidding and project management, adopting real-time monitoring and reporting solutions, applying data analytics to guide decision-making, and leveraging technology to enhance risk management and ensure greater transparency.

Ms. Al-Marzouq also highlighted the significance of financing sustainable projects, citing examples like the Al-Dabdaba Power and Shagaya Renewable Energy project. She highlighted the vital role technology plays in advancing inclusivity and good governance by providing accessible digital infrastructure.

She concluded by highlighting the

vast opportunities across sectors such as transportation, healthcare, education, and housing. Ms. Al-Marzouq called for the mandatory use of unified digital platforms, increased investment in digital capacity building, training on partnership models, and collaboration with technology firms and government bodies to establish a comprehensive digital ecosystem for Public-Private Partnerships.

“There is a unique opportunity today for Kuwaiti banks to take a leading role in shaping the future of digital transformation and sustainable development,” she said. “By doing so, we can reinforce Kuwait’s position as a smart, modern financial and commercial hub.”

Gulf Bank continues to dedicate itself to driving Kuwait’s national development and shaping the future of its financial sector through innovation, teamwork, and strong leadership

Ex-VP praises House on tax bill

Pence speaks in N. Carolina against broad Trump tariffs

RALEIGH, N.C., May 20, (AP): Former Vice President Mike Pence spoke Monday in North Carolina against the Trump administration’s zealous efforts to impose tariffs on trading partners worldwide - another effort that shows his willingness to split at times with his former boss.

The education arm of Pence’s political advocacy group kicked off in Raleigh a series of events nationwide that was also billed as building support to extend tax reductions enacted by Trump and Republicans in 2017 but set to expire at year’s end.

In a brief interview with The Associated Press, Pence praised congressional Republicans for pushing ahead President Donald Trump’s bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, saying “there should be no higher domestic priority” than making permanent income tax cuts passed in Trump’s first term. But much of the meeting focused on Pence and key conservative business leaders in North Carolina opposing Trump’s tariff program.

Monday’s event marked another step by Pence to try to distinguish himself among the small group of Republicans in Washington willing to publicly criticize policies sought by the second Trump administration.

Pence and others said protectionism would ultimately harm the U.S. economy in the form of higher prices and employment losses.

“It is ultimately for the most part American consumers that will pay the price of higher tariffs,” Pence said at the event assembled by Pence’s Advancing American Freedom Foundation and the Raleigh-based John Locke Foundation.

The massive budget bill, which also contains additional tax breaks that Trump campaigned for in the 2024 election - as well as spending reductions and beefed-up border security - initially failed to pass the House Budget Committee late last week.

A handful of conservatives who vot-

ed against the bill want further cuts to Medicaid and green energy tax breaks. House Speaker Mike Johnson wants to send the bill to the Senate by Memorial Day. The bill cleared the committee in a rare Sunday night meeting, but Johnson told reporters afterward that negotiations were ongoing.

“I’m encouraged,” Pence told the AP after the event. “I’m grateful that conservatives in the House have been pressing for more common sense reforms in Medicaid.”

Three days ago, Moody’s Ratings mentioned the 2017 tax cuts as it stripped the U.S. government of its top credit rating, citing the inability of policymakers to rein in debt.

Conservatives see the tax cuts as providing fuel for the economy while putting more money in taxpayers’ pockets. Democrats say the wealthiest Americans benefit the most from them.

Pence told the AP the larger issue is the unwillingness of politicians to consider “commonsense, compassionate” entitlement reforms for Medicare and Social Security that would address the nation’s nearly \$37 trillion of debt and “set us back on the path of fiscal integrity.”

Pence said he’s proud of Trump’s first-term efforts to use the tariff threat to reach new free-trade agreements with trading partners. And Pence agreed that China is an exception for retaliatory tariffs, citing intellectual property theft and dumping products like steel onto world markets. But Trump’s second-term effort, seeming to make tariffs large and permanent, are very different and misguided, he said.

Trump said that countries “have to pay for the right to sell here,” Pence said in recalling first-term conversations. “Any time I’d remind him that actually it’s American importers that pay the tariff, he would look a little annoyed at me from time to time and say, ‘I know how it works.’ And then he’d say, ‘but they have to pay.’”

WASHINGTON, May 20, (AP): China’s economy showed signs of slowing in April as President Donald Trump’s trade war took a toll, with retail sales, property and investment coming in weaker than economists had forecast.

Industrial production slowed as Trump’s painfully high tariffs of up to 145%, and 125% retaliatory duties imposed by Beijing, took effect and shipments were curtailed.

National Statistics Bureau spokesperson Fu Linghui said the general trend was positive though he pointed to “external shocks” that had gained intensity.

“It should also be noted that there are still many outside unstable and uncertain factors, and the foundation for the continued recovery and improvement of the national economy needs to be further consolidated,” Fu said.

Here are a few key indicators reported Monday.

Chinese consumers have been holding back after the shocks of a prolonged downturn in the housing market that is the source of much household wealth. Retail sales rose 5.1% from a year earlier in April, below economists’ expectations for a 6% increase.

Fu said Beijing would continue to focus on supporting job creation and spurring more domestic demand.

He also said China must stop prices from falling. The consumer price index fell 0.1% in April. Such deflation is both a symptom of weak demand and also a factor behind shoppers’ reluctance to spend, in hopes of getting better deals later.

“The current overall price level is low, which puts pressure on production and companies’ operations and affects jobs and incomes, so it’s important to promote a reasonable recovery of prices,” Fu said.



Tourists bargain price with a vendor at a store selling luggage and bags inside a mall, in Beijing, Thursday, May 15, 2025. (AP)

On the U.S. side, consumer sentiment has fallen slightly in May for the fifth straight month, with Americans increasingly worried that the trade war will worsen inflation.

Industrial production rose 6.1% from a year earlier, slowing from 7.7% in March as tariffs and other trade barriers bit into exports.

The truce in Trump’s trade war with China has helped, Fu said, calling it “conducive to the growth of bilateral trade and the recovery of the world.”

With tariffs paused for 90 days to allow time for talks, shipments have revived as businesses rush to meet back-to-school and other seasonal deadlines. But even before Trump took office

for the second time in January, China was under pressure from its trading partners for relying too heavily on exports to absorb its excess industrial production.

And if output continues to outpace demand from businesses and consumers, prices will keep falling.

“Export-driven gains in factory output could continue given China’s manufacturing competitiveness and frontloaded orders before the end of the 90-day truce, but this is coming at a persistent deflationary cost,” Louise Loo of Oxford Economics said in a report.

The government reported that fixed asset investment in such things as factories and equipment rose 4% in April

in the first four months of the year.

However, property investments fell 10.3% year-on-year in January to April. New home prices also edged lower.

While manufacturing held up better than expected, the pressures from trade are complicating Beijing’s effort to keep turn the housing market around and keep the economic recovery on track.

“Establishing a trough on a national level is taking some time, as the recovery of the property market remains uneven and gradual. It’s possible that tariff-related pessimism and uncertainty kept more buyers on the sidelines in April,” Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Economics said in a report.

Company world’s biggest EV battery maker

Shares in China’s CATL surge in Hong Kong after \$4.6 bln IPO

HONG KONG, May 20, (AP): Shares in CATL, the world’s largest maker of batteries for electric vehicles, jumped more than 16% Tuesday in its Hong Kong trading debut after it raised about \$4.6 billion in the world’s largest initial public offering this year.

The solid reception for the Chinese company, Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., in Hong Kong suggests there is still an appetite among international investors for leading Chinese manufacturers despite trade tensions between Beijing and Washington.

It sold more than 135 million shares at their maximum offer price, 263 Hong Kong dollars (\$33.6) each. Its shares rose after they started trading at 296 Hong Kong dollars (\$37.80), 12.5% higher than their offer price. They closed 16.4% higher.

CATL also has shares listed in Shenzhen, a business hub neighboring Hong Kong. They initially fell but then edged 1.2% higher.

A supplier to automakers like Tesla, Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Ford, Toyota and Honda, CATL held a nearly 38% global market share for EV batteries in 2024, its listing documents showed.



The stock prices of Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. (CATL) is displayed at the listing ceremony in Hong Kong, Tuesday, May 20, 2025. (AP)

The company has faced pressure from the U.S. In January, the U.S. Defense Department added it to a list of companies it says have ties to China’s military, an accusation that CATL denied. It called the inclusion a “mistake.”

In April, John Moolenaar, chairper-

son of the U.S. House Select Committee on China, wrote to the CEOs of JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Bank of America to demand that the two American banks withdraw from their work on CATL’s IPO. But the two banks stayed on.

China accuses US of undermining export control over chip products

BEIJING, May 20, (KUNA): China’s Ministry of Commerce accused, Tuesday, the United States of misusing export restrictions on Chinese semiconductor products, as this action deeply damages Chinese firms and global supply chains.

“The US is abusing export controls by tightening restrictions on Chinese chips based on groundless accusa-

tions,” the ministry said, calling this action a threat to the stability of global semiconductor industry, as well as hinder technological innovation.

The remarks came in response to an announcement by the US Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) that said the use of Huawei’s Ascend AI chips anywhere in the world violates US export regulations.

The ministry said that this move is blatant violation of the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese firms, urging US to reverse its action and cooperate with China.

The ministry warned that if the US continues to “harm China’s interests, China will take resolute measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests.”

Australian cbank cuts benchmark interest rate to 3.85%

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 20, (AP): Australia’s central bank on Tuesday reduced its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage for a second time this year, to 3.85% after inflation fell within a target range.

The Reserve Bank of Australia reduced its cash rate from 4.1%. The reduction from 4.35% at its February board meeting was Australia’s first rate cut since October 2020.

The rate cut was anticipated, although expectations had declined slightly after the United States and China agreed last week to cut back recent tariff hikes for 90 days, reviving stalled trade between the world two biggest economies.

Bank Governor Michele Bullock said inflation had fallen to her board’s target band as “internal developments are expected to weigh on the economy.”

World trade policy was changing rapidly, subjecting central forecasts to “considerable uncertainty,” she said.

“Uncertainty in the world economy has increased over the past three months and volatility in financial markets rose sharply for a time. While recent announcements on tariffs have resulted in a rebound in financial market prices, there is still considerable uncertainty about the final scope of the tariffs and policy responses in other countries,” Bullock said in a statement.

“Geopolitical uncertainties also remain pronounced. These developments are expected to have an adverse effect on global economic activity, particularly if households and firms delay expenditure pending greater clarity on the outlook,” she added.

The bank adjusts interest rates to steer inflation toward a target band of between 2% and 3%.

During the March quarter, annual inflation was 2.4%. The trimmed mean -- a gauge of underlying inflation which is the bank’s preferred measure -- was 2.9%.

Inflation was also steady at 2.4% in the previous three months. But the underlying figure, which strips out the smallest and largest values, was 3.2% in the last quarter of 2024.

Inflation has gradually declined after it peaked at 7.8% in the last quarter of 2022.

Unemployment inched up to 4.1% in January-March from 4.0% in the December quarter but remains relatively low. Economists fear a shortage of workers could fuel further inflation.

Elon Musk, who’s suing Microsoft, is also software giant’s special guest in new Grok AI partnership

NEW YORK, May 20: Elon Musk is in a legal fight with Microsoft but made a friendly virtual appearance at the software giant’s annual technology showcase to reveal that his Grok artificial intelligence chatbot will now be hosted on Microsoft’s data centers.

“It’s fantastic to have you at our developer conference,” Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said to Musk in a pre-recorded video conversation broadcast Monday at Microsoft’s Build conference in Seattle.

Musk last year sued Microsoft and its close business partner OpenAI in a dispute over Musk’s foundational contribu-

tions to OpenAI, which Musk helped start. Musk now runs his own AI company, xAI, maker of Grok, a competitor to OpenAI’s ChatGPT.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman also spoke with Nadella via live video call earlier at Monday’s conference.

Musk’s deal means that the latest versions of xAI’s Grok models will be hosted on Microsoft’s Azure cloud computing platform, alongside competing models from OpenAI and other companies, including Facebook parent Meta Platforms, Europe-based AI startups Mistral and Black Forest Labs and Chinese company DeepSeek.

The Grok partnership comes just days after xAI had to fix the chatbot to stop it from repeatedly bringing up South African racial politics and the subject of “white genocide” in public interactions with users of Musk’s social media platform X. The company blamed an employee’s “unauthorized modification” for the unsolicited commentary, which mirrored South Africa-born Musk’s own focus on the topic.

Musk didn’t address last week’s controversy in his chat with Nadella but described honesty as the “best policy” for AI safety.

“We have and will make mistakes, but we aspire to correct them very quickly,” Musk said.

Monday’s Build conference also became the latest Microsoft event to be interrupted by a protest over the company’s work with the Israeli government. Microsoft has previously fired employees who protested company events, including its 50th anniversary party in April.

“Satya, how about you show how Microsoft is killing Palestinians?” a protesting employee shouted in the first minutes of Nadella’s introductory talk Monday. “How about you show how Israeli war crimes are powered by Azure?”



Felicitation speech by Chief Guest Mr. Gangadhar Srishath, Principal of ICSK Khaitan, on stage: Prasanth Warriar (PPF President), Shaji Madathil (PPF Gen.Secretary), Adv. Smitha (Vice President), Sreejith S. (Treasurer), Jithin Prakash (General Convenor, Elevate 2025), Rahul J. Nair (Speaker), Mujeeb Patla (Speaker).



Release of Souvenir.

140 students compete in project presentation at Elevate 2025

PPF Kuwait hosts Elevate 2025 to inspire future leaders

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait successfully hosted Elevate 2025, a vibrant event aimed at inspiring and empowering young minds to become future leaders and professionals. Held at Aspire Bilingual School, Abbasiya, the event featured engaging competitions and seminars that brought together students from various Indian schools across Kuwait.

One of the main highlights was the Project Presentation Competition, which saw participation from 55 teams and 140 students representing different schools. In the Junior Category, the first prize was secured by Reeya Jafar from Indian Community School, Amman Branch, while the second prize went to the team from FAIPS Ahmadi (DPS), consisting of Moukthika Manikandan and Sadhana Senthilanthan. The third prize was awarded to the team from Indian Public School, Salmiya – Fathima Jumana Mohammed Shifan, Emma Richel Tuwan, and Arush Sunil.

In the Senior Category, the first prize was claimed by the team from IES Jaleeb Al-Shuwaikh (Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan), comprising Niranjan Kaliserry Hari and Govind Rajith. The second prize was

awarded to Ayush Deb, Arjunan Asokan, and Yuvinesh Balamuragan from Indian English Academy (Don Bosco). The third prize went to FAIPS Ahmadi (DPS) students – Adwita Chisel Saldanha, Priyanka Pradeep, and Andrea Ann Thomas.

The Rubik's Cube Competition, which saw the participation of 60 contestants, was another crowd-puller, with Akashmik Mund from FAIPS Ahmadi (DPS) clinching the first prize. Shreyas Mahesh Hosahalli from Indian Community School, Amman Branch, secured the second prize, and Rohit Sreejith Gopinath from the same school took home the third prize. Rohit also received a special award for the best solving time of 11.126 seconds in the semi-finals.

The Career Guidance Seminar by Mr. Rahul J. Nair, Director and Co-founder of Lifology, attracted over 500 attendees and was followed by an impactful seminar titled "Exemplify" by Mr. Mujeeb Patla, offering practical tips for exam success.

PPF President, Mr. Prasanth Warriar, presided over the event, emphasizing the importance of nurturing young talent in the community. The

event also witnessed the release of a souvenir, presented to the speaker Mr. Rahul J. Nair by Souvenir Committee Convener Sherly Sasirajan.

Loka Kerala Sabha member Mr. Naganathan presented mementos to the judges, while the closing ceremony and prize distribution were graced by Chief Guest Mr. Gangadhar Srishath, Principal of ICSK Khaitan, whose speech left a lasting impact on the audience. He, along with PPF office bearers and committee members, distributed prizes to the winners.

PPF General Secretary Shaji Madathil delivered the welcome speech, while the vote of thanks was delivered by Jithin Prakash, General Convenor of the Program and PPF Joint Secretary. PPF Treasurer Sreejith S., Vice President Adv. Smitha, and other key committee members were present at the event. Lincy Bipin, who served as the master of ceremonies, added a seamless flow to the event, engaging the audience throughout the program. The PPF Central Committee, Elevate Organizing Committee, and a dedicated team of volunteers were acknowledged for their exceptional efforts in making the event a grand success.

‘First ACHSI-Accredited Polyclinic’

City Clinic Mirgab celebrates reopening with special offers

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Kuwait's First Polyclinic is back in service—ready to care for you. Proud to be the first ACHSI-accredited polyclinic in Kuwait, with International Patient Safety Standards (Australian Council on Healthcare Standards International).

We are thrilled to announce the grand reopening of City Clinic Mirgab, now fully equipped with pioneer and highly experienced doctors with over 19 years of clinical expertise in Kuwait.

Now operating from a modern, spacious facility, carefully designed for your comfort and well-being. Enjoy Special Promotional Activities across all services during our reopening celebration!

At City Clinic, your health is our top priority. We welcome you to ex-



Dr. Noushad K.P., Managing Director

perience the warmth, compassion, and medical excellence that truly set us apart. City Clinic Mirgab – Committed to Your Well-being.

YMCA conducts Interchurch Bible Quiz

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: YMCA Kuwait conducted the Ninth Interchurch Bible Quiz competition at Abbasiya. The program was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Geevarghese John. Mathews Mammen (President) presided the function. Saji Jacob (Patron), Dr. Naveen Thomas (Vice President), Ajesh Thomas (Treasurer), Mathew Koshy (Trustee – Accounts), Sunny Andrews (Convener) delivered the felicitations on the occasion.

The biblical quiz was based on the books of Genesis & the Gospel of Mathew. Ms. Susan George the Quiz Master conducted the Quiz session with the technical support of Joji B, John, Sam John & Bincy John. The Jury members was Rev. Fr. Jacob Varghese & Pastor Jose Philip.

After a tough competition, Church of God won the first prize, Mariam Ever Rolling Trophy, Kuwait City MarThoma Parish, bagged the second prize, Sunny Andrews & Family Ever Rolling Trophy & St.Thomas Orthodox Church, Ahamadi, secured the third prize, Mathew Eapen Ever Rolling Trophy.



Group photo during the competition.

The winners were presented with medals and certificates. Rev. Fr. Geevarghese John., Rev. Fr. Jeffin Varghese (St. Stephens Indian Orthodox Church), Rev. Jacob Varghese (St. Peters MarThoma Church), Pastor Jose Philip distrib-

uted trophies and mementos to the winning teams. Manoj Parimanam (General Secretary) welcomed all the teams and the guests. A.I.Kurien (Advisory Board Chairman) proposed the vote of thanks.

IWG President highlights diversity of Southeast Asian cultures

IWG and ASEAN Committee host colorful cultural evening in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The International Women's Group (IWG) in cooperation with the ASEAN Committee in Kuwait (ACK), under the chairmanship of Vietnam, successfully hosted a vibrant cultural and tourism evening on May 18, 2025, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event brought together members of the IWG and many other distinguished guests from the diplomatic corps and private sector in Kuwait.

In her opening remarks, Madame Polina Dlamini, President of the IWG and wife of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Eswatini, warmly welcomed a multitude of guests and emphasized the cultural diversity and growing presence of ASEAN in Kuwait. "The Southeast Asian nations are special for their incredible diversity, each with its unique language, unique culture, unique traditions with different ethnic backgrounds and religions," she noted.

Representing the current ASEAN Chair, H.E. Dr. Duc Thang Nguyen, Ambassador of Viet Nam to Kuwait, highlighted Southeast Asia's strong post-pandemic recovery in the tourism sector: "In 2024, the region welcomed almost 122 million international visitors. Thailand remained the top destination with 35.5 million visitors. Malaysia followed with 25.0 million. And Vietnam continued its growth trajectory, welcoming more than 18 million international tourists". He also stressed that Southeast Asia's tourist attraction has come from its cultural diversity, wide range of traveling experiences, the people's hospitality, amazing delicious cuisines, safe and clean environment with breathtaking natural landscapes, a large number of world recognized heritages, so many beautiful beaches and bustling cities.

The evening featured cultural performances by the Indonesian, Myanmar, Fili-

pino, and Vietnamese communities, showcasing the unique artistic traditions of the region. Guests also enjoyed different video clips demonstrating the diverse cultures of ASEAN member states, plenty of natural beauty spots and rich culinary arts before indulging in a curated buffet of signature dishes from across the region.

Adding a touch of excitement to the night, the event concluded with a lucky draw, offering valuable prizes contributed by ASEAN embassies in Kuwait.

The IWG Executive board was delighted to present each ASEAN member state with a commemorative plaque in appreciation of their outstanding efforts in organizing an exceptional and informative event. This cultural and tourism evening served as not only a celebration of ASEAN to promote the unity and obvious image of the ASEAN community in Kuwait, but also a meaningful platform to strengthen cultural exchange and friendship with the Kuwaiti people.



Photos during the event.

'Highest 2 Lowest' premieres with star power

Washington receives surprise honorary Palme d'Or

CANNES, France, May 20, (AP): Denzel Washington sandwiched a whirlwind trip to the Cannes Film Festival, in between Broadway performances, for the premiere of Spike Lee's "Highest 2 Lowest" on Monday - and was rewarded with a surprise: an honorary Palme d'Or.

Cannes had flipped around some of its scheduling to accommodate Washington's speedy France trip, which came on his lone off-day while performing "Othello" in New York. Cannes Film Festival chief Thierry Frémaux surprised Washington with the award before the Monday night premiere.

"This is my brother, right here," said the film's director, Spike Lee, who passed the award to Washington.

"This is a total surprise for me," said Washington.

The festival usually gives out one or two honorary Palmes each edition - last year, the awardees were Studio Ghibli and George Lucas. Last week, Robert De Niro received one on the festival's opening night. De Niro's award was announced in advance, but surprise prizes aren't unheard of: In 2022, Tom Cruise was presented with a surprise honorary Palme d'Or just before the screening of "Top Gun: Maverick."

The premiere also had another surprise: Rihanna attended and walked the carpet afterward with partner A\$AP Rocky. Earlier this month, she revealed at the Met Gala that she was pregnant with their third

child.

While the festival's photo calls usually happen the day after a film's premiere, Cannes hosted one for "Highest 2 Lowest" earlier Monday so Washington could attend. The actor, playfully posing with Lee and co-star A\$AP Rocky, showed no signs of jet lag and left once the screening began.

"He told me to tell you: Thank you for the love," Lee told the crowd after the screening. "He's on Broadway doing 'Othello,' so it really took a lot for him to fly here. Let's give it up for Denzel Washington, please."

Lee also came to Cannes with obligations back in New York on his mind. He arrived at the film's premiere decked out in Knicks colors and wearing a blue and

orange striped suit. Lee ended his brief speech in the Palais by hollering: "New York Knicks!"

That Washington would be able to make the trip had been a sticking point for Cannes. When the festival first announced its lineup last month, "Highest 2 Lowest" wasn't included. Within hours, however, Lee himself announced the film was heading to Cannes. Representatives for the festival said they had been waiting for confirmation that Washington would attend to walk the red carpet.

"Highest 2 Lowest," a remake of Akira Kurosawa's 1963 film "High and Low," will be released in theaters by A24 on Aug. 22 before streaming on Apple TV+ on Sept. 5.



Actor Denzel Washington reacts after receiving the Honorary Palme d'Or (Golden Palm) ahead of the screening of the film 'Highest 2 Lowest' at the 78th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, Monday, May 19. (AP)

Festival standout

Nigeria 'makes' Cannes history

CANNES, France, May 20, (AP): Akinola Davies Jr. and his brother Wale were both toddlers when their father died. Many years later, they began thinking about an idea for movie: What if they had gotten to spend a day with him?

In "My Father's Shadow," which is playing in the Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section, the Davies brothers pay tribute to the father they hardly knew in a shattering father-son tale and one of the clear standouts of the festival.

The film, which premiered Sunday, was the culmination of more than a decade's worth of wondering. Wale first sent Akinola a script - the first Wale had written and the first Akinola had read - in 2012.

"With zero context, he sent it to me and I just had this real emotional reaction," Akinola Davies said in an interview. "I actually cried when I read it because I had never conceived of the idea of spending a day with my father and what we would say to him and what he would be like."

"My Father's Shadow," set over a single day in Lagos in 1993, is making history in Cannes. It's the first Nigerian film in Cannes' official selection, a milestone that Nigeria is celebrating. The country has its own large film industry, nicknamed Nollywood. But thanks to "My Father's Shadow," Nigeria set up its own national pavilion in Cannes' international village this year.

"It means a lot to people back in Nigeria. It means we can exist on these platforms and our stories can exist in these spaces," said Davies. "It's a testament to talent that's around in Nigeria. It's a testament to the stories that are there. It's a testament to the industry that's flourishing."

Connections

"My Father's Shadow," which Mubi acquired for North American distribution ahead of the festival, has connections to the United Kingdom, too, which is where Davies is based after growing up in Nigeria.

"The Nigerian press asks me a lot if the film is Nollywood or not Nollywood. I would say it is because all the technicians work in Nollywood," said Davies. "You can't borrow people from that whole industry and say it's not part of it."

"My Father's Shadow," shot in Lagos, also gets a tremendous amount of its texture and atmosphere from Nigeria. "Point a camera at anything in Lagos, and it's so cinematic," Davies says.

"I have this real sense of romance for Nigeria," he adds. "Everyone's like, 'It's super chaotic,' but for me it's actually very still. Just driving around in the car feels really cinematic to me. I just take pictures of people all the time."

"Gangs of London" actor Sope Dirisu plays the father, Folarin. At the family's home outside Lagos, the boys (Chibuike Marvellous Egbo and Godwin Egbo) return home to unexpectedly find him there. They hardly ever see him - he works in Lagos - but Folarin takes them along on a trip in the city that will be revelatory for the boys.

To make the fictional version of their father, the Davies brothers had to try to remember what they could (Akinola was 20 months when his father died; Wale was 4 years old), listen to stories and weed out their imagined memories. Their father rapidly developed epilepsy and died during a seizure, lying in bed next to their mother. Akinola is named after him.

"It's kind of the confluence of memory, dream and hearsay," Davies says. "How do you work through all of that to create a portrait?"

"My Father's Shadow" is set on a pivotal day for Nigeria, when Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, who took power in a coup, refuses to accept the results of a democratic election. On this day, not just the conjured memory of the Davies' father but the dreams of a nation are put on hold.

"My Father's Shadow," though, represents the realization of Davies' filmmaking aspirations. His first feature, following the brothers' BAFTA-nominated short "Lizard," confirms Davies as a major up-and-coming director. More than that, though, "My Father's Shadow" is deeply cathartic for him.



Sope Dirisu, (left), and director Akinola Davies Jr. pose for a portrait photograph for the film 'My Father's Shadow' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, May 19. (AP)

Cannes



Dakota Johnson poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Highest 2 Lowest' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Monday, May 19. (AP)

'Sirât' leads bleak, bold new wave of films

Cannes brings global anxiety to the screen

CANNES, France, May 20, (AP): "Is this what the end of the world feels like?"

So asks a character in one of the most-talked about films of the 78th Cannes Film Festival: Oliver Laxe's "Sirât," a Moroccan desert road trip through, we come to learn, a World War III purgatory.

It's well into "Sirât," a kind of combination of "Mad Max" and "The Wages of Fear," that that reality begins to sink in. Our main characters - Luis (Sergi López) and his son Esteban (Bruno Nuñez) - have come to a desert rave in search of Luis' missing daughter. When the authorities break it up, they join up with a bohemian troupe of ravers who offroad toward a new, faraway destination.

Thumping, propulsive beats abound in "Sirât," not unlike they do at Cannes' nightly parties. In this movie that jarringly confronts the notion of escape from harsh reality, there are wild tragedies and violent plot turns. Its characters steer into a nightmare that looks an awful lot like today's front pages.

"We wanted to be deeply connected to this day and age," Laxe said in Cannes.

Summoned

As much as Cannes basks in the Côte d'Azur sunshine, storm clouds have been all over its movie screens at the festival, which on Monday passed the halfway point. Portents of geopolitical doom are everywhere in a lineup that's felt unusually in sync with the moment. Tom Cruise, in "Mission: Impossible - Final Awakening," has battled the AI apocalypse. Raoul Peck, in "Orwell: 2 + 2 = 5," has summoned the author's totalitarianism warnings for today. Even the new Wes Anderson ("The Phoenix Scheme") is about an oligarch.

If the French Riviera has often served as a spectacular retreat from the real world, this year's Cannes abounds with movies urgently reckoning with it. It's probably appropriate, then, that many of those films have been particularly divisive.

"Sirât" is laudable for its it's-time-to-break-stuff attitude to its characters, even if that makes for a sometimes punishing experience for the audience. This is a love-or-hate-it movie, sometimes at the same time.

Ari Aster's "Eddington," perhaps the largest American production in recent years to sincerely grapple with contemporary American politics, was dismissed more than it was praised. But for a good while, "Eddington" is breathtakingly accurate in its depiction of the United States circa 2020.

In "Eddington," the conservative, untidy sheriff Joe Cross (Joaquin Phoenix) runs for mayor against the liberal incumbent, Ted Garcia (Pedro Pascal), partly over disagreements on mask mandates. But in Aster's small-town satire, both left and right are mostly under the sway of a greater force: social media and a digital reality that can wreak havoc on daily lives.

"I wrote this film in a state of fear and anxiety about the world," Aster said in Cannes. "I wanted to try and pull back and just describe and show what it feels like to live in a world where nobody can agree on what is real anymore."

It's been striking how much this year's Cannes has been defined by anxious, if not downright bleak visions of the future. There have been exceptions - most notably Richard Linklater's charming ode to the French New Wave "Nouvelle Vague" and Anderson's delightful "The Phoenix Scheme." But seldom has this year's festival not felt like an ominous big-screen reflection of today.

That's been true in the overall chatter around the festival, which got underway with the new threat of US tariffs on foreign-produced films on the minds of many filmmakers and producers.



Zineb Triki, (left), and Lyna Khoudri pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Eagles of the Republic.' (AP)



Director Julia Ducournau poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Alpha.' (AP)



Sergi Lopez, (from left), Bruno Nunez, and director Oliver Laxe pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Sirat.' (AP)

Rising geopolitical frictions led even the typically very optimistic Bono, in Cannes to premiere his Apple TV+ documentary "Bono: Stories of Surrender," to confess he had never lived at a time where World War III felt closer at hand.

Other films in Cannes weren't as overtly about here and now as "Eddington," but many of them have been consumed with the recurring traumas of the past. Two of the most lauded films from the beginning of the festival - Mascha Schilinski's "Sound of Falling" and "Two Prosecutors," by the Ukrainian filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa - contemplated intimate cases of history repeating itself.

"Two Prosecutors," set in Stalin's Russia, captures the slow-moving crawl of bureaucratic malevolence by adapting a story by the dissident author and physicist Georgy Demidov, who spent 14 years in the gulag. Loznitsa said his film is "not a reflection of the past. It's a reflection of the present."

In the period political thriller "The Secret Agent," Brazilian filmmaker Kleber Mendonça Filho turns to not a real historical tale but a fictional one, set in 1977 during Brazil's military dictatorship.

Wagner Moura brings a natural movie-star cool to the role of Marcelo, a technology expert returning to his hometown of Recife where government corruption is rife and hitmen are on his tail. Vividly textured, with absurdist touches (the hairy leg of a corpse plays as a colorful metaphor for the dictatorship), "The Secret Agent" seeks, and sometimes finds, its own logic of political resistance.

Heartfelt

"I really believe that some of the most heartfelt texts come not necessarily from fact but from the logic of what is happening," Filho said in an interview. "Right, now the world seems to be running on some kind of new logic. Ten or 15 years ago, some of these ideas would be completely dismissed, even by the most conservative politicians. I think 'The Secret Agent' is a film full of mystery and intrigue but it does seem to have a certain logic which I associate with my country, Brazil."

In nonfiction filmmaking, no one may be better today than Peck ("I Am Not Your Negro," last year's "Ernest Cole: Lost and Found") in connecting historical dots. "Orwell: 2 + 2 = 5" marries George Orwell's words (narrated by Damian Lewis) on totalitarian states that demand "the disbelief of objective truth" with the actions of contemporary governments around the world, including Russia, Myanmar and the United States. Images of a bombed-out Mariupol in 2022 runs with its official description: "Peacekeeping operations."

It's not just geopolitical tremors quaking on movie screens in Cannes. Climate change and natural disasters are on the minds of filmmakers, too, sometimes in the most unlikely of movies.

The French animated film "Arco," by illustrator Ugo Bienvenu, is about a boy from the distant future who lives on a "Jetsons"-like platform in the clouds. He travels back in time to another future-time, 2075, where homes are bubbled to protect them from fire and storm, and robots do all of the parenting for working parents who appear to their children only as digital projections.

It's a grim future, particularly so because it feels quite plausible. But the strange charm of "Arco," a brightly colored movie with a whole lot of rainbows, is that it offers a younger generation a dream of a future they might make. A relationship between the boy from the future and a girl who finds him in 2075 sparks not just a friendship but a nourishing vision of what's possible.

"Arco," in that way, is a reminder that the most moving movies about our current doom offer a ray of hope, too.

"People are feeling disenchanted with the world, so we have to re-enchant them," said Laxe, the "Sirât" director. "Times are tough but they're very stimulating at the same time. We'll have to look deeply into ourselves. That's what we're forced to do because it's a tough world now."

US president seeks to remake arts and culture in America

Trump vows to turn the Kennedy Center around

WASHINGTON, May 20, (AP): President Donald Trump hosted the Kennedy Center’s leadership at the White House on Monday night, reinforcing how much attention he’s devoting to remaking a premier cultural center as part of a larger effort to overhaul the social and ideological dynamics of the national arts scene.

The meeting of the center’s board in the State Dining Room followed Trump firing its previous members and announcing in February that he’d serve as the board’s chair. The new board, which unanimously approved Trump as its chair, is stocked with loyalists.

They include White House chief of staff Susie Wiles; Attorney General Pam Bondi; Usha Vance, the wife of Vice President JD Vance; and Lee Greenwood, whose song “God Bless the USA,” plays at Trump rallies as well as many official events, including during his trip to the Middle East last week.

Trump called it a “hot board.”

“We’re gonna turn it around,” Trump told dinner attendees of the center. He said of running the board, “When I said, ‘I’ll do this,’ I hadn’t been there” and joked, “That’s the last time I’ll take a job without looking at it.”

Trump has called the center’s past programming “woke” and “terrible,” while more broadly seeking to slash federal funding for the arts - complaining that too much programming promotes leftist ideology and political correctness. In his view, molding the Kennedy Center to his own liking can go a long way toward creating a new arts and social culture nationwide.

The Kennedy Center announced its upcoming lineup

on Monday, which includes performances of “Chicago,” “Moulin Rouge” and “Back to the Future: The Musical.” The offerings for kids includes a theatrical version of the cartoon hit “Bluey.”

The center previously abandoned a week’s worth of July events celebrating LGBTQ+ rights as part of this summer’s World Pride festival in Washington.

The White House has further moved to cancel millions in previously awarded federal humanities grants to arts and culture groups. And Trump’s budget framework has proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities altogether.

Repairs

Trump told the dinner that congressional Republicans have pushed for more than \$250 million for repairs and maintenance at the Kennedy Center, and said that, over the past decade, “tremendous amounts of money” was spent there.

“I don’t know where they spent it,” he said. “They certainly didn’t spend it on wallpaper, carpet or painting.”

Richard Grenell, a Trump envoy for special missions who is interim head of the Kennedy Center, said a previous budget included “\$26 million in phantom revenue.” He suggested the behavior could be a criminal matter for prosecutors and that Bondi, in addition to being on the center’s board, heard the details at a meeting earlier Monday.

Trump said the center would raise funds but added of the building’s state that it’s “falling apart”

He said previous “programming was out of control with

rampant political propaganda” and featured “some very inappropriate shows” including a “Marxist anti-police performance” and “Lesbian-only Shakespeare.”

“Who thinks of these ideas, really?” Trump cried, drawing loud laughs from those present.

Trump also visited the Kennedy Center in March to preside over a meeting of its board, and complained then of “tremendous disrepair” to the building.

The president has decried a recent expansion of the complex, known as “The Reach,” which features studios, rehearsal spaces and meeting facilities, and has suggested he would move to close up the spaces because they lack windows. He said Monday that he’d rather see an open-air performance space on the Potomac.

The president’s changes drew pushback from a variety of artists.

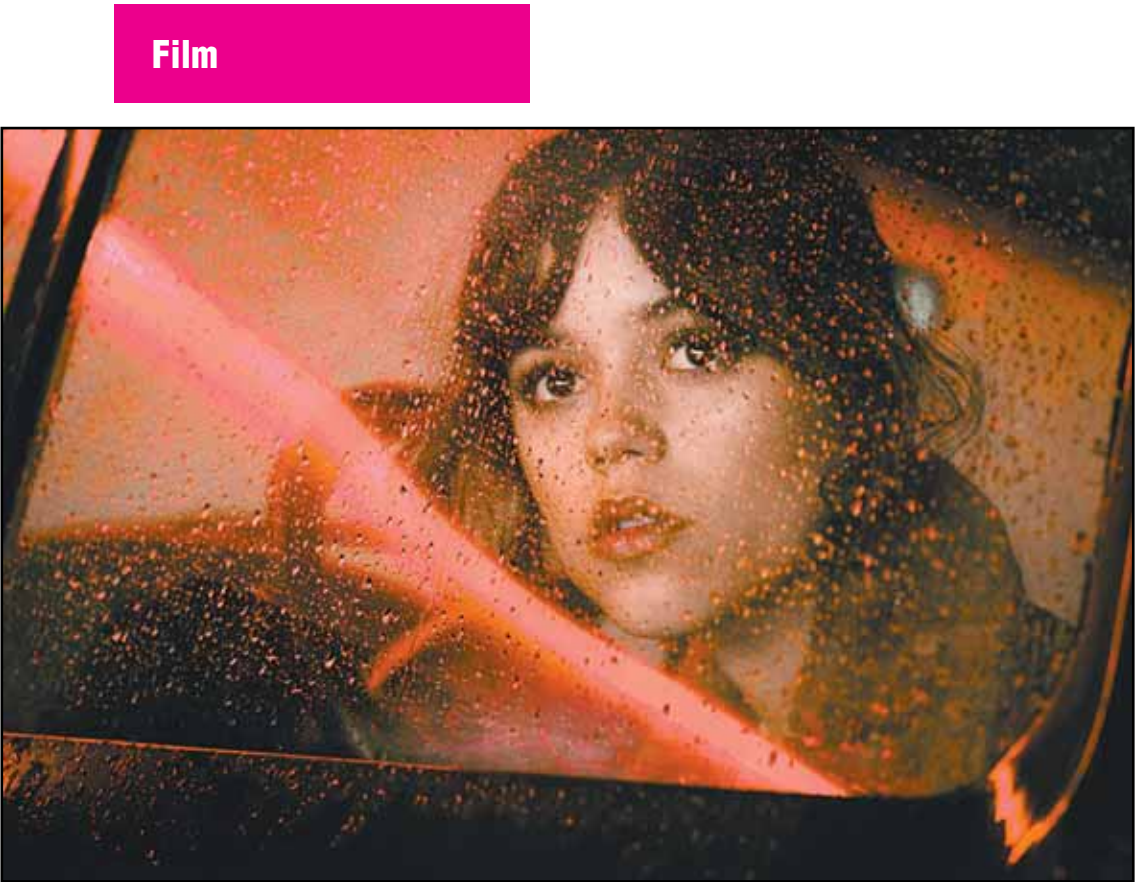
The musical Hamilton responded to Trump’s hands-on approach by canceling performances it had planned in March and April. Other performers - including actress and producer Issa Rae and musician Rhiannon Giddens - have similarly scrapped planned appearances.

And with Trump planning to attend a performance of Les Miserables at the Kennedy Center on June 11, the show announced that many understudies may be performing then due to boycotts by cast members.

The Kennedy Center opened in 1971 and for decades was seen as an apolitical celebration of the arts. Presidents typically nominate members of the Kennedy Center’s board in consultation with members of Congress.



President Donald Trump speaks during a Kennedy Center board dinner in the State Dining Room at the White House, Monday, May 19, in Washington. (AP)



This image released by Lionsgate shows Jenna Ortega in a scene from 'Hurry Up Tomorrow.' (AP)

Movie lacks both heart and structure

The Weeknd’s ‘Hurry Up Tomorrow’ is a bold, surrealist vanity project

NEW YORK, May 20, (AP): It’s the final night of tour. SoFi Stadium, just outside Los Angeles, is packed. 80,000 fans stand before The Weeknd, an endless sea of blinding lights. The bestselling artist born Abel Tesfaye emerges onstage. He launches into the first song. Less than a minute goes by, and the unthinkable happens: His voice cracks. And then it is gone.

That September night in 2022 marked a turning point for Tesfaye. He mines the scene in “Hurry Up Tomorrow,” where, ironically, it arrives too late. The tedium of an incoherent first act paints the charismatic performer - one of the last few decades’ most popular - as an unempathetic protagonist in a nonlinear and nonsensical world.

But how much of The Weeknd is here, really? In his first leading role in a feature film, directed by Trey Edward Shults, Tesfaye plays a fictionalized version of himself, an insomniac musician (as made explicitly clear in the “Wake Me Up” leitmotif, where he sings, “Sun is never rising / I don’t know if it’s day or night”). He’s marred by a recent breakup from an ex portrayed in a cruel voicemail message (“I used to think you were a good person,” she says) and a hedonistic lifestyle, instigated by his superficial friend-manager Lee, played Barry Keoghan.

Shortly after Tesfaye loses his voice, a psychosomatic ailment, he meets superfan Amina, portrayed by Jenna Ortega. She offers temporary comfort and, in return, is afforded no agency. She exists for him. Soon, the uninspired horrors begin, culminating in what recalls the torture scene in “Reservoir



Abel Tesfaye aka The Weeknd attends the 'Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning' premiere at Lincoln Center on Sunday, May 18, in New York. (AP)

Dogs” with less violence. Instead, Amina - when she is not weeping; I urge all viewers to keep a “cry count” and consider what feminist blogs might have to say - lip-syncs some of The Weeknd’s biggest hits back to him, explaining that they’re all about “emptiness and heartbreak.” Woven throughout is some conversation about absent fathers and fear of abandonment, with unearned delivery and first-draft acuity - something gesturing at depth without piercing the surface.

According to press materials, Amina and Lee are not real people but representations of Tesfaye. She is meant to represent Tesfaye’s disconnected, “deeper emotional self” - and Lee, his public persona. That is not made explicitly clear in the film, except in

a very generous reading of the ending. Subtext only works when there is context to back it up, otherwise, you are left with “Hurry Up Tomorrow”: an exciting vanity project with surrealist imagination but stiff writing, no stakes, limited emotional weight and an unclear narrative.

That won’t be an issue for superfans, of course - those intimately familiar with The Weeknd’s music and career. This film appears to be for them and Tesfaye, a producer, alone; they have the framework in which to enjoy the runtime. Considering that fandom is the dominant form of popular culture, it’s not a bad business decision.

And it’s worked for him before. This is not Tesfaye’s first foray into acting. Aside from his cameo in “Uncut Gems,” he starred in HBO’s 2023 series “The Idol.” He co-created the show with Sam Levinson, a show that similarly presented unearned provocation. At the time, “The Idol” received criticism for its sadomasochistic storytelling that emerged after a shift away from “the female perspective,” allegedly a request from Tesfaye. It was not a clever or subversive show, nor was it really even about anything, but it did inspire conversation. It’s easy to see how “Hurry Up Tomorrow” may have similar effects.

In a moment where autobiographical films about musicians are playful and creative - Pharrell Williams’ Lego partnership “Piece by Piece” comes to mind, as does Robbie Williams’ “Better Man” - “Hurry Up Tomorrow” feels like a misstep for those outside The Weeknd’s most devoted. Of course, the film does not identify as a biopic.

Variety

NEW YORK: The creator of the Dilbert comic strip, which was canceled by most newspapers two years ago over the creator’s racist comments, said Monday that he has been diagnosed with the same aggressive prostate cancer as former President Joe Biden.

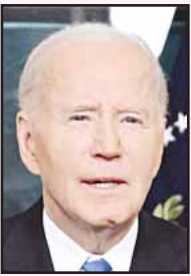
“I have the same cancer that Joe Biden has,” Scott Adams said Monday during an episode of his YouTube show, “Real Coffee with Scott Adams.” “So, I also have prostate cancer that has also spread to my bones.”

He made the announcement after extending his “respect and compassion and sympathy” for Biden and his family. Biden announced his diagnosis on Sunday and said he and his family were reviewing treatment options with his doctors.

Adams, 67, said he’s always in pain, uses a walker to get around and that he expects to die sometime this summer.

“It’s basically intolerable,” he said of the pain.

Adams said he has had time to process his diagnosis and that it has given him time to say goodbyes, get his affairs in order and do all the things he needed to do. (AP)



Biden

Music

Iconic group battles for musical legacy

Salt-N-Pepa sue record label to reclaim rights to their recordings

LOS ANGELES, May 20, (AP): Salt-N-Pepa are telling their record label not to push it as they fight for the rights to their music.

The groundbreaking duo behind hip-hop classics including 1993’s “Shoop” and 1987’s “Push It” say in a lawsuit that Universal Music Group is violating copyright law by refusing to agree to turn over the rights to their master recordings.

Cheryl “Salt” James and Sandra “Pepa” Denton filed the lawsuit in federal court in New York on Monday asserting that the copyright act of 1976, which says that after several decades artists can terminate previous agreements and reclaim ownership of their recordings, clearly now applies to them.

The fight, which has led to UMG pulling Salt-N-Pepa’s music from streaming services, comes as many artists with beloved legacies are making lucrative sales of their catalogs, while others get stuck in classic record-label battles over old contracts.



Sandra Denton (Pepa), (from left), DJ Spinderella, and Cheryl James (Salt) attend a ceremony honoring Salt-N-Pepa with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Catalogue

“UMG has indicated that it will hold Plaintiffs’ rights hostage even if it means tanking the value of Plaintiffs’ music catalogue and depriving their fans of access to their work,” the suit says.

UMG representatives did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The lawsuit suggests that situations like Salt-N-Pepa’s are the very reason the provision of the copyright act exists. It allows artists who made deals “at the beginning of their careers” when they were relatively powerless to use the cultural standing and musical legacy they later established.

The suit says James and Denton filed to terminate their agreement under the law in 2022, “eager to retake full ownership of their art and legacy,” but that, “Inexplicably, UMG has refused to honor” their rights.

James and Denton say that by law, they should now be able to own early recordings including those from their 1986 debut album, “Hot, Cool & Vicious,” and 1987’s “Push It,” a B-side whose remix caught on and became their breakthrough hit.

They say other recordings should legally be theirs later this year and in 2026, including the 1993 album “Very Necessary,” which includes “Shoop” and “Whatta Man.”

The duo is seeking both actual damages for money lost and punitive damages in amounts to be determined for UMG’s actions. The suit says actual damages could “well exceed \$1 million.” They also want a permanent injunction confirming their rights to the recordings.

They said by pulling the songs from streaming and other commercial platforms, the label has “maliciously punished” Salt-N-Pepa “for daring to assert their rights.”

The label’s lawyers said in letters included as exhibits in the lawsuit that they have encouraged mediation and want to reach a “mutually acceptable resolution.”

‘Dried out prune’? ‘Corrupt’ and ‘incompetent’?

Springsteen-Trump feud turns ugly

LOS ANGELES, May 20, (AP): They have some similarities, Bruce Springsteen and Donald Trump - guys in their 70s with homes in New Jersey and big constituencies among white American men middle-aged and older. And both, in very different respects, are the boss.

That’s about where it ends.

The veteran rock star, long a political opponent of the president, stood up as one of Trump’s most prominent cultural critics last week with a verbal takedown from a British stage.

As is his nature, Trump is fighting back - hard. He calls Springsteen a “dried out prune of a rocker” and is even bringing Beyoncé into the fray.

On Monday, the president suggested Springsteen and Beyoncé should be investigated to see if appearances they made on behalf of his Democratic opponent, Kamala Harris, last fall represented an illegal campaign donation.

Opening a tour in Manchester, England, Springsteen told his audience last Thursday that “the America I love, the America I’ve written about that has been a beacon of hope and liberty for 250 years is currently in the hands of a corrupt, incompetent and treasonous administration.”



Bruce Springsteen performs at a campaign rally supporting Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, Oct. 28, 2024, in Philadelphia. (AP)

Democracy

He added, “Tonight we ask all who believe in democracy and the best of our American experiment to rise with us, raise your voices against authoritarianism and let freedom ring.”

Springsteen later made reference to an “unfit president and a rogue government” who have “no concern or idea for what it means to be deeply American.”

The next morning, Trump called Springsteen highly overrated. “Never liked him, never liked his music or his Radical Left Politics and, importantly, he’s not a talented guy - just a pushy, obnoxious JERK,” he wrote on social media.

“This dried out prune of a rocker (his skin is all atrophied) ought to

KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT until he gets back in the Country,” he said.

The next night, also in Manchester, Springsteen repeated his criticisms.

“It’s no surprise what Springsteen’s political leanings are and have been for many decades,” said veteran music writer Alan Light, author of the upcoming “Don’t Stop: Why We (Still) Love Fleetwood Mac’s Rumours.” “He’s somebody who has been outspoken in his music and his actions.”

The Boss’ statements this week showed he wasn’t afraid to speak out “at a time when so many people and institutions are just kind of rolling over,” Light said.

It’s not the first time Springsteen has spoken out against Trump - or a Republican president.

When former President Ronald Reagan referenced Springsteen’s “message of hope” at a campaign stop during the height of the rocker’s “Born in the USA” popularity, Springsteen wondered if Reagan had listened to his music and its references to those left behind in the 1980s economy. He also has had an occasionally bumpy relationship with onetime Republican

presidential candidate and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a fan of his music.

Springsteen has campaigned for Trump’s opponents, including Harris last fall. In 2020, he said that “a good portion of our fine country, to my eye, has been thoroughly hypnotized, brainwashed by a con man from Queens.”

He knows the outer-borough reference still stung a man who built his own tower in Manhattan and ascended to the presidency. Trump often stays at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey. Springsteen grew up in New Jersey - you may have heard - and lives in Colts Neck, New Jersey, now.

Musical

Trump doesn’t hesitate to go after the biggest musical names that speak out against him, like Beyoncé and Taylor Swift. But the political risk may be less; their younger, more female audiences are less likely to intersect with Trump’s core constituency.

During his career, Springsteen has challenged his audience politically beyond presidential endorsements. The 1995 album “The Ghost of Tom Joad” bluntly documented the lives of struggling immigrants - Mexican and Vietnamese among them. And his 2001 song “American Skin (41 Shots),” criticized the shooting by New York City police officers of an unarmed Guinean immigrant named Amadou Diallo, angering some of the blue-collar segments of his fan base.

Clearly, Springsteen has conservative fans and some who wish he’d steer clear of politics, Light said. Still, “40 years later, it’s hard to imagine what they think would happen” with Trump, he said.

While Trump made a point to reference Springsteen’s criticism in an overseas show, he and the E Street Band haven’t performed in the United States since before the 2024 election. His tour last year hit heavily on themes of mortality, less of politics.

Event educates public on shingles prevention, treatment

Experts urge shingles vaccine for high-risk groups

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Dermatologists Association recently organized an awareness event under the slogan, ‘Mahzam’, to shed light on herpes zoster, commonly known as ‘shingles’, reports Al-Anba daily.

The event brought together dermatologists from various Ministry of Health hospitals, along with Kuwaiti board-certified physicians and trainees enrolled in the accredited dermatology training program.

Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and several leading healthcare figures, including Dr. Walid Al-Busairi and Dr. Qusay Al-Saleh attended the event.

In a statement on this occasion, President of the association Dr. Atfal Al-Lafi explained that shingles is a common viral illness that affects the nervous system and the skin. “It is caused by the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus -- the same virus responsible for chickenpox. Symptoms include a painful, ribbon-shaped rash that appears on one side of the

body, often accompanied by burning sensations and numbness. In some cases, pain can persist even after the rash fades, a condition known as postherpetic neuralgia,” he disclosed.

Al-Lafi stressed the importance of raising public awareness, especially the availability of an effective vaccine such as Shingrix, which has been proven to remarkably reduce the incidence and severity of the disease and its complications.

She urged the elderly and those with weak immune system to get vaccinated as a preventative measure, underlining the broader goal of minimizing the health and social burdens posed by the disease.

The association extended its heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in and supported the event, which reflects a strong commitment to educate the public about shingles and to promote proactive prevention, especially among high-risk groups like the elderly and immunocompromised individuals.

Empowering families, patients

MoH launches awareness drive on healthy diet and hypertension

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: The Ministry of Health has launched a national campaign to raise awareness about healthy nutrition for individuals suffering from hypertension, in conjunction with World Hypertension Day, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign was inaugurated by Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs, Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi. Running for two weeks in ten different locations, the campaign aims to highlight the importance of healthy eating in preventing and managing high blood

pressure, reducing complications, and improving patients’ quality of life.

The campaign includes a series of awareness events, free nutritional consultations, and interactive programs designed to educate the public on simple, practical ways to prepare healthy meals.

Dr. Al-Hasawi stressed that the campaign is part of the ministry’s ongoing efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and empower patients and their families to adopt healthy nutritional habits that help prevent chronic diseases.

‘Like it or not’

The Like button has reshaped the world

SAN FRANCISCO, May 20, (AP): The internet wouldn’t be the same without the Like button, the thumbs-up icon that Facebook and other online services turned into digital catnip.

Like it or not, the button has served as a creative catalyst, a dopamine delivery system and an emotional battering ram. It also became an international tourist attraction after Facebook plastered the symbol on a giant sign that stood outside its Silicon Valley headquarters until the company rebranded itself as Meta Platforms in 2021.

A new book, “Like: The Button That Changed The World,” delves into the convoluted story behind a symbol that’s become both the manna and bane of a digitally driven society.

It’s a tale that traces back to gladiator battles for survival during the Roman Empire before fast-forwarding to the early 21st century when technology trailblazers such as Yelp co-founder Russ Simmons, Twitter co-founder Biz Stone, PayPal co-founder Max Levchin, YouTube co-founder Steve Chen, and Gmail inventor Paul Buchheit were experimenting with different ways of using the currency of recognition to prod people to post compelling content online for free.

Reviews

As part of that noodling, a Yelp employee named Bob Goodson sat down on May 18, 2005, and drew a crude sketch of thumbs up and thumbs down gestures as a way for people to express their opinions about restaurant reviews posted on the site. Yelp passed on adopting Goodson’s suggested symbol and, instead, adopted the “useful,” “funny” and “cool” buttons conceived by Simmons. But the discovery of that old sketch inspired Goodson to team up with Martin Reeves to explore how the Like button came to be in their new book.

“It’s something simple and also elegant because the Like button says, ‘I like you, I like your content. And I am like you. I like you because I am like you, I am part of your tribe,’” Reeves said during an interview with The Associated Press. “But it’s very hard to answer the simple question, ‘Well, who invented the Like button?’”

Although Facebook is the main reason the Like button became so ubiquitous, the company didn’t invent it and almost discarded it as drivel. It took Facebook nearly two years to overcome the staunch

resistance by CEO Mark Zuckerberg before finally introducing the symbol on its service on February 9, 2009 - five years after the social network’s creation in a Harvard University dorm room.

As happens with many innovations, the Like button was born out of necessity but it wasn’t the brainchild of a single person. The concept percolated for more than a decade in Silicon Valley before Facebook finally embraced it.

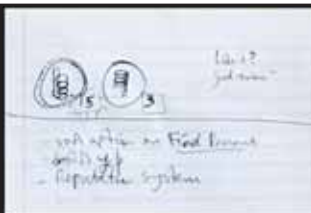
Innovations

“Innovation is often social and Silicon Valley was the right place for all this to happen because it has a culture of meetups, although it’s less so now,” Reeves said. “Everyone was getting together to talk about what they were working on at that time and it turned out a lot of them were working on the same stuff.”

The effort to create a simple mechanism to digitally express approval or dismay sprouted from a wellspring of online services such as Yelp and YouTube whose success would hinge on their ability to post commentary or video that would help make their sites even more popular without forcing them to spend a lot of money for content. That effort required a feedback loop that wouldn’t require a lot of hoops to navigate.

And when Goodson was noodling around with his thumbs-up and thumbs-down gesture, it didn’t come out of a vacuum. Those techniques of signaling approval and disapproval had been ushered into the 21st century zeitgeist by the Academy Award-winning movie, “Gladiator,” where Emperor Commodus - portrayed by actor Joaquin Phoenix - used the gestures to either spare or slay combatants in the arena.

But the positive feelings conjured by a thumbs up date even further back in popular culture, thanks to the 1950s-era character Fonzie played by Henry Winkler in the top-rated 1970s TV series, “Happy Days.”



This image provided by BCG shows a sketch by Bob Goodson that included a crude concept of what would become the Like button on May 18, 2005. (AP)

A step toward global health equity, preparedness

World Health Assembly officially adopts a ‘pandemic agreement’

GENEVA, May 20, (Agencies): The World Health Assembly on Monday officially adopted the Pandemic Agreement which is an international agreement aimed at enhancing global cooperation in pandemic prevention preparedness and response after more than three years of intensive negotiations among Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Member States voted on the agreement to strengthen pandemic cooperation during the 78th session of the World Health Assembly currently taking place in Geneva until the May 27th.

The agreement reaffirms the sovereign right of countries to determine their public health policies while committing to enhanced international collaboration in several areas including pandemic prevention strengthening research and development capacities technology transfer equitable distribution of health products and the establishment of a global supply chain and logistics network.

The agreement includes provisions for a benefit-sharing mechanism related to access to pathogens and embraces the One Health approach which links human animal and environmental health.

Furthermore it provides for technical and financial support for countries with limited resources.

This binding global framework reinforces international solidarity and ensures better preparedness for future pandemics while respecting the specificities of national health policies of WHO Member States.

The agreement was adopted by WHO Member States. However the United States was absent from the session following the announcement by President Donald Trump of the US withdrawal from the Organization.

New agreement aims to better pre-



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), applauds as member countries approve an agreement to combat future pandemics, during the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA78) at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, May 20. (AP)

vent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics in the wake of the devastation wrought by the coronavirus.

Sustained applause echoed in a Geneva hall hosting the WHO’s annual assembly as the measure - debated and devised over three years - passed without opposition.

The treaty guarantees that countries which share virus samples will receive tests, medicines and vaccines. Up to 20% of such products would be given to the WHO to ensure poorer countries have some access to them when the next pandemic hits.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has touted the agreement as “historic” and a sign of multilateralism at a time when many countries are putting national interests ahead of shared values and cooperation.

Dr. Esperance Luvindao, Namibia’s health minister and the chair of a committee that paved the way for Tuesday’s adoption, said that the COVID-19 pandemic inflicted huge costs “on lives, livelihoods and economies.”

“We - as sovereign states - have resolved to join hands, as one world together, so we can protect our children, elders, frontline health workers and all others from the next pandemic,” Luvindao added. “It is our duty and responsibility to humanity.”

The treaty’s effectiveness will face doubts because the United States - 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.

Mpox case

Vietnam readies for COVID surge

HANOI, May 20, (Xinhua): The Vietnamese Ministry of Health has instructed hospitals across the country to prepare necessary facilities, isolation areas and medical supplies to accommodate COVID-19 patients in the event of a surge in cases, the Vietnam News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Healthcare facilities have been directed to strengthen infection prevention measures, particularly those targeting respiratory transmission, to minimize the risk of disease spread within medical examination and treatment areas.

The ministry also emphasized the need to implement measures to protect high-risk groups, including pregnant women, patients with underlying health conditions, those with severe illnesses and the elderly.

Since the beginning of this year, Vietnam has reported 148 new COVID-19 cases across 27 provinces and cities, according to the ministry.

□ □ □

Mpox: Togo has confirmed a case of mpox, the first one in the country, the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene announced in a statement on Friday.

According to the statement, the case was detected and confirmed on Friday, and the patient is a 22-year-old woman residing in the capital city of Lome. She is currently receiving treatment at an infectious disease unit.

In response to this situation, the ministry said it has taken steps to reinforce epidemiological surveillance, early warning, case confirmation, management of detected cases, and public awareness campaigns on preventive measures.

Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, was first identified in laboratory monkeys in 1958. It is an infectious disease primarily spread through body fluids, respiratory droplets, and contaminated materials.

□ □ □

HIV: Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said last Tuesday that the government gave high priority to people’s health and HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Winnie Byanyima, under-secretary-general of the United Nations and executive director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), at the Peace Palace in the capital Phnom Penh, said a news release from the prime minister’s spokesperson unit.

“Samdech Thipadei highlighted the attention of the Royal Government of Cambodia in the fight against HIV/AIDS through the launches of many policies and strategic action plans,” the news release said.

Samdech Thipadei is the honorific title of Hun Manet.

“He said the Royal Government of Cambodia has given high priority to strengthening the health sector, especially improving people’s well-being,” the news release added.

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Decision stirring controversy

Tour de France’s new Montmartre climb could be a game changer

PARIS, May 20, (AP): Breaking with tradition at the Tour de France is Sharma’s blistering 18-ball 59 led Hyderabad’s chase to 206-4 Sharma’s blistering 18-ball 59 led Hyderabad’s chase to 206-4 Sharma’s blistering 18-ball 59 led Hyderabad’s chase to 206-4 Since race organizers announced plans last week to climb the iconic Montmartre hill in Paris during the final stage in July, the cycling world has been abuzz. Could the climb actually decide the Tour winner? Or disrupt the final sprint by injecting tactical uncertainty into what is usually a celebratory day?

Well, that remains to be seen. But one thing seems certain: The stage will be a spectacle.

At last year’s Olympics, massive crowds lined the streets of Montmartre - the area in the northern part of Paris that is popular among artists and offers grand vistas of the city - to cheer on riders.

Inspired by the frenetic atmosphere and willing to build on the momentum, Tour organizers said this month that riders competing in cycling’s biggest race this summer would climb the Montmartre hill and pass beneath the Sacré-Coeur basilica before “batling it out on a stage that may break from the traditions established over the past 50 years in the heart of the capital.”

Traditionally, the Tour final stage is largely pro-

cessional until a sprint decides the day’s winner on the Champs-Élysées. Last year’s final stage was held outside Paris for the first time since 1905 because of a clash with the Olympics, moving instead to Nice. The world famous avenue is back on the program this year for the conclusion of the 3,320-kilometer (2,060-mile) race.

The inclusion of the steep Montmartre climb could dramatically change the dynamics of the stage. If the hill features just a few kilometers from the finish line, or is climbed several times, pure sprinters will likely be dropped before they can compete for the stage win. And if the general classification remains tight ahead of the final stage, the yellow jersey itself could be decided in Paris.

Full details of the route will be presented at a news conference on Wednesday. With a peloton roughly twice as big as it was at the Olympics, organizers are working with Paris authorities and the Prefecture of police to ensure the security of the race on the narrow and cobbled streets of the area. But some top riders have already expressed their lack of enthusiasm about the addition.

“Montmartre was nice to do in the Olympics, it seemed good, a lot of people, a really good atmo-

sphere,” two-time Tour champion Jonas Vingegaard told reporters this week. “But when they came to the Montmartre, there was only 15 riders left in the bunch. And when we do the Tour de France, there will be 150 guys fighting for positions on a very narrow climb. It could end up being more stress than they want to have.”

Even Remco Evenepoel, who won the Olympic men’s road race in Paris last year and the gold medal in the time trial, is also opposed to the idea.

“There will be enough battle for positioning in the first week of the Tour,” he told sports media Spozza. “With Montmartre added, that would mean we have to do the same on the last day. We will be tired enough by then.”

Evenepoel also lamented the fact that sprinters would be robbed of a rare chance to claim a prestigious win on the world famous avenue.

“They get a big chance every year to sprint for a stage win on the Champs-Élysées,” he said. “That chance is then taken away from them. In my opinion, Montmartre is an unnecessary obstacle.”

Marc Madiot, who manages the Groupama-FDJ team, said bad weather on the final day could make the stage more treacherous.



In this file photo, Mads Pedersen, of Denmark, right, leads Attila Valter, of Hungary, Remco Evenepoel, of Belgium, and Félix Grossschartner, of Kazakhstan, as they ride past the Sacre Coeur basilica, during the men’s road cycling event, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Hyderabad ends Lucknow IPL playoff hopes after 6-wkt win



Sunrisers Hyderabad’s Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Sharma’s blistering 18-ball 59 led Sunrisers’s chase

HYDERABAD, India, May 20, (AP): Sunrisers Hyderabad ended Lucknow Super Giants’ faint playoff hopes with a clinical six-wicket win in the Indian Premier League.

Abhishek Sharma’s blistering 18-ball 59 led Hyderabad’s chase to 206-4 with 10 balls to spare.

Lucknow, which needed to win its remaining three games and rely on other results, couldn’t capitalize on a blazing 115-run opening stand between Mitchell Marsh (65) and Aiden Markram (61) and was restricted to 205-7.

Gujarat Titans, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings have made it to the playoffs. The fight for the fourth and final place was now between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals.

Lucknow captain Rishabh Pant’s sub-par season continued when he fell for 7, his seventh single-digit score. Pant was a symptom of the team’s middle order woes, and Hyderabad fast bowler Eshan Malinga (2-28) was the latest bowler to profit.

Left-handed Sharma’s brutal hitting sealed the game inside the first six overs as Hyderabad raced to 72-1. He opened with Atharva Taide after regu-



Sunrisers Hyderabad’s Nitish Kumar Reddy bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

lar partner Travis Head was in quarantine with COVID-19.

Sharma didn’t hold back once the field restrictions came off after the powerplay, and smacked leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi for four successive sixes. The third one burst through the hands of Nicholas Pooran on the boundary and brought up Sharma’s half-century.

But soon after that 26-run over,

Sharma was out caught off a googly by Digvesh Rathi, and both got into a heated argument. Rathi’s signature notebook celebration seemed to irritate Sharma and they had to be separated by onfield umpire Michael Gough. They appeared to make up after the game.

Unlike Lucknow’s middle order, Hyderabad’s delivered. Ishan Kishan scored a six off the first ball he faced

and made 35 off a slow 28 balls. Heinrich Klaasen (47) and Kamindu Mendis (32) accelerated before Mendis retired hurt with a hamstring injury only nine runs from victory.

Marsh and Markram have been Lucknow’s batting mainstays and gave another whirlwind start of 115 runs off just 63 balls. Both batters raising half-centuries off 28 balls.

But Lucknow slipped from 108 without loss in the first 10 overs to 97-7 in the last 10 overs.

The Hyderabad bowlers, especially Malinga, bowled smart with changes of pace.

Pant promoted himself to No. 3 but chipped a slower ball back to Malinga, who also claimed Ayush Badoni for just 3.

Debutant left-arm spinner Harsh Dube (1-44) also slowed down Lucknow. He ousted Marsh, who was caught at short third man, in the 11th over. Markram also was deceived by Harshal Patel’s slow yorker in the 16th over just when the South African was looking to up the rate in the death overs.

Nicholas Pooran hit 45 off 26 balls with one six and six fours but Lucknow kept on losing wickets.

Nitish Kumar Reddy bowled for the first time this season and conceded 20 runs in the final over that also brought two run-outs. Akash Deep got Lucknow past 200 with a six off the final ball.

Chess grandmaster faces 143,000

Carlsen forced into tie in showdown vs ‘The World’

BERLIN, May 20, (AP): Norwegian chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen was forced into a draw Monday by more than 143,000 people worldwide playing against him in a single, record-setting game.

Billed as “Magnus Carlsen vs. The World,” the online match began April 4 on Chess.com, the world’s largest chess website, and was the first-ever online freestyle game to feature a world champion.

The mega-match ended after Team World checked Carlsen’s king a third time, a stunning outcome after Chess.com had predicted Carlsen would win by a wide margin.

Members of Team World - anyone around the globe could sign up - voted on each move and each side had 24 hours to make their play. Carlsen played the white pieces.

The world forced the draw on move 32 after checking Carlsen’s king three times in the corner of the board where it could not escape. The rule is called “threefold repetition,” meaning all of the pieces on the board are in the exact same position three times to prompt a draw.

Carlsen, 34, became the world’s top-ranked player in 2010 at 19 and has won five World Championships. He achieved the highest-ever chess rating of 2882 in 2014 and has remained the undisputed world No. 1 for more than a decade.

“Overall, ‘the world’ has played very, very sound chess from the start. Maybe not going for most enterprising options, but kind of keeping it more in vein with normal chess - which isn’t always the best strategy, but it worked out well this time,” Carlsen said in a statement Friday as Monday’s draw seemed imminent.

In a freestyle match, the bishops, knights, rooks, queen and king are randomly placed around the board at the start while the pawns are in their usual spots. Freestyle chess is popular because it allows players to be more creative and avoid memorization.

This was the third “vs. The World” record-setting online game. In 1999, Russian grandmaster Garry Kasparov played against more than 50,000 people on the Microsoft Network and won after four months.

Last year, Indian grandmaster Viswanathan Anand won his “vs. The World” match against nearly 70,000 players on Chess.com.

In the Chess.com virtual chat this week, players appeared split on whether to force the draw - and claim the glory - or to keep playing against Carlsen, even if it ultimately meant a loss.

“Don’t Draw! Let’s keep playing Magnus,” one user wrote. “This is an opportunity that won’t come along again. I’d rather play the Master all the way to the end and see if we can battle it out another 20 or 30 moves! Let’s have some FUN!!!!”

Another added: “Thanks Magnus for such a great game. We made history.”



In this file photo, Norwegian Magnus Carlsen, left, of SG Alpine Warriors plays against Poland’s Jan-Krzysztof Duda of Chingari Gulf Titans during Global Chess League in Dubai United Arab Emirates. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Norway ski jumper retires: Former Olympic champion ski jumper Robert Johansson announced he is retiring on Tuesday while an investigation continues into alleged cheating by his teammates at the world championships.

The 35-year-old Johansson, who sports a distinctive red mustache, was not initially under suspicion when the scandal around the Norway team altering competition suits emerged at their home Nordic worlds.

The 2018 Olympics team event gold medalist was then suspended along with other Norwegians by the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) from taking part in season-ending events.

Johansson told broadcaster TV2 in an interview aired on Tuesday, “I feel like I’ve been suspended because I’m Norwegian.”

He said the case denied him the chance to compete in his planned farewell events in March.

Norwegian athletes have not talked publicly about the FIS investigation, though TV2 said Johansson’s suit was checked and cleared before, during and after the worlds held in Trondheim.

Johansson was a three-time winner in World Cup events who had a career-best year in the 2018 Olympics season.

He also took individual bronzes in the normal and large hill events at Pyeongchang, South Korea. (AP)

US Open’s Arthur Ashe Stadium getting overhaul as part of \$800 million project

NEW YORK, May 20, (AP): The U.S. Open’s Arthur Ashe Stadium will get an overhaul as part of an \$800 million project announced Monday that the U.S. Tennis Association is touting as the “largest single investment” in the history of its Grand Slam tournament. The USTA said it is funding the improvements at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, with no help from the city government.

According to a class-action antitrust lawsuit filed in federal court in New York in March by a players’ group co-founded by Novak Djokovic, the four major tennis tournaments - the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, French Open and Australian Open - “generated over \$1.5 billion collectively in 2024, while only paying between (10% to 20%) of revenue to players.”

Separately, in April, Djokovic, Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff were among 20 leading tennis players who signed a letter sent to the heads of the Grand Slam tournaments seeking more prize money and a greater say in what they called “decisions that directly impact us.”

The USTA said there will not be interruption to scheduled play or fan access for the next two editions of the U.S. Open. Play in the main draw this year begins on Aug. 24 - shifting to a Sunday start for the first time in the Open era, which began in 1968, and adding a 15th day of competition.

The USTA’s work, which is expected to be done in time for the 2027 U.S. Open, includes constructing a \$250 million player performance center.

The new player area will be next to the practice

courts and include additional courts, locker rooms, lounges and an open-air warmup area so players be acclimated to the conditions before they get to the court for their matches.

USTA executives did not say if ticket prices would increase as a result of the project.

Ashe’s courtside-level seating capacity will increase from 3,000 to 5,000, while some seats in other sections will be removed, leaving the arena’s total similar to what it is now - around 23,000 to 24,000, the biggest in Grand Slam tennis. The stadium, which first opened in 1997 and has had a retractable roof since 2016, also will get a new “grand entrance,” two new luxury suite levels, more club and restaurant areas, larger and updated concourses and restrooms, and more escalators and elevators.



In this file photo, court workers dry the playing surface at Arthur Ashe Stadium after a sudden downpour with the retractable roof open caused play to be delayed between Petra Kvitova, of the Czech Republic, and Jessica Pegula, of the United States, during the fourth round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Slim chance of European soccer still alive

Supersubs give Brighton thrilling win over Liverpool

BRIGHTON, England, May 20, (AP): Substitute Jack Hinshelwood scored with his first touch of the ball and gave Brighton a thrilling 3-2 win over Liverpool and kept alive its slim chance of European football.

If fourth-placed Chelsea wins the Europa Conference League next week, there is a chance that the eighth-placed team in the Premier League can qualify for next season's Conference League.

The win lifted Brighton into that coveted eighth spot, three points above Brentford, four ahead of Fulham and five clear of Bournemouth. Bournemouth has two games left; the others have one.

Liverpool rested several starters but still took the lead after just nine minutes, and in doing so became only the third team in Premier League history to score in every one of its away games.

Conor Bradley, in his first start since signing a new four-year contract on Saturday, cut the ball back from the byline for Harvey Elliot to side-foot home.

Brighton, though, fought back in an end-to-end encounter.

Danny Welbeck missed a golden chance after half an hour but Yasin Ayari made no mistake two minutes later to level the score.

Liverpool was back in front by the break after Dominik Szoboszlai's memorable cross-cum-shot on the stroke of halftime.

Japanese substitute Kaoru Mitoma equalized in the 69th, just four minutes after his introduction. It was his third goal in four games, all of them as a late substitute.

Hinshelwood then stole in at the back post to convert Matt O'Riley's low cross and, although the offside flag was raised, the goal was given after a video review.

It was a winning introduction for Hinshelwood, who came on alongside his 17-year-old cousin Harry Howell. Howell also made history by becoming Brighton's youngest ever Premier League player.



Brighton's Yankuba Minteh, left, challenges for the ball with Liverpool's Kostas Tsimikas during the English Premier League soccer match between Brighton and Liverpool at American Express Stadium in Brighton, England. (AP)

Al-Qadsiya looks to bounce back in Amir Cup after league struggles



A file photo of Al-Qadsiya players celebrate with the Amir Cup

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Al-Qadsiya begins its title defense in the Amir Cup against Burgan at 7:10 pm at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in a rescheduled preliminary round clash. The match was postponed due to Al-Qadsiya's participation in the Gulf Champions League, where the "Yellows" reached the final but fell short, losing 2-1 to Iraq's Duhok in the second leg after a 1-1 draw in the first.

Now, Al-Qadsiya is aiming to bounce back

Yellows hit by player exits

with a strong start in the Amir Cup following a season marked by domestic setbacks. The team was knocked out of the Zain Premier League title race – having not lifted the league trophy in nine seasons – and exited the Crown Prince Cup semifinals after a narrow loss to Al-Arabi. Additionally, it suffered a heartbreaking Super Cup final defeat to Kuwait Club, losing 7-6 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

Despite finishing third in both the Crown Prince Cup and the league, the team's inconsistency – capped by a heavy 7-3 defeat to Al-Fahaheel in the league's final round – has raised questions about the coaching staff led by Montenegrin coach Zeljko Petrovic, whose contract ends in May. Petrovic has stated he will remain with the team only if it reaches the Amir Cup

final, scheduled for June 16. The quarterfinals will take place on Sunday, with the semifinals on May 29.

Adding to the uncertainty, goalkeeper Khaled Al-Rashidi is reportedly set to join Kuwait Club, while fellow player Ali Jarrah is close to a move to Kazma next season.

Despite being the favorite on paper, Petrovic warned against complacency, acknowledging that cup competitions often deliver surprises. He called for full focus and effort from his squad as they look to retain the country's most prestigious football title.

Meanwhile, Burgan enters the match with hopes of pulling off an upset. After missing out on Premier League qualification – finishing fourth in the Zain First Division League – the team will be looking to prove itself in the Amir Cup with a bold performance.

It's all or nothing

Man United and Tottenham square off for CL ticket

MADRID, May 20, (AP): It's all or nothing when Manchester United and Tottenham meet in the Europa League final on Wednesday.

For the winner of the all-English showdown in Bilbao, there is the mother of all get-out-of-jail-free cards with entry to the Champions League.

For the loser, the abyss of no European soccer next year, the indignity of so many unwanted records broken, and uncertainty hanging over the futures of those who have presided over such a spectacular fall.

That's what's on the line at Estadio de San Mamés when two English soccer giants get one last shot at salvaging the season.

Long gone are the days when United dominated the Premier League and challenged the summit of European soccer on a regular basis. But even after 12 years without winning the English title, this season has represented a new low.

United is 16th out of 20 in the standings after a club-record 18 defeats in a single campaign since the Premier League began in 1992. It is also certain to register its worst-ever points total in the era, as well as its lowest finish.

"We know this season has been nowhere near good enough for this club and for our standards," United defender Harry Maguire says.

Tottenham is one place below United, having lost 21 times in the league – also a club record in the modern era.

Spurs – Champions League runner-up in 2019 – are aiming for a first trophy since the 2008 English League Cup.

Such a major final rarely has so much riding on it beyond the trophy itself.

Neither team has looked capable of challenging for a top-five posi-



Manchester United's Mason Mount celebrates after the Europa League semifinal second leg soccer match between Manchester United and Athletic Bilbao in Manchester, Britain. (AP)

tion in the Premier League, which would secure Champions League qualification. But in a season when both teams occupy the last few spots before relegation, they have a mind-boggling lifeline to the Champions League via the Europa League.

The Champions League offers the prestige of playing beside teams like Real Madrid and Barcelona, draws prospective signings, and comes with huge financial rewards.

Real Madrid earned almost \$154 million from winning the competition for a record-extending 15th time last season. Total prize money has increased from \$2 billion last season to \$2.7 billion in this expanded season.

United, in particular, could do with some of that money at a time of job losses and cuts under new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe, while coach Ruben Amorim hopes to rebuild his squad in the offseason.

"We are supposed to be in

the Champions League. Europa League here is not enough and you have that feeling here," Amorim says. "The best way to help us get in the top in a few years is the Champions League - it's not (winning) the cup (Europa League)."

While a return to the Champions League is also enticing for Tottenham, the chance to end its trophy barren run may be even more appealing.

Not even top-class managers like Mauricio Pochettino, Jose Mourinho, or Antonio Conte ended Spurs' wait for major silverware.

It could be destiny that Ange Postecoglou is the man to end the drought, having boldly predicted early in the season that he would always win a trophy in his second year.

That was true at previous clubs Brisbane Roar, Yokohama F Marinos, and Celtic – but it would be remarkable if he continued that run on the back of such a desperate

campaign.

"It's not for the want of world-class players. This club has had world-class players," Postecoglou says. "It's not for the want of world-class managers. They've had world-class managers. It's something else that's going to change this club."

By contrast, United has continued to win trophies despite its failure to win the Premier League since former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

This could be the third straight year United ends the season with silverware after winning the 2023 League Cup and the 2024 FA Cup.

Amorim replaced Erik ten Hag as United coach in November but has not been able to turn its form around.

He's lost 14 of his 26 league games, including six of the last eight.

While there has been no suggestion that his job is under immediate threat, he has raised doubts about his position, admitting he is embarrassed by his team's form.

Postecoglou is two years into the job at Spurs and became the club's fourth permanent manager in four years when joining from Celtic in 2023.

A major trophy would put a different complexion on a season in which the Spurs have dramatically fallen since he led them to a fifth-place finish in his first year.

He and Amorim have spoken of the similarities in their positions.

"I guess from an emotional standpoint and the noise around the club," Postecoglou says, "we're kind of dealing with similar things of something so fantastic in terms of a European run, and also something that's obviously the opposite of that, the other extreme in the league."

Financial breaches

Relegated Leicester referred to independent commission

LEICESTER, England, May 20, (AP): Leicester might be returning to life in the Championship with a points deduction.

The club was referred by the Premier League to an independent commission on Tuesday for alleged breaches of financial rules in the English Football League – the three divisions below the top flight – in the 2023-24 season.

Leicester also has been accused by the Premier League of alleged breaches of its obligation to provide its annual accounts by Dec. 31 last year and to "provide full, complete and prompt assistance to the Premier League in response to the league's inquiries."

The Premier League has acted after an arbitration tribunal decided that the top-flight competition has jurisdiction to investigate and refer the club to an independent commission for its breaches of rules in a different competition – the EFL.

The Premier League previously charged Leicester for breaching financial regulations by overspending in the 2022-23 season, but the club successfully argued it was no longer a representative of the Premier League – owing to its relegation that season – by the end of that year's accounting period on June 30.

Because of this latest tribunal decision, the Premier League is trying again to punish Leicester for overspending, this time in the 2023-24 season – the year after relegation and when the team was in the Championship.

"The tribunal confirmed that the Premier League has the power to investigate an alleged breach of the Profit & Sustainability Rules because the EFL validly transferred responsibility for its investigation to the Premier League in June 2024, when the club was promoted from the Championship," the Premier League said.

"The Premier League continues to have jurisdiction even though Leicester City will



Leicester City's Jamie Vardy carries his daughter after the Premier League match in the English Premier League soccer match between Leicester City and Ipswich Town at King Power Stadium, Leicester, England. (AP)

be relegated to the Championship at the end of this season."

Leicester's return to the Championship was confirmed on April 20 with a loss to Liverpool.

"The club intends to engage cooperatively in this matter now that the Premier League's jurisdiction has been established for the period ending FY24," Leicester said. "However, we will not be able to comment further on these proceedings until they are concluded, due to their confidential nature."

Best of the Rest

Nantes fires coach Kombouaré: Nantes fired coach Antoine Kombouaré on Tuesday after a difficult season where the club battled to stay in Ligue 1.

Nantes finished 13th in the 18-team league and top-flight survival was not certain until the final round.

"FC Nantes announces the end of its collaboration with Antoine Kombouaré, head coach of the professional team," Nantes posted on X. "The club sincerely thanks Antoine Kombouaré and his staff for their professionalism and dedication."

The 61-year-old Kombouaré had one year left on his contract.

He remains a popular figure at the club, having saved it from relegation in 2021 and winning the French Cup in 2022 – the club's first trophy in 21 years.

Kombouaré had a difficult relationship with Nantes president Waldemar Kita, who fired him in 2023 and re-hired him amid another relegation scrap the following year.

Kombouaré was part of the Nantes team when the club's La Beaujoire stadium opened in 1984, and played 177 games as a rugged defender for Nantes,

which has won eight league titles. (AP)

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Barca sets August target for return: Barcelona aims to return belatedly to its Camp Nou stadium after two years of reconstruction work for a preseason friendly on Aug. 10.

Club president Joan Laporta set the date for the traditional season-opening Joan Gamper Trophy game when he spoke in a television interview late Monday.

Barcelona has played in the city's Olympic Stadium for two years – and won La Liga this season – during the massive overhaul to create a 105,000-capacity home that would be the biggest soccer stadium in Europe.

The original target was a November 2024 return to a partially finished venue, then Barcelona said in February it hoped to play games in Camp Nou before the end of this season with 60,000 spectators.

The February update also detailed plans to complete the project by adding a roof at the end of the 2025-26 season.

The Camp Nou is a potential candidate to stage the 2030 World Cup final which Spain will co-host with Portugal and Morocco. The more likely options are Real Madrid's renovated Santiago Bernabéu Stadium and a 115,000-seat venue planned in Casablanca, Morocco. (AP)

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NEWS



Italy's Matteo Arnaldi returns the ball to Hugo Gaston of France during the round of 32 at the ATP 250 Geneva Open Tennis Tournament in Geneva, Switzerland. Arnaldi won 6-7, 6-4, 6-4. (AP)

Sports



His Highness the Crown Prince receives a gift from Al-Ghanim in the presence of Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Ahmad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.



Kuwait Club celebrates with the championship trophy.

Crown Prince congratulates Kuwait Club on Cup victory

Minister: Crown Prince's patronage of final reflects strong support for Kuwaiti sports

KUWAIT CITY, May 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory letter on Tuesday to the President of Kuwait Club, Khaled Al-Ghanim, celebrating the club's victory in the Crown Prince Cup. In his letter, His Highness praised the dedication and hard work of everyone at the club, wishing them continued success in their future endeavors.

On the same day, His Highness the Crown Prince also sent a letter of appreciation to Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association (KFA). The letter expressed gratitude for the KFA's efforts in organizing a well-run championship, which reflected the true spirit of Kuwaiti sports through an atmosphere of sportsmanship and honorable competition. His Highness commended the association's commitment and hoped for even greater achievements in the future.

His Highness the Crown Prince sponsored and attended the final match of the Crown Prince Football Cup. He was warmly welcomed by Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Ahmad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, Vice President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Nawaf Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with other senior officials.

Meanwhile, Al-Mutairi highlighted that the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince at the final match symbolized his unwavering support and interest in Kuwaiti athletes. Speaking at a press briefing after the final between Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club, Al-Mutairi said the entire sports community felt immense pride and gratitude for this generous sponsorship, which clearly reflects the political leadership's care for young athletes.

He emphasized the crucial role of sports development in Kuwait, noting that strengthening the status of athletes contributes significantly to both individual growth and societal progress. Al-Mutairi also acknowledged the Public Authority for Sports' dedication to collaborating with clubs and federations to elevate the level of Kuwaiti sports across all disciplines. He extended congratulations to Kuwait SC for their championship win and to Al-Arabi for securing second place.

In a thrilling final, Kuwait Club secured their tenth Crown Prince Cup title with a 1-0 victory over Al-Arabi. The match was tightly contested throughout regular time, with multiple scoring opportunities but no goals during the official 90 minutes.

Al-Arabi had a prime chance to take the lead in the 67th minute when awarded a penalty, but Hamza Khabba's attempt was unsuccessful. The game remained intense through extra time, with chances on both sides. It wasn't until the 121st minute that Kuwait Club was awarded a penalty, which Yahya Jabrane converted, securing the winning goal and lifting his team to the top of the championship podium.



Kuwait player is challenged by an opponent during the Crown Prince final.

Maresca slams timing of fixture

Maresca slams fixture timing ahead of final

LONDON, May 20, (AP): Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca has expressed his unhappiness at his team getting two fewer days to prepare for the Conference League final compared to Spanish opponent Real Betis.

While Betis plays its final La Liga match on Friday against Valencia, Chelsea closes its Premier League campaign on Sunday - three days before the Conference League final in Wroclaw, Poland - against Nottingham Forest.

It's a huge game for Chelsea, too, with Champions League qualification on the line for both teams at the City Ground.

"I'm not happy, 100%," Maresca said on Tuesday at a news conference. "You cannot allow a team 48 hours more than the other team when you play a European competition final."

UEFA, which organizes the Conference League, has no say on when domestic league competitions hold their matches.

Chelsea will be unable to bring forward its match against Forest to Friday because the Premier League wants all of its fixtures in the final round to be held at the same time.

So Maresca has another idea. "Or they (Betis) play Sunday like us," he said with a smile.

Tottenham and Manchester United meet in the Europa League final on Wednesday. They both played their most recent Premier League matches on Friday night.

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Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca attends a training session at Cobham Training Ground, London. (AP)

Kevin De Bruyne will be hot property when he leaves Manchester City and many clubs would love to sign him next season.

Marseille is not one of them. Club president Pablo Longoria has ruled out a move for the 33-year-old playmaker because he thinks signing a player of such stature might prove disruptive.

"If we take a player with a much higher salary than the players we have in the squad today, who qualified us for the Champions League, it destroys all the balance, all the good things, the good dynamic the players built," Longoria said. "It would be, on the part of a club, a total lack of respect for

the players who helped us qualify for the Champions League."

Marseille finished second in Ligue 1 behind champion Paris Saint-Germain and qualified directly for next season's Champions League.

De Bruyne was set to make his final home appearance for City later Tuesday against Bournemouth after 10 trophy-laden years at the club. He is one of City's greatest ever players and won 16 trophies with the club, including six Premier League titles and the Champions League. De Bruyne shares the record for the highest number of assists in a single Premier League season with 20, and scored more than 100 goals for City.

Delegation returns with 32 medals

Gymnastics team celebrated after West Asian success

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: Kuwait's artistic gymnastics teams for youth, juniors, and girls have returned home in triumph after a stellar performance at the West Asian Gymnastics Championships, held in Amman, Jordan. The Kuwaiti delegation concluded the tournament with a total of 32 medals, including 1 gold, 6 silver, and 9 bronze, marking a major milestone in the country's gymnastics history.

A celebratory reception was held at Kuwait International Airport to welcome the team. Leading the reception were Fahad Al-Soula, President of the Arab and Kuwaiti Gymnastics Federations; Abdul Latif Murad, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Gymnastics Federation; and Hessa Al-Sanea, Board Member and Chairwoman of the Women's Committee. Parents of the athletes were also present and were honored with flower bouquets as part of the celebration.

Al-Soula expressed immense pride in the achievements of the national team, commending the dedication of the athletes and the efforts

of the technical and administrative staff.

He dedicated the victory to Kuwait's political leadership and the broader sporting community, acknowledging the continued support of the Public Authority for Sport and the Kuwait Olympic Committee in overcoming challenges faced by the federation.

Secretary-General Abdul Latif Murad hailed the achievement as the result of rigorous preparation and strong commitment from the athletes, both male and female. He emphasized that despite their young age, the players rose to the occasion and demonstrated exceptional performance on the international stage.

Murad also highlighted ongoing challenges facing the federation. "We are still lacking essential infrastructure," he said, noting the absence of a dedicated gymnastics facility and up-to-date equipment necessary for skill development. As a result, the federation continues to depend on international training camps in countries with advanced gymnastics programs.



A warm welcome for the Kuwaiti gymnastics team.

Shipping, Freight and Logistics

Arab Times Special Supplement

The Shipping Industry in Kuwait: A Strategic Maritime Hub in the Gulf

Kuwait, a small yet economically significant country in the Arabian Gulf, holds a strategic position in the global maritime landscape. Though its coastline stretches only about 500 kilometers along the northwestern shore of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait has cultivated a robust shipping industry that plays a vital role in its trade, oil exports, and economic diversification efforts.

Strategic Location and Historical Context

Historically, Kuwait has leveraged its location at the crossroads of trade routes between India, East Africa, and the Levant. Before the discovery of oil, Kuwaiti dhows carried goods and pearls across the Gulf. With the advent of oil in the 20th century, the country transitioned from a traditional maritime trading hub to an oil-exporting powerhouse. Today, the shipping industry in Kuwait remains a critical component of the national economy, heavily tied to the export of petroleum and import of consumer goods.

Major Ports and Infrastructure

Kuwait's shipping operations are primarily supported by three major commercial ports:

Shuwaikh Port: Located near Kuwait City, this is the most significant commercial port in the country. It handles a large share of Kuwait's imports and is equipped to accommodate container ships, bulk carriers, and general cargo vessels.

Shuaiba Port: Situated in the south, Shuaiba is both an industrial and commercial port. It primarily handles oil exports and petrochemi-

cals, serving the adjacent industrial zone.

Doha Port: Once the primary port before the development of Shuwaikh, Doha Port now primarily supports smaller cargo vessels, local trade, and maritime services.

In addition to these, Mina Al-Ahmadi is a specialized oil port operated by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), crucial for exporting crude oil and petroleum products.

Role in Oil Exports

Kuwait's shipping industry is dominated by oil logistics. The country is one of the world's leading crude oil exporters, and much of this oil is transported via tankers operated by the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). KOTC plays a central role in ensuring the efficient and secure delivery of crude oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and petroleum products to markets worldwide.

With around 90% of Kuwait's export revenue coming from hydrocarbons, maritime shipping remains vital to the country's economic stability and its link to global markets.

Efforts Toward Diversification and Modernization

In recent years, Kuwait has initiated plans to modernize and expand its maritime infrastructure as part of its "Vision 2035" development strategy. A cornerstone of this initiative is the Mubarak Al Kaber Port, currently under construction on Boubyan Island. Once completed, it will be one of the largest ports in the



Gulf region, with ambitions to turn Kuwait into a key regional transshipment hub.

This mega-project is expected to enhance Kuwait's position in global supply chains, attract foreign investment, and support broader economic diversification beyond oil. The port will be integrated with rail and road networks, facilitating seamless movement of goods across the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Iraq.

Despite its strengths, Kuwait's shipping sector faces several challenges. Regional geopolitical tensions, such as those in the Strait of Hormuz, pose risks to maritime security. Additionally, competition from neighboring ports in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar makes it imperative for Kuwait to continuously

invest in infrastructure, technology, and logistics services to maintain competitiveness.

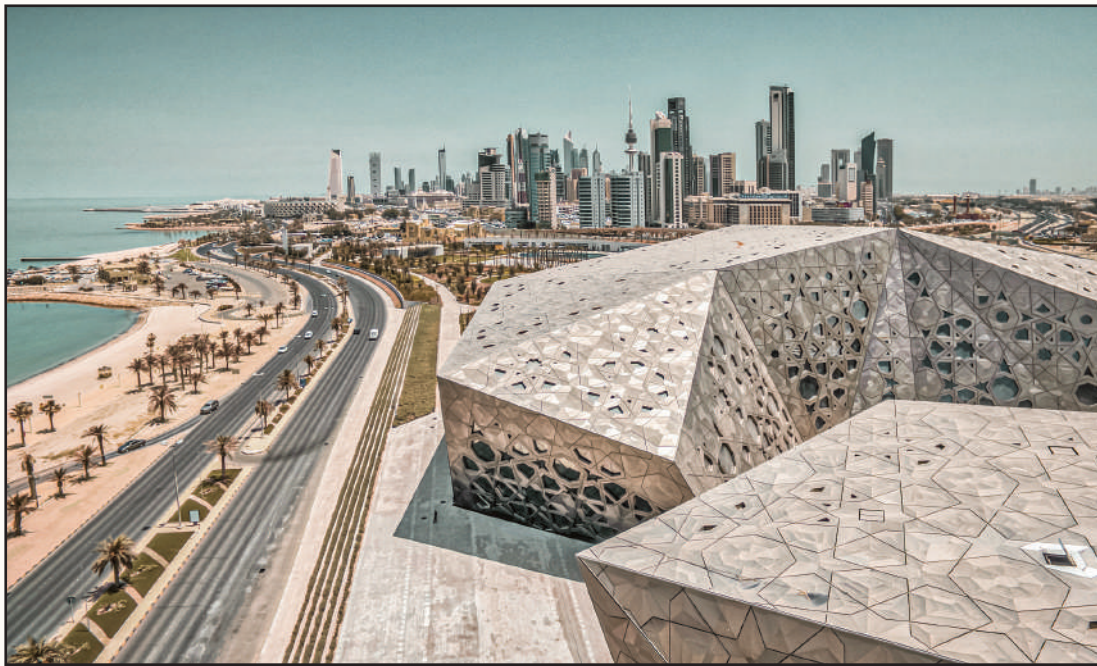
Future Outlook

The outlook for Kuwait's shipping industry is optimistic. As global trade continues to evolve and shift toward Asia, Kuwait's location and investment in port infrastructure position it well to benefit from increased maritime activity.

Continued expansion of logistics services, digitalization of port operations, and a focus on sustainability will be key to maintaining long-term growth.

Moreover, Kuwait's strategic efforts to become a logistics hub for northern Gulf states, including Iraq and Iran, could significantly elevate its regional importance in the coming decades.

Strategies for Efficient Shipping, Freight and Logistics Operations



IN an increasingly interconnected world, the efficiency of shipping, freight, and logistics is vital to business success and economic growth. The ability to move goods swiftly, safely, and cost-effectively not only meets consumer expectations but also boosts profitability and sustainability. With rising fuel costs, global competition, and environmental concerns, companies must continually innovate and refine their logistics operations. Here are key strategies to improve efficiency in this critical sector.

Embrace Technology and Automation

Digital transformation is the cornerstone of modern logistics. Implementing technologies like Transportation Management Systems (TMS), Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) helps businesses track inventory, optimize routes, and manage orders more effectively. Real-time tracking and predictive analytics provide greater visibility and decision-making power.

Automation also plays a crucial role. Automated sorting systems, robotic pickers, and self-driving forklifts reduce human error and speed up warehouse operations. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning can forecast demand, detect inefficiencies, and suggest process improvements.

Optimize Supply Chain Networks

Efficient logistics start with a well-designed supply chain network. Businesses should regularly analyze their supplier locations, distribution centers, and customer bases to ensure the most strategic placement. Tools like network modeling and simulation software can help identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies in current setups.

Additionally, consolidating shipments, minimizing empty truckloads, and choosing the right mode of transportation — be it road, rail, air, or sea — are key to reducing transit time and cost.

Improve Inventory Management

Poor inventory management leads to stockouts, overstocking, and increased holding costs. Adopting just-in-time (JIT) inventory systems, where goods arrive exactly when needed, reduces waste and frees up storage space. Businesses can also leverage demand forecasting tools to ensure optimal stock levels at all times.

Barcoding and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) systems improve accuracy in tracking inventory movements, which enhances warehouse efficiency and reduces errors during picking and packing.

Focus on Sustainability

Efficiency and sustainability go hand-in-hand. Green logistics not only reduce environmental impact but can also result in long-term cost savings. Companies are increasingly using electric or hybrid delivery vehicles, optimizing packaging to reduce waste, and utilizing eco-friendly materials.

Consolidating shipments and improving route planning can also cut fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions. Moreover, some governments offer tax incentives or grants for companies investing in sustainable logistics solutions.

Train and Empower Staff

Even with the best technology, human capital remains essential. Providing regular training for logistics and warehouse staff ensures they are up-to-date with the latest systems and safety protocols. Cross-training employees to perform multiple roles also adds flexibility and resilience to operations.

Empowering staff to identify inefficiencies and suggest improvements can lead to valuable insights from those on the front lines of logistics operations.

Strengthen Collaboration Across the Supply Chain

Efficient logistics require strong communication and coordination between suppliers, carriers, and customers. Shared platforms and integrated systems foster collaboration and transparency. When all parties have access to the same real-time data, they can make informed decisions quickly, especially during disruptions.

Building strong relationships with reliable carriers and third-party logistics providers (3PLs) also ensures consistency and reliability in transportation services.

Efficiency in shipping, freight, and logistics is no longer optional — it's a competitive necessity. By embracing technology, optimizing supply chains, managing inventory smartly, and fostering collaboration, businesses can reduce costs, improve service levels, and adapt more quickly to market changes. Ultimately, a streamlined logistics operation is key to delivering the right product, at the right time, to the right place — every time.

Why Today's Container Ships Are Bigger Than Ever – and Still Growing

Modern container ships are the giants of the seas — floating mega-structures that can carry tens of thousands of containers across oceans in a single voyage. These vessels, often longer than four football fields and taller than many buildings, are central to global trade, transporting over 80% of all goods shipped internationally. But how is it possible for these ships to be so massive? The answer lies in a combination of engineering innovation, economic demand, and evolving port infrastructure.

Economies of Scale Drive Size

One of the main reasons for the increasing size of container ships is economic efficiency. Larger ships can carry more containers with relatively lower fuel and operating costs per unit of cargo. This concept, known as economies of scale, means that shipping companies can reduce costs and emissions per container by using larger vessels.

For example, a vessel that can carry 24,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) costs only slightly more to operate than one with a capacity of 14,000 TEUs, yet it delivers a significantly greater volume of goods. As global trade volumes have grown — particularly between Asia and Europe — shipping companies have responded by commissioning ever-larger vessels to stay competitive.

Advanced Hull Design and Materials

A key factor in building such enormous ships is the design of the hull, the body of the ship. Modern container ships have wide, flat-bottomed hulls designed for maximum stability and buoyancy. These hulls are made from high-tensile steel that is both strong and relatively lightweight, allowing the structure to support massive cargo loads without compromising safety.

Engineers also use finite element analysis and advanced simulation tools to test designs under various stress conditions, ensuring the vessel can withstand waves, wind, and cargo weight. Bulbous bows and hydrodynamic hull shapes reduce drag, improving fuel efficiency and stability.

Powerful and Efficient Engines

Despite their massive size, modern container ships are surprisingly fuel-efficient. They are powered by low-speed two-stroke diesel engines designed to operate at optimum efficiency over long distances. Some of the largest engines in the world are found on container ships, capable of generating more than 80,000 kilowatts of power.

These engines are paired with slow cruising speeds — usually around 18 to 22 knots — which reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Innovations such as air lubrication systems, waste heat recovery, and alternative fuels (like LNG or methanol) are becoming more common to meet stricter environmental regulations.

Modular Container Stacking

The design of modern container ships also makes them efficient at carrying cargo. Containers are stacked in modular rows both above and below deck. The decks are reinforced and structured to allow precise, vertical stacking of containers, sometimes up to 10 tiers high.

Computer systems and onboard software assist in determining the optimal loading pattern for weight distribution, access, and balance. Specialized lashing systems secure containers against shifting during rough seas.

Port Infrastructure and Global Support Systems

Large container ships wouldn't be viable without the global infrastructure to support them. In recent decades, major ports like Rotterdam, Singapore, Shanghai, and Los Angeles have expanded and modernized their facilities to handle ultra-large vessels. These upgrades include deeper harbors, larger cranes, and automated cargo handling systems.

Additionally, nautical charts, tug services, and pilotage operations have been adapted to accommodate larger ships, allowing them to safely navigate through tight channels and busy shipping lanes.

Limitations and the Future

There are, however, limits to how big container ships can get. Physical constraints like the depth of harbors, canal dimensions (e.g., Suez or Panama), and the risk of port congestion place practical boundaries on vessel size. Furthermore, disruptions like the 2021 Suez Canal blockage have highlighted the logistical and economic risks associated with ultra-large vessels.

As the shipping industry seeks to balance size with flexibility and sustainability, future innovations may focus less on sheer scale and more on smart shipping technologies, greener propulsion, and fleet diversification.

Conclusion

The enormous size of today's container ships is a product of advanced engineering, global trade demands, and a complex web of supporting infrastructure. These vessels represent the peak of maritime logistics—carefully designed to move the modern world's goods with maximum efficiency across vast oceans.



IT gives me great pleasure to present to our esteemed readers this special supplement on Shipping, Freight and Logistics highlighting Kuwait's strategic position as a vital hub for imports and exports. This growing role necessitates efficient and reliable shipping, freight and logistics services to support the country's expanding economic and trade activities.

The supplement features a spotlight on the wide range of services offered by leading shipping companies in Kuwait. It also provides comprehensive insights into various aspects of the shipping and logistics industry, underscoring its critical importance to the national economy.

There is a common misconception in today's media landscape regarding the relevance of print media. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize why print media continues to play a vital role.

Print offers a tangible, focused reading experience that digital platforms cannot replicate. Newspapers and magazines are often perceived as more credible and trustworthy sources of information. Moreover, print content enjoys a longer shelf life and is easily accessible to a wide audience, making it a valuable medium in today's fast-paced world.

We hope you enjoy this special supplement and invite you to share your thoughts and feedback with us.

Happy reading!

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Shipping, Freight and Logistics

Arab Times Special Supplement

The Future of Shipping, Logistics and the Freight Industry in Gulf Countries



THE shipping logistics and freight industry in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries — comprising Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman — is undergoing a profound transformation. As global trade patterns shift, technological advancements accelerate, and regional economies diversify, the Gulf region stands at the forefront of redefining maritime logistics. The future of this sector in the Gulf is poised to be shaped by investments in infrastructure, digital innovation, sustainability initiatives, and strategic geopolitical positioning.

One of the most significant drivers of change is the massive investment in infrastructure by Gulf nations. The UAE's Jebel Ali Port, one of the world's largest and most advanced, exemplifies this trend. Similarly, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims to transform the country into a global logistics hub, with ports like King Abdullah Port and the expansion of Dammam and Jeddah Islamic Ports gaining prominence. These efforts are designed to increase the region's share of global maritime trade and reduce reliance on oil revenues. The development of multimodal logistics zones — integrating ports, airports, and rail — will further enhance freight movement efficiency.

Digitalization is another cornerstone of the industry's future. Ports and shipping companies across the Gulf are increasingly adopting technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and digital twin modeling. These tools improve cargo tracking, automate customs procedures, and optimize supply chain management. For instance, Dubai's DP World has launched digital platforms like "CARGOES" to streamline trade logistics and port operations. As these technologies mature, real-time decision-making, predictive maintenance, and reduced operational costs will become standard across Gulf shipping networks.

Sustainability is also gaining ground as an essential part of the logistics strategy. With the International Maritime Organization (IMO) pushing for lower carbon emissions,

Gulf countries are investing in green port infrastructure and cleaner maritime fuels. The UAE has committed to net-zero emissions by 2050 and is encouraging ports and logistics firms to follow suit. This includes deploying electrified cargo handling equipment, using alternative fuels like LNG, and integrating renewable energy sources into port operations. These efforts not only align with global environmental standards but also appeal to international trade partners prioritizing eco-friendly supply chains.

Geopolitics and regional cooperation will continue to shape the industry's future. The strategic location of Gulf countries — at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa — makes them natural gateways for East-West trade. The normalization of relations between Gulf states and Israel, ongoing collaborations with China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and partnerships with Western countries enhance their trade corridors and logistics connectivity. Regional projects such as the GCC railway network will further link Gulf states internally and externally, reducing road congestion and increasing freight capacity.

However, challenges remain. The industry must grapple with fluctuating oil prices, geopolitical tensions, and the risk of overcapacity due to rapid infrastructure expansion. Moreover, cybersecurity threats, climate-related disruptions, and the need to upskill the logistics workforce are pressing concerns. Addressing these will require coordinated policy-making, public-private partnerships, and resilience planning.

In conclusion, the future of shipping logistics and freight in Gulf countries is promising and dynamic. With strategic investment, digital innovation, and a growing commitment to sustainability, the Gulf is positioning itself as a global maritime leader. If managed effectively, the region's shipping sector can become not only a cornerstone of economic diversification but also a model for smart and sustainable logistics in the 21st century.

Key Trends in the Shipping and Logistics Sector in Gulf Countries:

Focus on Kuwait and the Wider Region

The shipping and logistics sector in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Kuwait, is undergoing a significant transformation. Driven by economic diversification, digitalization, infrastructure investments, and shifting trade routes, the region is rapidly evolving into a global logistics hub. As Gulf nations seek to reduce reliance on oil exports and strengthen non-oil sectors, logistics is emerging as a strategic pillar of long-term growth.

Massive Infrastructure Development

One of the most visible trends in the Gulf shipping sector is large-scale investment in port and logistics infrastructure. Countries like the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait are expanding existing ports and constructing new ones to increase capacity and efficiency.

In Kuwait, the flagship Mubarak Al Kabeer Port project on Boubyan Island exemplifies this trend. Designed to become a key transshipment hub for northern Gulf countries, the port will integrate with regional rail and road networks. Similarly, the UAE's Jebel Ali Port and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Port are expanding to accommodate larger vessels and increased container traffic.

These developments aim to position Gulf ports as essential links in global trade routes connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Digitalization and Smart Logistics

Digital transformation is playing a crucial role in modernizing logistics operations across the Gulf. Technologies such as blockchain, AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), and cloud computing are being implemented to enhance supply chain visibility, reduce costs, and improve customer service.

Ports in the region are adopting Port Community Systems (PCS) and Terminal Operating Systems (TOS) that streamline port operations, reduce paperwork, and allow real-time tracking of shipments. In Kuwait, logistics companies are investing in digital platforms to automate freight forwarding, customs clearance, and inventory management.

The pandemic accelerated this trend, pushing companies to adopt contactless and remote solutions to maintain supply chain continuity.

Focus on Economic Diversification

With a collective goal of reducing dependency on oil, Gulf countries are investing heavily in trade, manufacturing, and logistics as part of their economic visions. Kuwait's Vision 2035, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and the UAE's Economic Diversification Strategy all prioritize logistics as a key sector for non-oil growth.

These initiatives encourage private sector participation, foreign investment, and public-private partnerships in the development of logistics parks, free trade zones, and multimodal transport systems.

As part of this strategy, Kuwait is seeking to become a regional logistics gateway for Iraq and Central Asia,

enhancing its relevance beyond energy exports.

Regional Integration and Cross-Border Connectivity

Gulf countries are increasingly investing in cross-border infrastructure to enhance regional trade. Projects like the GCC Railway, once completed, will connect six countries via a 2,117 km rail network, significantly improving overland cargo movement.

For Kuwait, which shares borders with Iraq and Saudi Arabia, improving cross-border connectivity is crucial. Investments in customs modernization, joint border posts, and harmonized regulations are gradually easing the flow of goods across the region.

Increased regional integration is expected to reduce logistics costs and increase the competitiveness of Gulf ports and transport corridors.

Green and Sustainable Logistics

Environmental concerns are beginning to shape logistics policies across the Gulf. Compliance with IMO 2020 sulfur emission regulations, efforts to reduce carbon footprints, and the adoption of cleaner fuels are gaining momentum.

Several ports in the region are introducing shore power, electrified equipment, and waste management systems to enhance sustainability. Kuwait, for instance, is exploring solar-powered facilities and eco-friendly logistics hubs as part of its environmental commitments.

Logistics providers are also looking to optimize transportation networks to reduce empty runs and increase fuel efficiency.

Growing Role of E-commerce

The rapid rise of e-commerce in the Gulf is creating new demands on logistics infrastructure. Consumers expect faster delivery, real-time tracking, and seamless returns, prompting logistics firms to invest in last-mile delivery, fulfillment centers, and automated warehouses.

In Kuwait, the growing number of online shoppers has pushed both global and local logistics companies to expand their services. Companies are leveraging technology and local partnerships to meet rising consumer expectations.

E-commerce logistics is expected to be one of the fastest-growing segments in the region, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital shopping habits.

The shipping and logistics sector in Gulf countries, including Kuwait, is on the cusp of a new era. As governments invest in infrastructure, digital transformation, and regional cooperation, the region is positioning itself as a key player in global logistics. While challenges remain — such as geopolitical risks and the need for regulatory alignment — the overall trajectory points toward growth, innovation, and increased global integration.

By embracing these trends, Kuwait and its neighbors are not only enhancing their maritime and logistics capabilities but also laying the foundation for a diversified, knowledge-based economy in the years to come.

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A pioneering name in shipping industry in Kuwait



Service Offerings

Our shipping business was established in the 1950s, it now serves as the exclusive Kuwait agent for two major shipping lines: Cosco (China) and PIL (Singapore). We specialize in container cargo, general & break bulk cargo, RORO, heavy-lift project cargo, sea & air freight forwarding, customs clearance, and door delivery services.

Global Reach

We represent two global shipping lines:

- **Cosco:** One of the world's largest shipping companies serving 145+ countries and approximately 650 ports globally



Nishad Victor
General Manager

■ **PIL:** Singapore-based carrier serving nearly 500 locations worldwide

Competitive Position

Operating since the 1960s as agents for leading shipping lines demonstrates our strong market presence. The decades-long trust from our shipping partners validates our ability to meet their objectives. Our experienced local

teams, customer service focus, and market adaptability have established us as valued industry partners.

Market Environment

Our industry now navigates complex dynamics including Kuwait's consumption-driven market, Red Sea route disruptions, geopolitical uncertainties, regional competition and evolving tariff structures.

Strategic Outlook

Kuwait's economic diversification initiatives present significant opportunities, with the Mubarak Al Kabeer port development serving as a cornerstone project. This emerging logistics hub is positioned to attract major global shipping and logistics corporations, creating a foundation for industry expansion and regional influence.

Al Bahar Shipping will soon be celebrating a major milestone, 75 years of superior customer service, reliability, and trusted partnerships



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Shipping, Freight and Logistics

Arab Times Special Supplement

AL-RASHED INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CO.

Regional Experience with Global Vision

The most trusted shipping company in Kuwait over the decades



Ravi Varrier
CEO

It was in 1911 that the founder of the Al-Rashed Group, the late Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Al-Rashed had laid down the foundation of a trading company with a commitment to advance and diversify the business. His vision was focused on the future infrastructure development and industrial rise of Kuwait from a fishing and pearl diving village to a major oil producing metropolitan state.

Since the discovery of oil in Kuwait, Al-Rashed Group has been participating in major infrastructure and industrial government projects. The foundations of the business continue to be based on quality, reputation, customer service and performance. The highest emphasis is placed on human resources and the deployment of the latest in information technology within the Group's business operations.

Leveraging more than five decades of experience in the shipping and logistics industry, Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. offers unique solutions that cater to specific customer requirements. Blending regional experience with global vision and extensive capacity, the company has spread its wings over all aspects of vessel

handling at Kuwait and Iraq ports. Along with air and ocean freight, the company handles inland transportation, project logistics, and integrated supply chain solutions that allow them to offer integrated services to customers.

Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. in association with proactive, reliable global partners, and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after-sales machinery is positioned to lead the way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world. Treating each challenge as an opportunity that can be turned to better service to their customers, the company leads the way in providing services that are unique to the industry, leaving competition far behind in its wake.

Elaborating on the company's strategies, **Ravi Varrier, CEO of Al Rashed International Shipping Co.**, said, "To meet the challenges in a highly competitive business environment, we constantly assess our objectives and business activities to consistently provide innovative solutions and services to our customers. In association with proactive, reliable, professional global partners and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after-sales machinery, we are positioned to lead the way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world."

Distinguished by a character that is humble and passionate, with a far-sighted mind and a crystal-clear vision for the future of the company, Mr. Varrier through his sincere leadership infuses his employees with dedication and loyalty. With a positive attitude and commitment to perseverance, the staff of Al Rashed International Shipping work cohesively towards one goal of providing the best products and services in the shipping and logistics industry.

The company's



Bassim Saud A. Al-Rashed
Chairman

vision is to be the undisputed regional leader providing uncompromising 360 logistics solutions through commitment to customer service, excellence in financial performance and foster the spirit of teamwork and mutual growth among our people with a desire to excel.

To achieve this vision, the company is committed to consistently deliver ex-

traordinary value to our customers and stakeholders through the building of passionate, empowered and high performance teams.

Dynamic solutions are vital for the energy business. Oil and gas logistics have traditionally been facing business challenges of maintaining quality performance, timely deliveries, and protecting the environment. Logistics to balance specialized services and safe transportation requirement, in an environment of ever-increasing client demands simultaneously, while complying with all necessary local regulations within time-limits in a meticulous manner.

Freight forwarding and contract logistics continue to be a growth industry and Al-Rashed has already established a strong presence in the GCC, and many multi-national companies are using their services. The strategy is to focus their market with a more flexible business model, increased expertise and better IT tools with the trend.

To bring out the best in people, it is important to put sincere efforts in everything we do. After all, small things make a big difference," says **Pradeep Menon, CFO of Al Rashed International Shipping Co.**

He adds, "Today, we are an established player in our own space and have created a strong foundation for future growth. Our continued initiatives towards cost rationalization and effective improvement will take us to the next level. I am confident that by focusing on delivering better services and value to our clients, we will maintain a strong and sustainable business."

We continue to strengthen our core operations while exploring diversified activities connected to the shipping industry. As a



Pradeep Menon
CFO

reliable logistics service provider, we are committed to offering expert solutions tailored to the needs of our clients.

Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. has been awarded the quality management system certification with UKAS accreditation as per the ISO 9001, 18001 and 14001. This certification acknowledges the Quality system maintenance in the company's activities of shipping, vessel handling, air and ocean freight, inland transportation, project logistics, warehousing and integrated supply chain solutions.

Today Al-Rashed International Shipping Co is an established player in their own space and has created a strong foundation for future growth. Their continued initiative towards cost rationalization and effective improvement will take them to the next level of growth. Based on their continued delivery of premium services and value to their customers, they will have a strong and sustainable business over the long term. They continue to focus on and strengthen their core business, and look for every opportunity for diversified activities connected with the shipping industry.



We make reliable logistics, timely delivery, and unwavering commitment to your satisfaction our priority.

WHO WE ARE

One of the leaders of the Kuwait Marine Industry, Al Rashed International Shipping Co a division of The Al Rashed Group a long established trading company founded in 1911 by Late Mr Abdul Aziz Abdul Mohsin Al Rashed, from the highly respected Al Rashed family

WHY CHOOSE US?

We deliver exceptional logistics services with a focus on efficiency, reliability, and customer satisfaction. Our team combines expertise and experience to handle shipments of any scale, from planning to delivery. Trust us to exceed your expectations and manage your logistics with precision and care.



SHIPPING

- | Port Agency
- | Liner Agency
- | NVOCC
- | Cruise Vessel Agents
- | Oil Tankers



MARINE

- | Offshore Agency
- | Crew Change
- | Survey
- | Shiphandling Services



LOGISTICS

- | Sea Freight
- | Air Freight
- | Project Logistics
- | Overland Trucking
- | De-Consolidation
- | Customs Brokerage



WAREHOUSING

- | Warehousing
- | Distribution Services

Shipping, Freight and Logistics

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Kuwait's Path to Logistics Leadership:

Building a Regional Shipping Powerhouse by 2035

Kuwait is strategically positioning itself to become a leading logistics and shipping hub over the next decade, leveraging its geographic location, infrastructure investments, and technological advancements.

Strategic Location and Infrastructure Development

Situated at the northern tip of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait offers direct access to major shipping routes connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. This prime location is being enhanced through significant infrastructure projects. The Mubarak Al Kabeer Port on Bubiyan Island, part of the Silk City initiative and China's Belt and Road Initiative, is a key development. The port aims to serve as a vital link for trade between Central Asia and the Middle East.

Complementing this is the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway, a 36-kilometer bridge completed in 2019. This causeway significantly reduces travel time between Kuwait City and the northern economic zones, facilitating smoother transportation of goods and integration of logistics operations.

Modernizing Ports and Logistics Infrastructure

Kuwait is investing in upgrading its existing ports to handle increased cargo volumes efficiently. The Shuwaikh Port is undergoing a redevelopment project valued at KD48.8 million, aiming to extend dock lengths and enhance machinery and storage facilities. Similarly,

Shuaiba Port is being upgraded to support offshore drilling and exploration activities, reflecting its role as the country's primary industrial port.

The Kuwait Ports Authority is also embracing the concept of smart ports. Initiatives include implementing a maritime single window system to link multiple ports, establishing a smart port to automate operations, and creating the country's first dry port to streamline the flow of goods and reduce border congestion.

Development of Logistics Cities

To further bolster its logistics capabilities, Kuwait plans to develop four logistics cities, covering 1.9 million square meters. These cities are designed to specialize in areas such as e-commerce, re-export activities, and warehousing, aiming to attract foreign investment and support small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Expansion of Air Transport Facilities

Kuwait International Airport is undergoing significant expansion with the construction of Terminal 2, designed to increase the airport's capacity by 25-50 million passengers annually. Scheduled for completion by the last quarter of 2026, the terminal aims to be one of the world's largest environmentally friendly airport projects and is a crucial component of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Through strategic infrastructure projects, modernization of



ports, development of logistics cities, technological integration, and expansion of air transport

facilities, Kuwait is laying the groundwork to become a central logistics and shipping hub in the

region. These initiatives not only aim to diversify the economy beyond oil but also position Kuwait

as a competitive player in global trade and logistics over the next decade.

Kuwait: A Strategic Trade Hub in the Gulf

KUWAIT, a small yet influential country located at the northern edge of the Arabian Gulf, holds a strategic position in the global trade landscape. Despite its modest geographic size and population, Kuwait's location, wealth in natural resources, and developed infrastructure make it a vital player in regional and international commerce. Understanding what makes Kuwait strategically important for trade — as well as its key imports and exports — sheds light on its role in the global economy.

Strategic Geographic Location

Kuwait is situated between major Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and Iraq, and directly across the Gulf from Iran. This placement makes it a gateway to the Middle East and a natural bridge between Asia and Europe. The Port of Shuwaikh and Port of Shuaiba serve as major entry and exit points for goods, connecting international shipping routes with the broader Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

Furthermore, Kuwait is part of the Northern Arabian Gulf's strategic maritime corridor, allowing easy access for cargo vessels. Its proximity to key energy markets and shipping lanes like the Strait of Hormuz enhances its logistical significance. This strategic location has encouraged the development of free zones and trade partnerships that further bolster its attractiveness as a trading hub.

Rich Natural Resources and Export Capabilities

With one of the world's largest proven oil reserves — estimated at over 100 billion barrels — Kuwait is a become a major oil exporter. The state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) oversees petroleum production and export, making Kuwait one of the top oil suppliers to countries such as India, China, Japan, and South Korea.

Apart from crude oil, refined petroleum products like diesel, fuel oil, and lubricants also form a significant portion of its exports. Petrochemicals and fertilizers are other important exports, stemming from the country's integrated oil-based industrial sector.

The revenue generated from these exports funds infrastructure, healthcare, education, and diversi-

fication efforts, giving Kuwait economic leverage and influence in regional trade affairs.

Key Imports: Diversifying to Meet Demand

While Kuwait is a major exporter of oil, it relies heavily on imports for consumer goods, food, industrial machinery, and technology. Due to limited arable land and fresh water, Kuwait imports most of its foodstuffs, including grains, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and meat products. Countries like India, the United States, China, and the UAE are major trade partners supplying these essentials.

Kuwait also imports vehicles, electrical machinery, electronics, construction materials, and pharmaceuticals to support its growing infrastructure and population needs. The high standard of living and consumer demand among Kuwaiti citizens and expatriates further increase the diversity and volume of imports.

Trade Agreements and Economic Initiatives

Kuwait is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which promotes economic and trade integration among Gulf countries. The GCC Customs Union and common market help facilitate the free flow of goods, services, and capital across member states, enhancing Kuwait's role as a trade corridor.

Additionally, the government is pushing forward with its "New Kuwait 2035" vision — a long-term development plan aimed at reducing oil dependency and transforming Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub. Major investments in logistics infrastructure, such as the Mubarak Al Kabeer Port, aim to position Kuwait as a critical node in the Belt and Road Initiative, enhancing its global trade connectivity.

Kuwait's strategic geographic location, vast oil reserves, and trade-friendly policies make it a key player in global commerce. Its significance lies not only in what it exports — mainly oil and petroleum products — but also in its growing import market for consumer and industrial goods. As the country continues to invest in diversification and infrastructure, its role in regional and international trade is poised to grow even further, reinforcing its position as a vital link in global supply chains.

Streamlining the Future:

Strategies for Efficient Freight, Shipping, and Logistics Operations



In an increasingly interconnected world, the efficiency of shipping, freight, and logistics is vital to business success and economic growth. The ability to move goods swiftly, safely, and cost-effectively not only meets consumer expectations but also boosts profitability and sustainability. With rising fuel costs, global competition, and environmental concerns, companies must continually innovate and refine their logistics operations. Here are key strategies to improve efficiency in this critical sector.

Embrace Technology and Automation

Digital transformation is the cornerstone of modern logistics. Implementing technologies like Transportation Management Systems (TMS), Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) helps businesses track inventory, optimize routes, and manage orders more effectively. Real-time tracking and predictive analytics provide greater visibility and decision-making power.

Automation also plays a crucial role. Automated sorting systems, robotic pickers, and self-driving forklifts reduce human error and speed up warehouse operations. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning can forecast demand, detect inefficiencies, and suggest process improvements.

Optimize Supply Chain Networks

Efficient logistics start with a well-designed supply chain network. Businesses should regularly analyze their supplier locations, distribution centers, and customer bases to ensure the most strategic placement. Tools like network modeling and simulation software can help identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies in current setups.

Additionally, consolidating shipments, minimizing empty truckloads, and choosing the right mode of transportation — be it road, rail, air, or sea — are key to reducing transit time and cost.

Improve Inventory Management

Poor inventory management leads to stockouts, overstocking, and increased holding costs. Adopting just-in-time (JIT) inventory systems, where goods arrive exactly when needed, reduces waste and frees up storage space. Businesses can also leverage demand forecasting tools to ensure optimal stock levels at all times. Barcoding and RFID (Radio Frequency Identifica-

tion) systems improve accuracy in tracking inventory movements, which enhances warehouse efficiency and reduces errors during picking and packing.

Focus on Sustainability

Efficiency and sustainability go hand-in-hand. Green logistics not only reduce environmental impact but can also result in long-term cost savings. Companies are increasingly using electric or hybrid delivery vehicles, optimizing packaging to reduce waste, and utilizing eco-friendly materials.

Consolidating shipments and improving route planning can also cut fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions. Moreover, some governments offer tax incentives or grants for companies investing in sustainable logistics solutions.

Train and Empower Staff

Even with the best technology, human capital remains essential. Providing regular training for logistics and warehouse staff ensures they are up-to-date with the latest systems and safety protocols. Cross-training employees to perform multiple roles also adds flexibility and resilience to operations.

Empowering staff to identify inefficiencies and suggest improvements can lead to valuable insights from those on the front lines of logistics operations.

Strengthen Collaboration Across the Supply Chain

Efficient logistics require strong communication and coordination between suppliers, carriers, and customers. Shared platforms and integrated systems foster collaboration and transparency. When all parties have access to the same real-time data, they can make informed decisions quickly, especially during disruptions.

Building strong relationships with reliable carriers and third-party logistics providers (3PLs) also ensures consistency and reliability in transportation services.

Efficiency in shipping, freight, and logistics is no longer optional — it's a competitive necessity. By embracing technology, optimizing supply chains, managing inventory smartly, and fostering collaboration, businesses can reduce costs, improve service levels, and adapt more quickly to market changes. Ultimately, a streamlined logistics operation is key to delivering the right product, at the right time, to the right place — every time.



Shipping, Freight and Logistics

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Seguro Shipping

A prominent name in the shipping business in Kuwait

What are the main challenges your company faces in running the shipping business smoothly?

Costing: We must determine the appropriate price. If it's excessively high, we lose clients. If it's excessively low, we don't earn sufficient income. Customer and product analysis will be conducted prior to providing a quote.

Competition: The market has numerous freight forwarders, so we must build a bigger database of clients and secure additional business.

Technology: Staying updated with innovative business concepts and marketing tactics is essential for maintaining our competitive edge.

Profit: We must make sure that we generate enough revenue after accounting for all expenses.

Connections: it is essential to nurture positive connections with liners to secure more favorable rates.

Guidelines: It is essential to adhere to all the rules and regulations within their sector.

How would you rate your company's success in today's highly competitive market?

We are concentrating on our current clients and their requirements.

We are aware of our market competitors and their products.

We consistently focus on our marketing efforts.

We are seeking the top talent in the field.

Reducing expenses whenever needed.

We are attempting to test various products and services.

What difficulties do you encounter from time to time in managing the business?

When employees lack specific targets and objectives, it can be simple to underachieve what's anticipated. Effectively convey objectives and specify anticipated outcomes to every member of your team. In this manner, if any outcomes are lacking, you can confront the issue directly by evaluating expectations against actual results. Ensure that you're consistently tracking real performance against these established goals. This allows you to identify any issues early and give helpful feedback, which aids in preventing bigger problems later. If performance fails to improve, now is the moment to pursue a transparent and just disciplinary procedure.

What's is your role in the current shipping business?

Create and execute business development plans to accomplish the organization's sales targets and aims. Discover and chase new business possibilities by prospecting, evaluating, and finalizing agreements. Establish and nurture robust connections with current clients.



Mohammed Fanas
General Manager

What type of services does your company offer to its clients?

Land freight

Seguro offers unmatched road transport services in Kuwait and the GCC region, possessing extensive expertise in land freight, we are dedicated to ensuring complete client satisfaction. From complete trailer loads to specialized logistics, we provide the most adaptable and reliable services with economical delivery of individually packaged packages. We collaborate with industry leaders and our carriers to ensure that your products reach their destination on time. Tracking services will consistently inform you about the location of your item. No matter your sector, our experts will guarantee that land freight reaches its destination safely and punctually. To deliver tailored road services that align with our customers' needs, we fully grasp the importance of safe cargo management and prompt delivery, along with optimized speed and routes. We provide complete openness and adaptability in every facet of land freight, encompassing information sharing, management, and operations. We function in Kuwait and GCC nations with an impressive fleet of car carriers, refrigerated trucks, side loaders, low bed trailers, and curtain-sided trailers. We have garnered praise for our tailored, affordable, reliable, and prompt delivery services.



Sea freight

We provide ocean freight services of various dimensions, volumes, and sizes for time-sensitive, door-to-door ocean transport to and from all major ports. We have the ability to establish long-term contracts with ocean carriers that offer advantages in competitive pricing and scheduling flexibility. We can fulfill customer needs, which encompass consolidated shipments, full and partial charters, roll-on/roll-off freight transport, project cargo, and refrigerated containers. We are currently enhancing our system capabilities to offer improved sailing schedules, online shipment tracking, and comprehensive supply chain visibility. Our tailored freight forwarding services guarantee that shipments arrive at their destinations promptly and safely.

Specialized Services

Delivery from door to door, DDU and DDP shipments, Full Container Load (FCL), Less than Container Load (LCL), Breakbulk services, Personal and household items, Factory packing, Project cargo, Heavy lifts, Motor vehicles, Managing documentation.

Air freight

We provide a diverse array of air freight services characterized by the secure, dependable, and economical transportation of shipments. Our skilled and committed teams can manage the necessary documentation and ensure prompt customs clearance. Our reliable and established partnerships with various service providers in leading airlines, freight carriers, and charter services

allow us to acquire goods and services with meticulous care at each phase of the shipment.

How long does it typically take to clear shipments with local authorities, and how smooth is the process?

Customs clearance typically requires one to two days, provided the goods are sent in accordance with all customs regulations, which includes the precise submission of all essential documents and information for clearance. If something is not functioning properly, there will be hold-ups.

Which are the main countries you import from and export to?

We mainly source imports from various parts of the world, such as China, USA, UK, Germany, India, and eastern nations.

Our main export markets are Indian sectors, the GCC, and countries in the far east.

Are there any plans for business expansion in the near future?

Indeed, we currently operate branches in Dubai, Iraq, and India, and we are looking to expand into additional GCC nations too.

How does your company ensure compliance with international shipping regulations and standards?

Adequate documentation is the cornerstone of global shipping and customs adherence. Businesses should guarantee that all shipping documentation, such as commercial invoices, packing lists, and bills of lading is precise, thorough, and adheres to regulations.

Inside the Engine of Global Commerce: Understanding Freight Shipping



The shipping freight industry is the backbone of global trade, responsible for transporting goods across continents efficiently and cost-effectively. It encompasses a complex network of shipping companies, freight forwarders, ports, customs agents, and logistics providers that work together to ensure products move smoothly from one location to another.

At its core, freight shipping refers to the process of transporting commodities, merchandise, and cargo by land, sea, or air. The most prominent mode is ocean freight, which accounts for about 90% of international trade. Massive cargo ships transport everything from electronics and automobiles to food and raw materials across vast oceans.

The process begins when a shipper (usually a manufacturer or seller) needs to move goods from one place to another, often internationally. They may work directly with a carrier, which owns the ships, trucks, or planes, or more commonly with a freight forwarder. A freight forwarder acts as a logistics expert who coordinates the entire shipping process, handling documentation, booking cargo space, arranging pickup and delivery, and navigating customs regulations.

There are two primary types of ocean freight: Full Container Load (FCL) and Less than Container Load (LCL). In FCL, a single shipper uses an entire container for their goods, offering better control and often lower costs per unit. LCL involves combining shipments from multiple customers in one container, suitable for smaller loads but generally more expensive per unit.

After goods are packed and prepared for shipment, they are transported to a port where they're loaded onto a cargo vessel. These ports are equipped with advanced infrastructure, including cranes and warehouses, to manage the high volume of containers. Major ports like Shanghai, Singapore, and Rotterdam serve as critical hubs for global shipping routes.

Once the ship departs, it follows established sea routes to its destination, often passing through key chokepoints like the Suez Canal or the Panama Canal. During transit, shipping companies use tracking systems and logistics software to monitor cargo and ensure timely delivery.

When the ship arrives at its destination port, the containers are offloaded and pass through customs. This is a critical phase where proper documentation — such as bills of lading, commercial invoices, and packing lists — must be submitted for clearance. Customs agents verify that the cargo meets all regulatory requirements and that duties and taxes are paid.

After clearance, goods are transferred to inland transport — usually trucks or trains — for final delivery to their destination. This stage is known as "last-mile delivery" and can significantly impact overall shipping time and cost.

In addition to physical movement, digitalization is reshaping the freight industry. Technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are improving transparency, reducing delays, and streamlining communication between stakeholders. For example, real-time tracking allows customers to monitor their shipments, while AI can optimize routes and predict disruptions.

The shipping freight industry also faces challenges, including port congestion, fluctuating fuel prices, labor shortages, and environmental concerns. In recent years, there's been a growing push for greener practices, such as adopting low-emission fuels and more efficient vessels to reduce the industry's carbon footprint.

In summary, the shipping freight industry is a vital, intricate system that keeps global commerce moving. It relies on coordination between many players and increasingly on technology to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world. Whether delivering consumer goods or industrial equipment, the industry's role in connecting markets and enabling trade is indispensable.

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Untangling the Web: Understanding the Complexities of Shipping Logistics



Shipping logistics is one of the most intricate and vital components of the global supply chain. It involves the planning, coordination, and execution of transporting goods from one location to another — often across international borders. While the idea of moving products from point A to point B may sound straightforward, the reality is far more complex. From coordinating multiple modes of transport to navigating regulatory requirements and overcoming unpredictable challenges, shipping logistics demands precision, flexibility, and expertise.

One major complexity in shipping logistics is the multimodal nature of transport. Goods rarely move via a single method; instead, shipments often involve a combination of ocean freight, air freight, rail, and trucking. Each mode has its own advantages and constraints. Ocean freight is cost-effective for large, non-urgent shipments, but it's slower. Air freight is fast but expensive. Rail and road transport fill the gap, especially for inland distribution. Coordinating these different modes to ensure a smooth and timely transition at each stage is a logistical feat that requires detailed planning and strong partnerships.

Timing is another critical factor. Delays in one part of the chain can cascade through the entire system. For example, a delay at a port due to congestion, weather, or labor strikes can cause missed connections with trucks or trains, ultimately affecting delivery deadlines. Logistics managers must account for these risks and often build in contingencies to maintain service levels.

Customs and regulatory compliance add another layer of complexity. Every country has its own rules for importing and exporting goods, including documentation requirements, tariffs, inspections, and security protocols. A small error in paperwork — such as an incorrect tariff code or missing invoice — can cause significant delays or financial penalties. Shipping logistics professionals must stay up-to-date on international trade laws and ensure all documentation is accurate and compliant.

Inventory management is closely tied to shipping logistics. Companies must strike a balance between holding enough stock to meet customer demand and

avoiding excess inventory that ties up capital. This becomes especially challenging when lead times are long or unpredictable. Efficient logistics enable just-in-time (JIT) inventory strategies, which reduce storage costs but require flawless coordination and real-time visibility into shipment status.

Technology plays a central role in managing these complexities. Logistics software helps automate scheduling, track shipments, manage inventory, and optimize routes. Advanced analytics and artificial intelligence are being used to forecast demand, predict disruptions, and recommend contingency plans. The Internet of Things (IoT) enables real-time tracking of cargo conditions, such as temperature or humidity, which is critical for perishable goods.

Despite technological advancements, human expertise remains essential. Logistics professionals must constantly make decisions under pressure, resolve issues as they arise, and maintain communication with stakeholders across different time zones and languages. Building strong relationships with carriers, customs brokers, and warehouse operators is key to keeping the supply chain running smoothly.

Environmental concerns are also influencing shipping logistics. There is growing pressure to reduce carbon emissions, which has led to changes in routing, fuel choices, and packaging strategies. Companies are increasingly looking at how to make their logistics operations more sustainable while still meeting delivery expectations and cost targets.

In conclusion, shipping logistics is a highly complex and dynamic field that plays a critical role in global commerce. It requires the seamless integration of multiple transportation modes, strict adherence to international regulations, and the ability to adapt quickly to unforeseen challenges. As global trade continues to expand and evolve, the importance of efficient and resilient logistics systems will only grow. Understanding and managing these complexities is essential for businesses seeking to compete in the modern marketplace.

Charting the Future: Where Global Shipping Trade Is Heading in the Next Decade



As we move deeper into the 2020s, global shipping is entering a transformative period shaped by technology, environmental regulation, geopolitical shifts, and evolving trade dynamics. The next decade promises not only increased demand for maritime transport but also significant changes in how goods are shipped across the world's oceans. Here's a look at the key trends that will define the future of global shipping trade through 2035.

Green Shipping and Decarbonization

One of the most pressing challenges facing the maritime industry is the need to drastically reduce carbon emissions. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has set ambitious targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions from ships by at least 50% by 2050, compared to 2008 levels. Over the next decade, this will push the industry toward cleaner fuels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG), methanol, ammonia, and even hydrogen. Investment in electric and hybrid propulsion for short-sea shipping is also expected to grow.

Major shipping companies are already experimenting with alternative fuel vessels and carbon-neutral technologies. Ports will need to adapt too, providing infrastructure to support cleaner fuels and green logistics. The race to decarbonize could reshape ship design, routing decisions, and port operations globally.

Automation and Smart Shipping

The rise of automation will redefine shipping logistics. Smart ships — equipped with advanced sensors, AI-based navigation, and automated systems — are expected to become more prevalent. While fully autonomous ocean-going vessels may still be a decade away, semi-autonomous operations and AI-driven decision-making will enhance safety, efficiency, and reduce crew requirements.

Digitization of shipping documentation, blockchain-based supply chains, and real-time cargo tracking will streamline global trade, minimize delays, and reduce fraud. Smart ports, utilizing AI and robotics for cargo handling and traffic management, will be central to this evolution.

Shifting Trade Routes and Geopolitical Tensions

Geopolitical factors will continue to influence shipping lanes and trade flows. Rising tensions in the South China Sea, the Red Sea, and around the Taiwan Strait could affect key routes and insurance costs. Addition-

ally, new strategic corridors may emerge.

One example is the Northern Sea Route, which, due to melting Arctic ice, could become a viable seasonal shortcut between Europe and Asia. Though environmental concerns and operational risks remain, Russia and other Arctic nations are investing in infrastructure to support this potential corridor.

Elsewhere, China's Belt and Road Initiative continues to develop alternative land-sea trade links, and India is increasingly looking to expand its maritime presence to counterbalance China in the Indo-Pacific.

Port Infrastructure and Global Hubs

As trade volumes grow and vessel sizes increase, major ports around the world will undergo modernization. Automation, digital integration, and expanded capacity will be key priorities for global hubs like Shanghai, Singapore, Rotterdam, and Los Angeles.

There will also be a trend toward building more regional transshipment hubs to decongest mega-ports and improve resilience in global supply chains. Smaller ports may benefit from investments aimed at diversifying logistics networks, especially as companies seek to avoid future supply chain shocks like those seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changing Trade Patterns and Regionalization

While globalization remains strong, there's a noticeable shift toward regionalized supply chains. The rise of nearshoring and reshoring — especially in North America and parts of Europe — is reducing reliance on long-haul routes in some sectors. However, this doesn't mean the end of global shipping. Instead, it suggests a more balanced trade environment where regional and global trade coexist, with new shipping patterns emerging.

Asia will continue to dominate maritime trade, especially as Southeast Asian economies grow and manufacturing continues to expand in countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and India.

The global shipping trade in the next decade will be shaped by a blend of environmental responsibility, technological innovation, and shifting economic priorities. While the seas will still carry the bulk of global trade, how, where, and why goods move across them will evolve dramatically. Stakeholders — from shipbuilders and carriers to port authorities and regulators — must adapt swiftly to remain competitive and sustainable in this changing maritime landscape.

Inside the Suez Canal: How One Waterway Moves Global Trade

THE Suez Canal is one of the most vital maritime passages in the world, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and allowing ships to travel between Europe and Asia without circling Africa. Stretching 193 kilometers (120 miles) across Egypt, the canal is a crucial link in the global supply chain, handling over 10% of international trade by volume. But how exactly does this engineering marvel function?

A Sea-Level Canal

Unlike some other canals, such as the Panama Canal which uses locks to lift ships between different water levels, the Suez Canal is a sea-level canal. This means ships can travel through it without being raised or lowered by locks. This design simplifies transit and allows for a steady, uninterrupted flow of ships — albeit one that is tightly controlled and highly organized.

The canal runs from Port Said on the Mediterranean coast to Suez on the Red Sea. It passes through various terrain including lakes (like Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake), desert landscapes, and engineered channels.

Northbound and Southbound Traffic

The Suez Canal is designed to accommodate two-way traffic, thanks to expansions and bypasses added over time — most notably the New Suez Canal, a parallel waterway opened in 2015 to allow simultaneous passage of ships in both directions along part of the canal. However, not the entire length allows two-way traffic, so vessels must follow a convoy system.

Typically, ships travel in convoys, with northbound and southbound groups scheduled at specific times. These convoys are carefully managed to avoid collisions and ensure smooth transit. Ships that need to wait often anchor in the Great Bitter Lake or other designated zones until it's their turn.

Pilotage and Navigation

Every ship passing through the Suez Canal must take on Egyptian pilots, experienced navigators who board vessels to guide them through the canal's narrow stretches. While the ships' captains retain command, the pilots provide essential local expertise to

prevent accidents.

Navigation is aided by buoys, markers, radar systems, and a centralized traffic control center. The canal's straight, narrow sections require precision, especially for large container ships that may have just a few meters of clearance on either side.

Depth and Size Restrictions

The canal's depth is currently around 24 meters (79 feet), allowing large vessels — including some of the biggest container ships and oil tankers — to pass. However, there are still limits on the size of ships, referred to as Suezmax. Ships exceeding these dimensions may not be able to transit, though expansion projects have increased the maximum permissible size over time.

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) continues to invest in dredging and widening projects to keep up with the growing size of modern ships, ensuring it remains competitive with alternative routes.

Economic and Strategic Significance

The Suez Canal is a major source of revenue for Egypt, generating billions of dollars annually from tolls. Fees are determined based on ship size, cargo type, and route. For shipping companies, the canal saves thousands of kilometers and several days of travel compared to sailing around the Cape of Good Hope.

Its strategic location also makes it geopolitically sensitive. Any disruption — like the infamous 2021 blockage by the Ever Given — can have massive ripple effects on global trade, delaying goods and raising shipping costs worldwide.

Ongoing Improvements

The Suez Canal continues to evolve. Projects are underway to widen and deepen more sections, improve traffic flow, and reduce waiting times. The Egyptian government is also working to develop the Suez Canal Economic Zone, aimed at turning the area into a global logistics and industrial hub.

Highways of the Sea: The Busiest Shipping Lanes in 2025

Shipping lanes are the lifelines of global trade, facilitating the movement of goods across continents. In 2025, more than 90% of global trade by volume continues to be transported by sea, making shipping lanes vital to economic stability and global supply chains. The busiest shipping lanes today are not only defined by traffic volume but also by their strategic importance, geopolitical relevance, and the sheer value of cargo they carry.

The Strait of Malacca

One of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the world, the Strait of Malacca links the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean through the South China Sea. Stretching between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, this narrow passage is the shortest route between the Middle East and East Asia. It is estimated that over 100,000 ships pass through the strait each year, carrying goods such as oil, liquefied natural gas, and consumer electronics. As China's economy remains a global powerhouse, and Southeast Asian trade grows, the Malacca Strait continues to be one of the most trafficked sea routes globally.

The Suez Canal

Connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, the Suez Canal is a crucial route for shipping between Europe and Asia. Operated by Egypt, this 193-kilometer canal sees over 50 ships a day and handles more than 10% of global trade. The 2021 blockage of the canal by the Ever Given demonstrated its global economic significance, causing billions in trade losses and weeks of supply chain disruptions. Since then, improvements have been made, and traffic remains consistently high, especially for container ships and oil tankers.

The Panama Canal

Linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Panama Canal is vital for maritime traffic between the Americas, as well as between Asia and Europe via the western hemisphere. Expanded in 2016 to accommodate larger vessels (New Panamax ships), the canal sees thousands of transits annually. It remains especially important for U.S. East Coast ports and is a key alternative to the Suez Canal for certain routes.

The English Channel

The English Channel, particularly the Strait of Dover, is the busiest shipping lane in the world by ship numbers. Located between southern England and northern France, it is a key route for vessels moving between the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Around 500–600 ships pass through this lane daily. It serves not only commercial container ships but also ferries and fishing boats, creating a high-density traffic zone that requires sophisticated vessel traffic systems.

The South China Sea Routes

Encompassing trade routes from the Strait of Malacca through to China, Japan, and South Korea, the South China Sea is among the most commercially significant and politically sensitive maritime areas in the world. These routes support trillions of dollars in annual trade. Territorial disputes in the region add a layer of strategic complexity, but the lanes themselves remain highly trafficked, especially for bulk carriers and container ships supplying East Asian manufacturing hubs.

Trans-Pacific and Trans-Atlantic Routes

These ocean-spanning routes don't pass through narrow chokepoints but are essential for high-volume trade between continents. The Trans-Pacific route, for instance, connects Asia (especially China, Japan, and South Korea) to the United States and Canada. Major ports like Shanghai, Los Angeles, and Vancouver are linked through these lanes. Similarly, Trans-Atlantic routes between Europe and North America — connecting major ports like Rotterdam, Hamburg, and New York — are critical for containerized goods and energy exports.

Conclusion

Today's major shipping lanes reflect global economic patterns and geopolitical realities. As trade volumes increase and environmental and security challenges grow, these arteries of commerce will continue to evolve. Future developments such as the Northern Sea Route in the Arctic, and increased automation in shipping, could reshape global trade — but the strategic shipping lanes of today remain the backbone of international commerce.

Shipping, Freight and Logistics

Arab Times Special Supplement



UNITED LOGISTICS COMPANY

Navigating Success

What are the main challenges your company faces in running the shipping business smoothly?

In the world of logistics every wave of change be it geopolitical tensions or the recent economic tariff war affects routing and even acceptance of cargos which leads to disruption in the supply chain network and ultimately the availability of goods. Educating our clients of the unprecedented challenges we as a community face has been of prime importance in the recent past. Having said that we are very much optimistic of what the future beholds. Given the recent development plans laid down by the Kuwait Administration including but not limited to logistical hub and the new airport, we feel there is lot of opportunities that will present itself that can be tapped into. We are firm believers of the quote "No Pressure No Diamonds". Our undying attitude of excelling in whatever the condition might be is the reason we have excelled over the last 22 years.

How would you rate your company's success in today's highly competitive market?

In this modern shipping, we would rate our company's success as Rank 1, for the reason that we have adopted a strategy and polished principles, without spoiling the standards. Good Customer service and nurturing a group of solid, committed employees adds value every day. A strategy of always watching for opportunities.

What difficulties do you encounter from time to time in managing the business?

Competition. Fundamentally an unhealthy competition between the offices with the same business in terms of cutting up the basic elements. Discounting the delivery order Fee and the BL fee which are considered to be the overhead costs, by old standards. This is not only a challenge, in practical terms a threat to the industry itself.

One another major difficulty is the space constrains from different sectors by different modes due to



Sivi Paul
Founder and Managing Director

the dynamic geopolitical scenarios. The quoted rates are not honored by the carriers/ airlines due to the space constrains but we honor the commitments made to our clients and take the hit in our stride.

What is your role in the current shipping business?

Our main or current role in the shipping business is on multiple Freight segments. In terms of broader applications.

Airfreight – Both Import and export. Focusing on urgent cargoes to meet the customer needs. Time bounded commodities, or sensitive

and perishable items.

Sea Freight – FCL / LCL, Break Bulk cargoes / OD cargoes

FCL (Full container load) – Customers with huge quantity requirements. Helping them to take care of their goods and reaching it within the time.

LCL (less container load) – This business is very much sensitive comparatively, because it's all sharing spaces in one container and it's being handled by multiple know/ unknown people, right from the Shipper's premises till the buyer / consignee's stores. More alert and responsible movement, with profes-



sional monitoring.

We rank 1 in this business in Kuwait Market, since we have built and maintained a regularized Groupage services, basis setting up suitable networking with all sea ports in the world. Direct regularized groupage is our own exclusives, which helped our valuable customers to reach their shipments early on time.

Break Bulk cargoes / OD sized project cargoes – This is a kind of transport used for oversized, heavy or irregular shaped goods. Since the traditional intermodal containers have size and limitation, we provide suggestions to customers or project contractors to use this service. Oil field pipes, and highly sensible machines are the most commodities moved and we are masters on this so said project logistics.

Customs clearance & Delivery – Customs clearance is a compulsory process which goods must pass every time they enter or leave a country. Kuwait being a import dominated country, we mostly focus on importers. High priority taskers, and we have it all to meet each of our customer requirements. Received excellence awards from various project contractors and high brands importers multiple times.

Offshore handling- We are among the very few forwarders in the industry to have handled offshore projects. These project movement are in a league of their own

and their successful completion give us much pride and satisfaction. Kuwait Customs and all related agencies extend their utmost support in the successful completion of these challenging projects which lay the foundation of the road to excellence of the State of Kuwait.

How long does it typically take to clear shipments with local authorities, and how smooth is the process?

With the onset of digitalization post COVID, customs clearance has become much more efficient, transparent and easy to transact with. It is interesting to note that the transformation from physical to digital platform was done by the State of Kuwait in a matter of few days post COVID which in itself is a very remarkable feat. There after every update has helped transform the system to the holistic system it is today. It typically takes 2-3 days to clear a shipment depending on the mode of the shipment. We have been blessed with a team of versatile and dedicated staff who can also bring the turnaround time to 1 day if our client demands for the same. The fact that Kuwait Customs and associated departments work round the clock; even during holidays helps us in delivering this service to our clients.

Which are the main countries you import from and export to?

As per our recent studies, we

have found out that 50% of the imports happen from Europe /US and UK, and the rest half are from the Chinese ports and other Far East ports. Exports are dominated by petroleum byproducts, exhibition cargos and return project cargo to name a few sectors.

Are there any plans of business expansion in the near future?

Well, we had been expanding our business from the start of this organization, and still continued expanding in 2016 again with adding The Groupage segment (LCL). A further expansion will depend on the progress and development of upcoming new projects in Kuwait as envisioned by the Kuwait Administrations which we are eagerly waiting for.

How does your company ensure compliance with international shipping regulations and standards?

We maintain the standards, by following the ISO 9001:2015, ISO 140001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 certified approved process. We also do have an internal quality assurance standard that we adhere to which is monitored by our QHSE to ensure all the balances are checks are in place to ensure the best services are rendered to our clients with maximum efficiency. We also have a feedback requisition from our clients which forms our database to strive to excel every passing day.

Key Players in the Shipping Industry in Kuwait: Driving Maritime Trade and Logistics



Kuwait's shipping industry plays a critical role in supporting the country's economy, especially as it remains primarily reliant on imports and oil exports. As Kuwait moves toward economic diversification under its Vision 2035 strategy, its maritime infrastructure and logistics ecosystem are becoming increasingly vital. Several key players, including government entities, port operators, shipping companies, and logistics providers, contribute to the functioning and growth of Kuwait's shipping sector.

Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA)

At the core of the country's maritime administration is the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA), the government agency responsible for managing and operating the country's three commercial ports — Shuwaikh, Shuaiba, and Doha. KPA oversees port development, safety, regulation, and coordination with international shipping standards.

KPA is also involved in major infrastructure projects, including the upcoming Mubarak Al Kaber Port on Boubyan Island, which aims to position Kuwait as a major regional transshipment hub. The Authority is critical in setting policies to enhance operational efficiency and attract investment into port and shipping services.

Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC)

A subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) is the primary operator of the country's oil and gas shipping fleet. Established in 1957, KOTC owns and operates a fleet of modern tankers that transport crude oil, refined petroleum products, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to international markets.

KOTC's role is crucial for maintaining the country's oil export capabilities, which account for around 90% of Kuwait's export revenues. The company is also responsible

for marine agency services, ship repair, and marine gas oil bunkering operations within Kuwaiti waters.

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)

While primarily focused on refining and petrochemical production, KNPC is a key stakeholder in shipping logistics, especially through its export terminals at Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah.

Agility Logistics

A global logistics powerhouse with Kuwait roots, Agility is one of the most prominent private sector players in the country's shipping and freight forwarding scene. Though Agility operates in over 100 countries, its influence in Kuwait remains significant through customs clearance, freight forwarding, warehousing, and supply chain management services.

United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) – Legacy and Merger with Hapag-Lloyd

Until its merger with Hapag-Lloyd in 2017, UASC was a major player in the Gulf region, including Kuwait. Though now part of a global shipping giant, the legacy of UASC's operations continues through Hapag-Lloyd's regional presence. This merger enhanced Kuwait's connectivity with European and Asian markets via an expanded fleet and service routes.

Mubarak Al Kaber Port Development Stakeholders

Although still under construction, the Mubarak Al Kaber Port is bringing new players into the Kuwaiti shipping scene. International contractors, consultants, and potential operators are already involved in the planning and infrastructure development phases. Once operational, this port is expected to attract new shipping lines, logistics companies, and regional trade partners, significantly increasing competition and capacity.

**We Don't Serve the Cargo,
We serve the people who entrust it to us.
We serve YOU.**

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Al-Kazemi International Shipping Logistics Leader in Kuwait

Kuwait's Strategic Location

KUWAIT'S geographic position offers distinct advantages as a regional logistics gateway. Historically, before developing ports in Dammam and Um Qasr, Shuwaikh Port served as a vital hub for cargo transiting to Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Today, Kuwait maintains efficient road links to KSA, Iraq, the broader GCC, and beyond. Through multimodal operations via Iran, it can also serve the CIS markets.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, the country is investing heavily in logistics infrastructure, aiming to transform into a regional logistics and financial hub. Projects such as Mubarak Al Kabeer Port with its associated free zone and the Gulf Railway are set to redefine regional trade and connectivity.

How would you rate Al Kazemi's success in today's competitive shipping and logistics market?

Al Kazemi Group has established and sustained a strong presence in Kuwait's dynamic market since 1953, earning a solid reputation for reliability, integrity, and consistent performance. Originally founded as a shipping agency, the Group has since diversified into multiple sectors, including General Trading, Contracting, Engineering, Travel & Tourism, FMCG, Real Estate, and Investments. The Key Success Factors of Shipping & Logistics:

- We offer end-to-end comprehensive portfolio of logistics solutions, including shipping agency, freight forwarding, project logistics, express services, airline GSA representation, customs brokerage, warehousing, distribution, local & GCC transportation.
- Long-term agency representation of leading global carriers such as K-Line Ro-Ro, Wan Hai Lines, RCL, UPS, Vanguard, and PSA BDP. Additionally, through a joint venture with Sharaf Shipping, the Group represents major lines in Kuwait, including MSC, YML, ESL, etc.

● A dedicated team with deep knowledge of Kuwait's regulatory framework and specialized expertise in customs clearance, chemical logistics, defence logistics, heavy-lift transport, and over-dimensional cargo handling.

● GMTC, a key subsidiary of Al Kazemi Group, is an approved logistics vendor for Kuwait's major oil and infrastructure companies (K-Companies). It has successfully executed over 20 project logistics assignments ranging from small-scale operations to large and mega



Shajy George,
General Manager

projects.

● Having a well-established global network of seasoned, reliable, and highly professional logistics partners, trusted for their proven expertise, operational excellence, and commitment to delivering dependable, end-to-end logistics solutions across markets.

What difficulties do you encounter in managing business operations in Kuwait?

Kuwait's economy is primarily driven by oil exports, which contribute nearly 90% to its GDP. While government spending drives economic growth, several challenges persist:

- Rigid regulatory frameworks relating to company registration, work permits, land acquisition, and government approvals slow down new investments and business expansion.
- Economic dependency on oil makes the country vulnerable to global price volatility and delays in credit recovery.
- The industrial and value-added manufacturing base outside oil remains limited, hindering business diversification.
- Delays in awarding and executing

cutting development projects create business uncertainty, particularly in the contracting and infrastructure sectors.

- High operational costs restrict the feasibility of re-export and transshipment opportunities.
- Kuwait's relatively small market size and modest growth rate contribute to the intense competition in established sectors.

With over 70 years of market presence, Al Kazemi has developed deep institutional knowledge, enabling smoother navigation of regulatory frameworks and government processes. We mitigate economic volatility with a diversified business portfolio and competitive partnerships.

What services does Al Kazemi Shipping offer to customers in Kuwait?

Al Kazemi Shipping delivers end-to-end logistics solutions tailored to the needs of both local and international customers. Our offerings include:

- Shipping Agency & Liner Representation (Ro-Ro, BB, Container bulk)
- Global Freight Forwarding (air, sea, land - cross-trade, D2D)
- Project Logistics (ODC & heavy-lift, cable drums, transformers, oil rigs, etc.)
- Express Courier Services (UPS)
- Airline GSA Services (Akasa Air, Azerbaijan Airlines, PIA etc.)
- Customs Clearance & Brokerage (Inclg. DG and Defence Cargo)
- Local & Cross-Border Transportation
- Warehousing & Distribution
- Chemical Logistics
- Defence Logistics

Our integrated solutions are backed by decades of experience, industry compliance, and a strong



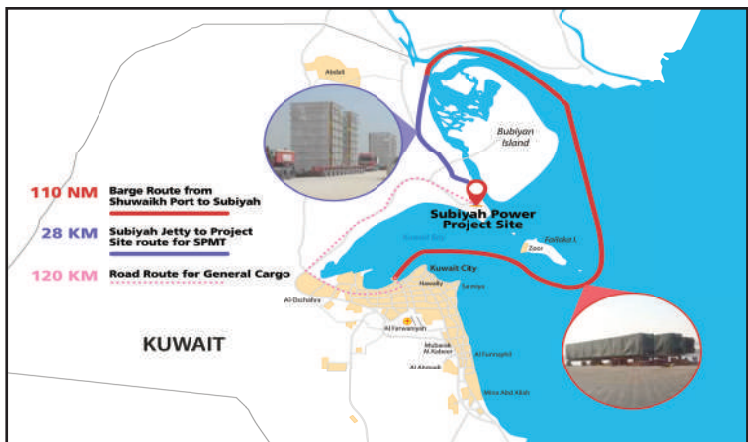
The longest unit ever transported in Kuwait

global partner network.

Strength of Al Kazemi Shipping in Project Logistics

With over seven decades of legacy in shipping and logistics, Al Kazemi shipping stands as a proven and trusted partner for Project Logistics in Kuwait. The Group's strength lies in its ability to manage complex, large-scale logistics operations, particularly in sectors such as oil & gas, power generation, infrastructure, and EPC contracting.

Having successfully executed logistics for over twenty major projects, Al Kazemi has earned its position as an approved logistics



Route map of Subiyah CCGT Power Station Project

tics service provider for Kuwait's leading oil, energy, and public infrastructure authorities — including KOC, KNPC, KIPIC, PIC, MEW, and MPW — reflecting its deep familiarity with regulatory frameworks, project protocols, and compliance standards essential for mega-project execution.

The Group specializes in handling Over-Dimensional Cargo (ODC) and heavy-lift equipment, including turbines, transformers, generators, cable drums, refinery modules, and oil rig components, through strategic partnerships with certified heavy haulers and barge operators across Kuwait and the GCC.

It offers both local and cross-border bonded trucking, along with specialized transport solutions such as SPMTs, lowbeds, and barges, while an experienced in-house team manages customs clearance, duty exemptions, and temporary import/export permits, etc.

This holistic, approach ensures projects are delivered safely, compliantly, and on schedule.

Which are the major logistics projects Handled by the Group?

A. Subiya Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Project

- * Project Owner: MEW

- * EPC: HHI, Korea
- * Project Value: USD 1.3 billion
- * Duration: 3 years

Scope: Transportation of 425,000 ft of BB & Containerized Cargo from Shuwaikh Port to project site using low beds, SPMT and Barge

B. Clean Fuels Project - Mina Al Ahmadi

- * Project Owner: KNPC
- * EPC: JGSK (JGC, GS & SK)
- * Project Value: USD 4.9 billion
- * Duration: 3 years
- Scope: Transportation of 750,000

due to aging berth infrastructure.

● The container terminals at Shuwaikh Port experience space limitations and periodic congestion, particularly during peak seasons.

● The limited number of inspection facilities available at the port leads to delays in container clearance and long queues.

Are there any plans for business expansion in the near future?

Yes, we are actively planning growth in line with national development goals:

- Leveraging future logistics zones at Shuwaikh, Doha, and Mina Abdullah
- Establishing a presence at Mubarak Al Kabeer Port as it becomes operational
- Continuing our digital transformation to enhance global service delivery

How does Al Kazemi ensure compliance with international shipping regulations?

Compliance is embedded in our operational philosophy:

- ISO certifications for Quality (9001), Health & Safety (45001), and Environment (14001)
- Adherence to IMO, IATA/IMDG, and GCC Unified Customs Laws
- A skilled internal clearance team aligned with updated trade laws and HS code regulations
- Regular audits, compliance training, vendor evaluations, and strict data security protocols
- Active membership in global forwarding networks ensures we meet international ethics, data protection, and service standards

What technologies or innovations has Al Kazemi adopted to improve efficiency?

We are committed to leveraging technology to enhance operational efficiency:

- A centralized logistics management system for bookings, tracking, warehousing, and billing
- Digital documentation workflows for faster processing
- GPS-enabled fleet tracking and route optimization
- International IT security protocols to protect customer and partner data

These innovations allow us to deliver reliable, transparent, and timely service to our clients and partners worldwide.

Your Shipping & Logistics Partner

- Shipping Agency
- Liner Representation
- Global Freight Forwarding
- Project Logistics
- Express Courier
- Local & Cross-Border Transportation
- Customs Clearance & Brokerage
- Warehousing & Distribution
- International Relocation
- Chemical Logistics
- Defence Logistics
- Airline GSA

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