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# Kuwait set to sizzle at 50°C

Winds may whip up dust in some areas over the weekend



The iconic Kuwait Towers endure the blazing near 50°C heat, standing strong against the scorching Thursday sun.

Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

**KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA):** The Meteorological Department has forecast extremely hot weather during the day and warm nights, with occasionally active winds that may stir up dust in some areas over the weekend.

Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is being affected by the Indian seasonal low, accompanied by a hot and dry air mass, causing temperatures to rise along with light to moderate northwesterly winds.

He explained that Kuwait will experience extremely hot weather on Friday during the day time, with northwesterly to variable winds, light to moderate in speed, ranging from 8 to 35 km/h. The expected high temperatures will be between 48°C and 50°C, with sea conditions light to moderate, ranging from one to four feet.

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## Energy crunch sparks area-wide power cuts

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: 'Programmed power outages' have apparently become the 'bitter medicine' for the electricity crisis amid the ongoing heat wave the country is experiencing.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy resorted to the programmed power outage for the third consecutive day on Thursday; with an expanded scope -- 56 residential areas, five industrial areas and three agricultural areas. This is an increase of 12 areas compared to Wednesday, when the number of areas affected by power outages reached 51.

In a related development, the electricity load indicator crossed into the red zone; recording 16,858 megawatts -- an increase of 505 megawatts, compared to 16,350 megawatts on Wednesday.

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Hydrate ... or suffer

## MoH sounds alarm as rising temps threaten public health

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Ministry of Health has warned about the effects of rising temperatures on one's health like heat stress, sunstroke and others that require intensified public awareness efforts to prevent health risks associated with certain climatic conditions.

In a press statement, the ministry pointed out that the remarkable increase in temperatures that the country is witnessing these days calls for individual and societal vigilance, scientifically based preparedness, and well-thought-out preventative measures to ensure public safety, especially for those most vulnerable to the effects of hot weather.

It explained that heat stress is one of the most common health effects associated with rising temperatures, indicating the condition manifests as general fatigue and dizziness resulting from the loss of fluids and salts.

The ministry said heatstroke is also an emergency condition resulting from a sharp rise in body temperature, which can lead to loss of consciousness. Dehydration, which occurs when fluids are depleted, can also cause headaches, fatigue and dry mouth, it added.

It clarified that heat can contrib-

ute to a sudden drop in blood pressure, especially in the elderly and the sick, as well as electrolyte imbalances, which disrupt the balance of sodium and potassium, affecting muscle and nerve function.

It stated that some people experiencing fatigue and lethargy these days could be a direct effect of extreme heat, dehydration and imbalance in vital body functions. It added these symptoms are not the result of laziness, as is commonly believed, because these are physiological indicators of decrease in blood volume flowing to the organs due to fluid loss through excessive sweating.

"This leads to decreased perfusion of the muscles and brain, causing feelings of weakness and mental and physical fatigue. These conditions can be avoided with proper prevention and attention to hydration and replenishing lost fluids and salts," the ministry advised.

It urged adults to drink adequate amounts of water -- around 2.5 to three liters per day, even if they are not thirsty, to compensate for the constant loss of fluids. It also recommend avoiding direct exposure to the sun during peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm -- when temperatures are highest and the risk of heatstroke is high as well.

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## Doors open to regional and global real estate developers

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: "Our aspiration regarding real estate development is not limited to local companies, as it includes international companies -- Gulf and others," says Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullahif Al-Mishari.

This is a confirmation of the report entitled, "Gulf Real Estate Development Giants Knocking on Kuwait's Doors," that the newspaper published on May 18.

In a statement to reporters on the sidelines of the closing ceremony of the Gulf Housing Week, Al-Mishari affirmed "the week was rich in discussions and knowledge, through which we benefited from the experiences of our brothers in the Gulf, and we came out with important recommendations that will contribute to supporting our housing projects in Kuwait."

The event included specialized workshops on real estate development and real estate financing issues, with the active participation of the representatives of other Gulf countries.

Al-Mishari cited the signing of a joint cooperation agreement between Kuwait and the Kingdom of



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

A dazzling performance marks the finale of the Gulf Housing Week on Thursday.

Saudi Arabia, covering the areas of housing and municipalities. "This is a general agreement pertaining to the field of real estate development and the exchange of expertise. The Kingdom has extensive experience in the field of housing over the past seven

years. We look forward to benefiting from it in developing our local projects."

He confirmed that Kuwait has benefited from the experiences of all other Gulf countries in this regard, as each country has its own unique character-

istics. "The Kingdom has a wide scope in this field and everyone benefits from it. They have upcoming projects, similar to those we aspire to implement in Kuwait," he added.

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## Kuwait taps Google AI to boost traffic, infrastructure efficiency

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar on Wednesday met with General Man-

ager of Sales Specialists for Data Analytics at Google Cloud Thomas Remy, Country Manager of Google Cloud-Kuwait Shaima Al-Terkait and their accompanying delegation who are on official visit to the State of Kuwait.

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## Uzbekistan grants visa-free entry to Kuwaiti citizens starting June 1

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Kuwait has announced that, beginning June 1, Kuwaiti citizens will be allowed visa-free entry into Uzbekistan for stays of up to 30 days from the date of arrival, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the embassy ex-

plained that the move is part of a presidential decree titled "Measures to increase the number of tourists and expand the range of tourism services in the period 2025-2026 with the aim of strengthening the role and importance of tourism in the national economy."

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## UK-Kuwait mural project completed in Cardiff



UK-Kuwait mural marks 125 years of ties, blending cultural symbols across two nations in vibrant public art.



KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The British Embassy in Kuwait has announced the completion of the United Kingdom-Kuwait mural project; which reflects elements of the two countries' cultures, and shared postage and maritime history.

In a press statement, the embassy disclosed that British artist Lee Ferry was commissioned to paint the mural during last year's celebrations to mark the 125 years of UK-Kuwait official diplomatic relations.

The first part of the public art project was completed at the British Embassy in November, while the second and final part is situated in Trevithick Gardens -- a popular green space within the Cardiff University campus. This celebrates the cultural richness that has underpinned the UK-Kuwait partnership for more than 125 years.

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**2** Top brass turn out to greet as HH Prime Minister returns to homeland Kuwait



**8** NBK organizes chain of workshops to enhance financial awareness in collaboration with 'Lei W Lakom' initiative

### Newswatch

#### Kuwaiti citizenship stripped from 1,292

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee on Kuwaiti citizenship announced on Thursday the stripping of 1,292 citizenships with the matter referred to the Cabinet.

The decision was made during the committee's meeting on Thursday chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

In a statement, the Interior Ministry revealed that eight individuals had their Articles (10 and 11) of the citizenship law stripped due to dual citizenships, and 189 individuals had their Article (21 bis A) of the citizenship stripped due to forgery, fraud, and attaining the document via affiliation.

Additionally, 73 individuals who obtained their citizenship through recognition of valuable services had their Article (13) citizenship stripped due to forgery, fraud, and attaining the document via affiliation, while 967 individuals who obtained their citizenship through recognition of valuable services had their Article (13) citizenship stripped due to country's higher interest.



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:21	Asr .....	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:37
Zohr .....	11:45	Isha .....	20:06

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with

Weather			
light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h.	Abdaly	49	28
	Jahra	49	33
	Salmiyah	44	34
	Nuwaisib	49	32
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	49	28	

## Kuwait Amir invited to attend inauguration of Grand Egyptian Museum

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received an invitation from Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Grand

Egyptian Museum (GEM), due on July 3. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a similar invitation.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya was handed both invitations during his meeting with Egypt Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Thursday.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah receives HH the PM .



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah welcomes HH the PM



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah welcomes HH the PM



PM Diwan photos  
Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah welcomes HH the PM.

## Top brass turn out to greet as HH Prime Minister returns to homeland Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Under the grace and protection of God, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, returned to the homeland today (Thursday).

Upon his arrival, His Highness was warmly received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, may God protect him, along with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-

Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and several distinguished dignitaries.

Also present to welcome His Highness were His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah; His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sherida Abdullah Al-Muasherji; His Excel-

lency the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah; His Excellency Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil, Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan; as well as a number of Their Excellencies the Ministers and senior officials from the Amiri Diwan, the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince, and the Diwan of the Prime Minister.

# ‘China, Kuwait cultural ties have seen major progress’

NCCAL keen to build bridges: Sheikha Al-Anoud

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei has affirmed that culture opens doors between peoples, and that humanitarian exchange between China and Kuwait has witnessed remarkable development in recent years.**

Jianwei made the statement during the opening of the ‘Experience Chinese Intangible Heritage’ event titled, “Tea: A Cause of Harmony - Indigo Dyeing and the Art of Tea Preparation,” at the Chinese Cultural Center which, he stressed, plays a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange.

Present at the event were Sheikha Al-Anoud Ibrahim Al-Sabah who represented the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), along with numerous Chinese culture enthusiasts and Chinese community members.

The Ambassador expressed gratitude to NCCAL and praised Sheikha Al-Anoud for supporting Chinese culture and strengthening ties between the two nations.

He stated that cultural exchanges enrich civilizations and mutual learning leads to prosperity, while confirming the shared apprecia-

tion for traditions and the pursuit of a good life in both Chinese and Kuwaiti cultures.

He said indigo dyeing is an ancient art reflecting the Chinese pursuit of beauty; and described Chinese tea as a cultural symbol embodying peace, tolerance and intercultural coexistence.

He also pointed out the strengthened cultural cooperation between China and Kuwait within the framework of President Xi Jinping’s Global Civilization Initiative, affirming the role of the Chinese Embassy in organizing activities to deepen mutual understanding.

He stated that the center, the first in the Gulf region, is a vital resource for learning Chinese language, as well as traditional and contemporary Chinese culture. He highlighted the successful series of courses and events organized by the center, reflecting the growing Kuwaiti interest in Chinese culture.

On a personal note, he announced his imminent departure from Kuwait; indicating it is an honor to oversee the establishment of the center and participate in its activities. He shared his fond memories of Kuwait and his wish for the center’s continued progress, along with his

anticipation of the unwavering support of NCCAL.

Meanwhile, acting Assistant Secretary General for the Islamic Antiquities Sector Dr. Sheikha Al-Anoud Al-Sabah said NCCAL is keen on building cultural bridges, especially during Kuwait’s year as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media.

In a bilingual speech, she highlighted the strong cultural, media and educational co-operation between Kuwait and China since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1971.

She stated that several agreements and memoranda of understanding led to constructive communication and a roadmap for collaboration. She cited the first cultural agreement in 1982, which laid the groundwork for 43 years of exchanges and activities.

Director of the center Liu Jinhong explained that the event aimed to introduce Chinese heritage through live demonstrations of traditional indigo dyeing and Chinese tea making by renowned artists.

He confirmed that the center is witnessing the growing interest among the Kuwaiti public, as many have been inquiring about Chinese language courses and cultural activities.

He pointed out that the friendly relations between China and Kuwait have been going on for more than 60 years, hoping for more Kuwaiti visits to China and the continued flourishing of their friendship.



Zhang Jianwei



KFF personnel retrieve the dead body from the sea.

KFF photo

## Person drowns at Messilah beach

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: An individual drowned in Messila beach early Thursday morning.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Salmiya firefighters and Marine Rescue teams rushed to the location promptly upon receiving the report. Despite rescue efforts, the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

The site has been handed over to the relevant authorities for further investigation.

Meanwhile, fire broke out in an apartment in Hawally on Wednesday evening, resulting in injuries to an individual.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from the Hawally and Salmiya fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the blaze. The injured individual was handed over to the paramedics.

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**Bachelors power cut:** The Public Relations Department of the Kuwait Municipality confirmed that field inspections carried out by the monitoring teams of the Engineering Auditing and Follow-up Department in Hawally Governorate, in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Interior, resulted in the disconnection of power to five bachelor residences in Rumaithiya, Salwa, and Salmiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department urged citizens and residents to cooperate with the relevant authorities at the Kuwait Municipality by reporting, via various communication channels, any bachelors residing in residential areas. This will allow the authorities to deal with the reports and take the necessary actions to evict them, in compliance with laws that prohibit bachelors from living in these areas.

## Plan to give out sacrificial meat to needy in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Deputy Director General of Zakat House Adel Al-Jeri announced that the institution is preparing to launch its annual Eid Al-Adha sacrifice (Udhhiyah) project in Kuwait and internationally, in celebration of the upcoming holiday, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, Al-Jeri affirmed that Zakat House remains committed to fulfilling the Sunnah of sacrificing animals during Eid Al-Adha each year.

He explained that the local portion of the project will be carried out in cooperation with a Kuwaiti livestock company, starting from the first day of Eid. “Internationally, the project will be implemented in several African and Asian countries through licensed charitable organizations that work with Zakat House, in coordination with Kuwaiti embassies in those countries,” he disclosed.

He added that in Kuwait, the sacrifice animals will be slaughtered, butchered, packaged and stored in accordance with food safety and quality standards; and then distributed to eligible and needy families registered in Zakat House.

He provided the following pricing details:  
- Inside Kuwait: KD79 for Australian sheep and KD180 for local (Arab) sheep  
- Outside Kuwait: prices range from KD25 to KD105, depending on the country.

He said the project will be carried out in Lebanon, Yemen, Somalia, India, Sudan, Benin, Uganda, Tanzania, Indonesia, Djibouti, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Mauritania, Albania, Niger, Bosnia, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Cambodia, Jordan and Syria.

He clarified that the international sacrifice animals will not be limited to sheep and goats, but will also include cows. He cited as examples in Tanzania, where one share of a cow costs KD22; and in Cambodia where one share costs KD35

He added that donors can contribute to the project through the Zakat House website, its mobile app or by visiting its donation centers near cooperative societies, and booths in 360 Mall, The Avenues, and Kuwait International Airport (Terminal Four).

## Amir congratulates Yemeni President on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the head of the Presidential Leadership Council President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the advent of his country’s national day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Al-Alimi and his people more progress, development, stability, and peace through Yemen.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the head of the Presidential Leadership Council President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the advent of his country’s national day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to the head of the Presidential Leadership Council President Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi on the advent of his country’s national day.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' Aisha Al-Mahmoud (left) at the gathering.

## Kuwait eager to assist Arabs achieve sustainable progress

CAIRO, May 22, (KUNA): Kuwait is eager to contribute towards efforts aiming to bring an Arab-wide 2030 sustainable development plan to fruition, its national cultural body said on Wednesday.

Kuwait’s National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) is hard at work over a number of initiatives and projects that will be instrumental in pushing forward the strategy, which mainly entails the protection of the region’s “cultural identity,” the body’s assistant chief for the cultural department Aisha Al-Mahmoud told a gathering in the Egyptian capital to discuss progress over the pan-Arab plan.

As a case in point, NCCAL routinely organizes a number of workshops and other similar events to promote the Arabic language, in addition to competitions acknowledging standout literary works and authors, the official added.

The official went on to say that the region’s cultural landscape has seen rapid changes by way of emerging technologies, which in turn, can be a useful tool in efforts to encourage creativity and productivity in the cultural realm, she underlined.

Kuwait has developed a solid rapport with regional and international bodies alike as part of efforts to achieve its cultural goals and plans, said the official.

## Violating co-ops to face penalties

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Cooperative Societies Sector in the Ministry of Social Affairs will soon issue a decision to suspend the signatures of 13 cooperative boards of directors for their continued violation of Ministerial Resolution No. 115T/2022 on the promotion of local agricultural products in cooperatives, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed such a decision will paralyze all the work of the boards of directors of cooperatives, particularly since it will lead to the disruption of their financial affairs, which are considered the cornerstone of their dealings with companies supplying food and consumer goods.

Sources said the decision is based on the recommendation of the committee tasked to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the aforementioned resolution, whose members conduct field visits to cooperatives to ensure that the boards are following the purchasing policy for local agricultural products.

Sources pointed out that, in coordination with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), the matter may reach the point of suspending the labor file of the concerned cooperative; in addition to imposing the penalty of dismissal or dissolution in accordance with Article 35 of Decree-Law No. 24/979 regarding cooperatives, amended by Law No. 118/2013.

Sources added that the decision to suspend accreditation will be taken after the issuance of a warning to the violating cooperative and a remedial notice within two weeks. “In the event of non-compliance, the team shall issue a judicial seizure order for the identified violation. A cooperative’s requests will not be submitted to the relevant committees at the ministry if the violating procedure is not rescinded. The transactions with governmental and civil entities will then be suspended, and the approval signature will be suspended for a certain period,” sources explained.



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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Much ado about nothing ...

difference in two summits

“LAST week, the region witnessed two important summits - the Gulf-US Summit in Riyadh and the Arab Summit in Baghdad”, columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The Gulf-US Summit had an agenda packed with political and trade agreements, and it concluded successfully. A main highlight was US President Donald Trump’s approval of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman’s request to lift sanctions on Syria, release its frozen assets in international banks, and sign multi-billion-dollar trade agreements, some of which involve localizing certain industries in the region.



Hamed Al-Marri

“In contrast, the Arab Summit faltered before it even began, primarily due to the weak representation of Arab countries. Only three heads of state attended the summit: Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The remaining countries were represented by deputy prime ministers, foreign ministers, and deputy ministers.

“The weak Arab representation at the summit can be attributed to several security and political factors, including the unstable security situation in Iraq. While the Iraqi government has a military security force, it is compromised by militias loyal to the Supreme Leader in Tehran. We have witnessed many security incidents throughout Iraqi cities due to these militias.

“Among the political reasons for the weak representation are the strained relations between Iraq and some Arab countries.

“In Kuwait, Iraqi militias continue to claim that Khor Abdullah, located near Boubyan Island, which is Kuwait’s largest island, is an Iraqi creek. This claim is an attempt to disrupt the construction of Mubarak Port, which Kuwait is currently building. These militias have sustained their efforts through continuous threats against Kuwait and aggressive media campaigns targeting the country day and night.

“In Syria’s case, these militias have threatened to assassinate internationally recognized Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa if he enters Baghdad . Iranian influence in Iraq and its control over the country’s political decisions further complicate the situation, contributing to the weak Arab representation and ultimately leading to the summit’s failure before it even took place.

“As for the outcomes of the summit, they were, as usual, rhetorical and lacked any real impact . They remain merely ink on paper, archived as a symbolic record, as the conflicting interests of Arab states resulted in agreements to disagree.”

Also:

“According to renowned weather expert Issa Ramadan, dust storms are expected to intensify this summer due to delayed rainfall, which has caused increased drought and a decline in vegetation cover. A year ago, there were reports that the government planned to plant one million trees along the border to help mitigate the dust storms sweeping in from the north and south. It seemed like a serious initiative to deal with an issue that should have been tackled years ago”, Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The intense dust that has been blowing, and continues to do so, is likely not locally generated but instead enters Kuwait from outside, much like human infiltration, a problem that security authorities have yet to resolve.

“Some citizens suggested a bold solution: constructing an electrified concrete wall along Kuwait’s exposed borders. However, the government dismissed this widely supported proposal and instead opted to install pipes that fail to block even birds or stray dogs. As a result, infiltration by land and sea continues unchecked.

“Kuwait is vulnerable to dust storms accompanied by temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius in the shade. Despite this, the government has taken no meaningful action, creating the impression of a disconnect, or even hostility, between the authorities and the public.

“There are many examples of poor public services, including deteriorating roads. On this occasion, I would like to thank the Minister of Public Works for her tireless efforts to rehabilitate the road network after years of neglect.

“Returning to the harsh weather and dust - two relentless forces that harm both the environment and the well-being of the people, it is disheartening to see the government continue to resist efforts to make Kuwait greener, as though such a goal were a luxury rather than a necessity.

“Neighboring countries have already embraced the concept of artificial rain during the summer, and the results have been successful, productive, and beneficial.

“While our government generously donates to other countries, it seems hesitant to invest in the well-being of its own citizens. Artificial rain is a proven and effective solution, so why hasn’t the government taken the initiative to adopt it in Kuwait and protect us from the deadly dust that harms both human and animal health?

“Despite Kuwait’s vast foreign investments, we continue to suffer under extreme heat that melts asphalt and pushes electrical loads into the red zone.

It seems the government remains indifferent, as long as its officials enjoy cool weather transmitted from the Eskimos.”

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“The provision for granting Kuwaiti citizenship to individuals who have rendered distinguished services to Kuwait is outlined in Article 5 of Nationality Law No. 15/1959 and its amendments”, legal advisor **Dr. Kazem Bu Abbas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The explanatory memorandum to the law specifies that the distinguished services must have provided significant benefits to the country. This includes naturalized citizens who have contributed valuable services to Kuwait in areas such as culture, administration, trade, or the economy.

“Unfortunately, this provision has been misused in many cases, though it has been correctly applied in other cases, such as that of the renowned heart surgeon who saved hundreds of lives through complex surgeries, along with other specialists in various fields.

“When the legislator included this provision in the law, it was not created in isolation but rather derived from the nationality laws of other countries.

“The Supreme Committee for Investigation into Nationality has been successful in uncovering cases of individuals who did not deserve citizenship, including those who obtained it through fraud and forgery. However, the committee has been unsuccessful in revoking the citizenship of individuals who have provided, and continue to provide, valuable services that deserve appreciation and recognition, and whom the country desperately needs.

“We believe the Supreme Nationality Committee’s approach was flawed in handling some of these cases, especially considering that their legal status has remained stable for many years.”

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“Rumors are among the most dangerous social phenomena that threaten the stability of societies and undermine trust between individuals and public institutions, especially with the widespread use of social media, which has become a fertile ground for the unchecked spread of information”, Kuwaiti lawyer **Abdulrahman Al-Houti** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The danger of rumors lies in the fact that they do not require evidence or a reliable source to circulate; it is enough for them to be passed from one person to another for them to become widespread, eventually posing a threat to societal security. Consequently, Kuwaiti legislation has addressed this issue through a set of legal provisions that criminalize the dissemination of false news and impose severe penalties on those who spread them.

“According to official statistics, rumors in Kuwait are often linked to matters of public opinion, which gives them momentum and increases the likelihood of rapid spread.

“The danger of this type of rumor lies in its potential to cause serious consequences,

such as inciting discord, spreading chaos, or damaging the reputation of individuals and government institutions.

“The purpose of a rumor may be to influence public decisions, mislead public opinion, or undermine citizens’ confidence in the authorities. To address this, Cybercrime Law No. 63/2015 was enacted as a primary legal tool to combat the spread of rumors through electronic communication.

“Under this law, anyone who uses the internet or any form of information technology to spread false news or information with the intent to harm public order or the internal or external security of the state is subject to legal penalties.

“The law also stipulates legal prosecution against anyone who creates or manages a website and publishes false or misleading news or information through it.

“Press and Publications Law No. 3/2006 upholds the accuracy and integrity of content reported by credible media outlets, prohibiting the publication of material that could harm public order or damage the reputation of individuals or entities.

“In addition to criminal penalties, the license of any newspaper or media website found to be involved in spreading rumors may also be revoked.

As part of its enforcement efforts, the Cybercrime Department actively monitors and tracks rumors, taking legal action against those who promote them . Official media outlets respond promptly by debunking false information through their verified channels to minimize its negative impact.

“Based on multiple international experiences, I have found that ongoing public awareness plays a vital role in curbing the spread of rumors. This is where educational and media institutions have a key responsibility in promoting a culture of critical thinking among all segments of society. They understand that rumors are not simply false news, but dangerous tools that can be used to destabilize national security and disrupt social unity.

“Combating rumors should not rely solely on legal measures but it must be a shared responsibility between the state and society.

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/  
Simi K.Kutty



Bad storage of items in a warehouse.



KFF personnel issuing citations.

KFF photos

KFF raid pinpoints fire and safety violations

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) carried out an inspection campaign in Subhan on Tuesday, in coordination with several government agencies, including the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), the Environment Public Authority

(EPA), the Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), and the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

According to a press release issued by KFF, the campaign aimed to monitor buildings and facilities for violations of safety and fire prevention

regulations.

As a result, several violations were recorded, and administrative closure orders were issued for multiple facilities that failed to comply with the safety requirements of KFF and the standards set by the participating authorities.

Woman acquitted as court bars male officers from probing car

Jail upheld in smuggling 28,000 liquor cans

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Criminal Court issued a remarkable ruling, emphasizing that a woman’s car should not be searched except in the presence of female police officers.**

The ruling deemed any violation null and void, according to a case in which a vehicle driven by a woman was searched without a female officer.

The ruling, issued under the chairmanship of Judge Mutab Al-Ardi, stated that searching a vehicle driven by a woman without the police officers is a violation of applicable regulations.

This prompted the court to accept the arguments of Attorney Ayed Al-Rashidi and acquit his client who was accused of involvement in a drug case.

Al-Rashidi asserted that “a car is an extension of a person’s privacy,” stressing a woman or her vehicle should not be searched without a female officer, in compliance with constitutional rules and legal guarantees of privacy.

This ruling established the principle of respect for personal privacy and affirmed the necessity of adhering to legal procedures during arrest and search operations.

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**7 years jail upheld:** The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Salem Al-Haid along with Judges Saud Al-Sanea and Tariq Metwally, upheld the seven-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen for smuggling more than 28,000 cans of alcohol beverage from Vietnam, while the other defendants were acquitted.



Nasr Al-Haid

Earlier, the Public Prosecution charged five defendants with illegally importing alcoholic beverages for the purpose of trafficking, in violation of applicable laws and without paying customs duties, as detailed in the investigation records.

The case started when a customs inspector got suspicious of a shipment from Vietnam. The container was declared to contain energy drinks; but upon inspection, it was found to consist of card-

board boxes labeled as such, which actually concealed cans of alcoholic beer. The container was sealed, and in coordination with the Drug Control General Department at the Interior Ministry, an entrapment was arranged. One of the defendants, the owner of the importing company, was apprehended; while two others were later summoned for questioning and they confessed to their involvement. They stated that the other defendant had been smuggling alcoholic beverages from Vietnam for several years.

The shipment was returned to the inspection center that same evening. Officials found 1,599 cardboard boxes, each containing 18 cans of beer with a volume of 330 ml, totaling 28,781 cans. This is in addition to three empty cans of the same brand.

The Criminal Court initially sentenced two of the defendants -- both citizens -- to seven years in prison with hard labor, while the other defendant, an Egyptian, was sentenced to four years in prison with hard labor and was ordered to be deported upon serving his prison sentence. Two other defendants were acquitted.

After reviewing the case, the Court of Appeals upheld the seven-year prison sentence on one defendant (citizen), but acquitted the two other defendants -- a citizen and an Egyptian, citing insufficient evidence linking them to the smuggled goods.

Expat almost fell victim to ‘fake officers’ on phone scam

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: In the latest reported scam targeting expatriates, a foreign resident recounted how he narrowly avoided falling victim to fraud recently, reports Al-Anba daily.

The expatriate narrated “at around 10:00 am, I received a call from a number starting with 3455. The caller claimed to be a passports officer and asked for personal details including my date of birth, civil identification number and the banks I use. Believing he was calling from the Ministry of Interior, I initially complied.”

The caller then advanced the scam by providing the first four digits of the expatriate’s bank card and instructing him to complete the rest. “At that point, I remembered reports in the newspapers about similar scams. I told him

I would not provide any further information and that any official request should be made through proper channels -- either through a police station notification or the Sahel government application,” he disclosed.

He then hung up the phone. Moments later, he received a second call -- this time from a number beginning with 3456. “The new caller claimed to be a higher-ranking officer and reprimanded me for not cooperating. He threatened that if I do not provide the requested information, I would be fined KD500 that I would be forced to pay,” he added.

The expatriate stood firm, responding that he would accept the fine if it is genuinely issued and ended the call.

When asked whether the fine was imposed,

the expatriate said “no, I have not been fined.”

A security source confirmed that this was a fraudulent attempt, indicating the phone numbers used in the scam do not exist in Kuwait. He reiterated that the Ministry of Interior never requests personal or financial information over the phone, and banks also do not request sensitive data such as card numbers or PINs through phone calls.

He urged the public to never respond to suspicious phone calls, especially those requesting banking information. “In cases where information updates are required, individuals should visit their banks in person. Authorities continue to monitor such incidents and advise the public to report any suspicious activity immediately,” he stressed.

Bad intentions lead to arrest of shop worker

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: As per the directive of the Hawally Public Prosecution, a grocery store worker was referred to the Central Prison for blackmailing a girl, reports Al-Anba daily.

The suspect accused the girl of stealing candy from the store where he is working and attempted to escape. He admitted doing so when questioned by Hawally detectives.

A case was registered as felony (no. 115/2025).

Providing details about the incident, a security source stated that a 51-year-old expatriate man reported being shocked when neighbors brought home his 13-year-old daughter, who was visibly upset and in tears after being detained by the worker.

The father disclosed “I spoke with my daughter, and she told me that the worker claimed she took candy without paying. He took her small bag and forcibly got money from it. He then threatened her, saying that if she did not come to see him daily, he would report her to the police. On the day of the incident, when she went to him as instructed, he told her to stay away from the cameras. She began screaming, which drew the attention of passersby who intervened.”

Public servant acquitted

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Omar Al-Masoud, upheld the acquittal of a public employee -- the deputy head of the Judicial Police at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy -- who was accused of embezzling violation records belonging to his employer.

Lawyer for the defendant, Attorney Hussein Al-Asfour, argued in court that his client did not commit embezzlement.

He contended that the accusation was malicious in nature, as it is due to personal disputes between the defendant and the complainant who filed the report. He asserted that his client had no knowledge of the alleged crime.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution charged the defendant, in his capacity as a public employee, with embezzling violation records that were officially entrusted to him in view of his role and responsibilities.

According to the prosecution, the defendant removed records from Violation Book No. 64 with the intent to possess them and subsequently lose them, as stated in the investigation records.



Al-Asfour

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# Kuwait stresses devotion to UN in human peddling, migrant smuggling war

VIENNA, May 22, (KUNA): Kuwait on Thursday affirmed its commitment in supporting the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in combatting human trafficking and migrant smuggling as it is considered one of the most dangerous forms of international organized crime.

This came in a speech by the Second Secretary of Human Rights Management Haya Al-Duraie during the discussion of the sixth meeting of the 34th Session Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) currently held in Vienna.

Al-Duraie pointed out that the increasing challenges posed by these crimes require strengthening collective international action to reflect the shared commitment to preserving human dignity and achieving justice.

She stressed that Kuwait has taken a series of national measures aimed at combating these crimes, within a constitutional and legislative framework that reflects its international commitments and is in line with its development vision "New Kuwait 2035," which shows importance on enhancing international participation in the field of human rights and achieving sustainable development goals, particularly Goal 8 concerned of decent work and economic growth.

She reviewed the most prominent measures adopted by Kuwait, including the issuance of Law No. (91) of 2013 regarding combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling, in addition to developing the labor laws system, including domestic workers and the private sector, as well as the Foreigners' Residence Law No. (114) of 2024, in a step aimed at controlling and regulating the labor market and reducing violations.

Kuwait has reaffirmed its commitment to human rights and international partnerships, particularly in combating human trafficking.



KUNA photo  
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duajj Al-Sabah with UNODC Executive Director Ghada Wali and the Kuwaiti delegation.

Al-Sabah reiterated Kuwait's stance in statements to KUNA after a meeting with UNODC Executive Director Ghada Wali in Vienna.

They discussed enhancing cooperation between Kuwait and the UN to tackle organized crime and human trafficking.

Sheikha Jawaher noted Kuwait's key legislative measures for addressing these issues and emphasized the significance of Kuwait's membership in the UN Human Rights Council as a platform to support humanitarian causes and strengthen its global presence.

Furthermore, Al-Duraie said that Kuwait established the Permanent National Committee for Combatting Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, as an implementation of a Cabinet decision issued in 2015. The committee includes all relevant entities and operates in accordance with a national strategy launched for the period from 2025 to 2028 titled "Towards Protecting Rights and Promoting Justice."

She emphasized that Kuwait, with this national strategy, seeks to shift from a traditional approach to an integrated approach that focuses on early detection of cases of exploitation, expanding the scope of first responders, and strengthening the concepts of institutional responsibility to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable, with the ultimate goal of raising indicators of justice and the efficiency of national response to such crimes.

Al-Duraie concluded her speech by reaffirming Kuwait's support for the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, its specialized networks, and non-governmental organizations, to build a safer world and a fair one based on respect for human rights and effective international cooperation.

# Get vaccinated at least 10 days before leaving for Hajj – MoH

Health documents, all vaccinations at local clinics

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

**KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Ministry of Health has announced the provision of vaccination services and the issuance of health certificates for pilgrims in the preventive health departments in primary healthcare centers (clinics).**

In a press statement, the ministry explained this step is aimed at ensuring the safety of pilgrims in accordance with the recommendations of health authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; stressing that it is preferable to get vaccinated at least 10 days before

the travel date.

The ministry enumerated the required and recommended vaccinations (vaccinations required before Hajj) as follows: meningitis vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination for those over 65 years old, pregnant women and people with chronic diseases such as heart, respiratory, kidney and nervous system diseases, as well as those with hereditary blood diseases like sickle cell anemia and thalassemia, and those with weak immunity.

The requirements include presenting the proof of immunization (immunity against COVID-19), which entails taking at least one of the following steps: one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccines for the 2024/2025 season, completion of the basic doses (two or more doses during the years 2021 to 2023), and recovery from a laboratory-confirmed COVID infection during the year 2024.

The ministry recommended a number of vaccinations like seasonal influenza and bacterial pneumonia, as well as the vaccination of contacts. It is also preferable to vaccinate family members of pilgrims who have been in contact with pilgrims who were not previously vaccinated or whose last vaccination has been more than five years ago, with one dose of meningitis vaccine; in addition to updating basic immunizations like diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, chickenpox and mumps.

## Bid to build strong health systems

### Kuwait pledges support for crises ongoing in the region

GENEVA, May 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi affirmed on Wednesday Kuwait's commitment to supporting regional cooperation in response to ongoing crises, and to build more equitable and resilient health systems, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

This came in during a speech delivered by Al-Awadhi before the World Health Assembly, the highest decision-making body in the World Health Organization (WHO), currently holding its 78th session in Geneva under the name 'One World For Health.'

Al-Awadhi stated that health systems are exhausted and difficult to access due to compound effects of armed conflicts, ongoing emergencies, forced displacement, increased non-communicable diseases, deteriorating mental health, food insecurity, and accelerating climate change impacts.

In return, Al-Awadhi expressed Kuwait's satisfaction with the adoption of the International Pandemic Agreement, considering a 'pivotal step' towards enhancing global health security and response efforts.

Al-Awadhi affirmed that Kuwait continues to implement its strategies aimed at achieving universal health coverage, enhancing health systems, improving health services, as well as enhancing policies related to mothers, infants, and the environment.

He reiterated Kuwait's emphasis on providing 'sustainable, flexible, and predictable' funding to ensure continued operation of the WHO and to enhance its readiness to face health emergencies.

Kuwait has reaffirmed its commitment to working "closely" with the WHO and member states, to enhance bilateral, regional, and international cooperation in support of sustainable development goals, and to building more equitable and robust health systems.



Dr. Al-Awadhi



KUNA photo  
Road maintenance continues in Saad Al-Abdullah area.

## Road repairs in new city

**By Mohammad Ghanem**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has announced the start of the comprehensive road maintenance work in Saad Al-Abdullah City.

This project is part of new contracts for maintaining highways and internal roads to upgrade the road infrastructure of the country.

Al-Mashaan said this is one of 18 major projects designed to rehabilitate roads nationwide, spanning all six governorates.

She added the objective is to improve the quality of the road network and guarantee the safety of all road users.

## Court Cases

### Lawyers get reprieve

## Death penalty sought for man who fatally stabbed his mother

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: During a session of the Criminal Court, the Public Prosecution, represented by Deputy Director of the Jahra Prosecution Muhammad Talal Al-Hajri, called for the maximum penalty - the death sentence - against a Kuwaiti citizen who is accused of fatally stabbing his mother and seriously injuring his younger brother in Sabah Al-Salem.

On the day of the incident, the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report at 6:00 am regarding a murder inside a home in Sabah Al-Salem. Security personnel rushed to the scene, where they discovered the body of a woman in the living room, a critically injured child, and a man sitting beside the woman's body holding a knife. The suspect reportedly confessed on the spot to stabbing both his mother and brother.

Further investigations revealed that the 28-year-old accused had a prior criminal record related to drug use and possession. He had been released from prison just three weeks before the day of the incident.

**Lawyers get reprieve:** The Court of Cassation has overturned the one-year prison sentence issued by the Court of Appeals against two lawyers who were convicted of publishing false news about Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan. The court instead refrained from pronouncing a penalty and ordered the defendants to maintain good conduct.

The case was classified as a State Security case.

The Court of Appeals had previously sentenced the lawyers to one year of imprisonment with hard labor for posts they allegedly made on the X platform that were deemed to contain false information about the minister. During investigations by the Public Prosecution, both defendants denied the charges against them.



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Data gaps and education hurdles remain

## Kuwait making impressive strides in food safety and agri-tech: Dr Burniske

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: “Kuwait has made significant strides in the field of food safety, while the institutional and research progress witnessed in the sector has been impressive,” says Dr. Gary Burniske, Assistant Executive Director of the Center for Global Food Security at Purdue University and a specialist in smart agriculture technologies and sustainable food supply chains.

Burniske made the statement in his interview with the newspaper when he attended the Gulf Summit on Nutrition and Food Safety.

During the interview; he talked about the objectives of his visit, his assessment of Kuwait’s experience, future partnership opportunities, and the biggest challenges that the region is facing in various areas like food, water and food waste.

He pointed out the important opportunities to enhance the efficiency of local agricultural production through controlled modern technologies and the environment.

He also stressed the need to address the food waste issue in Kuwaiti society, disclosing that majority of food waste occurs at the consumer level -- in homes or restaurants. He called for policies based on accurate data collection and analysis, followed by laying down well-thought-out plans to reduce this phenomenon.

He said Purdue University in the United States, where he serves as an academic, is looking forward to establishing effective partnerships with Kuwaiti institutions; most notably the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). He confirmed that during his visit, there were serious discussions on the implementation of research projects in smart agriculture using artificial intelligence, sensing and precision control.

He added one of the most difficult challenges he identified during his visit is the lack of agricultural academic specializations in Kuwaiti universities. He explained that developing the agricultural sector cannot be achieved without building trained national competencies through local academic programs that keep pace with the nature of the Kuwaiti environment.

He asserted that Kuwait, despite its harsh climate conditions, has opportunities to develop vertical and smart farming; considering the availability of natural light year-round.

He stated that improving water efficiency must be an urgent priority, emphasizing that modern technologies are available and can be applied immediately to increase production and reduce waste.

On the mechanism for reducing food waste in Kuwaiti society, he stated “we must first understand that waste occurs at multiple levels; starting from the supply chain. In Kuwait, the largest proportion of waste occurs at the consumption stage -- in homes, restaurants and hotels, or what is known as ‘plate waste’ or food leftovers. This type of waste contributes to the production of environmentally harmful methane gas. The solution begins with awareness and research into practical solutions that suit the Kuwaiti culture; such as reusing, recycling or using waste as feed or organic fertilizer. Energy can even be produced through ‘biogas’.” It is necessary to gather accurate data on the volume and type of waste, then analyze the data in order to create effective policies. Kuwait is more advanced than many countries in Latin America and Africa in terms of food safety. It has vital resources, an educated population, and strong institutions that are better equipped to deal with nutrition and food safety issues.”

On successful experiences in the field of vertical farming, he cited as an example the situation in Egypt, where production in greenhouses is advanced. He pointed out that Egypt has more water resources, such as the Nile River and groundwater; while the environment in Kuwait is different. “Nevertheless, this does not prevent us from benefiting from these technologies, but they must be adapted to Kuwait’s difficult circumstances,” he clarified.

On countries’ ability to adapt and switch between supply sources, he said that during the Corona crisis, India stopped exporting corn -- a key component in the production of fodder in Kuwait. “At the time, Kuwait was forced to switch to importing corn from the United States. This is a practical example of the importance of having strong diplomatic and trade relations with several countries to ensure that the supply chain is not affected when crises emerge. Another solution is to enhance local production, so that Kuwait produces a larger portion of its food, which reduces its dependence on imports and protects it from external geopolitical influences.”

Following is the full text of the interview:  
**Question:** What is the main purpose of your visit to Kuwait?

**Answer:** The primary goal is to participate in the Gulf Summit on Nutrition and Food Safety, where I gave a scientific presentation and participated in discussions with experts and specialists.

In addition, I am interested in communicating with scientists and food producers here in Kuwait to explore opportunities for joint collaboration.

Our university, Purdue University, works closely with the private sector, government agencies, universities and research centers. We hope to expand these partnerships to include Kuwaiti institutions operating within the food supply chain -- whether in production, food safety or agricultural research.

An important part of my visit is to explore the possibility of forming strategic partnerships in these areas.

**Q:** What are your observations on Kuwait’s preparations to overcome food safety challenges?

**A:** I believe that Kuwait is making progress in ensuring the safety of food arriving in its territory, whether for citizens or expatriates.

There is remarkable progress in scientific research and food production. I also see significant opportunities to increase the efficiency of agricultural production, especially in controlled agricultural environments.

These environments, such as greenhouses, need to be developed in terms of efficiency and profitability, while there are promising areas for improving the technology used and making these facilities more effective and economically viable.

**Q:** How would you rate the Kuwaiti experience in the field of food safety compared to Latin America and Africa?

**A:** It is clear that Kuwait is more advanced than many countries in Latin America and Africa with regard to food safety. It possesses vital resources, an educated population, and strong institutions that are

better equipped to address nutrition and food safety issues.

The institutional structure here is cohesive and covers various stages of the food chain, from imports to local processing and nutrition awareness. This puts Kuwait in a distinguished position in the region.

**Q:** Are there plans to sign agreements or memoranda of understanding between your university and Kuwaiti entities?

**A:** Yes, definitely. We are very interested in signing agreements with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). We visited them and had very constructive discussions. At Purdue University, we excel in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

We conduct advanced research on improving the efficiency of agricultural production in controlled environments, particularly in vegetable cultivation, by reducing water and fertilizer use and increasing production using sensor technologies, cameras, machine learning and artificial intelligence.

We also discussed the possibility of conducting joint research between us and KISR.

There is also the possibility of collaborating with the private sector. We are initiating several public-private partnerships to address bottlenecks in production and processing chains, in order to contribute to building human capacity and conduct joint scientific research.

We also met with Kuwait Food Producers Association, which consists of 90 percent of local processors and producers. We discussed the most difficult challenges they are facing and the opportunities to use Science to increase efficiency, productivity and profitability in this sector.

**Q:** What factors determine the success of the National Food Security Strategy?

**A:** Measuring success depends on the existence of an accurate monitoring and evaluation system. Clear performance indicators must be in place, measured periodically -- some weekly or monthly, but most annually.

It is essential to improve data collection and analysis systems. One of the weaknesses we have observed in the Gulf countries is the lack of an accurate and comprehensive database. We need to collect information on nutritious food consumption, food loss, extent of waste, where it occurs, and what is done with the wasted food -- if it is recycled, used for energy, feeds or fertilizer.

This information must be collected in collaboration with the private sector and shared with universities for analysis, then build informed scientific policies based on this analysis.

**Q:** How can Kuwait protect its food security amid geopolitical fluctuations?

**A:** This is an important question. To protect its food security, Kuwait needs the ability to adapt and switch between supply sources.

For example, during the Corona crisis, India stopped exporting corn -- the main ingredient in the production of fodder in Kuwait.

At the time, Kuwait was forced to switch to importing corn from the United States. This is a practical example of the importance of having strong diplomatic and trade relations with several countries to ensure that the supply chain is not affected when crises surface.

Another solution is to boost local production, so that Kuwait produces a larger portion of its food, which reduces its dependence on imports and protects it from external geopolitical influences.

**Q:** What are the practical solutions to the problem of water scarcity in agriculture in Kuwait?

**A:** 70 percent of the world’s freshwater is used for agriculture and Kuwait has harsh climatic conditions. Therefore, the solution lies in improving water use efficiency in controlled agricultural environments.

We are conducting research aimed at reducing water consumption in greenhouses; using sensor technologies, cameras and machine learning to precisely control irrigation, leading to lower consumption and higher yields.

There is also research into capturing dew water, more efficient desalination, and utilizing atmospheric humidity. However, these technologies still require significant investment. The fastest and most effective solution now is to improve water use efficiency in agriculture.

**Q:** Do you think there is a future for smart or vertical farming in Kuwait?

**A:** Certainly, Kuwait has the great advantage of year-round sunlight. In northern countries, such as Europe and the United States, vertical farming is limited due to the short winter days and their heavy reliance on artificial lighting, which consumes a lot of energy.

In Kuwait, the availability of sunlight makes vertical farming more efficient. The only current problem is that this type of farming consumes a lot of water due to the drip system. However, such systems can be improved and made more efficient.

**Q:** How can we develop training and education programs to prepare national competencies in the fields of agriculture and food security?

**A:** The main problem is that universities in Kuwait do not have colleges of agriculture or departments of food or crops and this is a major obstacle. It is important to establish educational programs here that focus on agriculture and agricultural research, rather than sending students abroad to learn techniques, which are not suitable for the local environment.

At Purdue, we are keen to collaborate with Kuwait University to establish a department or college of agriculture. We need institutions that produce Kuwaiti scientists and engineers who combine Science with local knowledge and provide solutions that are appropriate for Kuwait’s agricultural reality.

**Q:** Have you visited farms in Kuwait, such as Wafra or Abdally?

**A:** Unfortunately, I have not had enough opportunity to visit farms in agricultural areas like Wafra or Abdally. The information I obtained about agriculture here came from my meetings with producers and workers in this sector, but I aspire to visit these areas in the future.

**Q:** Do you have official figures or statistics on food security or food safety in Kuwait?

**A:** I have collected some data from the internet, but the problem is that such information is not publicly available or organized. Many entities keep data internally, making it difficult for researchers to access.

At our universities, we share databases publicly for everyone to benefit from them. We use artificial intelligence techniques to analyze them. However, if the data is not published, we cannot use them to inform policymakers or guide researchers.

# Kuwait powers up digital future with AI, cloud tech

Government systems go smart

**KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Najat Ibrahim confirmed that Kuwait is entering an accelerated phase of digital integration, led by the Ministry of State for Communications Affairs and its subsidiaries to support the “New Kuwait 2035” vision, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

During the opening of the fourth edition of the CIO Summit 2025, organized by CAIT and the Ministry of Communications to highlight the important role of digitization and artificial intelligence (AI), Ibrahim told KUNA that the integration phase between government agencies is a fundamental pillar for achieving the New Kuwait 2035 vision. This vision aims to build an integrated digital economy, improve the quality of life, and enhance the efficiency of government services.

She highlighted the commitment of the Ministry of Communications, CAIT, and its subsidiaries to advance digital integration in Kuwait through pioneering national initiatives.

Ibrahim indicated that one of the most prominent initiatives is CAIT’s work to facilitate the transition to Cloud computing through strategic partnerships with major tech-

nology companies.

In addition, she explained that efforts also include establishing a digital platform to integrate government systems and unify the management of programming interfaces (APIs). This initiative aims to improve the efficiency of government services, facilitate data exchange between institutions, enhance information security, improve user experience quality, and support innovation in both the public and private sectors.

CAIT has entered into agreements and strategic partnerships with international companies to undertake digital transformation and accelerate data exchange in support of the New Kuwait 2035 Vision.

These events provide a valuable opportunity to unify efforts and open new horizons for IT specialists and decision-makers, contributing to the achievement of the New Kuwait 2035 Vision, which prioritizes the digitization of government services as a top component of sustainable development strategies.

The fourth edition of the summit, held in collaboration with IDC Company, aims to highlight the crucial role of digitization and artificial intelligence in driving unprecedented improvements in efficiency, productivity, and profitability. It also seeks to enable the ICT ecosystem to enhance its capabilities to keep up with the current digital era.

The summit further aims to create a platform for communication and knowledge exchange between leading technology and IT companies and their users, including managers and leaders from both the private and public sectors.

Continued from Page 1

## Kuwait set

On Friday night, the weather will remain warm to slightly hot, with northwesterly to variable winds, light to moderate in speed, ranging from 6 to 30 km/h. The expected low temperatures will range between 27°C and 29°C, with sea conditions light to moderate, ranging from one to four feet.

During the day time on Saturday, Kuwait will experience extremely hot weather, with northwesterly to variable winds, light to moderate in speed, ranging from 8 to 35 km/h. The expected high temperatures will range between 47°C and 49°C, with sea conditions light to moderate, with waves ranging from one to five feet.

On Saturday night, the weather will remain warm to slightly hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, ranging from 12 to 38 km/h. The expected low temperatures will range between 26°C and 28°C, with the sea remaining light to moderate, with waves ranging from two to four feet.

## Energy crunch

In this context, sources from the ministry revealed that units currently under maintenance have a total production capacity of 2,700 megawatts. They affirmed that the ministry is working hard to complete the maintenance of these units soon in order to bring them back into service, which will contribute to the stability of the electricity grid and alleviate the current burdens resulting from the high temperatures approaching 50 degrees Celsius.

Sources expect a decrease in loads during the weekend due to the closure of government buildings, especially schools, which consume large amounts of electricity. They stressed the need to continue implementing rationalization mechanisms, particularly during peak hours, as one of the main solutions to the crisis.

They indicated that the ministry is keen on communicating with customers to inform them about the power outage schedule through the Sahel application, so they can take the necessary precautions at home in the event of a power outage.

The ministry announced Thursday that it may be forced to cut off power in some parts of certain agricultural, industrial and residential areas due to the high power consumption; in addition to ongoing maintenance work on some electricity generation units, in preparation for operating them at full capacity to maintain the stability of the country’s electrical system.

## MoH sounds

It underscored the importance of wearing light-colored cotton clothing, which helps absorb sweat and reduces heat retention, in addition to using hats or umbrellas when outdoors.

It emphasized the importance of avoiding stimulating beverages such as coffee, tea and soft drinks, as they are diuretics and contribute to increased fluid loss; as well as reducing the intake of salty foods, which can disrupt the body’s fluid and salt balance.

It went on to say that walking in the evening is a healthy way to gradually acclimate the body to hot weather without exposing it to the risks of peak temperatures, while it is necessary to postpone strenuous exercise until the early morning hours or after sunset.

It highlighted the importance of promoting professional responsibility in the workplace, especially in the field, which requires adherence to preventative measures that ensure worker safety during heat waves; hence, the need to regulate working hours to avoid peak heat periods, providing adequate rest periods in shaded or air-conditioned areas, and ensuring the continuous availability of cold drinking water.

It pointed out that this embodies a safe and healthy work environment and reflects a human commitment befitting the worker and his efforts. “The workers are partners in the construction process, and appreciation for their efforts is not limited to wages.

Rather, it manifests itself in the form of care befitting their humanity and reflecting ethical values in the work environment,” the ministry asserted.

## Kuwait taps

They discussed the strategic opportunities for cooperation in the fields of advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence, and accelerating digital integration initiatives in various government sectors.

Director General of the General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry Major General Jamal Al-Foudari attended the meeting; during which they discussed the use of artificial intelligence to analyze traffic flow, predict congestion, and improve traffic management; thereby, enhancing road safety and smooth mobility.

Discussions also focused on how the Ministry of Public Works can utilize Google’s advanced artificial intelligence and data analytics solutions to achieve its objectives.

The meeting explored the potential of AI-powered tools to improve the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, enhance predictive maintenance of critical assets, optimize resource allocation, and gain deeper insights from large datasets to develop practical policies based on a deeper understanding of data and field reality.

Al-Mashaan affirmed the commitment of the government to adopt innovative technologies to further improve the efficiency, transparency and overall quality of public services.

Al-Omar highlighted the vital role of a robust digital infrastructure and inter-ministerial collaboration in the successful use of such advanced technologies.

He pointed out that the integration of government entities through data exchange is a fundamental pillar for accelerating achievements and to accomplish more effective and integrated institutional performance.

On the other hand, Remy and his accompanying delegation presented a brief overview of the company’s experience in providing scalable and secure AI and data analytics platforms; affirming their potential to provide the Ministry of Public Works with actionable insights and achieve significant operational improvements.

Meanwhile, Al-Mashaan announced the commencement of radical road maintenance work in Bayan as part of new contracts for the maintenance of highways and internal roads.

She confirmed that the radical and periodic maintenance works extend the lifespan of roads and reduce the need for complete reconstruction; hence, reducing costs and achieving sustainability in the road sector.

## UK-Kuwait

Featuring the Welsh dragon and daffodil alongside the Kuwaiti falcon and Arfaj flower; it skillfully interweaves traditional Kuwaiti Sadu and Celtic patterns, while a bee and butterfly reflect the garden’s role as a space for biodiversity and student wellbeing.

Welcoming the mural’s completion, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Belinda Lewis said, “joint celebrations to mark 125 years of official diplomatic relations served to highlight our two countries’ unique partnership and to showcase the creativity and talent from the UK’s four home nations. From the creation of this beautiful new mural at Wales’ Cardiff University; to author/illustrator Clive McFarland’s visit which offered a glimpse of Northern Ireland’s vibrant literary scene; to the creation of a special “Partnership 125” tartan combining Scottish and Kuwaiti weaving materials, patterns, colours and techniques; to the launch of a horticultural exchange programme at England’s Highgrove House and Gardens, celebrations have involved every corner of the UK.”

Meanwhile, Pro Vice-Chancellor for International at Cardiff University Professor Rudolf Allemann stated “this beautiful artwork at the heart of Trevithick Gardens celebrates 125 years of partnership with Kuwait. Cardiff University has a long tradition of welcoming students from Kuwait,

and the mural reflects this by bringing together Kuwaiti and Celtic traditions and imagery. It symbolises the ambitions of this international partnership to create positive change and drive innovation that builds a better world for generations to come.”

British artist and founder of Custom Artwork Lee Ferry added “it was an absolute honour to be asked to design and paint this mural. I sought to draw on my experiences visiting Kuwait last year, which allowed me to get a feel for the country, culture and its shared history with the UK. Using what I had learned about the partnership between our two countries and throwing Welsh culture in the mix, I eventually came up with a mural that brings together our respective national identities. I’ve loved taking on this challenge and am thrilled that I got to learn something new while adding a splash of colour to brighten up everyday life. “

## Uzbekistan grants

The decree outlines the main objectives for Uzbekistan’s tourism sector to achieve by the end of 2025. These include attracting 15.8 million foreign tourists, increasing tourism service exports to \$4 billion, encouraging domestic tourism to facilitate travel for 40 million domestic tourists throughout the country, and launching 378 new tourism companies.

The Uzbek Embassy also announced that, beginning this year, regional tourism development programs will be prepared annually until November 30, 2026.

It revealed that the third week of November will be designated as International Tourism Week. Starting in June, the second Saturday and Sunday of each month will be observed as “Family and Group Travel Days” under the “Travel Through Uzbekistan” program.

## Kuwait, Saudi

Regarding the commencement of implementation of the real estate developer’s projects, Al-Mishari revealed that consulting contracts have been signed for the developer’s projects and they will be offered by the end of this year in accordance with the law.

He said “the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) currently has more than 60,000 housing units under construction and implementation. Three new cities have been activated for design within the housing development plan -- Al-Sabriya, Nawaf Al-Ahmad and Al-Khiran. The goal is to accelerate the pace of development.”

Asked about the redistribution of housing in South Saad Al-Abdullah, he confirmed that South Saad Al-Abdullah is still under study regarding the possibility of implementing Law No. 118/2023. “A decision will be made after the necessary studies are completed to determine the feasibility of its implementation, after which the distribution decision will be made,” he clarified.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Mohammed Al-Budaiwi affirmed that Kuwait’s support for the joint Gulf action comes in fulfillment of the aspirations of the Gulf leadership for stronger cooperation and integration among the GCC states.

He added “the housing sector is receiving great attention from the leaders of the GCC states, in the context of their clear directives to enhance the quality of life, achieve a social boom, and ensure citizens have access to decent housing.” He stressed that this is part of a comprehensive vision for development that integrates urban planning, housing development and sustainable development efforts.”

He pointed out that “everyone should be concerned about the real efforts and ambitious steps taken by the GCC countries in developing sustainable cities.” He also highlighted the importance of leveraging technological capabilities and national cadres.





Acting director of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Todd Lyons, speaking during a news conference at ICE Headquarters, in Washington on May 21. (AP)

## White House uses multiple techniques to encourage and force deportation

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): Carrying out mass deportations was a key rallying cry during Donald Trump’s campaign for the presidency. Since the day he was sworn into office, his administration has focused on how to make that rallying cry reality.

They’ve touted their policy of going after “the worst of the worst” - meaning people who’ve committed crimes in America - while leaning on some nations to take migrants who the US has difficulty deporting to their own countries.

They’ve removed protections from hundreds of thousands of people the Biden administration admitted on a temporary basis into the country with the aim of eventually making them deportable.

Immigration enforcement officials have repeatedly portrayed their initial efforts as going after people they describe as “the worst of the worst.” Those are people who pose public safety or national security threats, people who’ve been arrested or convicted of committing crimes in America or who ICE determines are gang members.

On their social media feeds, they posted a constant stream of photos of people arrested by ICE and crimes they’re alleged to have committed.

Previous administrations have also prioritized people who are considered public safety threats so that strategy isn’t necessarily new.

What is different under the Trump administration is that ICE agents now have authority to arrest other people they find with immigration violations when they’re going after “the worst of the worst.” These are called “collateral arrests” and they weren’t allowed under the Biden administration. As one ICE agent described it: “Nobody gets a free pass anymore.”

Immigration enforcement officials have long complained about countries that do not take their citizens back when the US has determined they can be deported.

Some countries don’t take back any of their citizens. Others are selective, especially when it comes to people with

criminal convictions or who’ve committed particularly egregious crimes. And according to a 2001 Supreme Court ruling, ICE cannot hold someone for more than six months if there is no reasonable chance to expect they can be sent back to their home country.

Historically that has meant that immigration enforcement officials have had to release people into the US that it wants to deport but can’t.

To get around this problem, the Trump administration has leaned on other countries to accept people who are not their own citizens. The most high profile of these deals was announced in February by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a trip to El Salvador. That country has taken Venezuelans that the US alleges are gang members and is holding them at a notorious prison.

Costa Rica and Panama have also taken citizens who are not their own although they were not imprisoned. Many of them have gone home or moved to third countries.

This bill gets Americans back to winning again: Johnson

## House GOP passes Trump’s big bill of tax breaks, program cuts after all-night session

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): US House Republicans stayed up all night to pass their multitrillion-dollar tax breaks package, with Speaker Mike Johnson defying the skeptics and unifying his ranks to muscle President Donald Trump’s priority bill to approval Thursday.

With last-minute concessions and stark warnings from Trump, the Republican holdouts largely dropped their opposition to salvage the “One Big Beautiful Bill” that’s central to the GOP agenda. The House launched debate before midnight and by dawn the vote was called, 215-214, with Democrats staunchly opposed. It next goes to the Senate.

“To put it simply, this bill gets Americans back to winning again,” said Johnson, R-La.

The outcome caps an intense time on Capitol Hill, with days of private negotiations and public committee hearings, many happening back-to-back, around-the-clock. Republicans insisted their sprawling 1,000-page-plus package was what voters sent them to Congress - and Trump to the

White House - to accomplish. They believe it will be “rocket fuel,” as one put it during debate, for the uneasy U.S. economy.

Trump himself demanded action, visiting House Republicans at Tuesday’s conference meeting and hosting GOP leaders and the holdouts for a lengthy session Wednesday at the White House. Before the vote, the administration warned in a pointed statement that “failure to pass this bill would be the ultimate betrayal.”

Central to the package is the GOP’s commitment to extending some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks they engineered during Trump’s first term in 2017, while temporarily adding new ones he campaigned on during his 2024 campaign, including no taxes on tips, overtime pay, car loan interest and others.

To make up for some of the lost tax revenue, the Republicans focused on changes to Medicaid and the food stamps program, largely by imposing work requirements on many of those receiving benefits. There’s also a massive rollback of green energy tax



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., center, is joined by from left: Rep. Jason Smith, R-Mo., Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., and House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., during a news conference at the Capitol on May 20, in Washington. (AP)

breaks from the Biden-era Inflation Reduction Act.

Additionally, the package tacks on

“Golden Dome” defense shield, and the rest for Trump’s mass deportation and border security agenda.

All told, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates 8.6 million fewer people would have health care coverage and 3 million less people a month would have SNAP food stamps benefits with the proposed changes.

The CBO said the tax provisions would increase federal deficits by \$3.8 trillion over the decade, while the changes to Medicaid, food stamps and other services would tally \$1 trillion in reduced spending. The lowest-income households in the U.S. would see their resources drop, while the highest ones would see a boost, it said.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York read letters from Americans describing the way the program cuts would hurt them. “This is one big ugly bill,” he said.

As the minority, without the votes to stop Trump’s package, Democrats instead offered up impassioned speeches and procedural moves to stall

its advance. As soon as the House floor reopened for debate, the Democrats forced a vote to adjourn. It failed.

In “the dark of night they want to pass this GOP tax scam,” said Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif.

Other Democrats called it a “big, bad bill” or a “big, broken promise.”

Pulling the package together and pushing it to passage has been an enormous political lift for Johnson, with few votes to spare from his slim GOP majority whose rank-and-file Republicans have conflicting priorities of their own.

Conservatives, particularly from the Freedom Caucus, held out for steeper spending cuts to defray costs piling onto the nation’s \$36 trillion debt.

At the same time, more moderate and centrist GOP lawmakers were wary of the changes to Medicaid that could result in lost health care for their constituents. And some worried the phaseout of the renewable energy tax breaks will impede businesses using them to invest in green energy projects in many states.

## Greece doubles drone fleet and deploys record firefighters to tackle wildfire risk

LAVRION, Greece, May 22, (AP): Greece is deploying a record number of firefighters and nearly doubling its drone fleet this summer to address growing wildfire risks driven by climate change, officials said Thursday.

Civil Protection Minister Ioannis Kefalogiannis said 18,000 permanent and seasonal personnel, supported by thousands of volunteers, would be mobilized as wildfire damage has increased steadily over the past two decades.

“It is clear that the conditions this year will be particularly difficult,” Kefalogiannis told reporters after attending a firefighting exercise south of Athens.

Rising average temperatures and low rainfall have significantly worsened conditions in recent years.

Greek Fire Chief Lt. Gen. Theodoros Vagias told The Associated Press that additional elite firefighting units would be deployed to high-risk areas during the May 1-Oct. 31 fire season.

“The climate crisis is here to stay, and we must be more effective in surveillance, preparedness, and how we mobilize our resources,” Vagias said.

Wildfire damage surged to more than 1,300 square kilometers (500 square miles) in 2021 and 1,745 square kilometers (675 square miles) in 2023 - roughly three times the 2011-2020 average - according to data from the European Union’s Forest Fire Information System.

Firefighters held an exercise Thursday to test Greece’s evolving wildfire response, which increasingly relies on advanced technologies such as drone surveillance and



A firefighter plane drops water during the 'Through Fire 2025' drill over a forest in Lavrio, about 60 kilometres (37 miles) southeast of Athens, Greece on May 22. (AP)

mobile command centers.

Fire planes skimmed treetops, releasing plumes of water in coordinated low-altitude drops, as commanders on the ground huddled over tablets streaming real-time drone footage. The coast guard and armed forces took part in a drill simulating the evacuation of a children’s summer camp threatened by fires on multiple fronts.

Officials said the number of firefighting personnel has increased by roughly 20% over the past two years, while the fleet of fire-surveillance drones has grown to 82, up from 45.

**Also:**

**ATHENS, Greece:** An undersea 6.1-magnitude earthquake scale struck off the Greek island of Crete

early Thursday and was felt across the Aegean Sea, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or significant damage.

The powerful quake occurred some 55 kilometers (34 miles) north of the island, according to the Geodynamics Institute of Athens at a depth of 37 kilometers (23 miles) beneath the seabed.

A central road in the Cretan port city of Iraklio was cordoned off after chunks of cracked plaster from a damaged and abandoned building crashed to the ground. “Fortunately, initial reports indicate that due to its significant depth (of the earthquake), there has been no major damage,” Civil Protection Minister Ioannis Kefalogiannis told reporters outside Athens before traveling to Crete.

## Romanian court validates presidential election, rejecting defeated candidate challenge to results

BUCHAREST, Romania, May 22, (AP): A top Romanian court on Thursday validated the results of Romania’s presidential election rerun, shortly after rejecting a request to annul the results by the hard-right candidate who decisively lost the race to his pro-European Union opponent.

After deliberations on Thursday, Romania’s Constitutional Court unanimously rejected the annulment request, filed on Tuesday by George Simion, in which he alleged that foreign interference and coordinated manipulation affected the vote.

The Court then validated the results and held a short ceremony attended by the elected President Nicusor Dan, the Bucharest mayor who won the tense runoff, beating Simion with 53.6% of the vote, a margin of more than 829,000 votes.

“I want to thank the Romanian people who turned out in great numbers for the May elections and, in doing so, gave legitimacy to the new president,” 55-year-old Dan, a mathematician and former civic activist, said at the court during the ceremony.

“A new chapter is beginning in Romania’s recent and contemporary history. I want to assure Romanian citizens that I understand the responsibility of the mandate they have entrusted to me,” he said. “There will be many challenges, and I hope that we will successfully overcome all of them.”

Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, had conceded defeat after losing in the runoff to Dan, but later contested the results. The court said its decision on Thursday is final.

In his request to annul the election,



Romanian President elect Nicusor Dan receives a copy of the Constitutional Court’s decision from court President Marian Enache during the ceremony for validation of his presidential mandate, after winning the country’s presidential election redo in Bucharest, Romania on May 22. (AP)

Simion claimed he had “irrefutable evidence” that France, Moldova and “other actors” meddled in the ballot, but did not present any evidence. He also alleged that “deceased people” had participated in the vote, and that he requested it be canceled on the same grounds as the court’s decision last year.

After the court rejected his annulment request, Simion said in a post on Facebook that the Court “has continued the coup!”

“We have no choice but to fight!” his post read. “I call on you to stand with me, today and in the coming weeks!”

Sunday’s tense vote was held months after the same court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu led the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

The Court’s unprecedented decision last year to cancel the election plunged EU and NATO member Romania into its worst political crisis in decades, compounded by a string of crises such as the war in neighboring Ukraine and a significant budget deficit.

Dan is expected to be officially sworn in next week, after which he must also contend with deep societal divisions laid bare by the vote, revealing a country where endemic corruption, inequality and an erosion of trust in traditional institutions and parties have fueled a broad rejection of the political establishment.

## ‘No new direct Russia-Ukraine peace talks scheduled’

MOSCOW, May 22, (AP): Russia and Ukraine have scheduled no further direct talks on ending their more than three-year war, a Kremlin spokesman said Thursday, almost a week after the first face-to-face engagement between the countries’ delegations since 2022 and days after U.S. President Donald Trump announced they would start ceasefire negotiations “immediately.”

“There is no concrete agreement about the next meetings,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. “They are yet to be agreed upon.”

During two hours of talks in Istanbul last Friday, Kyiv and Moscow agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each, in what would be their biggest such swap. Apart from that step, the meeting delivered no significant breakthrough.

Several months of intensified US and European pressure on the two sides to accept a ceasefire and negotiate a settlement have yielded little progress. Meanwhile, Russia is readying a summer offensive to capture more Ukrainian land, Ukrainian government and military analysts say.

Putin said earlier this week that Moscow would “propose and is ready to work with” Ukraine on a “memorandum” outlining the framework for “a



Ukrainian servicemen of the 127th Territorial Defence Brigade fire KS-19 100mm gun towards Russian positions near Kharkiv, Ukraine on May 16. (AP)

possible future peace treaty.” Putin has effectively rejected a 30-day ceasefire proposal that Ukraine has accepted. He has linked the possibility to a halt in Ukraine’s mobilization effort and a freeze on Western arms shipments to Kyiv as part of a comprehensive set-

tlement.

The major prisoner swap is a “quite laborious process” that “requires some time,” Peskov said.

But he added: “The work is continuing at a quick pace, everybody is interested in doing it quickly.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that preparations are underway for the potential prisoner exchange, which he described as “perhaps the only real result” of the talks in Turkey.

Peskov disputed a report Thursday in the Wall Street Journal that Trump told European leaders after his phone call with Putin on Monday that the Russian leader wasn’t interested in talks because he thinks that Russia is winning.

“We know what Trump told Putin, we don’t know what Trump told the Europeans. We know President Trump’s official statement,” Peskov said. “What we know contrasts with what was written in the article you mentioned.”

Apart from the continuing war of attrition along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, which has killed tens of thousands of troops on both sides, the warring parties have been firing dozens of long-range drones at each other’s territory almost daily.

## UK signs agreement to hand sovereignty of disputed Chagos Islands to Mauritius

LONDON, May 22, (AP): Britain signed an agreement Thursday handing sovereignty over the contested and strategically located Chagos Islands to Mauritius, a move the government says ensures the future of a US-UK military base that is vital to British security.

The Indian Ocean archipelago is home to a strategically important naval and bomber base on the largest of the islands, Diego Garcia.

Under the agreement, the UK will pay Mauritius 101 million pounds (\$136 million) per year to lease back the base for at least 99 years.

Starmer said that base, operated by US forces, is crucial for British counterterrorism and intelligence and is “right at the foundation of our safety and security at home.”

The signing was delayed for several hours after a UK judge imposed a last-minute injunction blocking the transfer. That was later lifted by another judge.

High Court judge Martin Chamberlain said after a hearing on Thursday that an injunction barring the handover



People demonstrate outside the Foreign Office in London on May 22 after a British court blocked the U.K. from transferring sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius hours before the agreement was due to be signed. (AP)

should be removed. He said “the public interest and the interests of the United Kingdom would be substantially prejudiced” if there was a further delay.

The agreement was due to be signed by Keir Starmer and Mauritian leader Navin Ramgoolam at a virtual ceremony on Thursday morning.



‘Bold reset’ of Marcos administration

## Philippines president calls for all Cabinet secretaries to resign after election setbacks

MANILA, Philippines, May 22, (AP): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. asked all of his Cabinet secretaries to submit resignations on Thursday in a “bold reset” of his administration following last week’s mid-term elections, which saw more opposition candidates win crucial Senate seats.

Marcos, the 67-year-old son of a late Philippine dictator overthrown in 1986, won the presidency in the deeply divided Southeast Asian country by a landslide in 2022 in a stunning political comeback as he made a steadfast call for national unity. But his equally popular vice-presidential running mate, Sara Duterte, later broke from him in a falling out that has sparked intense political discord.

With support from treaty ally the United States and other friendly countries, Marcos emerged as the most vocal critic of China’s growing aggression in the disputed South China Sea while contending with an array of longstanding domestic issues, including inflation - and delayed fulfillment of a campaign promise to bring down the price of rice - as well as many reports of kidnappings and other crimes.

“This is not business as usual,” Marcos was cited as saying in a government statement. “The people have spoken and they expect results - not politics, not excuses. We hear them and we will act.”

Marcos called for the “courtesy resignation of all Cabinet secretaries in a decisive move to recalibrate his administration following the results of the recent elections,” the government statement said.

“The request for courtesy resignations is aimed at giving the president the elbow room to evaluate the performance of each department and determine who will continue to serve in line with his administration’s recalibrated priorities,” the government said.

At least 21 Cabinet secretaries led by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin ei-



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, speaks during the presentation of the newly enacted laws to stakeholders at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines on May 22. (AP)

ther immediately submitted their resignations or expressed their readiness to do so.

“This is not about personalities - it’s about performance, alignment and urgency,” Marcos said. “Those who have delivered and continue to deliver will be recognized. But we cannot afford to be complacent. The time for comfort zones is over.”

Government services will remain uninterrupted during the transition, the government said, adding that “with this bold reset, the Marcos administration signals a new phase - sharper, faster and fully focused on the people’s most pressing needs.”

Five out of the 12 Senate seats contested in the mid-term elections were won by allies of Sara Duterte or her father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, who has been arrested and detained by the International Criminal Court in The Hague in the Netherlands. The elder Duterte, a staunch critic of Marcos, was accused of committing crimes against humanity over a brutal anti-drugs crackdown he launched that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead.

Marcos-endorsed senatorial candidates won five Senate seats while two other seats were unexpectedly won by two liberal democrats associated with the late former President Benigno Aquino III, whose family has long been at odds with the Marcoses.

Voting for half of the 24-member Senate is crucial because the government body will hold an impeachment trial for Sara Duterte in July over an array of criminal allegations, including corruption and a public threat to assassinate Marcos, his wife and House Speaker Martin Romualdez. She made those threats in an online news conference in November but later issued a vague denial that she wanted the president killed.

## North Korea’s second naval destroyer damaged in failed launch: state media

SEOUL, South Korea, May 22, (AP): North Korea’s second naval destroyer was damaged in a failed launch this week, state media reported Thursday, sparking fury from leader Kim Jong Un, who wants bigger warships to deal with what he calls escalating U.S.-led threats against his country.

It’s not common for North Korea to acknowledge military-related setbacks, but observers say the disclosure of the failed ship launch suggests that Kim is serious about his naval advancement program and confident of ultimately achieving that objective.

During a launching event at the northeastern port of Chongjin on Wednesday, the newly built 5,000-ton-class destroyer became unbalanced and was punctured in its bottom sections after a transport cradle on the stern section slid off first and became stuck, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

KCNA didn’t provide details on what caused the problem, the severity of the damage or whether anyone was injured.

According to KCNA, Kim, who was present at the ceremony, blamed military officials, scientists and shipyard operators for a “serious accident and criminal act caused by absolute carelessness, irresponsibility and unscientific empiricism.” Kim called for a ruling Workers’ Party meeting slated for late June to address their “irresponsible errors.”

“It’s a shameful thing. But the reason why North Korea disclosed the incident is it wants to show it’s speeding up the modernization of its navy forces and ex-



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un speaks during a launching ceremony of a new naval destroyer at a western port in Nampo, North Korea, on April 25. (AP)

presses its confidence that it can eventually build” a greater navy, said Moon Keun-sik, a navy expert who teaches at Seoul’s Hanyang University.

Moon suspected the incident likely happened because North Korean workers aren’t yet familiar with such a large warship and were rushed to put it in the water.

The damaged vessel was likely the same class as the country’s first destroyer unveiled last month, which experts assessed as North Korea’s largest

and most advanced warship to date. Kim called the first vessel, named Choe Hyon - a famed Korean guerilla fighter during the Japanese colonial period - a significant asset for advancing his goal of expanding the military’s operational range and nuclear strike capabilities.

State media described that ship as designed to carry weapons systems including nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles. Kim said the ship was expected to enter active duty early next year and later supervised test-firings of missiles from the warship.

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday that the damaged vessel was likely equipped with similar systems and remains toppled over in the sea.

The North Korean report came after recent commercial satellite images indicated that the country was building its second destroyer at a shipyard in Chongjin.

Beyond Parallel, a website run by the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said the satellite imagery of Chongjin’s Hambuk shipyard on May 12 showed that a second vessel in the Choe Hyon-class of guided missile destroyers was under construction.

A report by the North Korea-focused 38 North website assessed last week that the destroyer in Chongjin was being prepared to be launched sideways from the quay, a method that has been rarely used in North Korea. The report said the previous destroyer launched at the western shipyard of Nampo, in contrast, used a floating dry dock.



Flood waters surround houses in Port Macquarie, north of Sydney, Australia on May 22. (AP)

### Record floodwaters in eastern Australia leave 3 dead, 1 missing

Record floodwaters on Australia’s east coast left three people dead and one missing, officials said Thursday, as more heavy rain was forecast in the area.

More than 500 people were rescued in the flooding emergency in New South Wales state north of Sydney. The area has been hit with heavy rain since Tuesday. The flooding exceeds local records set in 1921 and 1929.

News South Wales Premier Christopher Minns said some areas were forecast to receive as much as 30 centimeters (1 foot) of rain in the next 24 hours. He said 50,000 people were warned to prepare to evacuate or be isolated by floodwaters, telling reporters: “We are bracing for more bad news.”

The body of a 63-year-old man was recovered from a flooded house in Moto in New South Wales on

Wednesday afternoon, Acting Police Commissioner Peter Thurtell said. A coroner will determine whether a pre-existing medical condition played a part in his death, he added.

The body of a man, aged in his 30s, was recovered from floodwaters near Rosewood early Thursday, a police statement said. He had disappeared while attempting to drive through a flooded intersection on Wednesday night. (AP)



US President Donald Trump meets South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the Oval Office of the White House on May 21 in Washington. (AP)

## Lights, video, confrontation – Trump’s meeting with South African leader takes dramatic turn

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): “Turn the lights down,” President Donald Trump said. It was showtime in the Oval Office.

Sitting next to him was South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was visiting in hopes of reaching new agreements on trade. But Trump wanted to talk about baseless allegations that white farmers in his country were being systematically singled out for persecution and murder.

He directed everyone’s attention to a television that had been wheeled into the room, and a video began to play.

Even for a president who has transformed the Oval Office from a diplomatic venue into a gladiatorial arena, it was an extraordinary scene. Trump stared at the screen while Ramaphosa looked away. For roughly four min-

utes, the video showed Black politicians - none part of Ramaphosa’s government or political party - using anti-apartheid chants about attacking white South Africans.

The politicians have said their comments aren’t meant to be taken literally; conservative media use them to advance widely rejected claims that there’s a genocide underway in South Africa.

The video ended with footage of rows of white crosses, which Trump said represented slain white farmers.

“It’s a terrible sight. I’ve never seen anything like it,” he said.

Ramaphosa sounded skeptical.

“I’d like to know where that is,” he said. “Because this I’ve never seen.”

The confrontation echoed Trump’s explosive meeting in the Oval Office

with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy almost three months ago, but this one did not devolve into acrimony. While Zelenskyy and Trump ended up arguing in full view of the news media, what unfolded on Wednesday was a delicate dance between two leaders who had clearly prepared for the encounter.

Trump had more than just the video. He also shuffled through a stack of papers that he said were printouts of reports about attacks on white farmers.

“Death. Death. Horrible death” Trump said. His administration has welcomed dozens of Afrikaners to the U.S. as refugees, saying they face discrimination and violence at home.

Ramaphosa rejected allegations of genocide in South Africa, which has a painful history with race.

## Tanzania authorities block access to X after hackers targeted govt accounts

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania, May 22, (AP): Authorities in Tanzania on Wednesday blocked access to the social platform X after cyberattacks on some accounts of government institutions resulted in fake or pornographic posts.

After authorities said it was taken over by hackers late Tuesday, the police account posted pornographic images that later were deleted. The account also falsely announced the death of President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

“We are searching for those spreading false information,” police said in a statement. The account of telecommunications company Airtel Tanzania was also hacked.

Government spokesman Gerson Msigwa said Tanzania’s cyberspace is secure and called the attacks a minor incident. He urged citizens to remain calm.

“I assure you Tanzania is safe, and we will find those responsible,” he said.

On Wednesday, X remained inaccessible within Tanzania for those not using a virtual private network. But users of VPNs without permission can face jail terms or fines.

Many politicians, intellectuals and



A large, metal 'X' sign is seen on top of the downtown building that housed what was once Twitter, now rebranded by its owner, Elon Musk, in San Francisco, July 28, 2023. (AP)

critics in Tanzania express their opinions freely on X. But the government of Hassan, who is up for reelection in October, has sought to suppress online dissent.

Ahead of the election, fear is growing among government critics and opposition figures who allege government repression through legal process-

es and other means.

Tensions rose after Kenyan opposition politician Martha Karua and her colleagues were denied entry into Tanzania on Monday. They planned to attend a hearing in the treason case against opposition leader Tundu Lissu, who faces the death penalty if convicted.

## Kashmir tourism bears brunt after tourist massacre, India-Pakistan military strikes

SRINAGAR, India, May 22, (AP): There are hardly any tourists in the scenic Himalayan region of Kashmir. Most of the hotels and ornate pinewood houseboats are empty. Resorts in the snowclad mountains have fallen silent. Hundreds of cabs are parked and idle.

It’s the fallout of last month’s gun massacre that left 26 people, mostly Hindu tourists, dead in Indian-controlled Kashmir followed by tit-for-tat military strikes by India and Pakistan, bringing the nuclear-armed rivals to the brink of their third war over the region.

“There might be some tourist arrivals, but it counts almost negligible. It is almost a zero footfall right now,” said Yaseen Tuman, who operates multiple houseboats in the region’s main city of Srinagar. “There is a haunting silence now.”

Tens of thousands of panicked tourists left Kashmir within days after the rare killings of tourists on April 22 at a picture-perfect meadow in southern resort town of Pahalgam. Following the attack, authorities temporarily closed dozens of tourist resorts in the region, adding to fear and causing occupancy rates to plummet.

Graphic images, repeatedly circulated



Surekha Dube, (left), and Sunita Kamble, tourists from the Indian state of Maharashtra, take a selfie inside a deserted garden in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir, India, Tuesday on May 20. (AP)

through TV channels and social media, deepened panic and anger. India blamed Pakistan for supporting the attackers, a charge Islamabad denied.

Those who had stayed put fled soon after tensions between India and Pakistan spiked. As the two countries fired missiles and drones at each other, the region witnessed mass cancellations of tourist bookings. New Delhi and Islamabad reached a U.S.-mediated ceasefire on May 10 but hardly any new bookings have come in, tour operators said.

Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, vice president of the Kashmir Hotel and Restaurant Association, said at least 12,000 rooms in the region’s hundreds of hotels and guesthouses were previously booked until June. Almost all bookings have been cancelled, and tens of thousands of people associated with hotels are without jobs, he said.

“It’s a huge loss,” Ahmed said.

The decline has had a ripple effect on the local economy. Handicrafts, food stalls and taxi operators have lost most of their business. Idyllic destinations, like the resort towns of Gulmarg and Pahalgam, once a magnet for travelers, are eerily silent. Lines of colorful hand-carved boats, known as shikaras, lie deserted, mostly anchored still on Srinagar’s normally bustling Dal Lake. Tens of thousands of daily wage workers have hardly any work.

Lat/Am

**Panama union leader scales embassy wall:** A leader of Panama’s most powerful union, a driving force for weeks of street protests against social security reforms, climbed an embassy wall and requested political asylum from Bolivia on Wednesday.

Hours later, Panamanian prosecutors announced that arrest orders had been issued in relation to a three-year investigation into the national construction workers union that he led. Prosecutors did not name the targets of the investigation.

Panama’s Foreign Relations Ministry confirmed that Saúl Méndez, the union’s secretary general, had requested asylum.

Bolivia’s business attache in Panama, Carlos Javier

Suárez Cornejo, said Méndez was given temporary protection while they evaluated his case. (AP)

□ □ □

**4 involved in killing of mayor’s senior aides:** At least four people were involved in the killing of the personal secretary and a close adviser of Mexico City’s Mayor Clara Brugada, the capital’s police chief said Wednesday, as more details emerged of the worst attack against public officials in the capital in recent years.

Pablo Vázquez Camacho said investigators had identified and found a motorcycle and two other vehicles used in the escape of the gunman who killed the two officials Tuesday morning as they traveled in a vehicle along a busy thoroughfare.

Brugada’s personal secretary, Ximena Guzmán, and an adviser, José Muñoz, were shot dead in Guzmán’s car, authorities said. (AP)



## Kuwait crude rises to \$66.40 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil rose USD 1.04 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 66.40 per barrel compared with USD 65.36 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday.

Brent futures dropped 47 cents to US 64.91 pb and West Texas Intermediate lost 46 cents to USD 61.57 pb.

# Business

In line with its commitment to spreading financial knowledge to all society's segments

## NBK organizes chain of workshops to enhance financial awareness in collaboration with 'Lei W Lakom' initiative

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: National Bank of Kuwait is committed to enhancing the financial knowledge of all society segments, raising their awareness in the best ways possible to protect their rights, and safeguarding their accounts and banking information. In this light, NBK launched a chain of workshops to be held all year long in collaboration with "Lei W Lakom" initiative to spread financial knowledge, raise awareness, and provide essential pieces of advice when using digital banking platforms.

This initiative comes in line with the bank's support to "Let's Be Aware", the banking awareness campaign launched by Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association. On its part, NBK has intensified its efforts to publish awareness content on its social media platforms, in addition to assigning a specific page on its website that includes all guidelines and relevant topics.

Moreover, these workshops provide pieces of advice that should be followed to avoid fraudulent actions, such as not clicking on any unknown links whether through e-mails or text messages (SMS) or WhatsApp messages or social media pages that transfer users to fake websites, as scammers design web pages like famous shopping websites, pointing to the necessity of checking URL legitimacy before entering any banking data and information.

NBK also called to always check the identity of individuals or companies before disclosing sensitive information or making any transaction that requires personal information, especially with the constantly evolving fraud tactics that scammers follow, like pretending to be friends and family through WhatsApp and e-mails to steal money or pretending to be bank and official institution employees to steal bank-



NBK team with members of the 'Lei W Lakom' initiative.

- The workshops provide pieces of advice necessary to avoid fraudulent actions.
- NBK continues to emphasize the importance of not disclosing any sensitive financial information to any entity.

ing information. NBK affirmed that it will never ask customers for personal information via e-mail, SMS or phone calls, warning of responding to such mes-

sages representing fraud attempts to steal banking or sensitive information like PINs or Debit Card passwords, unless identified.

The bank also advised customers to use trusted applications only when logging in to banking services, in addition to the importance of using official websites and applications when paying bills, like logging in to official services pages through the government app Sahel, and not using Google search tool as it will show multiple pages similar to government official pages, which put users at risk of being scammed upon clicking on unverified bill-payment links. NBK also emphasized the importance of paying attention when paying any bills for any service provider and verifying the website. In the same way, users must verify online shopping websites and make sure they are securely coded using the safe https protocol.

In addition, NBK called customers to keep a close eye on bank statements and transaction history, to identify any suspicious or unauthorized activity, as the latter often occur after stealing Credit Cards or personal banking information or hacking smart phones through fake apps, further calling for regularly changing passwords and not using the same one for more than one account.

NBK ensures to employ all its massive efforts to communicate with customers through all its digital platforms that are the most followed locally among other banks, to support CBK's endeavors to protect customers and the economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different society segments. As the leading financial institution in Kuwait, the bank frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as organize training programs for employees to enhance their experience in fraud actions and financial crime protection.

### Fleet equipped with smart tech

1.2 million visits and more than 2 million views on NBK Online

## KOTC certified as strategic pillar in Kuwait's oil sector

KUWAIT CITY, May 22, (KUNA): The Oil Ministry affirmed Tuesday that the Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC) is a strategic pillar of Kuwait's oil sector, representing a pivotal link in delivering Kuwaiti oil and its derivatives to global markets.

This came in a statement by the Ministry's Director of Public Relations and Petroleum Media, Sheikhha Tamader Al-Sabah, during a Ministry panel discussion titled "Kuwait's Oil Tanker Fleet: Expansion and Development to Keep Up with Global Demand."

The company's fleet includes modern tankers equipped with the latest navigation systems, smart operating technologies, and emission reduction solutions, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to its responsible role in securing global energy supplies and strengthening its presence among advanced countries in the maritime energy transport sector.

The Oil Ministry reaffirmed to continue to organize such meetings, which contribute to building bridges of cooperation between national entities and support Kuwait's strategic directions in the fields of energy, transportation, and the environment.

For his part, Abdullah Hassan, KOTC's Head of the Fleet Operations Team (Liquefied Gas and Products, reviewed the history of the company, which was founded in 1957 by a group of elite Kuwaiti investors to be the cornerstone of the national maritime oil transportation system.

Hassan stated that KOTC is the main logistics arm of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), operating a balanced and modern fleet of giant crude oil and petroleum product tankers, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers.

The company also manages three main activities: maritime transport, shipping agency, and the LPG filling branches in Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish.

He added that the company has 31 tankers, including 13 VLCCs, 15 petroleum product tankers of various sizes, and five LPG carriers, all fully chartered to KPC.

He emphasized that the company is dedicating its efforts to modernize its fleet continuously to meet the requirements of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) by building or acquiring tankers that incorporate the latest global designs.

The company's committed to complying with international environmental standards and striving to achieve zero emissions, to reduce the carbon footprint and limit carbon dioxide emissions by equipping the fleet with modern systems to monitor and maintain performance.

## NBK records exceptional digital performance during the Q1 2025

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: National Bank of Kuwait announced achieving an exceptional digital performance during the first quarter of 2025, as NBK Online recorded more than 1.2 million visits and more than 2 million views, reaffirming its leadership in providing innovative and smooth digital experiences.

This noticeable growth reflects NBK's continuous commitment to developing its digital platforms and providing a convenient, safe, and informative digital banking experience, and it echoes the growing customer trust and reliance on digital platforms for their banking needs.

The rise in online visits is explained by the rising demand for NBK's digital services, in addition to the latest updates to the website and its features, as it provides smooth access to the bank's products and a wide range of services.

Moreover, NBK Online is an essential gateway through which customers can access products, apply for services, and stay constantly informed about financial solutions and market updates. The Bank has recently developed browsing and enhanced NBK Mobile Banking App by adding new services and making new content to enhance customer interaction and ease of use.

The developments on the website services included the rewards center and offers, which targets better browsing of hundreds of offers for



Abdul-Mohsen Al-Rushaid

Al-Rushaid:

- Indicators show NBK's leadership in providing innovative and smooth digital experiences.
- We continue to invest in digitalization to ensure that our customers get high-quality banking services.
- We are committed to developing our digital presence and providing new features and benefits to guarantee an efficient and safe digital experience.

current customers, in addition to enhancing customer-product interaction and increasing visits.

On this occasion, **Abdul-Mohsen Al-Rushaid**, Senior Vice President -Head of Digital Communications at NBK said: "Our NBK Online performance during 1Q25 is proof of our strategic investments in our digital infrastructure and our constant focus on providing our customers with the best digital experience. The huge increase in visits and views reflects the value our customers find in the information and services that our platform presents."

Al-Rushaid added that the NBK Online numbers and indicators echo NBK's strategic shift of focus on digital transformation and its continued investment in technology to ensure a high-

quality and exceptional digital banking experience for our customers."

He also emphasized that NBK Online is a central hub for customers who look for information about individual and corporate banking services, investment opportunities, digital services, and the bank's latest news and visions. Moreover, the design of the platform, in addition to the ease of browsing and rich content, have all contributed to its popularity and efficiency in meeting the growing needs of customers.

Al-Rushaid reiterated that NBK is committed to continuing to develop its digital presence and provide new features and benefits to ensure a safe and efficient digital experience for all customers.

### Kuwait's New Era 2025 launched at high-level event

## KDIPA & The Business Year co-host strategic investment forum

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Kuwait's New Era 2025 Launch Event, co-hosted by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and organized by The Business Year, took place today at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya. The high-level event also marked the official launch of The Business Year: Kuwait 2025, the latest edition in TBY's annual publication series. Bringing together senior government officials, leading executives, and industry stakeholders, the event explored how Kuwait is accelerating its economic transformation through investment, diversification, and industrial resilience.

The event featured keynote contributions from His Excellency Mr Khalifa Abdullah Al Ajel, Minister of Commerce and Industry of the State of Kuwait, who outlined: "We are committed to accelerating economic development and achieving Kuwait Vision 2035 by enhancing digital services, strengthening public-private partnerships, and aligning our efforts with global economic trends."

Khaled AlShamlan, Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House, emphasized the importance of strengthening Kuwait's financial sector to unlock long-term economic potential. "Robust financial institutions are not



just enablers of growth – they are architects of national resilience," he stated. "As Kuwait advances toward Vision 2035, we at KFH are committed to providing the financial tools and investment platforms needed to empower the private sector and drive sustainable development."

Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait said: "At Zain, we believe Kuwait's digital future is built on smart partnerships and purposeful technology. We are proud to support the country's economic transformation and Vision

2035 by accelerating AI adoption, empowering national talent, and building sustainable digital networks. We thank KDIPA and The Business Year for fostering this vital platform that brings together government and industry to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven future for Kuwait."

Faisal Alkhaldi, Deputy CEO of Kuwait Steel, highlighted the vital role of industry in Kuwait's economic transformation: "At Kuwait Steel, we see industrial growth as a driver of national development. Our participation in Kuwait's New Era 2025

launch reflects our commitment to strategic investment and public-private collaboration."

Other notable speakers included Faisal Sarkhou, Vice Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies and CEO of KAMCO Investment Company; Abdulrahman Al Khan-nah, CEO of Beyout Investment Group (BIG); Khalifah Al Yaqout, Managing Partner of Al-Yaqout & Al-Fouzan Legal Group; Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Jaber Al Sabah, Chairman of Commercial Bank of Kuwait; Rashed Al Munae, CEO of United Beverage Company; Anne Koistin-



Photos during the event.

en, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Kuwait; and Ahmed Alkharafi, CEO of Oula Steel.

Two panel discussions anchored the event. The first, titled Strategic Sectors and Areas to Foster Investment, focused on Kuwait's evolving FDI landscape, the shift toward public listings, and enabling regulatory frameworks to strengthen private sector participation. The second panel, Kuwait's Industrial Evolution: Diversification and Sustainability as Pillars of Economic Resilience, addressed the modernization of Ku-

wait's industrial base, with emphasis on renewable energy, automation, and reducing dependency on oil.

The Kuwait's New Era 2025 Launch Event was proudly supported by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) as Co-host; Gold Sponsors Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Zain Kuwait, and United Steel Industrial Company; Silver Sponsor Beyout Investment Group (BIG); Investment Partners Union of Investment Companies (UIC) and Al Safat Investment Company; Banking Partner Kuwait Banking Association; Legal Partner Al-Yaqout & Al-Fouzan Legal Group; Gold Media Partner M2R Group; Media Partner Al Qabas Newspaper; Travel Partner ITL World; and Event Partners Media Line for Integrated Media & Advertising Services, Atiyah Al Marshoud Co., Beidoun Trading Co., Apache Photography Co., and Al Mulla Rental and Leasing.

The Business Year will continue to provide comprehensive insights into Kuwait's economic trajectory, alongside coverage of key developments across the GCC and other global markets. Stay tuned to The Business Year's upcoming publications, official website, social media channels, and event series for continued access to exclusive interviews, sector analysis, and expert perspectives shaping the economic future.



Company exclusive sponsor of university's 26th career fair

# Zain drives national workforce empowerment at GUST

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: In line with its ongoing efforts to drive national workforce empowerment in Kuwait's private sector, Zain announced its exclusive sponsorship of the 26th career fair organized by the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST). The three-day event was held at GUST's campus in Mubarak Al-Abdullah and featured the participation of over 50 leading local and international organizations from various sectors and industries.

As the Exclusive Sponsor, Zain took part in the fair's opening ceremony, attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally, Acting Secretary General of the Private Universities Council Adel Al-Badr, and Chairman of GUST's Board of Trustees Nawaf Arhama. Also present were Zain's Human Resources team, representatives from participating organizations, and a large number of students, graduates, and job seekers.

Zain is keen to actively participate in the country's major career fairs and provide continuous support to them in collaboration with academic and educational institutions from both public and private sectors. The company aims to attract national talents to the private sector and introduce the new generation of students and graduates to its leading experience in the telecom and technology industries.

At its dedicated booth, Zain showcased its employment policy and the job opportunities it offers. It also introduced university students to its internship program, Future University Network (FUN), which allows them to gain hands-on professional experience in the private sector.

The 26th edition of the GUST career fair witnessed the participation of over 50 leading local and international employers from various sectors and industries, offering more than 2,500 job opportunities for graduates and job seekers. The event also featured a series of insightful seminars and engaging workshops aimed at



Nawaf Al-Gharabally, Adel Al-Badr, and Nawaf Arhama with Zain officials at the company's booth.



Al-Gharabally with Zain's Human Resources team.

enhancing a wide range of life and professional skills. Through such initiatives, Zain aims to stimulate the local labor market, promote the exchange of professional experiences, and empower young people to access

job opportunities that match their skills, capabilities, and ambitions, ultimately contributing to the national economy and boosting the integration of Kuwaiti talent into the private sector.

## GCC price stability persists despite global trade shocks

By KAMCO Invest

Inflationary pressures across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries remained contained during the first quarter of 2025, underscoring a broader regional trend of price stability. Among the six GCC nations, only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) registered annual inflation exceeding 2% in March-2025, reflecting a generally subdued price environment. When compared to inflationary patterns across the wider Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the GCC continues to perform favorably, with price levels staying well below the regional average. This divergence is expected to persist throughout the remainder of the year, supported by moderating energy prices, expectations of a relatively stable global exchange rates after recent volatility, and careful monetary policy. However, downside risks that include uncertainties surrounding evolving global trade dynamics particularly in relation to recently imposed tariff measures – could potentially interrupt this disinflationary momentum and reignite upward pressure on prices, especially within more vulnerable MENA economies.

Globally, the specter of escalating trade protectionism – especially through increased tariffs targeting economies with strong ties to the United States – has the potential to reverse the downward trajectory in inflation observed over the past year. Research indicates that newly implemented US tariffs could cumulatively add as much as 2.3% points to US core inflation over the next 12 months. However, risks, global inflation continued to ease in 2024, extending the deceleration that began in the aftermath of the inflationary peak observed in 2022. This trend was expected to carry into 2025, supported by subdued global energy prices, stabilizing supply chains, and improving logistical networks. However, should the new US administration pursue a sustained increase in tariff barriers, this could introduce friction into the global trading system, negatively impacting growth and inflation expectations. Such measures could drive up costs, suppress productivity, and exacerbate existing price pressures – particularly in import-reliant economies. Encouragingly, recent diplomatic talks have shown progress, notably the US-China agreement to reduce tariffs by 115% over a 90-day period, suggesting a possible de-escalation in trade tensions.

In the United States, inflationary pressures softened in April-2025, with the annual inflation rate easing to 2.3%, down from 2.4% in March-2025. This decline was largely attributed to shifts in anticipated trade policies, with several new tariffs either postponed or suspended altogether. Additionally, weaker price growth in the US services sector contributed to the overall moderation in inflation. Nonetheless, US consumer sentiment declined significantly, falling by 32% between January and March-2025. This marked the sharpest drop in more than three decades, reflecting growing consumer uncertainty in response to political developments and the evolving trade landscape. By comparison, Eurozone inflation held steady at 2.2% in April-2025, slightly above market expectations. Meanwhile, Eurozone core inflation, which excludes volatile items such as food, energy, alcohol, and tobacco, rose to 2.7% in April, up from 2.4% in March-2025, reflecting continued price pressure in services and consumer goods.

Within the GCC, Dubai recorded a monthly inflation rate in April-2025, which reached 2.3% a slight moderation from 2.8% in March-2025. This was followed by Saudi Arabia, where inflation also stood at 2.3% in April-2025. In contrast, Kuwait's monthly inflation rate was more moderate at 2.3% during the same period. Across the board, inflation remained well-anchored, supported by stable currencies pegged to the US dollar and continued government subsidies in sectors such as energy, food, and housing.

### Global Food Prices

Global food prices demonstrated moderate growth in April-2025. The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Food Price Index increased by 1.0% y-o-y. However, this figure remained 7.6% below the level recorded in the previous year and nearly 20% lower than its peak in March-2022. The marginal uptick was driven primarily by developments in the vegetable oil market. Specifically, the FAO Vegetable Oil Price Index declined by 2.3% from March to April-2025, led by significant decreases in international palm oil prices contributing to the subdued performance of the FAO price index. This decline more than offset the gains recorded in other vegetable oils such as soy and rapeseed, while sunflower oil prices held steady. The drop in palm oil prices was attributed to seasonally increased production levels and a resurgence in global export supplies from key producing countries in Southeast Asia.

### Fed and ECB Rate Hike Expectations

Although inflation is not the sole determinant in shaping monetary policy decisions, it remains one of the most critical variables, alongside growth dynamics. In 2024, as inflationary pressures in both the United States and the European Union steadily moderated toward the central banks' 2% target, the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) and the European Central Bank (ECB) began implementing a series of rate cuts. These reductions marked a reversal of the aggressive tightening cycles of 2022–2023, which had been enacted to curb post-pandemic inflation.

In the U.S., the gradual easing of inflation, combined with signs of cooling in the labor market, had led to expectation of rate cuts during 2025. However, recent disruptions in global trade – stemming from escalating tariff measures – have introduced uncertainty, potentially delaying the Fed's anticipated monetary policy easing in 2025. At its most recent meeting, the Fed maintained the federal funds rate within the 4.25% to 4.5% range for the third consecutive time, signaling a cautious approach amid evolving economic conditions. Conversely, the European Central Bank faces a distinct and more delicate situation.

## Deputy CEO Sami Mahfouz leads Gulf Bank delegation

# Gulf Bank joins more than 1,800 industry leaders at Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East 2025 Conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: As part of its continued efforts to support the development of the local capital market and engage with the regional business community, Gulf Bank sponsored the Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East 2025 Conference – the region's largest event dedicated to corporate and investment banking – held at the Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events Centre in Dubai on May 20–21, 2025.

Gulf Bank's delegation was headed by Deputy CEO Mr. Sami Mahfouz. The conference welcomed over 1,800 participants, including top decision-makers, sovereign entities, leading corporations, investors, banks, legal firms, regulators, financial service providers, and experts in sovereign finance and private credit. With contributions from more than 75 distinguished speakers representing over 45 countries, the event served as a leading platform for strategic dialogue and the latest market developments.

Gulf Bank's annual participation in this prestigious regional event highlights its commitment to maintaining its position as a leading financial institution in the region. It also reflects the Bank's dedication to supporting economic growth by building strategic partnerships with key players in the financial markets, exploring new collaboration opportunities, and promoting knowledge exchange with industry leaders, experts, and professionals – all contributing to the advancement of innovation and progress in financial services.

The Bank's delegation actively engaged in strate-



Sami Mahfouz in the middle of the Gulf Bank delegation participating in the conference.

gic discussions on capital markets and remained up to date on the latest market trends and developments, especially in light of the region's growing bond and sukuk issuances. The conference provided an ideal platform for dialogue between banks and investment firms, unlocking new opportunities for collaboration and growth. This presence reinforces Gulf Bank's positioning in the region's dynamic capital markets

and supports its long-term strategic goals. Gulf Bank remains steadfast in its mission to play a vital role in revitalizing Kuwait's capital market and offering exceptional investment opportunities to its clients. The launch of its investment arm, InvestGB, marks a significant step in this direction, supported by a comprehensive suite of innovative investment products and services.

# HSBC hosts strategic meeting with Hong Kong Trade Development Council & Kuwait Clients

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Trade and investment are set to accelerate between Hong Kong and Kuwait as companies from high growth sectors, entrepreneurs and government bodies prioritise strategic partnerships and economic ties. Expected annual two-way goods trade between Asia and the Middle East is projected to more than double to over USD1.9trn by 2035, and businesses within these two regions are identifying the opportunities in potential high-growth sectors for each market.

"As the largest international bank in Kuwait, the wider MENAT region as well as in Asia, we are perfectly positioned to facilitate discussions and connect clients with opportunities in both regions," said Samer Alabed, CEO of HSBC in Kuwait. "HSBC has been present in Kuwait for 20 years and we see Kuwait as a key market with growth potential in the GCC with its wealth, financial strength and young ambitious population."

At a meeting hosted by HSBC discussions around these topics were held between delegates from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, senior leaders from HSBC MENAT and major Kuwait-based clients from the bank, including local and international businesses and financial institutions. The meeting aimed to explore further collaboration in different sectors such as infrastructure development and logistics and trade facilitation, as well as renewable energy, sustainability, and smart cities.

"At HSBC we believe investors will continue to play an important role in the Kuwaiti government's plans and will look to access those opportunities via the Private Public Partnership framework," said Ahmed AlMurad, Head of Wholesale Banking at HSBC Kuwait. "Mainland China has already been part of infrastructure and construction with projects such as the Mubarak Al Kabere port (Chi-



Group photo during the strategic talks.

na Harbour) and the Road Network project (China Gezhouba).

Hong Kong, one of the world's top financial hubs, offers Kuwait a gateway to Asian markets, especially in asset management and Islamic finance. According to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), Hong Kong's assets under management reached over HK\$35 trillion in 2023. With Kuwait's robust sovereign wealth fund and growing FinTech ecosystem,

collaborative platforms in wealth management, digital banking, and green finance are gaining momentum.

MENAT and Asia are fast growing markets signified by the dynamic shift in the global economy from West to East driven by the Middle East's investment-led economic transformation drive, GCC and Asia's rising wealth, and the necessity of creating sustainable economies.

## With 8 honors across various categories

# Kuwait Finance House Group dominates Euromoney's banking excellence awards

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group has secured eight prestigious awards at Euromoney's banking and Islamic Finance excellence ceremony held in Dubai for the year 2025. This global recognition from Euromoney Magazine affirms KFH's leadership in the banking sector and Islamic finance and reflect its successful strategy of comprehensive and balanced growth at all levels.

KFH racked up accolades which are "The Middle East's Best Islamic Bank", "Kuwait's Best Islamic Bank", "Kuwait's Best Bank", "Kuwait's Best Bank for SMEs", "Kuwait's Best Investment Bank (KFH Capital)", "The Middle East's Best Bank Transformation", "Bahrain's Best Islamic Bank", and "Bahrain's Best Digital Bank for Large Corporate".

KFH Group representatives, General Manager Corporate Banking and Syndication, Nasser Alshaya, Deputy General Manager Cards, Talal AlArbeed, and KFH Capital Vice President Investment Banking, Khalid Alshami received the awards.

The Euromoney Awards panel, comprised of journalists and a research team, selects winners based on a defined set of criteria. These criteria include financial solvency, performance indicators, the breadth and depth of financing services offered, as well as a bank's capacity for innovation, sustainable growth, and adaptation to evolving market conditions. The panel also considers how well banks meet customer needs, embrace technological advancements, and achieve success in their digital transformation strategies.

Thanks to its prudent management and sound business plans, these honors underscore KFH Group strong market position and the customers' trust. They also underline the Bank's efforts in innovation and offering advanced digital banking experience, highlighting its customer-centric and proactive approach in digitalization and commitment to global standards. As a result, KFH seeks to reinforce its standing as one of the fastest growing and most prominent brands worldwide, supporting its goal of becoming among the world's largest 100 banks and a vital contributor to Kuwait's economic growth.



Talal AlArbeed, Nasser Alshaya, and Khalid Alshami receive Euromoney awards.

On the Kuwaiti market front, KFH consistently distinguishes itself by setting standards and leading the competitive landscape. Its recognition as "Kuwait's Best Islamic Bank" and "Kuwait's Best Bank" are a testament to customers trust and business excellence. They also reaffirm KFH's operational efficiency, commit-

ment to financial inclusion, sustainable growth, women's empowerment, and its ability to meet the evolving needs of a diverse and expansive customer base.

As the largest bank in Kuwait by market capitalization and the highest in profitability in the local banking sector, KFH boasts the most comprehensive and diversified portfolio of services and products, catering to individuals, SMEs, and large corporations.

At the Middle East level, KFH's competence and leadership in the region enable it to offer innovative banking and financial services in regional and international markets. With the Group spanning 8 countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey, Germany and the UK, KFH has built a robust cross-border presence for exchanging expertise and leveraging market strength. This edge enhanced customers benefits, profitability, growth opportunities, risk and market volatility management.

The "The Middle East's Best Bank Transformation" award celebrates KFH's exemplary execution of the largest-ever merger project in the Kuwaiti banking sector as part of its landmark cross-border acquisition. The project is one of the largest deals in the region which paved the way for the creation of a giant financial entity in Kuwait and the world. This strategic transformation also marked the launch of KFH's new visual identity titled "Beyond Horizons" to align with its growth, significant achievements and expanding global presence.

Euromoney awards are based on the input and assessment of world-class experts and analysts in the banking and Islamic finance, as well as interviews and surveys with market stakeholders. It also considers the performance of financial institutions that demonstrate exceptional leadership, innovation and positive impact across the markets they serve.

It serves to note that Euromoney Magazine is one of the renowned financial publications in finance and business, offering benchmarking and insights on international capital markets.



Focus will be on critical minerals

Trump admin will evaluate request to sell leases for seabed mining

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): The Trump administration said Wednesday that it will consider selling leases to extract minerals from the seabed off the South Pacific island of American Samoa, a potential first step in a wider industry push to allow deep-sea mining that environmentalists oppose because they say it could irreparably harm marine ecosystems.

The Department of Interior said it is responding to an April request from California-based company Impossible Metals for a commercial auction. The company wants to mine the ocean floor for deposits of nickel, cobalt and other critical minerals.

Last month, President Trump signed an executive order directing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to fast-track permits for companies to mine the ocean floor in U.S. and international waters. The move comes amid the Trump administration's trade war with China, which controls many critical minerals such as nickel, cobalt and manganese used in high-tech manufacturing, including for military uses.

"Critical minerals are fundamental to strengthening our nation's resilience and safeguarding our national interests," Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said in a news release. He said the upcoming evaluation could be a prelude to future mining in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.

Environmentalists worry that ocean mining could harm fisheries and even affect oceans' ability to absorb and store carbon dioxide, the main driver of global warming. More than 30 countries, as well as fisheries trade groups, environmentalists and some auto and tech companies, have called for a moratorium on seabed mining.

"We're ready for a fight as Trump's dangerous deep-sea mining obsession worsens," said Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Mining the ocean floor will damage fragile habitat and unique critters we haven't even discovered yet. Island communities depend on healthy oceans and declaring open season on mineral prospecting puts people and wildlife at risk."

Impossible Metals said it has developed an autonomous underwater robot that uses artificial intelligence to minimize harm to marine life and habitat.

"Beginning the process to access seabed minerals from our own waters is a big win for the U.S. (by) securing critical minerals here at home instead of relying on foreign competitors," Impossible Metals CEO Oliver Gunasekara said in an email. "We're ready to work with all stakeholders to show that bold innovation, economic prosperity, and environmental protection can go together."

Burgum said the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will undertake a multistep evaluation, starting with public input.

Opponents say any U.S. approval of deep-sea mining would ignore an ongoing process to adopt international rules for the practice. Most countries in the 1990s joined a United Nations-affiliated International Seabed Authority to govern seabed mining in international waters. But the U.S. never signed on to the effort, which hasn't yet adopted rules.

Countries can approve mining in their own territorial waters, so Impossible Metals wouldn't need permission from the authority. Canada-based The Metals Company has said it plans to apply this year through a U.S. subsidiary for permits to mine in international waters.

Tariffs, inflation and leery customers are hitting retailers in different ways

Fears of a recession have left many Americans uneasy

NEW YORK, May 22, (AP): Retailers are trying to navigate their way through economic uncertainty in 2025. Tariffs, inflation and lingering fears of a recession have left many Americans uneasy and pulling back on spending.

Because consumer spending accounts for about 70% of U.S. economic activity, a retreat would heighten the odds of contraction for the U.S. economy.

With earnings from major retailers wrapping up it's become clear that the trade war launched by the Trump administration is impacting retailers in very different ways.

Walmart earned a public rebuke from President Donald Trump after it said last week that it has already raised prices and will have to do so again this summer, right when the back-to-school shopping season kicks off. Trump told the retail giant that it should "eat" the additional costs created by his tariffs.

Home Depot said Tuesday that it doesn't expect to raise prices because of tariffs, saying it has spent years diversifying the sources for the goods on its shelves. However, executive Billy Basteck said some products on Home Depot shelves now may disappear. "There's items that we have that could



The logo for Target is displayed above a trading post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Tuesday, May 20, 2025. (AP)

potentially be impacted from a tariff that, candidly, we won't have going forward," Basteck said in a conference call with industry analysts.

While retailers are sorting out how to best operate in a trade war, their customers are taking stock of their finances and the trends are not good. U.S. consumer sentiment declined slightly in May for the fifth straight month, surprising economists, as Americans increasingly worry that President Donald Trump's trade war will worsen inflation.

The preliminary reading of the University of Michigan's closely watched

consumer sentiment index, released Friday, declined 2.7% on a monthly basis to 50.8, the second-lowest level in the nearly 75-year history of the survey. The only lower reading was in June 2022. Since January, sentiment has tumbled nearly 30%.

Here's a quick look at some poignant details from retailers reporting quarterly financial results Wednesday.

Target's sales dropped more than anticipated in the first quarter, and the retailer warned they will slip for all of 2025 year as its customers, worried over the impact of tariffs and the economy, pull back on spending.

Target also cut its annual sales projections. The company now expects a low-single digit decline for 2025 after previously projecting a 1% increase for sales.

Chairman and CEO Brian Cornell said during Target's conference call that the chain has been dealing with multiple issues impacting its business, including tariffs and declining consumer confidence.

"We have many levers to use in mitigating the impact of tariffs and price is the very last resort," he said. "Our strategy is to remain price competitive by leveraging the capabilities, longstanding relationships and the scale that set us apart from many of our retail peers."

TJX Cos., parent of T.J. Maxx, Marshalls and other stores, has been pegged as one of the potential "winners" of the shifting trade landscape, as Americans try to save money.

That appeared to be the case Wednesday as the company beat both revenue and profit expectations on Wall Street.

And CEO Ernie Herrman said the second quarter is off to a strong start.

"I am convinced that our broad assortment of great brands and fashions, at compelling prices, will continue to be a tremendous draw for shoppers seeking value," he said. "Further, I am confident that the strength, flexibility, and resiliency of our off-price business model will serve us well in today's macro environment, as it has throughout our long, successful history."



View of the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange from the Lookout viewing point, in London, Wednesday, April 9, 2025. (AP)

LONDON, May 22, (AP): Inflation in the U.K. spiked to its highest level for more than a year in April amid a raft of higher domestic bills, such as energy and water, official figures showed Wednesday.

The Office for National Statistics said that its key measure of inflation, as measured by the consumer prices index, rose by 3.5% in the year to April, up from 2.6% in March.

April's rate was the highest since January 2024 and above expectations for a more modest increase to 3.3%.

The scale of the rise was also the largest since October 2022, at the height of the energy crisis in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Economists had anticipated a sizeable increase as April saw hefty annual price rises for an array of household bills, as well as the impact of higher taxes on businesses and a sizeable increase in the minimum wage.

Inflation is widely expected to stay above 3% for the rest of the year, which could rein in expectations of further interest rate reductions from the Bank of England, whose target for inflation is 2%.

On Tuesday, the bank's chief economist, Huw Pill, said that borrowing rates have been cut too quickly, in a sign that he's concerned about underlying inflation pressures. Since it started cutting borrowing costs last August from the 16-year high of 5.25%, the bank has proceeded on a gradual basis by lowering its main interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point every three months. Earlier this month, it reduced it to 4.25%.

Nikkei 225 shed 0.8% to 36,988.36

Asian shares slip as jitters about U.S. debt send Wall St tumbling

TOKYO, May 22, (AP): Asian shares fell Thursday after Wall Street slumped under pressure from the Treasury bond market and worries about surging U.S. debt.

U.S. futures were little changed, while Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 shed 0.8% to 36,988.36.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.5% to 23,711.58, while the Shanghai Composite was virtually unchanged, inching up less than 0.1% to 3,387.58.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.5% to 8,348.10. South Korea's Kospi dropped 1.3% to 2,591.95.

Rising yields for U.S. Treasury bonds are a canary in the coal mine, Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

"The U.S. still has the biggest markets, the deepest liquidity, and the dollar's inertia working in its favor. But even inertia can't outrun compound interest and structural deficits forever," he wrote. The declining U.S. dollar also weighed on regional markets, according to some analysts, because some Asian nations have significant holdings in dollars.

A weak dollar also hurts Asian exporters, such as Japanese automakers and electronics companies, by reducing the value of their overseas earnings when they are converted into yen.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 143.25 Japanese yen from



Currency traders work near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), top center left, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, top center, at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, May 21, 2025. (AP)

143.68 yen. It had been trading at 150 yen levels a year ago. The euro cost \$1.1343, up from \$1.1330.

Investors remain worried over President Donald Trump's actions, including tariff policies that directly affect Asian companies and decisions on major legislation such as a funding bill now in Congress.

"U.S. equities slumped in a 'Sell America' move as things turned ugly on Trump's 'big, beautiful tax bill,'" said Tan Jing Yi, analyst at Mizuho Bank in Singapore.

On Wednesday, shares tumbled on Wall Street after the U.S. government released the results for its latest auction of 20-year bonds.

New deal now thrusts Ive at the vanguard of AI

OpenAI recruits iPhone designer Jony Ive to work on AI hardware in \$6.5 bln deal

SAN FRANCISCO, May 22, (AP): OpenAI has recruited Jony Ive, the designer behind Apple's iPhone, to lead a new hardware project for the artificial intelligence company that makes ChatGPT.

OpenAI said it is acquiring io, a product and engineering company co-founded by Ive, in a deal valued at nearly \$6.5 billion.

Ive became renowned for a meticulous design aesthetic that shaped the cultural zeitgeist during a 27-year career at Apple, which he left in 2019. He did his most influential work after Apple co-founder Steve Jobs returned to run the company in 1997, where the two forged a partnership that would hatch a succession of game-changing products like the iPhone.

The new OpenAI deal now thrusts Ive at the vanguard of AI - a technology driving the biggest industry shift since the iPhone's arrival.

The company hasn't said exactly what product they will be making but it will likely be some kind of "physical AI embodiments" that bring generative AI chatbot technology out of computer screens into another form, such as through a car or a humanoid robot, said Gartner analyst Chirag Dekate, adding that it is too early to know for sure.

OpenAI said its CEO Sam Altman had been "quietly" collaborating since 2023 with Ive and his design firm, LoveFrom.

In a joint letter posted on OpenAI's website Wednesday, Ive and Altman said it "became clear that our ambitions to develop, engineer and manufacture a new family of products demanded an entirely new company."

That's when Ive co-founded io with three others about a year ago. OpenAI said it already owns a 23% stake in io from a prior collaborative agreement signed late last year. It says it will now pay \$5 billion in equity for the acquisition.

OpenAI said Ive will not become an OpenAI employee and LoveFrom will remain independent but "will assume deep design and creative responsibilities across OpenAI and



Jony Ive attends The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the 'Superfine: Tailoring Black Style' exhibition on Monday, May 5, 2025, in New York. (AP)

io." Both OpenAI and Ive's design firm are based in San Francisco.

Leading the new io division for OpenAI will be longtime executive Peter Welinder, who led robotics research in the startup's early years and more recently has been vice president of its "new product explorations" team that delves into hardware, robotics and other early stage research.

Altman, 40, can only hope his still-blossoming partnership with the 58-year-old designer, works out as well as the mind-meld between Jobs and Ive.

When he started his own firm, Ive derived the LoveFrom name from a Jobs' observation that one way to hail humanity is by "making something with a great deal of care and love."

Why are more shoppers struggling to repay 'buy now, pay later' loans?

NEW YORK, May 22, (AP): More Klarna customers are having trouble repaying their "buy now, pay later" loans, the short-term lender said this week. The disclosure corresponded with reports by lending platforms Bankrate and LendingTree, which cited an increasing share of all "buy now, pay later" users saying they had fallen behind on payments. The late or missed installments are a sign of faltering financial health among a segment of the US population, some analysts say, as the nation's total consumer debt rises to a record \$18.2 trillion and the Trump administration moves to collect on federal student loans.

Shoppers who opt to finance purchases through BNPL services tend to be younger than the average consumer, and a study from the Federal Reserve last year said Black and Hispanic women were especially likely to use the plans, which customers of all income levels are increasingly adopting.

"While BNPL provides credit to financially vulnerable consumers, these same consumers may be overextending themselves," the authors of the Federal Reserve study wrote. "This concern is consistent with previous research that has shown consumers spend more when BNPL is offered when checking out and that BNPL use leads to an increase in overdraft fees and credit card interest payments and fees."

As Klarna grows its user base and revenue, the Swedish company said its first-quarter consumer credit losses rose 17% compared to the January-March period of last year, to \$136 million.

A company spokesperson said in a statement that the increase largely reflected the higher number of loans Klarna made year over year. The percentage of its loans at a global level that went unpaid in the first quarter grew from 0.51%

in 2024 to 0.54% this year, and the company sees "no sign of a weakened U.S. consumer," he said.

Buy now, pay later plans generally let consumers split payments for purchases into four or fewer installments, often with a down payment at checkout. The loans are typically marketed as zero-interest, and most require no credit check or a soft credit check. BNPL providers promote the plans as a safer alternative to traditional credit cards when interest rates are high. The popularity of the deferred payment plans, and the expanding ways customers can use them, have also sparked public attention.

When Klarna announced a partnership with DoorDash in March, the news led to online comments about Americans taking out loans to buy takeout food. Similar skepticism emerged when Billboard revealed that more than half of Coachella attendees used installment plans to finance their tickets to the music festival.

An April report from LendingTree said about four in ten users of buy now, pay later plans said they had made late payments in the past year, up from one in three last year. According to a May report from Bankrate, about one in four users of the loans chose them because they were easier to get than traditional credit cards.

The six largest BNPL providers - Affirm, Afterpay, Klarna, PayPal, Sezzle, and Zip - originated about 277.3 million loans for \$33.8 billion in merchandise in 2022, or an amount equal to about 1% of credit card spending that year, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The federal agency said this month it did not intend to enforce a Biden-era

regulation that was designed to put more boundaries around the fintech lenders.

The rule treated buy now, pay later loans like traditional credit cards under the Truth In Lending Act, requiring disclosures, refund processing, a formal dispute process and other protections.

The regulation, which took effect last year, also prevented borrowers from being forced into automatic payments or charged with multiple fees for the same missed payment.

The Trump administration said its non-enforcement decision came "in the interest of focusing resources on supporting hard-working American taxpayers" and that it would "instead keep its enforcement and supervision resources focused on pressing threats to consumers, particularly servicemen and veterans."

Consumer advocates maintain that without federal oversight, customers seeking refunds or in search of clear information about BNPL fee structures and interest rates will have less legal recourse.

Industry watchers point to consumers taking out loans they can't afford to pay back as a top risk of BNPL use. Without credit bureaus keeping track of the new form of credit, there are fewer safeguards and less oversight.

Justine Farrell, chair of the marketing department at the University of San Diego's Knauss School of Business, said that when consumers aren't able to make loan payments on time, it worsens the economic stress they're already experiencing. "Consumers' financial positions feel more spread thin than they have in a long time," said Farrell, who studies consumer behavior and BNPL services. "The cost of food is continuing to go up, on top of rent and other goods ... so consumers are taking advantage of the ability to pay for items later."





Inauguration of the 'Lulu World of Beauty' promotion at the Fahaheel Hypermarket branch.



Skincare, perfumes, and more – world-class beauty brands on sale.

A week-long celebration of glamour and self-care

# LuLu Hypermarket unveils the ‘World of Beauty’ across Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: In a dazzling celebration of beauty, elegance, and self-care, LuLu Hypermarket launched the much-anticipated ‘LuLu World of Beauty’ promotion, from May 21 to May 27 across all its outlets in Kuwait.

The week-long event offered a vibrant fusion of exclusive deals, interactive beauty experiences, and expert consultations, turning every LuLu store into a haven for beauty enthusiasts.

The event was officially inaugurated on May 21 at the Fahaheel Hypermarket branch, drawing an enthusiastic crowd and a lineup of renowned beauty vloggers, fashion influencers, and LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait’s management and sponsors. Their presence added flair to the launch, setting the tone for an exciting week ahead.

Shoppers were treated to irresistible offers on a wide range of cosmetics, perfumes, skincare, and wellness products from some of



Beauty vloggers, influencers light up LuLu’s event launch.

the world’s most beloved brands. Major sponsors of the were Nivea, Unilever, P&G, Yardley, Colgate, Johnson’s, L’Oréal, Garnier, Dabur, Himalaya, Enchanteur, Mamaearth, Schick, Persona, Banana Boat, Dove, and Lux, each bring-

ing their signature style and quality to the forefront.

Adding to the charm, exclusive brand experiences and interactive product were on display throughout the stores. Live beauty demonstrations by top beauty brands



showcased the latest trends, expert makeup tips, and skincare techniques, captivating both seasoned makeup lovers and curious newcomers.

Visitors had the opportunity to explore exhibition stalls hosted

by sponsors and co-sponsors, offering firsthand insights into their best-selling and newly launched products. Guests had the unique opportunity to engage with brand representatives, ask questions, and receive free beau-

ty sampling kits – a hit among the shoppers.

One of the highlights of the promotion was the free live styling and makeup services, provided by professional makeup artists who offered personalized consultations and complete makeovers, delighting customers and helping them discover new looks and products tailored to their preferences.

The event attracted overwhelming participation from customers, reflecting a shared enthusiasm for beauty and self-expression. It not only brought communities together in celebration but also reaffirmed LuLu Hypermarket’s commitment to offering quality, variety, and a superior customer experience.

Through this colorful and engaging initiative, LuLu Hypermarket once again proved that it is more than just a shopping destination – it’s a lifestyle partner for every beauty enthusiast in Kuwait.



Some photos from the IDAK-KDD Shooting Championship 2025.

Dr. Shiraz, Dr. Suchindran win

## IDAK-KDD Shooting Contest displays skill, sportsmanship

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The IDAK-KDD Shooting Championship 2025, held on May 16 at Mayadeen Shooting Range (Q8 Shooting), proved to be a spectacular display of skill, sportsmanship, and spirited camaraderie.

Organized by the IDAK Sports Committee team comprising Dr. Eldho George (Chair), Dr. Renjit George (Co-Chair), Dr. Anjana Nair, Dr. Abraham Thomas, Dr. Sharon Thomas, and Dr. Varsha Mannohan, the event was a true testament of teamwork and sporting spirit.

The event was flagged off by IDAK President Dr. George P. Alex, in presence of the Chief Guest Anand, representing title sponsor KDD, along with the remittance partner, Al Mulla Exchange, thus setting the stage for a thrilling day of marksmanship.

Participants were given a detailed introduction to shooting and carefully guided through the different forms of the competition by the proficient instructors. Participants competed in two main categories, namely Rifle shooting and

Pistol shooting, showcasing precision and focus.

Winners in the rifle shooting category were as follows: First place: Dr. Shiraz; second Dr. Samit and third: Dr. Joe

Winners in the pistol shooting category were as follows: First place: Dr. Suchindran; second: Reuvan Thomas and third: Dr. Jijan

Dr. Shiraz (Rifle) and Dr. Suchindran (Pistol) were crowned as top shooters of the Championship, displaying their outstanding performance and accurate aim under pressure!

Talented photographers Dr. Jijan, Dr. Nithin, Dr. Jyothy, and Dr. Abraham used their lenses to capture the essence and excitement of the championship with remarkable clarity, while Dr. Asheel, Dr. George, and Dr. Sudhin flawlessly coordinated the event behind-the-scenes.

The IDAK-KDD Shooting Championship 2025 will be remembered as a landmark event that brought the IDAK community together in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

Register by May 25

## IMA Kuwait to host annual ‘Student Felicitation 2025’

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait is all set to host its Annual Grand Student Felicitation Event to celebrate the achievements of Indian Students who have recently completed their 10th and 12th Grades.

Date: Friday, May 30  
Time: 5:30 PM  
Venue: To be announced  
Last date to register: May 25  
Eligibility: Indian students residing in Kuwait who passed 10th or 12th Grade recently

Event highlights:  
Felicitation ceremony: Recognize and celebrate the achievements of outstanding students who have excelled in their 10th & 12th Examinations. Witness their success stories and be inspired by their dedication and hard work.

Renowned personalities, principals and embassy personnel will grace the event.

Experts will deliver speeches on career guidance.

Renowned experts from India and Kuwait will feature their insights on the topic.

One of the major attractions of the event is the prestigious Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Award, which will be presented to a Student showcasing Exceptional Academic Excellence.

Registration: Register your ward today at [www.imakuwait.org/register](http://www.imakuwait.org/register) or simply scan the QR code from the official flyer.

Note: Event is open to all students, parents and teachers. Registration is required for student felicitation only.

For more info, contact: 962 9394 I 6646 6479

Organized by IMA Kuwait – building a brighter future through community empowerment and education.

Stay tuned for the venue announcement and don’t miss this opportunity to recognize and inspire the next generation of achievers!



Photos from the event.

‘Kreedayana-Rasautana’ a huge success

## Kuwait Kannada Koota hosts Sports Day, Food Mela

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The Kuwait Kannada Koota Executive Committee 2025 recently organized a vibrant indoor sports day and food mela titled ‘Kreedayana-Rasautana’.

The event brought together a lively group of men, women, and children, all dressed in their respective team colors, to celebrate the day with enthusiasm and community spirit.

The event was meticulously designed to feature various indoor games and competitions, fostering a sense of teamwork and friendly competition among participants. Additionally, the food mela showcased a diverse array of culinary delights, allowing attendees to savor both traditional and contemporary dishes from Karnataka.

their families: President Tharendra Shettigar, General Secretary Dr. Guruprasad Subbarao, and Treasurer Manjunath Jogi, along with all the participants of the sports activities and members of the Kuwait Kannada Koota. Vice President Dr. Preeti Shetty played a pivotal role in preparing the teams for the food mela stalls. Her dedication and efforts were phenomenal in ensuring the success of the event.

The team responsible for organizing the indoor games was led by Sports Committee Convener Girish Shenoy, Co-convener Suresh Kunder, and team members Dr. Maribasappa Karched, Rameshchandra, Mohan B.V., Bharamappa Uppar, and Harish Nayak.

Before the start of the sports competitions, snacks were served under the banner of “Chat Pata Tindi” by a team of women renowned for their mouth-watering culinary skills. Led by Nayana Shenoy, they offered delicious Pani Puri, Pav bhaji, and Churumuri Chat,

delighting all attendees.

Teams Kaveri, Nethravathi, Hemavathi, and Sharavathi, led by their respective captains Mrs. Aparna Manjunath, Dr. Sanketha Patil, Mrs. Rajeshwari Chethan, and Mrs. Shilpa Sharanagouda Patil, geared up with their outstanding sportsmen and sportswomen to compete fiercely against other team titans.

Box Cricket, played by men between teams, enthralled the audience during the league matches and kept spectators on the edge of their seats with the nail-biting climax of the final match between the Nethravathi and Kaveri teams. Similarly, Kuntaata, an adventurous game, was played by women. The umpires and audience were amazed by the team spirit displayed by the women. Passing the ball was another engaging game, played by both men and women in the teams. Additionally, game stalls organized by children and adults kept the audience entertained throughout the event.



Ritchie's film delivers epic adventure with a star-studded cast

## Portman, Krasinski explore the globe in 'Fountain of Youth'

LOS ANGELES, May 22, (AP): The spirit of Indiana Jones is baked into the essence of the new movie "Fountain of Youth."

This lighthearted, globe-trotting heist from Guy Ritchie, debuting on Apple TV+ on Friday, stars Natalie Portman and John Krasinski as estranged siblings attempting to piece together historical facts in hopes of finding the mythical spring. The quest takes them to far-flung places from Vienna to the pyramids, as they try to evade capture by the authorities and a shadowy operation intent on stopping the search.

"I've been looking to watch this movie for years," Krasinski said in an interview with The Associated Press. "This is the movie I pretended to be in when I was a kid. This is what got me into the business."

The film also stars Domhnall Gleeson as the wealthy businessman funding the operation and Eiza González as one of the protectors of the Fountain of Youth.

"Guy Ritchie gets to work with some of the best cast in the world," said González, who has now worked with him three times. "The biggest gift Guy has given me, besides the privilege of working with him, is working with them."

Gleeson, a newcomer to the world of Ritchie, was pretty sure that it was going to be as enjoyable as it looked. And he got a vote of confidence from his director. "Guy basically said, if you're not having fun, then this is not going to work and so the idea is to turn up and have fun," Gleeson said.

There were a lot of things about "Fountain of Youth" that piqued Portman's interest. The chance to work with Ritchie, Krasinski, and the rest of the cast, as well as the travel, but it also felt like something she could share with her own son and daughter.

"It's so rare to get to make a movie that has this scale and this scope of adventure that you can watch with your kids," Portman said. "I'm always looking for something that I can enjoy with my children."

Her character, Charlotte, is an art historian who had an adventuresome childhood with her explorer father and brother Luke (Krasinski) but has since settled for a more stable life. We meet her amid a contentious divorce and custody battle over her 12-year-old son, and she's not exactly pleased when Luke steals a piece of art from her gallery and attempts to recruit her for the bigger mission. But soon, she's in scuba gear hunting down a lost Rembrandt in the wreckage of the RMS Lusitania.



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Eiza Gonzalez, (from left), John Krasinski, and Natalie Portman in a scene from the film 'Fountain of Youth.' (AP)

Lusitania.

"I think that something we search for as adults is how to regain that youthful spirit, how to hold onto that youthful energy and freedom and wildness, even when having to move into some adult responsibilities," said Portman, who, like her character is recently divorced. "Maybe that can make you a better parent to have a little bit of that glint in your eye."

She and Krasinski, working together for the first time, fell into the sibling dynamics easily.

"These movies sort of live and die with the relationships," Krasinski said. "The sibling thing really only works if you're having genuine fun with the person and it can come off screen. And I laughed with her every single day. She's so funny."

Globe-trotting films aren't just travelogues for the audience, but their own sort of adventure for the cast and crew. This production earned their miles, skipping between the streets of Bangkok and Liverpool, the Austrian National Library in Vienna and Cairo to film at the great pyramids - where "Fountain of Youth" became the first film of this scale to be granted the privilege to shoot action sequences there.

"It was really a pinch me kind of moment to be like, oh, those are the pyramids and we're just hanging out here and walking into them and filming in them," Portman said.

The big first was landing a Boeing Chinook CH47 helicopter in front of the Giza Plateau, and blowing up a jeep, all while the site remained open to tourists.

"With any luck, we didn't blow it for Hollywood going back there for somebody else," Krasinski said. "But if we did, at least we got to do it."

Most of the big action moments "inside" the pyramids were saved for the safety of sets constructed at London's Leavesden Studio, where they also built the wreck-age of the Lusitania in a water tank so big that it took two weeks to fill.

"Fountain of Youth" might seem like the type of movie that would be a natural fit for the big screen: A big budget, global adventure with major stars and sweeping vistas. While Krasinski champions movie theaters - at the time of the interview, he had a ticket to see "Sinners" on IMAX the next day - he's also not feeling bittersweet that this one won't be playing at the multiplex. They all came into "Fountain of Youth" knowing that it was a streaming-first endeavor.

"This was always going to be a streaming movie, so I didn't really think about it in terms of ... Would people want to see it in theaters because it was just one of those things," Krasinski said. "And I think that's the new reality. There are definitely movies that are being made for streaming, and there are movies being made for theatrical."

He added: "It all depends on what the filmmaker's intent was, what the studio's intent and I think as long as those rules are laid out clearly in the beginning, I'm down for either one."

## Cannes



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The History of Sound' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 21. (AP)

'Highest 2 Lowest' mixes crime, music, and NY spirit

## Washington, Lee reunite for high-stakes drama

CANNES, France, May 22, (AP): There's no sufficient way of explaining what it's like to be around Spike Lee, but his new film, "Highest 2 Lowest" comes pretty close.

The main character, played by Denzel Washington, is a Knicks fan who won't tolerate Celtics green in his house. A framed jersey of Jalen Brunson hangs in his Brooklyn apartment. There are movie references peppered throughout, of "The French Connection," "The Defiant Ones" and "The Sweet Smell of Success." Yankee Stadium plays a pivotal setting. In one scene, Nicholas Turturro even yells directly into the camera: "Boston sucks!"

"We're not counting on Boston for box office!" Lee says with a roaring cackle during an interview on a rooftop terrace in Cannes. "We might as well just write that off."

Some of Lee's most deeply felt passions - filmmaking and the New York Knicks - have collided at the Cannes Film Festival. The premiere of "Highest 2 Lowest," a reimagining of Akira Kurosawa's "High to Low," came shortly before the Knicks begin their Eastern Conference finals matchup with the Indiana Pacers. Everywhere Lee has gone at the French Riviera festival, he's gone in blue and orange, including a pinstripe suit on the red carpet.

"It's a film by a New Yorker who loves New York. But if you're not that, it doesn't detract from you enjoying it. You could be from ... (Lee raises an eyebrow) ... Indiana," Lee says before letting out a maniacal roar. "Wait a minute, we got to write off another market, too!"

"Highest 2 Lowest," which A24 releases in theaters Aug. 22 before it streams on Apple TV+ on Sept. 5, was one of the most eventful premieres of Cannes. Washington was surprised with a Palme d'Or. Washington also got in an angry tangle with a photographer on the red carpet after his arm was grabbed.

"I wish I could've told that photographer: 'Do not touch Denzel Washington or it's going to be a (expletive) problem,'" Lee says, laughing. "The headline, 'Man on Fire,' hoooooo! That was a good headline."

Lee then picks up the digital recorder lying in front of him and says in a calm, professional voice: "Ladies and gentleman, this is a public service announcement. Do not put your hands on Mr. Denzel Washington. Don't say I didn't warn you. Thank you very much."

But Lee, 68, has been more than happy to mix it up in Cannes. Before an interview, he taunted European journalists about his adopted Premier League team, Arsenal. At the press conference earlier in the day, he quoted Yoda for his primary message to film students: "There is no try, only do." Said Lee: "Are you faking the funk or are you serious?"

Lee, who last debuted 2018's "BlacKkKlansman" in Cannes, tried to avoid saying anything too pointed about President Don-



Director Spike Lee poses for a portrait photograph for the film 'Highest 2 Lowest' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, May 20. (AP)

ald Trump. But couldn't help himself when asked about the moral decisions that mark "Highest 2 Lowest."

"I don't know how much we can talk about American values considering who is president," Lee told reporters.

Lee was also on an apology tour at the festival. Four years ago, he was the head of the jury that awarded Julia Ducournau's "Titane" the Palme d'Or. Only Lee, confused by the French-language ceremony, accidentally revealed the winner too soon. "Oh, that's a big one," said Lee, shaking his head. "That's going down in the history of Cannes."

Just ahead of Lee's interview with The Associated Press, Ducournau, in Cannes with her "Titane" follow-up, "Alpha," crossed the terrace to warmly embrace him. Recalling "Titane," Lee said, "A car impregnates a woman? You gotta win. You got my vote."

"Highest 2 Lowest" has been referred to as a remake of "High and Low," but the degree to which it's a Spike Lee joint surprised festivalgoers. Washington plays David King, a wealthy record label executive whose son, along with the son of his friend and driver (Jeffrey Wright), is kidnapped for ransom. The kidnapper, played by ASAP Rocky, accidentally releases the wrong young man, leaving King with the decision to fork over the \$17.5 million ransom for a young man who's not his son.

The film is, in part, an ode to Kurosawa, whom Lee discov-

ered as a film student at NYU. He credits his "Rashomon" as the basis of "She's Gotta Have It." He met Kurosawa briefly once and has an autograph from the Japanese master signed with a paint brush. "I got to shake his hand," says Lee.

"I grew up with my mother taking me to musicals," he says. "The Sound of Music" was one. If you listen to that great song by Rogers and Hammerstein with Julie Andrews singing it. What did Coltrane do to it? That's my analogy. What Coltrane did to 'My Favorite Things,' I think that's what we did with this."

"Highest 2 Lowest" is less driven as a Kurosawa homage than by Lee's own obsessions: New York, music, the moral dilemmas of a Black entertainer and, yes, that Boston sucks. Above all, it's another Lee protagonist forced to do the right thing.

"I'm glad you said that. I never thought about that connected to the decisions David King has to make," Lee says. "But what you see is the turmoil he's going through. He's going through it. A moral decision. Money on one hand, a life on the other."

More than any recent film of his, you can sense Lee having fun. Back in New York. Back with Denzel. "Highest 2 Lowest" is Lee and Washington's fifth film together but the first in 19 years after 2006's "Inside Man." "It's not like we had to catch up," Lee says. "We never lost a step."

But Lee suspects "Highest 2 Lowest" marks the end of their collaboration - one of cinema's greatest actor-director pairings, spanning "Mo' Better Blues," "Malcolm X" and "He Got Game."

"That's what he says," Lee shrugs, citing Washington's retirement plans. "And then the other day he's doing a film with the guy from 'City of ...' so. Denzel put that on himself: 'I'm doing this thing and then I'm retiring.' I'll believe it when he hangs it up." "Highest 2 Lowest" reaches a blistering crescendo when King confronts Rocky's kidnapper in a basement recording studio. A kind of rap battle ensues that Lee gives much of the credit to Washington for. The actor improvised many of his lyrics, drawing heavily from Nas. ("That was not scripted," says Lee. "We had to pay for that!")

"People don't understand. Denzel is such a powerful force. Not a derogatory term, but he's a beast. If you got somebody who don't got it, Denzel is going to slaughter them. Slaughter," Lee explains. "Rocky is from Harlem, uptown. So I knew that he's not going to punk out. He's going to stand there, feet planted to the ground, as a heavyweight fight, blow to blow."

For Lee, the scene is a summation of what he loves about moviemaking and what delights him so much courtside at Madison Square Garden.

"People want to see a championship fight, and that's what it is. That is, in boxing terms, a slugfest," says Lee. "That makes great cinema. It makes great sports. You've got conflict. It's a battle, and they're slugging it out."

## Variety

**BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.:** Kim Kardashian is a step closer to following in her father's footsteps and becoming a lawyer.

She has completed a legal apprenticeship and is now eligible to take the California bar exam, her representative confirmed Wednesday.

The entrepreneur and reality TV star posted an Instagram Story from a small private ceremony at the Beverly Hills Hotel, where she smiled as she donned a graduation cap.

Jessica Jackson, a lawyer who mentored her in the program, called it "one of the most inspiring legal journeys we've ever seen." "Six years ago, Kim Kardashian walked into this program with nothing but a fierce desire to fight for justice," Jackson says in a speech in the video. "No law school lectures, no ivory tower shortcuts, just determination. And a mountain of case law books to read."

California allows people to study under a lawyer or judge as an alternative to law school. Kardashian could become a licensed lawyer if she passes the state's notoriously difficult state bar exam.

Jackson said Kardashian spent "18 hours a week, 48 weeks a year for six straight years" on the program. (AP)

□ □ □

**LONDON:** Grammy-winning singer Chris Brown was released on 5 million-pound (\$6.7 million) bail Wednesday while facing allegations he beat and seriously injured a music producer with a bottle in a London nightclub in 2023.

The decision by a London judge to grant bail will allow Brown to launch a world tour next month that had been thrown into doubt last week when a district judge in Manchester ordered him into custody after he was charged with causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Judge Tony Baumgartner in Southwark Crown Court said that Brown could go on tour, including several stops in the U.K., but would have to pay the bail to guarantee his court appearance. Brown, who was not in court for the hearing, was released in the late afternoon from a jail in Salford, outside Manchester, where he had been arrested at a hotel last week.

Brown was initially scheduled to return to court on June 13. Had he remained in custody, he would have missed the first two nights of his upcoming European tour, which starts next month. (AP)



Kardashian



A pair of blood-stained gloves that Abraham Lincoln had when he was assassinated at Freeman's/Hindman in West Loop, Chicago, May 15. (AP)

## Lincoln's blood-stained gloves up for auction

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., May 22, (AP): Treasured artifacts associated with President Abraham Lincoln were on the auction block Wednesday, separated from a collection that was intended to be available for public display forever but wound up in the middle of an interagency feud amid a lingering \$8 million debt.

The blood-stained leather gloves that were in Lincoln's pocket the night he was assassinated were among the 144 items up for bid, 136 of which sold.

They were auctioned to pay off the remainder of a two-decade-old loan that the Lincoln Presidential Foundation used to buy a one-of-a-kind cluster of Lincoln artifacts from a California collector.

The auction at Freeman's/Hindman in Chicago raised \$7.9 million, but that includes buyers' premiums of roughly 28% tacked onto each sale to cover the auction house's administrative costs.

The gloves were the top-selling items, bringing in \$1.52 million including the premium. One of two handkerchiefs Lincoln had with him April 14, 1865, the night he was shot, went for \$826,000.



Revisiting shot formulas

US FDA weighs COVID vaccine update for fall

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): Government advisers are meeting Thursday to decide if COVID-19 vaccines need updating to improve protection this fall and winter - even as a new Trump administration policy has thrown into question who may be eligible for a shot.

The Food and Drug Administration's outside experts have met regularly since the launch of the first COVID-19 vaccines to discuss tweaking their recipes to stay ahead of the virus. Thursday's meeting is the group's first since President Donald Trump took office.

But it comes just two days after FDA leaders upended the prior US policy of recommending annual COVID-19 boosters for all Americans ages 6 months and older.

Instead, the FDA said routine approval of COVID-19 boosters will be limited to seniors and to younger people who are at high risk of severe infection. Manufacturers will need to do new studies to show whether seasonal shots still benefit healthy people younger than 65.

That raises big implications for next fall's vaccination campaign, with uncertainty over whether healthy people still could get a vaccine even if it's not recommended for them - or whether insurers will keep paying for the shots for everyone. Nor is it clear what the policy means for babies who have never been vaccinated.

"This is a mess," said Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota infectious disease expert. "The one thing we don't want to do is put a barrier in place that prevents parents from getting their children vaccinated if they want to."

Changes

FDA's independent advisers may raise those issues Thursday, but the changes are not the focus of the meeting, which was scheduled before FDA's announcement.

Instead, the panel is set to recommend whether the virus has mutated enough to warrant strain updates for shots from Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax.

"We are asking for guidance to help the FDA decide what strain to select for COVID-19 vaccines going forward," FDA vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad said in comments opening the meeting. Prasad added that the agency wants "to give people a little more time to digest," the new policy on vaccines and is open to feedback.

Last fall's recipe was tailored to omicron descendants on the JN.1 branch of the virus family tree. Novavax brewed shots targeting the parent JN.1 variant while Pfizer and Moderna opted for a subtype called KP.2.

That JN.1 family still dominates, although it continues to evolve. The question is whether last fall's shots still offer enough cross-protection or if manufacturers instead should match today's most common subtype, called LP.8.1.

The World Health Organization recently said last year's version was OK but that vaccine makers could choose an update. The European Medicines Agency instead recommended targeting the newest subtype.

FDA officials didn't express a preference in documents posted online ahead of Thursday's meeting, suggested earlier in the week that the government should move away from yearly updates.

Science

"Instead of having a COVID-19 strategy that's year-to-year where we change things every single year, why don't we let the science tell us when to change?" Prasad said.

Debating that science is what the FDA's vaccine advisers do each year. If they recommend leaving the shots unchanged - and the FDA agrees - it's possible that healthy adults and children may still get access to a fall booster, since this week's policy changes suggest new studies would be required only if manufacturers switch strains or introduce a completely new vaccine. Those would be large, six-month studies, and vaccine experts question if their cost and logistics could make them unfeasible.

Still, the FDA's strain decision normally isn't the final word on recommendations about who should be vaccinated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's own advisory panel meets in June to make recommendations about the fall shots. Among its options are keeping universal access or recommending vaccination for high-risk groups but still giving lower-risk people the choice in getting a shot.

Stress disrupts emotion control in people with mental disorder

SYDNEY, May 22, (Xinhua): Acute stress can disrupt the brain's ability to manage emotions, particularly in people with mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and borderline personality disorder, an Australian study said on Thursday.

Stress can temporarily impair executive functions, which are mental processes like working memory, impulse control, and flexibility, crucial for regulating emotions and making decisions under pressure, said the new study released by Australia's Edith Cowan University (ECU).

"These executive functions are vital for controlling emotional responses, especially in challenging situations," said ECU Master's student Tee-Jay Scott, the first author of the study published in the Journal of Affective Disorders Reports.

The findings show that people with distress-related disorders may be especially vulnerable to stress-related disruptions, even if they don't have a formal diagnosis, Scott said. The team reviewed 17 international studies and found that stress significantly affects working memory in people with depression, and weakens impulse control in those with borderline personality disorder.

These findings may explain why some people respond poorly to common treatments like cognitive behavioral therapy, which rely on these very cognitive functions, said Joanne Dickson, the study's co-author and a professor at ECU.

"If acute stress is interfering with the mental processes that support emotion regulation, it could undermine a person's ability to benefit from these treatments, especially during periods of heightened distress," Dickson said.

'Everywhere you look, people are hungry'

Mothers and their babies face starvation in Gaza, where hospitals are overwhelmed

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, May 22, (AP): Grabbing her daughter's feeble arm, Asmaa al-Arja pulls a shirt over the 2-year-old's protruding ribs and swollen belly. The child lies on a hospital bed, heaving, then wails uncontrollably, throwing her arms around her own shoulders as if to console herself.

This isn't the first time Mayar has been in a Gaza hospital battling malnutrition, yet this 17-day stint is the longest. She has celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that means she can't eat gluten and requires special food. But there's little left for her to eat in the embattled enclave after 19 months of war and Israel's punishing blockade, and she can't digest what's available.

"She needs diapers, soy milk and she needs special food. This is not available because of border closures. If it's available, it is expensive, I can't afford it," her mother said as she sat next to Mayar, now exhausted from the screaming, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Mayar is among the more than 9,000 children who have been treated for malnutrition this year, according to the UN children's agency, and food security experts say tens of thousands of cases are expected in the coming year.

Blockade

Experts also warn the territory could plunge into famine if Israel doesn't stop its military campaign and fully lift its blockade - but the World Health Organization said last week that people are already starving.

"Everywhere you look, people are hungry. ... They point their fingers to their mouths showing that (they) need something to eat," said Nestor Owomuhangi, the representative of the United Nations Population Fund for the Palestinian territories. "The worst



Mayar Al-Arja, 2, who suffers from malnutrition, lies on a bed in a clinic in Nasser hospital, Khan Younis, Gaza, Wednesday, May 21. (AP)

has already arrived in Gaza."

For more than two months, Israel has banned all food, medicine and other goods from entering the territory that is home to some 2 million Palestinians, as it carries out waves of airstrikes and ground operations. Palestinians in Gaza rely almost entirely on outside aid to survive because Israel's offensive has destroyed almost all the territory's food production capabilities.

After weeks of insisting Gaza had enough food, Israel relented in the face of international pressure and began allowing dozens of humanitarian trucks into the territory this week - including some carrying baby food.

"Children are already dying from malnutrition and there are more babies in Gaza now who will be in mortal danger if they don't get fast access to the nutrition supplies needed to save their lives," said Tess Ingram of the UN children's agency.

But UN agencies say the amount is woefully insufficient, compared to around 600 trucks a day that entered during a recent ceasefire and that are necessary to meet basic needs. And they have struggled to retrieve the aid and distribute it, blaming complicated Israeli military procedures and the breakdown of law and order inside the territory.

On Wednesday, a UN official said more than a dozen trucks arrived at warehouses in central Gaza. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press. That appeared to be the first aid to actually reach a distribution point since the blockade was lifted.

Israel accuses Hamas of siphoning off aid, without providing evidence, and plans to roll out a new aid distribution system within days. UN agencies and aid groups say the new system would fall far short of mounting needs,

force much of the population to flee again in order to be closer to distribution sites, and violate humanitarian principles by forcing people to move to receive the aid rather than delivering it based on need to where people live.

On top of not being able to find or afford the food that Mayar needed, her mother said chronic diarrhea linked to celiac disease has kept the child in and out of hospital all year. But it's getting harder to help her as supplies like baby formula are disappearing, say health staff.

Hospitals are hanging by a thread, dealing with mass casualties from Israeli strikes. Packed hospital feeding centers are overwhelmed with patients.

"We have nothing at Nasser Hospital," said Dr. Ahmed al-Farrah, who said his emergency center for malnourished children is at full capacity. Supplies are running out, people are living off scraps, and the situation is catastrophic for babies and pregnant women, he said.

Malnourished

In the feeding center of the hospital, malnourished mothers console their hungry children - some so frail their spines jut out of their skin, their legs swollen from lack food.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises, has warned that there could be some 71,000 cases of malnourished children between now and March. In addition, nearly 17,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women will need treatment for acute malnutrition in the coming months.

Mai Namleh and her 18-month-old son, who live in a tent, are both malnourished. She wanted to wean him off of breastmilk because she barely has any, but she has so little else to give him.

MMR vaccine still key

Measles spreads easily, here's how to stay safe

NEW YORK, May 22, (AP): New Jersey health officials are asking people who went to last week's Shakira concert at MetLife Stadium to monitor for measles symptoms because a person went to see the singer while infectious.

There is no confirmed outbreak in New Jersey, but the US and North America are seeing high measles activity this year - including hundreds sickened by the highly infectious airborne virus in West Texas - and declining rates of people getting the vaccine, which is 97% effective after two doses.

Schools and daycares are among the most common places for measles exposures, like one that happened in three western North Dakota public schools in early May that led to all unvaccinated students being held at home for 21 days under state law.

Here's what to know about the measles and how to protect yourself.

Most US children get vaccinated against measles before entering public school, but increasing numbers of people skipping shots for religious or personal reasons have fueled outbreaks in the US and abroad this year.

Overall, the US has seen more than 1,000 measles cases across 30 states since the beginning of the year, and 11 states with outbreaks - defined as three or more related cases. The largest outbreak in the US has been in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma. There are also large outbreaks in Mexico and

Canada.

It's a respiratory disease caused by one of the world's most contagious viruses. The virus is airborne and spreads easily when an infected person breathes, sneezes or coughs. It most commonly affects kids.

"On average, one infected person may infect about 15 other people," said Scott Weaver, a center of excellence director for the Global Virus Network, an international coalition. "There's only a few viruses that even come close to that."

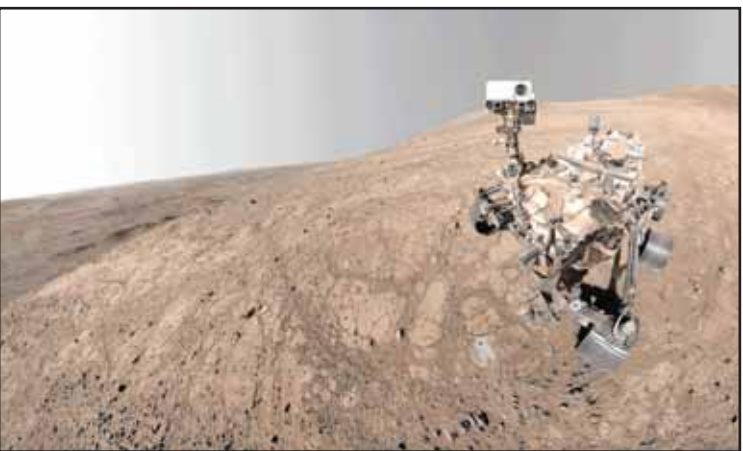
Measles first infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body, causing a high fever, runny nose, cough, red, watery eyes and a rash.

The rash generally appears three to five days after the first symptoms, beginning as flat red spots on the face and then spreading downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet. When the rash appears, the fever may spike over 104 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the CDC.

There's no specific treatment for measles, so doctors generally try to alleviate symptoms, prevent complications and keep patients comfortable.

People who have had measles once can't get it again, health officials say.

Common complications include ear infections and diarrhea. But about 1 in 5 unvaccinated Americans who get measles are hospitalized, the CDC said.



This image provided by NASA shows Perseverance taking a selfie on May 10, 2025. (AP)

A whirlwind on Mars

NASA's Mars Perseverance snaps selfie as Martian dust devil passes

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 22, (AP): The latest selfie by NASA's Perseverance rover at Mars has captured an unexpected guest: a Martian dust devil.

Resembling a small pale puff, the twirling dust devil popped up 3 miles (5 kilometers) behind the rover during this month's photo shoot. Released Wednesday, the selfie is a composite of 59 images taken by the camera on the end of the rover's robotic arm, according to NASA.

It took an hour to perform all the arm movements necessary to gather the images, "but it's worth it," said Megan Wu, an imaging scientist from

Malin Space Science Systems, which built the camera.

"Having the dust devil in the background makes it a classic," Wu said in a statement.

The picture - which also shows the rover's latest sample borehole on the surface - marks 1,500 sols or Martian days for Perseverance. That's equivalent to 1,541 days on Earth.

Perseverance is covered with red dust, the result of drilling into dozens of rocks. Launched in 2020, it's collecting samples for eventual return to Earth from Jezero Crater, an ancient lakebed and river delta that could hold clues of any past microbial life.

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Azam and Rizwan snubbed again as Ali returns for Bangladesh series

# All-rounder Ashraf leads Gladiators to PSL final

LAHORE, Pakistan, May 22, (AP): Quetta Gladiators made it to its first Pakistan Super League final in six years when it beat defending champion Islamabad United by 30 runs in qualifier 1.

Pakistan’s premier domestic T20 tournament was suspended for nine days due to tensions between India and Pakistan.

Quetta’s only PSL title came in 2019 when it beat Peshawar Zalmi by eight wickets in the final.

All-rounder Faheem Ashraf was the star for Quetta as his rampant 45 off 23 balls propelled the former champion to 209-6 with Dinesh Chandimal also contributing a handy unbeaten 48 off 28 balls.

Ashraf and Chandimal countercharged with a 95-run partnership off 48 balls after Quetta ran into trouble at 113-5 in the 12th over as both batters smashed eight boundaries and six sixes in between them.

Ashraf (2-33) then struck immediately with the new ball when he bowled opening batter Alex Hales of England for a duck of his second ball and later also hit the top of James Neesham’s off-stump as Islamabad got bowled out for 179 in 19.4 overs.

Opening batter Sahibzada Farhan top-scored

with 52 - his fourth 50-plus score in the tournament - and Salman Ali Agha made 44 in an otherwise lackluster performance by Islamabad batters.

Off-spinner Usman Tariq picked up 3-32 while fast bowlers Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Wasim shared four wickets between them.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has recalled fast bowler Hasan Ali for this month’s Twenty20 home matches against Bangladesh but overlooked senior batters Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam for the third successive series.

Hasan played just one T20 international in nearly three years when he returned with expensive figures of 0-42 in three overs against Ireland in Dublin in 2024.

However, the right-arm fast bowler has forced his way back into the squad with a rich haul of 15 wickets in the Pakistan Super League while representing the Karachi Kings.

Rizwan and Babar were dropped for the last two series in Zimbabwe and New Zealand as Pakistan continued to reshape its top-order ahead of next year’s T20 World Cup.

Rizwan scored 367 runs at a strike rate of 139.54 in the PSL this season as his franchise, the Multan Sultans, suffered nine defeats in 10

games.

Babar’s Peshawar Zalmi also missed out on the playoffs for the first time in PSL history as he finished the season with 288 runs and a strike rate of 128.57.

Salman Ali Agha, who was appointed captain ahead of the T20 series in Australia last year, will continue to lead the side with Shadab Khan as his deputy.

The series will be the first assignment for Pakistan’s newly appointed white-ball coach Mike Hesson, who is currently in charge of Islamabad United in the PSL.

The selectors have made eight changes to the squad which lost the series in New Zealand 4-1.

Fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi, Jahan-dad Khan and Abbas Afridi were replaced by Hasan, Naseem Shah and Mohammad Wasim while another pace bowler Mohammad Ali was also dropped.

**Squad:**

Salman Ali Agha (captain), Shadab Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hassan Nawaz, Hus-sain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Wasim, Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub.



Quetta Gladiators Faheem Ashraf bowls during the Pakistan Super League first qualifier match between Islamabad United and Quetta Gladiators, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)



Mumbai Indians' Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, India. (AP)

# Mumbai seals final IPL playoffs spot with 59-run win over Delhi

Capitals folded for 121 in 18.2 overs in reply to Indians total of 180-5

MUMBAI, India, May 22, (AP): Mumbai Indians sealed the final playoffs spot in the Indian Premier League with a 59-run victory over Delhi Capitals at Wankhede.

Delhi, which needed a win to keep its playoffs hopes alive, folded for 121 in 18.2 overs on a tricky wicket in reply to Mumbai’s competitive total of 180-5.

Gujarat Titans, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings have already qualified for the playoffs. Delhi became the first team in IPL history to miss the playoffs after winning its first four games.

Delhi didn’t get momentum from the onset in its run-chase as Faf du Plessis, who led the side in the absence of ill Axar Patel, and Lokesh Rahul fell inside the first three overs.

Du Plessis got deceived by Deepak Chahar’s slower delivery and holed out at mid-off while Trent Boult had Rahul caught by wicket-keeper Ryan Rickelton in the third over.

Rickelton pulled off a stunning stumping of Abishek Porel, who got beaten by Will Jacks sharp delivery and couldn’t ground his toe, as Delhi slipped to 27-3 in the sixth over.



Mumbai Indians' Jaspri Bumrah celebrates the dismissal of Delhi Capitals' Tristan Stubbs during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, India. (AP)

Dhir (24 not out) excelled in the final two overs, which produced 48 runs for the home team.

Dhir smashed fast bowler Mukesh Kumar (2-48) for two fours and two sixes after Yadav had started the 19th over with a six to complete his half-century off 36 balls.

Sri Lankan fast bowler Dushman-ta Chameera (1-54) then gave away further 21 runs in the final over to give Mumbai over-par total to defend.

Mumbai lost Rohit Sharma (5) and Jacks (21) inside the batting powerplay as wicketkeeper Porel plucked a superb two-handed catch to his right to dismiss Sharma of left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman.

Nigam (0-25) and Kuldeep Yadav (1-22) gave away only 47 runs off their combined eight overs as the ball started to grip and turn. But Yadav added a cautious 55 runs with Tilak Varma, who made run-a-ball 27 before he waited for the pacers to return for the final two overs and accelerated with Dhir.

“We let it slip in the last two overs,” du Plessis said. “Momentum is a real thing in cricket. The way they counter-punched to get almost 50 in the last two overs ... undoing the work of the first 17-18 overs, we lost that momentum.”

## Next IOC president attends ceremony

## Coventry hands over baton in planning for Brisbane ’32 Oly

BRISBANE, Australia, May 22, (AP): Kirsty Coventry has completed a ceremonial baton change before she takes over as International Olympic Committee president next month, handing off oversight of preparations for the Brisbane 2032 Games during a three-day inspection visit to southeast Queensland state.

Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski replaced Coventry as head of the IOC’s coordination commission for the 2032 Summer Games after the Olympic swimming champion from Zimbabwe was elected to take over from Thomas Bach in the sporting organization’s top job.

All three were part of the IOC team that met in Brisbane and the Gold Coast for their first on-the-ground update on the planning overhaul from local organizers.

“I’m here to formally hand over the baton, or the Olympic flame ... boomerang!” Coventry said as she introduced Jaworski at an IOC coordination commission news conference Thursday at Brisbane’s Suncorp Stadium. “I hope that I’m leaving some good vibes.”

Coventry made her Olympic competition debut at the Sydney 2000 Games and has family living in Australia. She said feels right at home after chairing the coordination commission since soon after the IOC awarded the 2032 Games to Brisbane in 2021.

“I’m very excited about what Brisbane 2032 is going to do,” she said. “Not just for the region, but for Australia and for the world.”

It took more than 1,000 days and at least three major concept changes before a newly elected Queensland state government settled on a comprehensive venue plan in March. That includes a new 60,000-seat stadium and an aquatics center to be built in parklands close to downtown Brisbane, as well as proposals to share events with regions outside the capital.

The surprising call to host rowing in a crocodile-inhabited river in Rockhampton on the central Queensland coast has attracted concern and criticism from the public and sports administrators.

Veteran IOC Olympic Games executive director Christophe Dubi said there’s time for local organizers and sports federations to consider all options and collaborate on specifics for venues, and there’s absolutely no need to panic with seven years until the Brisbane Games.

“No one else but the federation can say the field of play is ready,” he said, noting who had the final sign-off on sports venues as the planning for the Olympics evolve.

“The plan always changes, and generally they change for the better,” he said. “The question is not so much whether the plan has changed - it has - but is it a better plan? The answer is yes.”

Andrew Liveris, president of the local organizing committee, said venue construction is likely to begin later next year and he’s confident the main building program will be complete at least a year out from the Games.

Dubi said anyone doubting those predictions should look at the stage Sydney’s construction program was at seven years out from the 2000 Games, and what a landmark Olympic and Paralympic Games it turned out to be in Australia’s biggest city.



IOC president-elect Kirsty Coventry speaks at a press conference for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

## CWC teams can use ‘transfer windows’ to bring players to US

GENEVA, May 22, (AP): Last-minute transfer signings are open to all 32 teams going to the Club World Cup (CWC) in the United States next month, FIFA said Wednesday, likely fueling more speculation that one of them will try to sign Cristiano Ronaldo on a short-term deal.

FIFA confirmed all 20 home national federations of the 32 teams have taken up an offer made last year to approve special trading windows for the monthlong tournament that opens June 14 in Miami.

Transfers can be made from June 1-10 and again June 27-July 3 according to exceptional rules FIFA approved in October.

“The objective is to encourage clubs and players whose contracts are expiring to find an appropriate solution to facilitate the players’ participation,” FIFA said in Wednesday’s statement. One such player is Trent Alexander-Arnold, who is leaving Liverpool where his contract expires on June 30. He is expected to join Real Madrid which could try to reach agreement to take him to the U.S. next month. Liverpool did not qualify for the Club World Cup.

# Northwestern stuns Stanford to capture first NCAA title in women’s golf

CARLSBAD, Calif., May 22, (AP): Northwestern captured its first NCAA Women’s golf title when Dianna Lee holed a 5-foot par putt on the 18th hole to beat Andrea Revuelta for a 3-2 victory over top-seeded Stanford to end a final hour of high tension.

Stanford advanced through stroke play with a record score to win by 27 shots and was poised to win its third NCAA title in four years and become the first team to win back-to-back since the move to match play in 2017.

Instead, the Wildcats were screaming with delight at La Costa when Lee - who had twice before missed putts that would have won it - delivered the biggest putt of her life.

“More than doing what people didn’t think you could is this group believing what it thought it could do,” Northwestern coach Emily Fletcher said.

Stanford junior Megha Ganne had a 5-and-4 win in the lead match, while Hsin Tai Lin of Northwestern scored a 3-and-2 victory.

Laura Nguyen put the Wildcats on the verge of the title with a 7-foot birdie putt for a 1-up victory over Paula Martin Sampedro.

That left Northwestern needing only one more point from either Dianne Lee, who was 3-up with five holes to play, or Elise Lee, who had taken her first lead over Stanford’s Kelly Xu on the 15th hole.

Stanford didn’t go down without a might fight.

Xu, who missed a 4-foot putt to fall behind for the first time all match, answered with a 15-foot birdie on the par-3 16th and a wedge to 10 feet for birdie on the 17th to regain control. They halved the 18th hole, giving Xu a 1-up victory and team score at 2-all.

It came down to the final match that Dianna Lee once had firmly in her grasp. Revuelta bogeyed the 11th and 12th holes to fall 3 down with five holes to play. But she won the 14th with a par and holed a 15-foot birdie putt on the 15th to get within one.

Lee was in a back bunker, blasted out to 7 feet and missed her par putt on the 16th. Revuelta, however,

pulled her 4-foot par putt to stay 1 down. On the next hole, Lee had a 12-foot birdie putt to win the match and pulled it, running it nearly 5 feet by. Miss that and the match was all square. She holed it to stay 1 up going to the 18th.

The par-5 closing hole amounts to a wedge contest with a stream guarding the green. Both players had about 18 feet. Lee’s uphill putt spun hard off the left lip and rolled 5 feet by. Revuelta left her downhill putt short, setting up Lee with 5 feet for the win.

This time, she made it and the celebration was on for Northwestern, which had reached the final once before in 2017 before losing to Arizona State.



‘We have our teeth into it and we mustn’t let go’

# Conte on the brink of history with Serie A title-chasing Napoli

MILAN, May 22, (AP): Antonio Conte is on the verge of making history.

He would become the first coach to win Serie A with three different teams if Napoli clinches the trophy.

Napoli heads into its final match of the season, at home to Cagliari on Friday, with a point advantage over defending champion Inter Milan, which visits Como.

“We have our teeth into it and we mustn’t let go,” Conte said.

Conte has already won four Italian leagues. He led Juventus to the first three of its nine successive Serie A titles in each of his three seasons in charge from 2011-14, and won it with Inter in 2021.

In between them, he bagged a Premier League title with Chelsea in 2017.

While a handful of coaches have won Serie A with two teams, no one has ever done it with three. Although there is a significant asterisk.

Fabio Cappello lifted league trophies with AC Milan (four times) and Roma before steering Juventus to back-to-back triumphs in 2005 and 2006, but the Bianconeri were stripped of both of those titles because of the Calciopoli refereeing scandal.

That also saw Juventus demoted to the second division and its glory days were long behind it when Conte took over and immediately renewed its dominance of Italian

soccer.

Conte also ended an 11-year title drought at Inter.

Napoli has not had as long a wait having won Serie A in 2023, but reclaiming it would be arguably one of Conte’s biggest achievements.

The 55-year-old Conte inherited a team that was coming off a horrible season, having put up one of the worst title defenses in history, finishing 10th and churning through three coaches.

Key players departed including Victor Osimhen, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Kim Min-jae.

But Conte has worked his scudetto-winning magic and has transformed Napoli from Serie A has-been back to potential title winner.

“I sincerely hope to be able to celebrate this championship because it would be something beautiful, also because of the energy I have spent,” Conte said.

“It would repay me for everything I have put into it this year. I went beyond my limits. I’m very tired, I’m only just managing to get to the end.”

The city of Naples is fizzing with excitement at the prospect of a second title in three years. That’s a shorter span than the two championships in four seasons with Diego Maradona in 1987 and 1990.

Conte said after Napoli’s penultimate match that he just had one thing to tell his players: “Let’s go get this scudetto!”



Napoli's Andre' Frank Zambo Anguissa, left, and Parma's Botond Balogh vie for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Parma and Napoli at Parma's Ennio Tardini Stadium, Italy. (AP)

# Pacers stun NY Knicks in OT thriller after historic comeback in Game 1



Indiana Pacers guard Andrew Nembhard (2) and New York Knicks guard Josh Hart (3) chase down a loose ball in overtime of Game 1 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference final in New York. (AP)

## Haliburton's late heroics lift Indiana

NEW YORK, May 22, (AP): Tyrese Haliburton was sure his jumper as regulation ended was going in, then wasn't certain it had after it bounced high off the rim and hung in the air for what felt like an eternity.

He thought it was a 3-pointer to win the game, then quickly realized it was a 2 to tie. A lot to process, followed by just one thought with overtime looming.

"Then my focus just became winning it," Haliburton said. The Pacers did, finishing off their stunning rally by beating the New York Knicks 138-135 in overtime Wednesday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

The Knicks led by 14 points with under three minutes remaining in regulation, but Aaron Nesmith brought the Pacers back with a flurry of 3-pointers.

Haliburton then hoped he had won it with another. With the Pacers down two and time running down, he

started to lose control of his dribble, regained it, and dribbled back out toward the 3-point line. He fired up his jumper, and when it finally fell in, he raced toward the sideline and made a choke signal to the crowd, like Pacers Hall of Famer Reggie Miller did to Spike Lee while leading an Indiana comeback in a playoff game in 1994.

Replay confirmed that Haliburton's toe was on the line and it was a 2-pointer that tied it at 125. Andrew Nembhard eventually made the go-ahead basket with 26 seconds remaining in OT.

Game 2 is Friday night.

Haliburton had 31 points and 11 assists. Nesmith finished with 30 points, going 8 for 9 from 3-point range.

The Pacers won a game against Milwaukee in the first round when they trailed by seven points with 40 seconds left in overtime, then stole one from top-seeded Cleveland when they were behind by seven with 46 seconds remaining in regulation.

Another round, another comeback.

"It's always special. It's always fun," Nesmith said. "This is what we live for."

It was a thrilling start to the ninth playoff matchup between these fierce rivals from the 1990s - but a deflating finish for the Knicks in their first Eastern Conference finals game since 2000.

Jalen Brunson scored 43 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 35 points and 12 rebounds. But the Knicks couldn't protect the big lead they built while Brunson was on the bench in foul trouble in the fourth quarter, and had a collapse unlike any other in the postseason.

Teams leading by at least 14 points in the final 2:45 of the fourth quarter had been 994-0 since detailed play-by-play began being kept in 1997-98.

"Give them a lot of credit. They closed the game out like they've been doing all playoffs," Brunson said. "Just not really good on our part."

The Pacers beat the Knicks in Game 7 of the East semifinals at Madison Square Garden last year, routing a team decimated by injuries.

This was an entirely different way to win, with the Pacers looking all but out of the game after the Knicks' 14-0 run with Brunson on the bench pushed New York's two-point lead to 108-92.

## Unusual move

# All four host nations to join Euro '28 qualifiers

BILBAO, Spain, May 22, (AP): UEFA's Executive Committee approved an unprecedented qualifying system for the 2028 European Championship, with hosts England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland participating in the preliminaries.

The four teams will be drawn separately into the 12 qualifying groups, with the winners and the eight best runners-up advancing directly to the final tournament that will be held across nine venues in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Two spots in the final 24-team tournament will be reserved for the best-ranked host nations who did not qualify as group winners or best runners-up. The remaining berths will be assigned through playoffs between the other runners-up in the qualifying groups and the best ranked non-qualified group winners in the 2026-27 Nations League.

Depending on the number of berths used by the host nations, the number of final tournament spots decided by the playoffs may vary between two and four, UEFA said.

The tournament schedule is expected to be released later this year.

The Executive Committee met just ahead of the Europa League final between Manchester United and Tottenham in Bilbao.

A decision on the hosts for the 2027 Champions League final and the 2027 Women's Champions League final was set to take place on Wednesday. But it has

been postponed "for operational reasons" until the next Executive Committee meeting in September.

The committee also approved an increase in the number of players who can be registered by teams in this year's Nations League finals from 23 to a maximum of 26, "considering the dynamics of the end of season as well as an increase in activities over the summer of 2025."

On the club benefits program, UEFA said that for the next cycle linked to Euro 2028, 240 million euros (\$272 million) will be distributed in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between UEFA and the European Club Association. UEFA said 7 million euros (\$7.9 million) remains available for distribution from the previous club benefits cycle.

After a proposal from the ECA, UEFA said that it was agreed to shift 3 million euros (\$3.4 million) of the leftover from the 2020-24 cycle to the club benefit program for Women's Euro 2025, increasing its size from 6 million euros (\$6.8 million) to 9 million euros (\$10.2 million).

The club benefits program is the clubs' share of the Euros revenue. It's the daily rate UEFA pays to clubs whose players are called up to national teams. It was created in 2008 to recognize the newly-launched ECA as a more democratic representative of teams' interests.



UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin, center, attends during the Europa League final soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)

## Canadian continues run of international players winning the award

# Gilgeous-Alexander voted as the NBA's MVP

WASHINGTON, May 22, (AP): The case for Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was simple. He's the best player on an Oklahoma City Thunder team that had the best record this season and set a league mark for margin of victory. If that wasn't enough, he also won the scoring title.

That's an MVP year.

Gilgeous-Alexander was announced as the NBA's Most Valuable Player, his first time winning the award. It's now seven straight years that a player born outside the U.S. won MVP, extending the longest such streak in league history.

"You try so hard throughout the season to like not think about it and just worry about playing basketball and getting better and trying to win games," Gilgeous-Alexander said on TNT, when the results were unveiled. "But as a competitor and as a kid dreaming about the game, it's always in the back of your mind."

It ultimately was a two-person race. Gilgeous-Alexander got 71 first-place votes and 29 second-place votes; Denver's Nikola Jokic got the other 29 first-place votes and the other 71 second-place votes.

Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo was third, getting 88 of the 100 possible third-place votes.

Gilgeous-Alexander - the No. 11 pick in the 2018 draft - averaged 32.7 points, 6.4 assists and five rebounds per game this season, leading the Thunder to a 68-14 record.



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander dribbles the ball up court against Minnesota Timberwolves during the second half of Game 1 of an NBA basketball Western Conference Finals playoff series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

The Thunder outscored teams by 12.9 points per game, the biggest margin in league history.

He becomes the second Canadian to win MVP; Steve Nash won it twice. And Gilgeous-Alexander is the first guard to win MVP since James Harden in 2018.

"His value is his confidence," Oklahoma City's Kenrich Williams said of Gilgeous-Alexander, his Thunder teammate for the last five seasons. "His confidence that he has in himself and the confidence that he instills in every one of his team-

mates, including the coaches."

Jokic - a winner of three of the last four MVP awards - was second, despite a season for the ages. He averaged 29.6 points, 12.7 rebounds and 10.2 assists per game, the first center to average a triple-double and the first player since all those stats were tracked to finish in the NBA's top three in all three of those categories.

It was the sixth instance of a player finishing a season averaging a triple-double - at least 10 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds per game.

Russell Westbrook did it four times and Oscar Robertson once, but only one of those triple-double seasons led to an MVP win.

"He's a special player," Jokic said of Gilgeous-Alexander earlier this week when the Thunder eliminated the Nuggets in the Western Conference semifinals. "His shot selection, his shot capability ... he's always there. He's a special player."

Antetokounmpo, who averaged 30.4 points, 11.9 rebounds and 6.5 assists per game, was third. He started this run of international players winning MVP: Antetokounmpo, of Greek and Nigerian descent, won in 2019 and 2020.

Jokic, a Serbian, won in 2021, 2022 and 2024. And Philadelphia's Joel Embiid, who was born in Cameroon but since became a U.S. citizen, won the award in 2023.

Now, it's Gilgeous-Alexander - a son of Ontario, where hockey reigns - carrying the MVP flag. He was fifth in the voting two years ago, second behind Jokic last year, and used being so close to the award as fuel this season.

"There are voters every year. That will never change," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "And last year, all it meant was that more people thought I shouldn't have won than should have won. This year I wanted to change the narrative and have it flipped. I think I did a good job of that."

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NEWS





Tottenham's Kevin Danso, right, and Manchester United's Harry Maguire fight for the ball during the Europa League final soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)

# Sports

Al-Qadsia survives Burgan scare

## Amir Cup preliminary round wraps up as Al-Arabi locks horns with Al-Sulaibikhat

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The preliminary round of the Amir Cup concludes this evening with a rescheduled encounter between Al-Arabi and Al-Sulaibikhat, set to kick off at 7:10 pm at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

Originally slated for last April, the match was postponed due to Al-Arabi's involvement in the AFC Challenge League semi-finals.

Tonight's match holds critical importance for Al-Arabi, who aim to turn the page on a difficult stretch that saw it miss out on two major titles within just eight days. It lost its chance at the Zain Premier League crown after a 2-1 defeat to Kuwait Club in the decisive round on May 11, followed by a narrow loss in the Crown Prince Cup

final to Al-Abyad on Monday.

The "Green" side enters the match not just seeking victory, but a fresh start. The team hopes to restore confidence, regain momentum, and launch a serious campaign in Kuwait's most prestigious knockout competition, now its last remaining opportunity for silverware this season.

On the other side, Al-Sulaibikhat will be hoping to cause an upset and capitalize on Al-Arabi's recent misfortunes. However, its task is formidable. Al-Sulaibikhat recently missed out on promotion to the Zain Premier League after being held to a 1-1 draw by Al-Jahra in the final round of the Zain First Division League. It needed a win to secure promotion, but the result left it in third place, with Al-Shabab advancing instead.

In another rescheduled fixture, Al-Qadsia secured a hard-fought 3-2 win over Burgan, booking a spot

in the Amir Cup quarterfinals where it will face Al-Fahaheel this Sunday.

Under the watchful eye of Syrian coach Firas Al-Khatib, the "Yellows" looked in full control after racing to a 3-0 lead, courtesy of goals from Khaled Sabah (19'), Bader Al-Mutawa (22'), and Ismail Khafi (61'). But Burgan mounted a fierce comeback, with Hamoud Al-Sahli scoring twice (63' and 77') to narrow the gap and apply late pressure.

Al-Qadsia nearly paid the price for its defensive complacency, but held on until the final whistle to seal the win.

A moment of concern for Al-Qadsia came early in the match when defender Khaled Ibrahim collided with Burgan's Isaac James. Ibrahim was taken to the hospital, underwent medical tests, and has since been cleared to play in Sunday's quarterfinal.



Bader Al-Mutawa celebrates with his teammate.

# Tottenham ends long trophy drought

Spurs beat Man U to win Europa League

**BILBAO, Spain, May 22, (AP): Tottenham beat Manchester United 1-0 to win the Europa League final and lift its first European trophy in more than four decades.**

It is the first major title for Tottenham since it won the English League Cup in 2008, and first European triumph since it won its second UEFA Cup - the equivalent of the Europa League now - in 1984.

Brennan Johnson squeezed in the winner at the end of the first half to help Spurs salvage a dismal season in which it will finish near the bottom of the Premier League standings.

"This is what it's all about," Johnson said. "This club hasn't won a trophy for 17 years. This is what it means, it means so much. Ever since I came here it's been, 'Tottenham are a good team but can never get it done.' We got it done."

The title guarantees Spurs a spot in next season's Champions League, and brings some much-needed relief for manager Ange Postecoglou after he struggled to keep his team on track all year.

The victory in Europe's second-tier competition comes six years after Tottenham fell short against Liverpool in the Champions League final.

No team has won more games in the UEFA Cup-Europa League than Tottenham, according to UEFA. Its 98th victory in the competition on Wednesday moves it clear of the joint record of 97 it previously held with Roma.

The defeat adds pressure on United coach Ruben Amorim, whose team sits in 16th place - just ahead of Tottenham - in the Premier League. The club won't play in any European competition next season.

United came close to equalizing the match on Wednesday when a header by Rasmus Hojlund was cleared at the goal line by Tottenham's Micky van de Ven in the 68th. Deep into stoppage time, a header by Luke Shaw prompted a difficult save by Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario.

It had been an even match, with neither team creating many significant scoring opportunities, until Tottenham got on the board in the 42nd minute after a cross by Pape Sarr into the area. The ball ricocheted off Shaw and fell in front of Johnson, who seemed to get just enough of it to poke it across the goal line.

"I knew I touched it, and then I looked up because I didn't catch it cleanly," Johnson said. "Then the ball was trickling in the goal. I can't describe the feeling."

United pressed forward after conceding but was not able to get the equalizer in front of a mostly split crowd of nearly 50,000 at Athletic Bilbao's San Mames Stadium.

There were some confrontations between the clubs' supporters overnight as more than 50,000 English fans converged in Bilbao and other nearby Basque Country cities. But it was all mostly peaceful throughout the day of the final on Wednesday.

United had last won a trophy in the 2024 FA Cup, and its last European triumph was at the 2017 Europa League under manager Jose Mourinho.

The Red Devils lost all four matches against Tottenham this season and is win-



Tottenham's Heung-Min Son raises the trophy of the Europa League after the final soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)

less against its rival in seven straight games, with the last six under Postecoglou.

United and Tottenham had met in just one previous final - the 2009 League Cup when Alex Ferguson's United won 4-1 on penalties after a 0-0 draw.

Tottenham striker Son Heung-min, who came off the bench in the 67th, finally ended the title drought in his career. He was the one lifting the trophy in front of his teammates in the awards ceremony.

## Al-Ali appointed 1st vice president of the Arab Equestrian Federation

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: The inaugural meeting of the Arab Equestrian Federation marked a significant milestone with the appointment of Kuwaiti international referee Nabila Abdullah Al-Ali as First Vice President of the Board of Directors.

The Kuwait Equestrian Federation's Board, led by Masoud Jawhar Hayat, extended their heartfelt congratulations to Nabila Al-Ali on earning the trust and confidence of the Arab Equestrian Federation's Board.

Nabila Al-Ali, a prominent figure in the equestrian world, was also elected as a member of the Arab Equestrian Federa-

tion's Board of Directors.

The Arab Federation is chaired by His Highness Prince Abdullah bin Fahad bin Abdullah Al Saud. The Board includes notable members such as Bader Al-Darwish (Qatar), Munther Al-Busaiddi (Oman), Dr. Ismail Shaker (Egypt), Fareed Al-Subaie (Libya), and Fawzi Sahrawi (Algeria).

Under the leadership of veteran athlete Masoud Jawhar Hayat, the Kuwait Equestrian Federation proudly congratulated Nabila Al-Ali on her appointment as First Vice President and for gaining the confidence of the Arab Federation Council.



Prince Abdullah bin Fahad pictured between Ali and Hayat.

'These results are the product of long-term planning'

## Kazma celebrates one of most successful volleyball seasons

**By Khaled Al-Anzi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 22: Saad Yaqoub, head coach of the Kazma Club volleyball team, confirmed that the recently concluded 2024-2025 season stands out as one of the most successful in the club's history.

"It was a tough season, but the commitment and hard work of the players across all age groups, along with the dedication of the technical and administrative staff, made the difference," Yaqoub said. "Thanks to the continued support from the club's management and the volleyball department, we achieved impressive results."

Kazma's U-10 team captured the league title under the guidance of coach Tari Al-Baghdadi and supervisor Mohammed Al-Ansari. The U-12 team also secured the league championship with coach Abdulrahman Kamal and administrator Abdullah Al-Muzayel leading the way.

The U-14 team, coached by Mohammed Mabrouk and supervised by Hussein Al-Othman, won the Federation Cup and finished third in the league. The U-16 squad, under coach Makram Alimi and administrator Mohammed Al-Balushi, also claimed the Federation Cup and secured fourth place in the league.

At the youth level, the U-19 team dominated by winning both



Kazma celebrates on the podium with officials.

the league and cup titles, thanks to coach Riyad Ghandri and administrator Mishaal Subaih. Meanwhile, the senior team won the Federation Championship under Brazilian coach Kakarotto and administrator Alaa Al-Ma'rouf.

Yaqoub emphasized that the achievements of Kazma's volleyball teams were no coincidence. "These results are the product of long-term planning, consistent support from the club's leadership, and the efforts of everyone involved in the volleyball department," he added. "They serve as motivation to aim even higher in the upcoming seasons."

Kazma Club's volleyball division is overseen by Walid Al-Yaqout, with Khaled Al-Bahouh serving as game director and Saad Yaqoub as technical director.