



Page 15



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear Minister of Information, we want to meet with HH Prime Minister ... We have much to say

THE situation necessitates openness and transparency, so the Amiri measures taken to end the long-standing chaos that has hindered development and impacted all aspects of life will bear fruits. This happened when parliamentary action devolved into chaos, such that the National Assembly became like a group of different peoples and tribes -- each seeking to monopolize government decisions through their own representatives. The successive cabinets then became an echo chamber for the MPs, rather than an effective and independent executive authority.

This is the reason why the Amiri measures got overwhelming support from the people, as Kuwaitis considered the move of HH the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as their salvation. They hoped for a Kuwait worthy of its glorious history and a return to leadership in all fields, as it was before the spread of parliamentary chaos.

Today, more than one year after the end of the chaos, several grievances remain and others have begun to surface. Some are being discussed in the press, while others are being kept secret -- either for fear of being misunderstood or because no one is listening. Without a doubt, this has exacerbated the social crisis first, and then the economic crisis.

Among these grievances is the Civil Service Commission's announcement of salary cuts for employees in some government agen-

cies, and the suspension of their privileges and benefits. As a result, fear filled the hearts of all employees; afraid that this will become a general policy affecting all public sector employees.

The fact that about 80 percent of Kuwaiti employees are in debt makes matters worse; because their salaries have not increased for around 16 years, while inflation soared to such high levels that salaries are insufficient.

This has led to a decline in the purchasing power of citizens in a country based on consumption, due to the lack of an industrial and agricultural infrastructure that could help replace part of the imported commodities with cheaper locally produced ones.

As a result of this situation, it is natural for low-income employees to fall into the borrowing trap. Nevertheless, the citizens are not asking the government to cancel their loans or pay them on their behalf. All they need is a balance between the salaries and living expenses.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



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Kuwait Amir's Representative heads to Malaysia for summits



HH the Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, May 24, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation will head to Malaysia on Sunday to lead Kuwait's delegation partaking in the second GCC-ASEAN summit and the GCC-ASEAN-China summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya has said Kuwait's participation in GCC-ASEAN and GCC-ASEAN-China summits in Kuala Lumpur reflects Kuwait's

Continued on Page 5

'Pay freeze' law faces legal test

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The Administrative Court has reserved the first lawsuit, demanding the suspension of the implementation of the decision of the General Administration of Enforcement to permanently withhold a debtor's salary, and enforce arrest and subpoena procedures.

During the court session, Attorney Hani Hussein, who filed the lawsuit on behalf of a citizen, submitted a

memorandum requesting the referral of the new salary withholding law, as well as the arrest and subpoena laws, to the Constitutional Court for review.

The lawsuit calls for the cancellation of the salary withholding order and the enforcement of the arrest and subpoena decision instead.

This case is the first of its kind and comes amid ongoing legal and social debates over the practice of withholding salary, and the arrest and subpoena procedures.



KUNA photo

Monika Schmutz Kirgoz (right), Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, looks on during Swiss-Kuwaiti consultations held at the Swiss Foreign Ministry in the capital, Bern.

High-level consultations advance Kuwait-Switzerland strong bonds

BERN, May 24, (KUNA): Monika Schmutz Kirgoz, Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs expressed her great happiness with the political consultations held with the State of Kuwait, describing them as a "fruitful opportunity" to strengthen bilateral relations and expand areas of joint cooperation.

Kirgoz's statement came at the conclusion of the Swiss-Kuwaiti consultations held at the Swiss Foreign Ministry in the capital, Bern.

A high-level Kuwaiti delegation headed by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador

Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and including the Assistant Director-General of the Swiss Development Agency and Head of the Europe and Middle East Division at the agency, Ambassador Didier Chassot, participated in the talks.

Kirgoz explained that the consultations with Kuwait provided an opportunity for the Swiss Development Agency to sign a memorandum of understanding with the State of Kuwait on international cooperation, describing this as a step that reflects the depth and diversity of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait's real summer heat kicks in June 7th

Power load drops, but blackouts loom

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The Al-Ojairi Scientific Center announced that the "Al-Bateen" star season will begin on Sunday and last for 13 days, marking the final phase of the "Al-Kanna" season.

In a press statement, the center explained that this period is characterized by short shadows on some days and intense sunlight directly overhead. It also brings strong northwesterly winds and high daytime temperatures, often resulting in dust storms.

Online immorality under fire in Kuwait's latest cyber sting

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyasash/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The Ministry of Interior revealed that its Cybercrime General Department uncovered 118 cyber violations recently; including breaches of public morals, incitement of debauchery and immorality, defamation, and calls to violate laws and disrupt public order.

Continued on Page 5

During "Al-Bateen", daylight extends to over 13 hours and 47 minutes, with sunset delayed until 6:38 p.m., and nights becoming shorter.

Despite temperatures nearing 50°C, the center stated that the "Thuraya" season, which is considered the actual beginning of summer, will start on June 7. The center also highlighted that dry conditions and a gradual rise in temperature are expected over the next 13 days.

It stated that during the "Thuraya" season, temperatures are expected to reach high levels in several countries, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

Meanwhile, despite the continuous remarkable rise in temperatures approaching 50 degrees Celsius, the closure of ministries and government agencies during

Continued on Page 5

Mol imposes summer ban on delivery bikes in midday heat

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The Ministry of Interior has announced a ban on consumer delivery motorcycles on all roads throughout the country from June 1 to the end of August during the period between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release issued by the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media on Friday, the Ministry stated that any violations of this decision will be recorded as a breach of permit conditions.

The measure is aimed to ensure the safety of delivery workers during peak summer heat hours.

Newswatch

NEW YORK: Kuwait has stressed the urgent need to address the issue of missing persons in armed conflicts by tackling its root causes and promoting inclusive dialogue as a cornerstone for resolving disputes.

This came during remarks by the Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Kuwait at the United Nations, **Faisal Al-Enezi**, at a side event held Thursday at Kuwait's UN Mission.

The event was organized in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and The Global Alliance for the Missing.

Al-Enezi cited ICRC reports indicating that 2024 recorded the highest annual rise in missing persons in over two decades, and stressed the urgent need for preventive measures and effective response mechanisms.

Highlighting Kuwait's leadership in this field, Al-Enezi noted the country's sponsorship of UN Security Council Resolution 2474 (2019)-the first resolution addressing missing persons in armed conflict, and emphasizes prevention, identification efforts, the return of remains to families, and accountability to support reconciliation and peace. (KUNA)



2 Oman woos Kuwaiti businessmen for investment

8 Risk profiling key to personalized wealth management

9 Agility holds AGM for FY ending 31 December '24



10 ALSAYER Group celebrates employee achievements

Kuwait, Saudi naval chiefs align on maritime strategy

RIYADH, May 24, (KUNA): Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan headed a military delegation on a visit to the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

The delegation met with Chief of Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh Al-Ruwaili, and they discussed cooperation and the exchange of expertise in maritime affairs, the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army said in a statement.

Both sides explored bilateral military relations between the two brotherly countries and ways to enhance operational coordination and training, statement added.

During the visit, Al-Hamlan also met with Chief of Staff of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Gharibi.

Elsewhere, a Kuwaiti military delegation chaired by Major General Ahmad Al-Shanfa, head of the Kuwaiti National Military Service Department, visited on Saturday headquar-



KUNA photo
Chief of Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh Al-Ruwaili receives Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan.

ters of the UAE National Service and Reserve Authority (NSRA). Kuwait Army Chairmanship of Staff said in a statement that the Kuwaiti delegation met the UAE Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Ahmad bin Tahnoun al-Nahyan.

The delegation examined during the visit NSRA's programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing readiness of the UAE cadres in various military sectors. The Kuwaiti officers were apprised of the mechanisms for habilitating the recruited as part of the national service and latest methods for training and upgrading the military cadres' skills.

The visitors had also went to NSRA centers to examine the various tasks that constitute some of the basics of the UAE defense system.

The statement indicated that the visit aimed at bolstering the bilateral relations and military cooperation, also noting in this respect the necessity to exchange expertise and enhance the joint defense cooperation between the two states' armed forces.

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:20	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:38
Zohr	11:45	Isha	20:07

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.			
By Night: Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind,			
with speeds of 12-38 km/h and some high clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	50	35	
Kuwait Airport	49	28	
Bubyan	49	29	
Jahra	49	33	
Falaka Island	49	31	
Salmiyah	47	32	
Ahmadi	45	31	
Nuwaisib	47	30	
Wafra	48	27	
Salmiyah	49	31	

Kuwait, Austria to boost cooperation

‘Need to enhance women role in diplomatic field’

VIENNA, May 24, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah tackled during her meeting on Friday with the Director of Diplomatic Academy of Vienna Ambassador Emil Brix ways to boost to enable women in the diplomatic force, through workshops and specialized training courses.

Sheikhha Jawaher made the remarks during her visit to the academy and as part of her participation in the UN Committee meetings on crime and criminal justice.

Sheikhha Jawaher told KUNA that her meeting also delved into bilateral relations between the two countries.

Earlier, Sheikhha Jawaher visited the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens in Vienna, as part of Kuwait's efforts to strengthen international partnerships in the fields of human rights and sustainable development.



KUNA photo Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah at the meeting with Austrian officials.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah visited the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens in Vienna, as part of Kuwait's efforts to strengthen

international partnerships in the fields of human rights and sustainable development.

In exclusive statements to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Sabah explained that she met with Presi-

dent of the Center -former Austrian President- Dr. Heinz Fischer, where they discussed prospects for joint cooperation, especially in the fields of empowering youth and women, and supporting international efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.

Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of coordinating and integrating international efforts to address development and humanitarian challenges, stressing the vital role that institutional partnerships can play in building more just and inclusive societies.

She expressed Kuwait's pride in being one of the founding countries of the Center, stressing its commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at consolidating human rights and equality.

She also praised the constructive role played by the Center in supporting sustainable development at the regional and international levels.



Amir congratulates Eritrean Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, May 24, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, congratulating him on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president all wellness, and Eritrea and its friendly people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki on his country's Independence Day, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki on his country's Independence Day.



A group photo of the guests who attended the meeting.



Omani Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Dr. Khalfan Al-Shuaili and Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.



Dean of Kuwaiti journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Omani ambassador to Kuwait and Omani Housing Minister.

‘Gulf citizens treated same as Omani citizens’

Oman woos Kuwaiti businessmen for investment

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: “We welcome the ideas proposed by Kuwaiti businessmen. God willing, there will be a direct convergence of the picture. We will work with our brothers from other ministries to develop a comprehensive presentation to have a deeper impact and reach all our brothers,” says Omani Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Dr. Khalfan Al-Shuaili during his conversation with businessmen on the sidelines of the meeting of the Ministers of Housing and Urban Planning of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries recently.

This meeting was aimed at reviewing investment opportunities and real estate activities as part of promoting the qualitative opportunities available within the framework of Oman Vision 2040.

Al-Shuaili said the Omani Ministry of Housing is a partner in implementing these projects and invited the businessmen to visit Muscat to discuss details of the projects.

He explained the philosophy of ownership in Oman and the misconceptions surrounding it pointing out that ownership for Gulf citizens in Oman is carried out according to unified and clear policies among the Gulf countries, and that Gulf citizens are treated the same as Omani citizens.

He disclosed that the projects presented during the meeting included new freehold sites for non-Omanis of all nationalities; indicating that the Real Estate Registry and Real Estate Development in the ministry is concerned with this aspect.

“Given its rich heritage and housing development efforts, Oman does not suffer from a housing problem. Omani house ownership currently

stands at approximately 90 percent. The existing projects aim to create a new, contemporary environment in locations that lack services,” he added.

He stated that the program is qualitative, not quantitative, and there is no rush to launch large-scale projects, as each project has its own story and location.

He cited the 2018 law prohibiting ownership for non-Omanis during the COVID-19 pandemic. “This law included some border sites and islands, and limited ownership on Masirah Island, despite the Kuwaitis’ interest in it. Ownership permits were limited to sites close to royal palaces and military and security sites. There is flexibility in areas close to old neighborhoods and alleys,” he clarified.

He emphasized that since assuming office in 2020, he has been tasked with implementing this law and he implemented it on time, appreciating the understanding of Gulf brothers for some of the resulting discontent.

Ownership

He said the ownership ban law only affects five percent of Oman's total land area, as ownership remains available in 95 percent of the land, including Salalah, Muscat and Sohar. He indicated that confusion exists in a very limited number of plots, not exceeding 1,000, located within a narrow border strip.

He added that the Madinat Sultan Haitham project has witnessed ownership by more than 35 nationalities, with flexible and speedy procedures. “Once a residential unit is purchased from an off-plan real estate developer, the buyer receives approval in less than five days, demonstrating the ease of the process.

He confirmed that 70 percent of the land supposedly owned by Omanis has been completed,

with the remainder being very small. “Over the past two years, this issue has been addressed in an innovative way. Gulf citizens who own a company registered in Oman can own property in the commercial, industrial and tourism sectors; even in areas covered by the law, as long as this is done through a company registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This has allowed developers and investors to preserve their properties,” he disclosed.

On the projects, Al-Shuaili cited Al-Jabal Al-Aali project; stating that he personally is not permitted to own property there due to the privacy of the Green Mountain and some of the historical events that took place there during the 1950s and 1960s. “However, the project is now witnessing a new wave of ownership, with a strong focus on citizens of Gulf countries,” he confirmed.

On the other hand, Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah said that in 1970, he met with Sultan Qaboos in Oman, when there were no hotels. He lived at the time in a camp belonging to an Italian oil company.

He added that Sultan Qaboos told him about his dreams for the coming period, including the opera project, and praised the country, its beauty and its tranquility; emphasizing that it is a country devoid of noise.

Addressing the Minister of Housing, he stated “allow me to say that the marketing is bad, and the prevailing impression is that ownership is prohibited. There are Kuwaitis who owned property, and then they were asked to leave.”

He stressed that Oman is a beautiful country in terms of its environment and location, and if Gulf citizens do not come, foreigners will. “What matters is marketing,” he asserted.

‘Family vital to shape humans’

Kuwait stresses world talks

ISTANBUL, May 24, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah on Saturday underlined the significance or promoting international dialogue on family issues.

The minister made the remark to KUNA while touring an exhibition held in Istanbul under the title: “All Happy Families Are Alike”, along with Turkiye's first lady Emine Erdogan and ministers and officials from several countries.

Al-Huwailah spoke highly of Turkiye's pioneering role in family issues by means of hosting the recently concluded International Family Forum in Istanbul.

Voicing appreciation to the Turkish first lady, the Kuwaiti minister stressed the importance of the exhibition whose ideas reflect family values and highlight their role in strengthening humanitarian bonds and ensuring societal cohesion.

Organized under the theme “Safeguarding and Strengthening Family in the Face of Global Challenges, the two-day event brought together policymakers, experts and civil society representatives to explore the evolving role of the family and the threats it faces in modern society.

The forum is organized under the auspices of Turkiye's Family and Social Services Ministry as part of the country's 2025 Year of the Family initiative.

The event featured ministerial sessions and four panel discussions aiming at sharing expertise and successful international practices in the field of protecting families and promoting their social status.

The Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed Thursday with the Palestinian Minister of Social Development Dr. Samah Abu Oun enhancing cooperation in family support and protection.

This meeting was held on the sidelines of the International Family Forum in Istanbul.

They also explored best practices in social policies and programs to address the challenges posed by globalization and rapid social changes.

Minister of Social Affairs and Family



Dr Al-Huwailah

and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed with Nigerian Minister of Women Affairs Imaan Ibrahim on Thursday enhancing cooperation in family support and women's empowerment.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the International Family Forum in Istanbul.

It focused on exchanging expertise in social development and global best practices to promote family stability and sustainable development goals.

Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah affirmed Thursday the central role of the family in shaping human identity, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring the sustainability and progress of societies.

This came in a speech delivered by the Minister during her participation in the panel session titled “Integrating Family-Supportive Policies: National and International Efforts,” held as part of the International Family Forum hosted in Istanbul, Republic of Turkiye, from May 22 to 23.

Al-Huwailah expressed her gratitude to Turkish Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas for the kind invitation, warm reception, and excellent organization, adding that the high-level participation reflects the importance countries attach to the family as the foundation of society and a pillar of progress and stability.

Component

She stated that the family has always been a main component of both national and international policy frameworks. In light of the rapid changes resulting from technological advancements, global interconnectedness, and evolving geopolitical, economic, social, and environmental dynamics, it has become essential to adopt innovative policies and programs that enhance family resilience and empowerment.

Al-Huwailah highlighted Kuwait's pioneering experience in introducing family-supporting policies, affirming that since its foundation, Kuwait has prioritized the protection of the family and the rights of its members, in line with Article 9 of the Kuwait Constitution.

She emphasized that the family-supporting policies requires comprehensive and coordinated strategies that balance the economic, social, and health rights of families.

Kuwait, she said, has adopted a national development strategy centered on several key pillars.

The first pillar, she noted, involves designing integrated policies that align social, educational, health, and housing plans to create an enabling environment for family stability.



KUNA photo Bahrain's Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki hands over the letter to Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya.

Kuwait-Bahrain ties strong

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received a letter from his Bahraini counterpart Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, regarding the strong ties between the two sisterly countries and the frameworks for strengthening and developing

them in various fields.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said that this came during Al-Yahya's reception of Bahrain's Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki, on Thursday at the Ministry's General Diwan. (KUNA)

Air bridge will be launched to carry 8,000 Hajj pilgrims

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: An air bridge will be launched early next week to transport 8,000 pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Sources told the newspaper that extensive preparations are underway by Hajj caravans, which have begun receiving the pilgrims' luggage in preparation for their transportation by land, as part

of the organizational arrangements for the start of the season.

Sources affirmed that all relevant authorities, particularly those operating at Kuwait International Airport, are continuing their efforts to ensure smooth procedures and the comfort of pilgrims. They said coordination is ongoing with the airlines and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to launch Hajj flights according to the timetables.

They stated that the airport authorities have developed a comprehensive plan based on numerous

regulations aimed at facilitating the movement of pilgrims from their arrival at the airport until they board the plane.

Sources pointed out that the agencies are keen on developing work in the operational sectors, as the operating system was verified in order to simplify procedures to facilitate matters for pilgrims.

They also confirmed the completion of all preparations for the Hajj season through an operational plan of flights in cooperation with Kuwaiti caravans and airlines.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Will those days ever return?

Mother sends her regards, can I borrow tomato paste?

“THEY are the ones who slept on the rooftops of their homes during summer nights, walked to school every morning, sometimes hundreds of meters from their houses, and returned at noon under the blazing sun or in the pouring rain. They were the ones who relied on public buses to get around from Safa Square to Kaifan, Khaldiya, or Salmiya,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

“They went to the cinema, and paid 100 fils for a cheap seat in the front row, or a quarter of a dinar for a more comfortable one. Movie tickets included a tax in support of the Algerian independence struggle. And when Algeria gained its freedom, the tax was redirected to support the Palestinian cause.

“The generation of the good guys did not have smartphones. They studied for exams on the shores of the Gulf or under streetlights at night. They endured harsh discipline, insults and beatings from teachers, but they persevered.

“The young ones watched “Open Sesame” on TV, “Ramadan Puzles” in the afternoon, “Science for All”, and “Cinema in a Week”. We didn’t need air-conditioned buses, and we felt no fear. Life felt simpler, and safer.

“Back then, mothers had a profound influence on their children. Teachers held real authority and respect. The long wooden ruler may have hurt, but it commanded discipline... and we respected our teachers for it.

“In those days, a neighbor’s child might knock on the door and say, “My mother sends her regards. Can we borrow some tomato paste?”

“In the past, the streets would be empty after 10:00 pm, as everyone was home. If one citizen accidentally hit another’s car, both would step out smiling, greet each other warmly, and even exchange cheek kisses, just like we do on holidays.

“They were the ones who listened to singers performing in classical Arabic, especially Saud Al-Rashed and Awad Doukhi, who often sang songs composed by Saud Al-Rashed.

“They were also the ones who set traps to catch birds on the rooftops of their homes or out in the desert.

“In the early days of Kuwait’s independence, telephone booths stood along Fahad Al-Salem Street, just like those seen in American movies. A person would step inside, close the glass door, and make a free phone call.

“As boys, we used to ride the Kuwait Public Transportation Company buses – the German-made Mercedes models with their comfortable leather seats. Over time, some mischievous kids tore at the seats, exposing the yellow foam beneath. Eventually, these once-beautiful buses were replaced by vehicles assembled in an Arab country, equipped with uncomfortable plastic seats.

“In the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwait held leading positions in sports, theater, and culture. The country welcomed many Arab singers and artists. Security was so strong that the doors of Kuwaiti homes were often left unlocked. Religious thought was tolerant. We never read publications that spread division among worshippers, nor did we hear sermons that fueled sectarianism. There was no looting of mosque donation boxes, nor corruption within the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Public disputes, both verbal or physical, were rare.

“However, things changed. Kuwait began facing external threats to its security: the bombings of popular cafés, the attempted assassination of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the Iran-Iraq war, and later, the Iraqi invasion.

“These events altered people’s personalities. New forms of violence emerged. Society changed. The good people, the ones who defined that era, are gone.

“Will the good old days ever return?”

Also:

“There is no doubt that U.S. President Donald Trump’s tour of the region sparked both support and opposition. Some considered the visit a success, while others believed it brought nothing new to the table,” Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Throughout the history of the Palestinian cause, opinions have varied, as some viewed the Arabs as submissive, while others consider them intelligent. This intelligence was notably demonstrated by the Saudi leadership.

“I noticed that some people felt the Gaza issue did not receive the attention it deserved. I will examine the role of countries that supported those who objected to the outcomes of the visit.

“For example, the former Syrian regime played no major role in supplying weapons to the Palestinians in recent years, and its stance on supporting Palestinian resistance factions has remained unclear. Similarly, Iran’s position has been ambiguous since the beginning of the war. I hope there are no secret agreements in this regard, especially in light of reports suggesting that the recent Gaza war was a proxy conflict.

“On the other hand, I believe that the Gulf states would not hesitate to support Gaza. I have great confidence in the leadership of the Gulf, Arab, and Islamic countries in this matter, especially given that what is happening in Gaza constitutes a crime against humanity.

The Gulf’s position is clear: it supports the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and provides tangible assistance, through action, not just rhetoric.

“Regarding Trump’s tour and the outcomes it produced, we must approach the matter realistically. This is not simply about making statements for media attention. Countries are not companies marketing products; they are bound by agreements, treaties, and long-term strategic interests.

“It is true that the blood being shed is Arab and Islamic, and the humanitarian aspect is deeply important. However, we must also recognize the sensitivity of the current political moment and consider how to navigate this impasse with minimal losses.

“To be frank, misinformation and media sensationalism have historically worked against the interests of the Arab world and against the Palestinian people. While the horrific scenes broadcast on television understandably provoke anger, that anger alone does not provide food or weapons to the people of Gaza. Emotional, reactionary responses often serve the enemy more than they help the Palestinian cause.

“If we truly want to serve the cause, we must focus on raising awareness among people in all countries. We should reflect on the impact of the awareness campaigns in the West since October 7, 2023. The Palestinian cause is just, but its defenders have often failed in presenting it effectively.

“This issue cannot remain a matter of slogans for 77 years without a rational and strategic force working toward a resolution. At this point, I am not concerned about who is right or wrong in opposing viewpoints. What truly matters is the presence of a clear Arab-Palestinian vision that defines what we want and how we plan to achieve it.

“Soft power has undoubtedly played a role during recent meetings and appears to have influenced the American position. This is evident in the U.S. administration’s statement that it would reconsider its support for Israel if it does not cease its war on Gaza.”

□ □ □

“I was filled with immense joy and pride as I followed the activities of the 20th edition of the Arab Media Forum, hosted by the beloved State of Kuwait over three days from May 10 to 12. The event was held under the generous patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, and was attended by His Excellency the Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.” **Jamal Al-Fadhli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This year’s forum was held under the theme: “Media Challenges in Light of Advancing Technology and Digital Transformation”.

“I closely followed the rich and passionate discussions and dialogue sessions led by media officials, policymakers, and experts specializing in the production of various forms and formats of media content. These sessions tackled a range of important topics related to traditional and new media. These topics have taken center stage amid the ongoing media chaos sparked by the communications and information technology revolution, with its ever-evolving waves from social media to artificial intelligence.

“With the rise of what is now known as “citizen media,” it has become imperative to establish serious and enforceable frameworks that ensure the protection of our homeland, safeguard the privacy of our Arab societies, and shield our children, youth, and households from the relentless tools of destruction that invade our homes around the clock, uninvited and unchecked.



Al-Fadhli

“Hence, the forum holds great significance, as it touched on many urgent and serious issues such as credibility, fact-checking in the digital age, and the impact of social media and emerging AI-powered search engines like ChatGPT. It also explored ways to protect user privacy and sensitive personal and official data within AI-driven media environments.

“Moreover, the forum examined how to confront the destructive war of rumors that sows doubt, targets our homelands, undermines our national symbols, and seeks to erode our deeply rooted principles and values.

“It also aims to confront the fierce and relentless campaigns aimed at spreading pornography and promoting behavior that deviates from the natural disposition with which God created people, with the goal of disintegrating the Arab family and society.

“The forum stressed the urgent need for laws and regulations that protect individuals, communities, and our Arab countries from the dangers posed by new media and social media. It called for addressing emerging psychological and health issues, most notably, internet and social media addiction, which affects both adults and children. This addiction impacts cognitive abilities, intelligence, and academic performance among youth, limits individual productivity, and contributes to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, cyber-bullying, and the newly recognized condition known as “internet phobia”, which is the fear of losing internet access – a modern addition to the list of phobias.

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiye/ Simi K.Kutty



A fire-fighter tackles the blaze at the farmhouse and the damage caused (right).



KFF photos

1 dead in accident; fires in farm, eatery tackled

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Two vehicles collided on the Sixth Ring Road on Thursday evening, resulting in the death of an individual, and serious injuries to another.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Jahra Industrial Fire Station rushed to the location and dealt with the situation, after which the site

was then handed over to the relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, fire broke out in a livestock pen in Kabad area on Thursday afternoon. No casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Kabad and Istiqal fire stations rushed to the location and

brought the fire under control.

In another development, a restaurant in Abu Halifa was on fire on Thursday evening. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Mangaf and Fahaheel fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the blaze.



KUNA photo

Kuwait’s Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Salah Al-Bannai meets Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Zukan Helez.

Kuwait, Bosnia discuss military ties and stability

KUWAIT CITY, May 24, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Salah Al-Bannai met on Friday with Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Zukan Helez to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral ties.

According to a statement by Kuwait’s Embassy, the meeting was held at the Ministry of Defense, where both sides discussed military cooperation, as Ambassador Al-Bannai praised the country’s notable progress in military.

The talks also covered the implementation of existing bilateral agreements and the importance of encouraging mutual visits between military delegations to deepen joint collaboration.

The two officials exchanged views on current developments in the Western Balkans and the broader impact of global tensions on regional stability, emphasizing the shared commitment of both nations to advancing peace and security.

Not just issue citations, food safety eyed: PAFN

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Acting Deputy Director General for Inspection and Control Affairs at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Saud Al-Humaidi Al-Jalal said a joint inspection tour conducted in cooperation with several government agencies uncovered 20 violations in food establishments, reports Al-Anba daily.

These violations include three related to public sanitation, two related to personal hygiene, eight related to health card, three related to improper food transportation, three violations of health regulations and one media-related violation; while 53 kilograms of spoiled or unfit food were destroyed and 10 food samples were collected for laboratory testing.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Jalal revealed that most food establishment owners are in compliance; affirming a high level of awareness and commitment to the regulations, especially concerning hygienized fats. “Our objective is not merely to issue violations but to guarantee food safety and provide consumers with healthy and safe products,” he asserted.



Dr. Saud Al-Jalal

The inspection tour, conducted in Subhan in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, was in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Environment Public Authority (EPA), Kuwait Municipality and other agencies. This is part of PAFN’s ongoing efforts to ensure food safety and public health.

Inspection teams were strategically deployed to cover all areas simultaneously, ensuring thorough oversight. They verified health certificates to make sure the workers are free from infectious diseases and random samples were taken for laboratory testing.

Al-Jalal confirmed that penalties, including closures, will be imposed on establishments that fail to meet health standards or whose employees lack valid health certifications.

He stated that these inspections will continue on a weekly basis covering all governorates in coordination with the participating authorities. He said a detailed plan is being prepared to organize inspectors, ensure broad coverage, and facilitate monitoring.



KFF photo

A tugboat tows away the damaged boat.

KFF tows boat after ‘hit’ near damaged pipes isle

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: On Friday evening, firefighting teams from the Shuaiba Sea Station responded to a collision involving a speedboat near the damaged island pipes.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), no injuries were reported, and the boat was towed to Al-Kout marina.

Court ‘axes’ jail for two lawyers

Good conduct pledge frees officer

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The Court of Cassation overturned the one-year prison sentence previously imposed on two lawyers accused of spreading false information about Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

Instead of upholding the prison term, the higher court opted to refrain from imposing a punishment, ordering the lawyers to maintain good conduct.

Earlier, the Court of Appeals sentenced the two lawyers to one year in prison for disseminating false news about Al-Mashaan through the social media platform ‘X’ (formerly Twitter).

The State security case was filed after the Ministry of Interior arrested the lawyers on charges of publishing fabricated information about the minister. When they were referred to the Public Prosecution, both defendants denied the allegation.

□ □ □

Traffic officer freed: The Court of Cassation overturned the seven-year prison sentence imposed on a traffic officer accused of unlawfully transferring vehicle ownership without the presence of the original owners.

Instead of upholding the sentence, the court decided to refrain from pronouncing punishment and then required the officer to maintain good conduct.

In the same case, the court also ruled to abstain from punishing several employees involved in the case. All were ordered to pay

a bail of KD500 and adhere to good conduct conditions for one year.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution referred the accused to court on charges of forgery; alleging they facilitated the transfer of vehicle ownership to third parties without the presence or authorization of the actual owners.

□ □ □

Woman wins damages: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of the Court of First Instance, which ordered the Ministry of Health to pay KD45,000 to a female citizen as final compensation for damages, disability and bodily harm resulting from a medical error during childbirth at a government hospital.

The plaintiff demanded compensation for the material and moral damages she suffered and for the disability -- estimated at 20 percent of her total body capacity -- caused by medical errors during her delivery at the hospital.

Attorney Mishari Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, lawyer of the plaintiff, said the Medical Liability Authority report concluded that three doctors affiliated with the Ministry of Health committed medical and professional errors, with disciplinary sanctions imposed on them.

Al-Marzouq explained that his client suffered material damages, including a longer stay in the hospital and the expense of purchasing medications and painkillers after her discharge. “She also suffered a degree of disability and moral damages as a result of the significant reduction in her chances of becoming pregnant in the future. The medical reports concluded that the medical errors affected his client’s uterus, causing disability and a partial loss of its function. The subsequent pregnancy will be extremely risky; hence, the need for compensation.”

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Criminal justice system, cornerstone of social stability: AG

Kuwait deports 1,084 residency law, work permit violators in week

KUWAIT CITY, May 24, (KUNA): Some 823 individuals were apprehended and 1,084 were deported in violation of residency law and work permits across the country from May 11 to 18, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior said on Thursday.

The Interior Ministry said in a press release that the inspections were conducted in cooperation with the Public Authority for Manpower, Kuwait Municipality, and Kuwait Fire Force.

The Ministry pointed out that the arrests were taken after completing the necessary legal due process.

It affirmed the continuation of such campaigns to arrest violators of work and residency laws, stressing that legal procedures would be taken against workers and



Al-Masoud

employers equally.

Meanwhile, in Vienna, Attorney General Bader Al-Masoud said on Thursday that it is of great importance to strengthen Kuwait's criminal justice system, as it is a cornerstone of societal stability and for the preservation of human dignity.

In his speech delivered at the 34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held at the UN headquarters in Vienna, Al-Masoud stressed Kuwait's keenness to harmonize its national legislation in accordance with international standards.

Al-Masoud emphasized that justice is not achieved through court rulings, but also through outside court settlements that reflect the spirit of the law, noting Kuwait has adopted legal models allowing the suspension of judicial proceedings in certain cases that do not affect public safety if a settlement is reached between two parties.

Adding, such policies contribute to alleviating some burden on the

judiciary, enhancing flexibility of procedures and opening the door to more effective humane solutions.

He also highlighted Kuwait's efforts to update legislation on combating corruption, migrant smuggling, money laundering, and terrorist financing, to stress that these efforts are in line with international agreements and keep pace with emerging challenges in the world.

Al-Masoud also explained that the Nelson Mandela Rules on the treatment of prisoners represents an important framework for developing penal policies and ensuring the rights of detainees, calling for an adoption of such frameworks as a global standard in correctional institutions.

His words also extended to the commitment of Kuwait in supporting international cooperation in crime prevention, and the need to exchange expertise and offer innovative solutions that achieve a balance between the rule of law and human rights.

Kuwait support for refugees wins UN praise

Alleviating suffering source of inspiration: ICRC DG

GENEVA, May 24, (KUNA): Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has praised the State of Kuwait's leading support for refugees throughout the world, affirming that this backing would turn much more crucial in the shadow of current difficult challenges facing the nations.

Grandi affirmed necessity of enhancing the long-term partnership between the two sides during the meeting that engaged a high-level Kuwaiti delegation headed by the Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabab -- held in Geneva on Wednesday.

The two sides underscored that the meeting signaled depth of the humanitarian partnership dating back to decades ago and the State of Kuwait's keenness on backing international aid for the refugees and the needy throughout the globe.

They discussed during the meeting means of strengthening the coordination, overhauling mechanisms of humanitarian aid, explored major challenges facing humanitarian activities on the international stage and prospected cooperation



Kuwait delegation and the UN Refugee Agency officials pose for a picture after the first round of their strategic dialogue in Geneva.

opportunities between them. (end)

Kuwait and the UN Refugee Agency held the first round of their strategic dialogue in Geneva on Thursday.

The dialogue, co-chaired by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabab and UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements, focused on the strategic

partnership between the two sides and Kuwait's leading role as humanitarian actor, according to a statement from the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry.

Both sides also dealt with the efforts aiming to respond to regional emergencies and alleviate the suffering of refugees worldwide.

The Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Pierre Kra-

henbuhl affirmed on Thursday Kuwait's leading role in humanitarian diplomacy noting that its principled commitment and ongoing efforts to alleviate human suffering are a source of inspiration. He made these comments in an exclusive interview with the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following his meeting with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad

Al-Sabab at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

"It is always an honor to meet with officials from the State of Kuwait" Krahenbuhl said, adding "The ICRC deeply values its longstanding strategic partnership with Kuwait grounded in mutual respect trust and a shared commitment to alleviating human suffering."

He emphasized the ICRC's keenness to strengthen cooperation with Kuwait in the coming period pointing to the importance of ongoing meetings to expand the scope of partnerships and joint actions in addressing the growing humanitarian challenges in the Middle East and beyond.

The meeting aims to enhance coordination and cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the ICRC in humanitarian fields, affirming Kuwait's pivotal role in supporting relief efforts worldwide, especially in regions experiencing humanitarian crises.

The Kuwaiti International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) announced on Thursday that it executed a training course in Türkiye to enable and empower Syrian women refugees.

The IICO affirmed in a statement that the training course, which last six months at a cost of around USD 37,000, had benefited 101 Syrians women, benefiting some 400 members of their families.



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New Pakistan Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Zafar Iqbal.

Labor deal in offing: Dr Iqbal

Kuwait opens all 'types' of visas for Pakistanis: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The new Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal, in his first interview one day after presenting his credentials to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, described the meeting as a "special moment" that reflects the deep brotherly ties between the two countries and their peoples, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In an exclusive interview, the ambassador discussed the historic relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait and revealed his country's vision to strengthen bilateral cooperation in investment, labor, security, and education fields.

He also highlighted the importance of expanding collaboration in various political and economic fields.

Ambassador Dr. Iqbal pointed out Pakistan's major role in Kuwait's development and infrastructure during the 1960s and 1970s.

He noted that the Pakistani community is a vital part of Kuwaiti society, with many members working in the education and health sectors, and contributing effectively to the country's growth.

The ambassador stressed Pakistan's keenness to strengthen economic and trade relations with Kuwait and expand cooperation in important areas such as food security, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Labor Cooperation

He affirmed the importance of signing a new memorandum of understanding on labor cooperation between the two countries.

The ambassador expressed pride in meeting His Highness the Amir, describing the meeting as a testament to the deep historical and brotherly ties between the two nations, which he said extend back even before Pakistan's independence and the establishment of modern Kuwait.

He highlighted the longstanding human and economic connections, including the contributions of Pakistani engineers and workers in building Kuwait's infrastructure during the 1960s and 1970s.

Describing Kuwaitis as exceptionally kind, Dr. Iqbal said, "They capture your heart with their kindness."

He expressed his strong determination to succeed in his mission to strengthen bilateral relations.

Ambassador Dr. Iqbal stated that the Pakistani community in Kuwait exceeds 93,000, and plays an active role in the country's economic and social life, primarily in the education and health sectors.

He said, "In Pakistan, Kuwait is known as the land of peace and love. From north

to south, across 1,800 kilometers, anyone who hears the name Kuwait immediately expresses love for the country and its leadership, especially the honorable Al-Sabab family. This love is mutual and strengthens the friendship and ongoing cooperation between our peoples as we face challenges together."

Visa Issues

Regarding visa matters, the ambassador said, "I am pleased to confirm that Kuwaiti authorities have already begun issuing visas for various categories, including work visas for professionals, family visit visas, companion visas, as well as tourist and business visas starting this May. I have been in contact with the community, and they have confirmed that they are indeed receiving these visas. This is an important step in the right direction."

We are close to signing a new memorandum of understanding in the labor sector in the near future, and we are already implementing some parts of the agreement."

Dr. Iqbal highlighted Pakistan's huge investment potential in food security and agriculture, as well as its readiness to support New Kuwait 2035 vision in these sectors.

He pointed to promising cooperation opportunities in infrastructure and housing, areas where Pakistan has extensive expertise.

The ambassador indicated that Kuwait is the second-largest Gulf investor in Pakistan after the UAE, with Kuwaiti investors owning hotels and major assets in Pakistan, which reflects their strong confidence in the country's investment environment.

Military Cooperation

The ambassador highlighted Pakistan's strong support to Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion, including mine-clearing operations that claimed the lives of Pakistani soldiers, "sacrifices that remain deeply honored."

He described Pakistan's army as highly trained and experienced, ranking among the best in the world due to its extensive field expertise.

Dr. Iqbal explained that relations between the leadership of both countries are based on continuous dialogue. In the past six months, the Pakistani Prime Minister met with his Kuwaiti counterpart in February, met the Crown Prince in September, and communicated with him again in March.

He said, "We do not need intermediaries or special delegations to convey messages, as the leaderships communicate directly, with embassies playing an active role."

Continued from Page 1

Dear Minister

This means the government must ease the burdens of citizens by guaranteeing the debt, waiving loan interest or stop garnishing the salary to pay debts. The government must generate job opportunities to ease the pressure on public treasury.

There are other problems exacerbated by the revocation of citizenship. Here, I must emphasize that whoever obtained Kuwaiti citizenship fraudulently and are tampering with their national identity must be punished. All Kuwaitis agree on this view. A certain area needs to be highlighted concerning the revocation of the citizenship of the wives of Kuwaitis, and those who were born and lived in Kuwait as Kuwaiti citizens unaware that their grandfather or ancestor obtained citizenship fraudulently. What sin did these people commit for their citizenship to be revoked?

By the way, this group is a large and active force in the economy, society and administration. Consequently, such move will deprive Kuwait of much-needed talent and aggravate the Bedoun crisis, which is already a snowball that grows daily. The Bedoun problem should have been resolved decades ago; but unfortunately, it was left to worsen, leading to negative repercussions on all aspects of society. A solution to the Bedoun issue should have been reached before the decision to revoke the citizenship of those who acquired it by proxy; in order to enhance job, economic and social security.

Today, the picture does not look rosy. The gross domestic product is declining, while social problems are increasing. Instead of clarifying the situation and presenting appropriate solutions, we hear nothing but the silence of officials; hence, increasing public anxiety.

In several previous meetings with the Minister of Information; we suggested that the editors-in-chief of daily newspapers meet with His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister or First Deputy Prime Minister once a month or every two months. The goal of the proposal is to explain the government's viewpoints on one hand, and for the press to present public concerns to the leadership and participate in proposing solutions, on the other hand. In short, these are the duties of the press -- convey the voice of the people, shed light on shortcomings and propose solutions.

It is worth noting that ministerial measures require clarification, not just the issuance of official statements and decisions without explanation or clarification.

Regarding salary cuts, for example, there is a solution I have been advocating for some time. The solution is to

schedule or suspend subsidies, instead of distributing them haphazardly. It is unreasonable for wealthy merchants and residential building owners to benefit from the KD7.5 billion subsidy, while the government rationalizes expenditure by cutting the salaries of low-income employees.

Numerous public grievances must be heard and addressed to alleviate the social, financial and economic pressures on citizens. This is the task of the Council of Ministers; which must enlist the help of experts to address existing problems, anticipate the negative impacts of certain decisions, and then address them.

The country has a financial surplus and investments worldwide. The government has several plans, but they remain unimplemented. The government should focus on maximizing the gross domestic product, easing the burdens of citizens, and working in accordance with the lofty directives of His Highness the Amir who stressed the need to achieve social justice. This is not too much for a country with a small population and has the potential to become a pioneering State in all fields.

Online immorality

The ministry affirmed that all cases have been referred to the competent authorities for necessary legal action, as part of its ongoing efforts to protect society and uphold security and values.

It also stressed the importance of adhering to laws and regulations governing the use of cyberspace, while confirming its continuous monitoring of everything published on digital platforms; thereby, contributing to the promotion of a secure electronic environment

A security source told the newspaper that the department is focusing on everything that violates public morals, especially in the broadcasts of social networking sites like TikTok. He warned that anyone proven to have committed violations will be held legally accountable, while stressing the need to adhere to public morals and refrain from harming others.

High-level

Kirgoz noted that the consultations covered a wide range of bilateral and regional issues of common interest, including economic cooperation, regional developments in the Middle East, and issues of women, peace, and security.

Today, the seventh round of political consultations between the two countries was held in Bern to discuss relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen them in all

fields, as well as the latest developments on the regional and international arenas.

Kuwait Amir's

commitment to establishing international partnerships and communicating with regional blocs.

Al-Yahya made the statement to KUNA on Saturday amid Kuwait's preparations for both summits, along with a simultaneous economic summit, due in Kuala Lumpur on May 26-28.

He added that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah would lead the Kuwaiti delegation and the Gulf side during the two summits as part of Kuwait's presidency of the 45th GCC session.

He added that Kuwait's involvement in the gatherings affirms its commitment to establishing the international partnership approach, promoting communication with regional blocs and broadening cooperation in the multilateral arena amid the rapid development of Gulf relations with ASEAN countries and China in various fields in a way that boosts joint interests.

The minister said the GCC-ASEAN cooperation framework for 2024-2028 covers the promotion of cooperation in four areas pertinent to political- economic and trade dialogue, energy, food security and coordination in international arenas, considering the two summits an opportunity for participating countries' leaders to share views on regional and international developments and coordinate stances in international domains.

Kuwait's real

the weekend led to a drop in the load index on Friday and Saturday by around 706 megawatts.

The index recorded 16,294 megawatts, compared to about 17,000 megawatts on Thursday; which prompted the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to implement scheduled power outages in some parts of 64 residential, agricultural and industrial areas.

In the same context, the ministry announced on Saturday morning that it might be forced to cut off power in some parts of agricultural and industrial areas; including Wafra, Rawdatayn, Abdally Agricultural Area, Mina Abdullah, Subhan, Shuwaikh Al-Rai and Sulabiya Industrial Area. It excluded the residential areas in the scheduled power outages.

Kuwait powers up Al-Abdali Road

Project boosts sustainability goals

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan announced the launch of radical maintenance works on Al-Abdali Road, as part of a new set of contracts dedicated to the maintenance of highways and in-

ternal roads.

Dr. Al-Mashaan affirmed that both radical and regular maintenance efforts help extend the lifespan of infrastructure, reduce the need for future road reconstruction, and promote sustainability while lowering long-term costs.

Supervisor of the Al-Abdali Road project Engineer Eid Al-Rashidi stated that technical teams have begun laying a new layer of Type 3 asphalt.



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Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

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The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Tuesday, 24 JUN 2025 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (KD)
1	035808	POWER CONTROL ROOM	100
2	035809	INSTRUMENT AIR RECEIVER VESSEL	5
3	035811	MISC ELECTRICAL ITEMS	15
4	035905	CONTROL VALVE	15
5	036232	INSERT SLEEVE COATED	5
6	036233	RTP PIPES & FITTINGS, NOV FIBER GLASS SYSTEMS CO OR EQUIVALENT	35
7	036234	MISCELLANEOUS SPARE PARTS, LEYDEN	25
8	036316	DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMERS	25
9	036317	INSERT SLEEVES COATED	15
10	036318	PRESSURE REGULATOR	15
11	036319	SUCKER AND POLISH RODS, SINKER BARS	25
12	036467	ELECTRICAL CABLES	35

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender documents and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact: Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning



وزارة الإسكان والتخطيط العمراني

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning would like to announce the tender for the following works:

Tender Title	Tender No.	Tender Bond	Documentation Fee	Closing Date & Time	
Contract Management & Site Supervision for Landscape Construction Works at Madinat Salman Island 14 West & Island 12 in Kingdom of Bahrain funded through the Kuwait Grant under the GCC Development Program to the Kingdom of Bahrain	HP / 05 / 22	BD 5,000/-	BD 100/-	Wednesday, 6 th August, 2025	1:30 PM (Bahrain local time)

- Suitably eligible and qualified consultants are invited to participate in the Tender. Eligibility to participate shall be given to Kuwaiti Category «A» Consultants registered with the Kuwaiti Central Tender Committee; and Consultants registered in Bahrain should be licensed as Category A with the Council for Regulating the Practice of Engineering Professions (CRPEP), Kingdom of Bahrain in a Joint Venture with any Kuwaiti Eligible Consultant. Full details of the tenderer's eligibility and qualification criteria are provided in the Invitation for Qualification document.
- This is a public tender whereby the qualification of tenderers is combined with the submission of their technical and financial proposals. Full details are provided in the Invitation for Qualification Document no. QD/MS/S-HP/2022 attached to the tender package. This tender is a two-envelope tender and the qualification & technical bids will be opened first and the financial bid of technically qualified tenderers only will be opened later.
- This tender is advertised through the Bahrain Tender Board E-Tendering System and eligible consultants who wish to participate for above mentioned Project shall have to purchase and download the Documents online through the Bahrain Tender Board's portal <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh>. The tender documents shall be available for purchase and download beginning from from Wednesday, 21st May 2025 up to Wednesday, 23rd July 2025.
- Consultants who are not yet registered in the Bahrain Tender Board's e-tendering system shall be required to register through the below-mentioned link. Details of registration are provided online at the Bahrain Tender Board website. For technical assistance please contact the Tender Board through email address helpdesk@tenderboard.gov.bh or call on Tel No. +973 - 17566666.


<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh/Tenders/registerUser>

- The completed Tender which comprise of the Application for Qualification, Technical and Financial Proposal documents shall be submitted online in accordance with the Instruction to Tender and the E-Tendering Guidelines of the Bahrain Tender Board. The Tenderer should include and enclose in his offer the Tender Bond for the amount specified above. The Tender Bond should be in the form and manner as prescribed in the tender document valid for 180 days from the closing date.
- This Tender is in accordance with the provision of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Law Regulating Government Tenders & Purchases No. (36) of 2002 and Its Implementing Regulations issued by Decree No. (37) of 2002; and is subjected to the Unified Rules for Giving Priority to National Products and Products of a National Origin (Article 8, Prime Ministerial Edict No. 21 of 1987).

For any query regarding the invitation, please contact:
Cost Engineering Section, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, P.O. Box 5802, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, Tel. No.: **+973 - 17533000** - ext.519,
Email: Chandramohanana.Krishnapilla@housing.gov.bh.

• This advertisement shall be a supplementary to the Tender Documents.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning



وزارة الإسكان والتخطيط العمراني

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning would like to announce the tender for the following works:

Tender Title	Tender No.	Tender Bond	Documentation Fee	Closing Date & Time	
Landscaping Works for Coastal Areas & Open Spaces at Madinat Salman Island 14 West & Island 12 (part) in the Kingdom of Bahrain funded through the Kuwait Grant under the GCC Development Program to the Kingdom of Bahrain.	HP / 04 / 22	BD 10,000/-	BD 100/-	Wednesday, 6 th August, 2025	1:30 PM (Bahrain local time)

- Suitably eligible and qualified contractors are invited to participate in the above-mentioned Tender Package. Eligibility to participate shall be given to Kuwaiti Grade «A» Contractor registered with the Kuwaiti Central Tender Committee; and Contractors registered in Bahrain either an Infrastructure or a Landscaping Contractor in a Joint Venture with any Kuwaiti Eligible Contractor. Full details of the tenderer's eligibility and qualification criteria are provided in the Invitation for Qualification document.
- This is a public tender whereby the qualification of tenderers is combined with the submission of their technical and financial proposals. Full details are provided in the Invitation for Qualification Document no. QD-HP-04- 2022 attached to the tender package. This tender is a two-envelope tender and the qualification & technical bids will be opened first and the financial bid of technically qualified tenderers only will be opened later.
- This tender is advertised through the Bahrain Tender Board E-Tendering System and eligible contractors who wish to participate for above mentioned Project shall have to purchase and download the Documents online through the Bahrain Tender Board's portal <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh>. The tender documents shall be available for purchase and download beginning from from Wednesday, 21st May 2025 up to Wednesday, 23rd July 2025.
- Contractors who are not yet registered in the Bahrain Tender Board-s e-tendering system shall be required to register through the below-mentioned link. Details of registration are provided online at the Bahrain Tender Board website. For technical assistance please contact the Tender Board through email address helpdesk@tenderboard.gov.bh or call on Tel No. +973 - 17566666.

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For any query regarding the invitation, please contact:
Cost Engineering Section, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, P.O. Box 5802, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, Tel. No.: **+973 - 17533000** - ext.519,
Email: Chandramohanana.Krishnapilla@housing.gov.bh.

• This advertisement shall be a supplementary to the Tender Documents.

‘Without its international students, Harvard is not Harvard’

Federal judge blocks WH from barring foreign student enrollment at Harvard

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): A federal judge on Friday blocked the Trump administration from cutting off Harvard’s enrollment of foreign students, an action the Ivy League school decried as unconstitutional retaliation for defying the White House’s political demands.

In its lawsuit filed earlier Friday in federal court in Boston, Harvard said the government’s action violates the First Amendment and will have an “immediate and devastating effect for Harvard and more than 7,000 visa holders.”

“With the stroke of a pen, the government has sought to erase a quarter of Harvard’s student body, international students who contribute significantly to the University and its mission,” Harvard said in its suit. “Without its international students, Harvard is not Harvard.”

The ruling from US District Judge Allison Burroughs puts the sanction against Harvard on hold, pending the lawsuit.

The Trump administration move has thrown campus into disarray days before graduation, Harvard said in the suit. International students who run labs, teach courses, assist professors and participate in Harvard sports are now left deciding whether to transfer or risk losing legal status to stay in the country, according to the filing.

The impact would be heaviest at graduate schools such as the Harvard Kennedy School, where about half the student body comes from abroad, and Harvard Business School, which is about one-third international. Along with the impact on current students, the move would block thousands of students who were planning to come for summer and fall classes.

Harvard said it immediately puts the school at a disadvantage as it competes for the world’s top students. Even if it regains the ability to host students, “future applicants may shy away from applying out of fear of further reprisals from the government,” the suit said.

If the government’s action stands, Harvard said, the university would be unable to offer admission to new international students for at least the next two academic years. Schools that have that certification withdrawn by the federal government are ineligible to reapply until one year afterward, Harvard said.



People walk between buildings, Dec 17, 2024, on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

Harvard enrolls almost 6,800 foreign students at its campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Most are graduate students, and they come from more than 100 countries.

The Department of Homeland Security announced the action Thursday, accusing Harvard of creating an unsafe campus environment by allowing “anti-American, pro-terrorist agitators” to assault Jewish students on campus.

It also accused Harvard of coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party,

contending the school had hosted and trained members of a Chinese paramilitary group as recently as 2024.

Harvard President Alan Garber earlier this month said the university has made changes to its governance over the past year and a half, including a broad strategy to combat antisemitism.

He said Harvard would not budge on its “its core, legally-protected principles” over fears of retaliation. Harvard has said it will respond at a later time to allegations first raised by House Republicans about coordination with the Chinese Communist Party.

Lawrence Summers, a former Harvard president and US treasury secretary, wrote on X that the decision would mean losing key people, “some small fraction of whom are going to go on to be Prime Ministers of countries who’ve now been turned into enemies of the United States.” He said the administration’s action “is madness.”

The threat to Harvard’s international enrollment stems from an April 16 request from Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who demanded that Harvard provide information about foreign students that might implicate them in violence or protests that could lead to their deportation.

Harvard says it provided “thousands of data points” in response to Noem’s April 16 demand. Her letter on Thursday said Harvard failed to satisfy her request, but the school said she failed to provide any further explanation.

“It makes generalized statements about campus environment and ‘anti-Americanism,’ again without articulating any rational link between those statements and the decision to retaliate against international students,” the suit said.

Harvard’s lawsuit said the administration violated the government’s own regulations for withdrawing a school’s certification.

The government can and does remove colleges from the Student Exchange and Visitor Program, making them ineligible to host foreign students on their campus. However, it’s usually for administrative reasons outlined in law, such as failing to maintain accreditation, lacking proper facilities for classes, or failing to employ qualified professional personnel.

Move expected to elevate importance of State Dept, Pentagon

‘WH slashes staff in major overhaul of National Security Council’

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): US President Donald Trump is ordering a major overhaul of the National Security Council that will shrink its size, lead to the ouster of some political appointees and return many career government employees back to their home agencies, according to two US officials and one person familiar with the reorganization.

The number of staff at the NSC is expected to be significantly reduced, according to the officials, who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive personnel matter.

The shake-up is just the latest shoe to drop at the NSC, which is being dramatically made over after the ouster early this month of Trump’s national security adviser Mike Waltz, who in many ways had hewed to traditional Republican foreign policy.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been serving as national security adviser since the ouster of Waltz, who was nominated to serve as Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations.

The move is expected to elevate the importance of the State Department and Pentagon in advising Trump on important foreign policy moves. But, ultimately, Trump relies on his own instincts above all else when making decisions.



US President Donald Trump boards Marine One as he departs the White House on May 23, in Washington. (AP)

The NSC, created during the Truman administration, is an arm of the White House tasked with advising and assisting the president on national security and foreign policy and coordinating among various government agencies.

Trump was frustrated in his first term by political appointees and advisers who he felt gummed up his “America First” agenda.

There were roughly 395 people working at the NSC, including about 180 support staff, according to one official. About 90 to 95 of those being

ousted are policy or subject-matter experts seconded from other government agencies. They will be given an opportunity to return to their home agencies if they want.

Many of the political appointees will also be given positions elsewhere in the administration, the official said.

The NSC has been in a continual state of tumult during the early going of Trump’s second go-around in the White House.

Waltz was ousted weeks after Trump fired several NSC officials, just a day after the influential far-right activist Laura Loomer raised concerns directly to him about staff loyalty. Loomer has in the past spread 9/11 conspiracy theories and promoted QAnon, an apocalyptic and convoluted conspiracy theory centered on the belief that Trump is fighting the “deep state,” and took credit for the ouster of the NSC officials that she argued were disloyal.

And the White House, days into the administration, sidelined about 160 NSC aides, sending them home while the administration reviewed staffing and tried to align it with Trump’s agenda. The aides were career government employees, commonly referred to as detailees.

US defense secretary orders more restrictions on press at Pentagon

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): Bedeviled by leaks to the media during his short tenure, Defense Secretary **Pete Hegseth** issued a series of restrictions on the press late Friday that include banning reporters from entering wide swaths of the Pentagon without a government escort - areas where the press has had access in past administrations as it covers the activities of the world’s most powerful military.



Hegseth

Newly restricted areas include his office and those of his top aides and all of the different locations across the mammoth building where the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Space Force maintain press offices.

The media will also be barred from offices of the Pentagon’s senior military leadership, including Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Dan

Caine, without Hegseth’s approval and an escort from his aides. The staff of the Joint Chiefs has traditionally maintained a good relationship with the press.

Hegseth, the former Fox News Channel personality, issued his order via a posting on X late on a Friday afternoon before a holiday weekend. He said it was necessary for national security.

“While the department remains committed to transparency, the department is equally obligated to protect (classified intelligence information) and sensitive information, the unauthorized disclosure of which could put the lives of U.S. service members in danger,” wrote Hegseth.

The Pentagon Press Association expressed skepticism that operational concerns were at play - and linked the move to previous actions by Hegseth’s office that impede journalists and their coverage.

“There is no way to sugarcoat it. Today’s memo by Secretary Hegseth appears to be a direct attack on the freedom of the press and America’s right to know what its military is doing,” it said in a statement Friday night.



Local residents walk on a street with pieces of broken glass at the site of a residential building that was damaged after a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on May 24. (AP)

Russia and Ukraine swap hundreds more prisoners, hours after mass strike on Kyiv

KYIV, Ukraine, May 24, (AP): Russia and Ukraine swapped hundreds more prisoners on Saturday, as part of a major swap that was a moment of cooperation in otherwise failed efforts to reach a ceasefire.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russia’s defense ministry said each side brought home 307 more soldiers, a day after each released a total of 390 combatants and civilians.

The news came hours after Kyiv came under a large-scale Russian drone and missile attack that left at least 15 people injured, according to local officials. Explosions and anti-aircraft fire were heard throughout Kyiv as many sought shelter in subway stations.

In talks held in Istanbul earlier this month that marked the first time the two sides met face to face for peace talks since Russia’s 2022 full-scale invasion, Kyiv and Moscow agreed to swap 1,000 prisoners of war and civilian detainees each. It was a rare moment of cooperation in otherwise failed efforts to reach a ceasefire in the 3-year-old war.

Russia attacked Ukraine with 14 ballistic missiles and 250 Shahed drones overnight, officials said, adding that Ukrainian forces shot down 6 missiles and neutralized 245 drones - 128 drones were shot down and 117 were thwarted using electronic warfare.

The Kyiv City Military Administration said it was one of the biggest combined missile and drone attacks on the capital.

“A difficult night for all of us,” the administration said in a statement.

The debris of intercepted missiles and drones fell in at least six city districts of the Ukrainian capital. According to the acting head of Kyiv’s military administration, Tymur Tkachenko, six people required medical care after



Family members of Ukrainian prisoners hold photos of servicemen in captivity during a POWs exchange between Russia and Ukraine, in Chernyiv region, Ukraine on May 23. (AP)

the attack and two fires were sparked in the Solomianskyi district of Kyiv.

The Obolon district, where a residential building was heavily damaged in the attack, was the hardest hit. There were at least five wounded in the area, the administration said.

Yurii Bondarchuk, a local resident, said the air raid siren “started as usual, then the drones started to fly around as they constantly do.”

Moments later, he heard a boom and saw shattered glass fly through the air.

“The balcony is totally wiped out, as well as the windows and the doors,” he said, describing the damage to his apartment as he stood in the dark of the night, smoking a cigarette to calm his nerves while firefighters worked to extinguish the flames.

The air raid alert in Kyiv lasted more

than seven hours, warning of incoming missiles and drones.

Kyiv’s mayor, Vitalii Klitschko, warned residents ahead of the attack that more than 20 Russian strike drones were heading toward the city. As the attack continued, he said drone debris fell on a shopping mall and a residential building in Obolon district of Kyiv. Emergency services were headed to the site, Klitschko said.

The prisoner swap on Friday was the first phase of a complicated deal involving the exchange of 1,000 prisoners from each side.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the first phase of the deal brought home 390 Ukrainians, with further releases expected over the weekend, which will make it the largest swap of the war. Russia’s Defense Ministry said it received the same number of people from Ukraine.

The swap took place at the border with Belarus, in northern Ukraine, according to a Ukrainian official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The released Russians were taken to Belarus for medical treatment, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

However, the exchange - the latest of dozens of swaps since the war began and the biggest involving Ukrainian civilians so far - did not herald a halt in the fighting.

Battles continued along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed, and neither country has relented in its deep strikes.

After the May 16 Istanbul meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan called the prisoner swap a “confidence-building measure” and said the parties had agreed in principle to meet again.

All injured in stable condition after stabbing at Hamburg train station

BERLIN, May 24, (AP): More than a dozen people who were injured in a stabbing attack at the central train station in the German city of Hamburg were in stable condition, police said Saturday.

A 39-year-old woman, a German national, was arrested at the scene of Friday’s attack without putting up resistance and police said they believe she acted alone.

The Hamburger Abendblatt newspaper reported that two passersby managed to overpower the woman and take the knife from her.

It quoted a fire department spokesman, Philipp Baumann, saying that the attack injured 18 people between the ages of 19 and 85.

Three women aged 24, 52 and 85, and a 24-year-old man were critically injured. According to the police, however, all four were in stable condition on Saturday.

There was no immediate indication of any political motive, and police said that investigators were looking into whether the suspect may have been mentally ill.

The woman was expected to appear



Police and forensics work near the crime scene after a stabbing attack at Hamburg Central Station on May 23, in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

before a judge on Saturday and then placed in a psychiatric ward.

The attacker targeted people on the platform between tracks 13 and 14 in the station at around 6 p.m. Friday. The station in downtown Hamburg,

Germany’s second-biggest city, is a major hub for local, regional and long-distance trains.

Carrying weapons, including knives, is banned at the station and on local transport in Hamburg.



Former US Ambassador to NATO and US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, (second from right), speaks during a panel discussion with High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schmidt, (left), Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia Dr Gordan Grljic-Radman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic and former US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith as part of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Dayton, Ohio, on May 23. (AP)

Balkan and US officials say NATO helps maintain peace

DAYTON, Ohio, May 24, (AP): Representatives of Balkan nations that benefited from the 30-year-old Dayton Peace Accords joined Americans of both political parties on Friday to affirm the value of NATO to maintaining peace around the world.

US Ambassador to NATO Matthew Whitaker told a public forum at the University of Dayton held in conjunction with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly being held this week in the Ohio city that there’s “no doubt” that

the US, as the world’s leading superpower, will be challenged in the future and it’s “going to need friends.”

NATO was created in 1949 to provide collective security against the Soviet Union and now comprises 32 nations. U.S. Reps. Rick Larsen, a Washington Democrat, and Neal Dunn, a Florida Republican, also defended the value of US membership in the peacetime military alliance during a panel titled, “Why NATO Matters to Everyday Americans.”

Thousands protest in Serbian capital

BELGRADE, Serbia, May 24, (AP): Thousands of protesters braved a rainstorm in the Serbian capital on Friday to join a rally against a government crackdown on universities that have played a key role in months-long anti-corruption protests that continue to pressure the Balkan country’s populist government.

The populist government of President Aleksandar Vucic has accused the students and university professors of allegedly working for unspecified Western powers to oust the government and “destroy” Serbia. Vucic formally wants Serbia to join the EU but critics say he has stifled democratic freedoms while boosting ties with China and Russia.

Vucic has so far dismissed a student demand for an early election as the way out of a months-long political crisis.



Vucic

N.Korea’s Kim furious over failed destroyer launch, vows to arrest those responsible

SEOUL, South Korea, May 24, (AP): North Korea is seeking to arrest those responsible for the failed launch of its second naval destroyer, as it denied the warship suffered major damage - a claim quickly met with outside skepticism.

A statement from North Korea on its handling of the botched launch came after leader Kim Jong Un expressed fury over the incident that he said was caused by criminal negligence. The main military committee said Friday that those responsible would be held accountable for their “unpardonable criminal act.”

Satellite imagery on the site showed the vessel lying on its side and draped in blue covers, with parts of it submerged. North Korea says it will take about 10 days to repair the damage, but outside observers question that timeframe because damage to the ship appeared much worse than what North Korea claims.

Here is what you need to know about the failed ship launch:

North Korea’s state media said Friday the severity of the damage to the 5,000-ton-class destroyer was “not serious” as it canceled an earlier assessment that the bottom of the hull had been left with holes.

It said the hull on the starboard side was scratched and some seawater had flowed into the stern section. It said it

needs a total of 10 days to pump out the seawater, set the ship upright and fix the scratches.

It’s almost impossible to verify the assessment because of the extremely secretive nature of North Korea. It has a history of manipulating or covering up military-related setbacks, policy fiascoes and other mishaps, though it has periodically acknowledged some in recent years.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said the North Korean warship likely suffered much worse damage, including the flooding of its engine room located in the stern section, and holes in the starboard. He said North Korea could simply set the ship upright, paint it over and claim the ship has been launched, but that repairs could take more than a year as the replacement of an engine requires cutting the hull.

According to the North Korean account, the destroyer was damaged when a transport cradle on the ship’s stern detached early during a launch ceremony at the northeastern port of Chongjin on Wednesday.

Moon Keun-sik, a navy expert who teaches at Seoul’s Hanyang University, said North Korean workers are probably not familiar with launching a 5,000-ton-

class warship, which is a few times heavier than its existing main navy ships.

Observers say North Korea tried to launch the destroyer sideways, a method it has never used for warships, although it has previously employed it with big cargo and passenger ships.

Compared with those non-military vessels, Lee said it would be more difficult to maintain balance with the destroyer because it’s equipped with heavy weapons systems. He suspected North Korean scientists and officials likely did not factor that in.

The damaged ship is assessed as the same class as North Korea’s first destroyer, launched with great fanfare last month with a floating dry dock at a western shipyard. It is North Korea’s biggest and most advanced warship to date, and Kim called its construction “a breakthrough” in modernizing North Korea’s naval forces to cope with what he calls U.S.-led security threats.

Subsequently, a failure to launch the second destroyer was an embarrassment for Kim. But by disclosing the failure both internally and externally, Kim could be trying to show his resolve in building greater naval forces and boosting discipline at home. He ordered officials to repair the warship before a ruling Workers’ Party meeting in late June.



This satellite image provided by Airbus DS, shows a blue tarp covering a North Korean destroyer after it suffered a failed launch while it was being put to sea in Chongjin, North Korea on May 22. (AP)

Chinese defense minister meets with Thai defense forces chief

China warns US against using Philippines to stir trouble in South China Sea

BEIJING, May 24, (Xinhua): China urged the United States not to use the Philippines to stir trouble in the South China Sea, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Friday, noting that the Philippine side should immediately cease its provocations and violations on Tiexian Jiao in China’s Nansha Qundao island group. Spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks in response to a media query about a post from the US ambassador to the Philippines on X, which was related to recent law enforcement operations of Chinese coast guard vessels against Philippine fishing boats near Tiexian Jiao. The Philippines has repeatedly dispatched personnel to land illegally on Tiexian Jiao, seriously infringing upon China’s sovereignty and violating the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, Mao said, noting that China’s countermeasures are legitimate and legal. China urges the US side to stop using the Philippines to stir trouble in the South China Sea, and to cease undermining peace and tranquility there, Mao said. “The Philippine

side should immediately cease its provocations and violations on Tiexian Jiao in China’s Nansha Qundao, or China will respond resolutely,” she added. Enditem

Also:

BEIJING: China’s Minister of National Defense Dong Jun on Friday met with Songwit Noonpackdee, chief of defense forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, in Beijing. During the meeting, Dong hailed the profound friendship of “China and Thailand being one family” as well as the solid foundation and fruitful achievements of the two countries’ military cooperation. China is willing to work with Thailand to make full use of the existing cooperation mechanisms, step up cooperation in fields such as joint exercise and personnel training, and contribute to the building of a China-Thailand community with a shared future, Dong said. Noting that Thailand and China are friendly close neighbors, Songwit said the Thai side has always adhered to the one-China principle. The Thai military is willing to fur-



This image provided by Philippine Coast Guard shows a Chinese Coast Guard ship 5901 in the seas on Jan 13. (AP)

ther strengthen pragmatic exchanges and cooperation with China in various fields, to enhance coordination in multilateral affairs, and to jointly maintain regional security and stability.

asked Chinese citizens and students to closely monitor local news and updates, pay attention to the security situation in their surroundings, enhance personal safety awareness, strengthen self-protection measures, and avoid going out at night whenever possible.

The Chinese mission also said in a warning earlier on Friday that there have been some violent acts in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) recently against ethnic Chinese and international students from China. The consulate said it attaches great importance to this issue, and firmly opposes and strongly condemns violent acts, vowing to do its utmost to take effective measures to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens in the consular district. Two girls have been charged over the assault of a man and woman in Sydney’s eastern suburbs on Wednesday, NSW Police Force said in a statement on Thursday.

The couple, a 42-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man, were assaulted by a group of about seven teenagers inside the courtyard of a unit

complex in Sydney’s eastern suburbs of Eastgardens. The pair were taken to Maroubra Police Station where they were treated by NSW Ambulance paramedics for facial injuries, police said. They were later taken to a hospital, and have since been discharged. Following extensive inquiries two 12-year-old girls were arrested on Thursday in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.

They were taken to Maroubra Police Station, and each charged with one count of assault occasioning actual bodily harm in company of other(s) and affray. Both have been granted conditional bail to appear at a children’s court on June 19, 2025, according to the police statement. The Seven Network’s broadcast news service of 7NEWS said the 42-year-old woman moved from Shanghai, China, just over a year ago.

The entire attack was caught on camera by a resident in an upstairs unit. After the video was posted online, many viewers claimed that they recognized the same group had targeted several victims, most of whom are Asian, the 7NEWS reported.

India extends airspace ban on Pakistani airlines and military aircraft till June 23

NEW DELHI, May 24, (Agencies): The Indian government Friday extended the NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) for Pakistan flights until June 23, officials said. According to the NOTAM issued by the federal ministry of civil aviation, no aircraft registered in Pakistan, and operated, owned or leased by Pakistani airlines or operators will be allowed to enter the Indian airspace till June 23. The airspace ban also applies to Pakistani military aircraft as per the NOTAM.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: The death toll from a school bus bombing in southwestern Pakistan rose to eight on Friday after three more critically wounded children died, according to the country’s military, which blamed rival India for allegedly supporting rebels behind the attack.

The victims included two soldiers who were aboard the bus when it was attacked Wednesday in Khuzdar, a city in Balochistan province, where a separatist insurgency has raged for decades. A total of 53 people, including 39 children, were wounded in the attack.

The children were going to their Army Public School when the bombing happened.

Military spokesperson Lt Gen Ah-



In this photo released by the Prime Minister Office, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, (center), checks on a child injured in the suicide bombing in Khuzdar, as Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, (second right), looks on during their visit to a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan on May 21. (AP)

mad Sharif said that several of the wounded children remain critical. He said an initial investigation suggested the bombing was carried out by insurgents from the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, which was designated a terrorist organization by the United States in 2019, on India’s instructions.

Sharif said Pakistan had evidence that India is orchestrating “terrorists attacks inside Pakistan” and the in-

ternational community should take its notice. India has not responded to the allegation and Pakistan has presented no proof to back up its claim.

No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Tensions between India and Pakistan remain high after the two sides earlier this month engaged in a four-day border conflict before agreeing to a cease-fire.

‘Guatemalan prosecutor office uses criminal law to pursue opponents’

GUATEMALA CITY, May 24, (AP): A United Nations expert warned at the conclusion of her two-week visit that Guatemala’s prosecutor’s office is increasingly using criminal law against former prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, journalists and others.

Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, traveled the country meeting with judges, lawyers, lawmakers and others, including Guatemala’s chief prosecutor.

“The instrumental use of criminal law by the Prosecutor General’s Office appears to amount to a systematic pattern of intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights, targeted at specific groups,” Satterthwaite wrote in her preliminary report. “This persecution appears to be intensifying, as those who have sought to end impunity and corruption, defend human rights, or speak out against abuses of power increasingly face digital harassment, threats, and criminal charges.”



The UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Margaret Satterthwaite, gives a press conference at the end of her two-week visit, in Guatemala City on May 23. (AP)

The office is led by Consuelo Porras, who has been sanctioned by the United States and other countries and

accused of being an obstacle to corruption investigations.

Satterthwaite met with Porras and her staff. They told Satterthwaite that they acted within the law, denied using criminal law to pursue opponents and said they were the real victims of attacks by the executive branch and its allies, the U.N. expert said.

“Criminal charges have been directed at more than 60 justice operators and defense or human rights lawyers,” Satterthwaite said, noting that more than 50 “justice operators” have been forced into exile by the prosecutor’s office.

Porras’ office said later that it did not agree with Satterthwaite’s preliminary report, because it did not reflect “the complex work that we do, nor the exhaustive information that was provided.”

“We energetically reject the idea of a ‘criminalization of sectors,’” the office said. “Our actions are based on serious, objective investigations that strictly adhere to the Guatemalan legal framework.”

Uganda army accuses EU diplomats of engaging in subversive activities

KAMPALA, Uganda, May 24, (AP): Ugandan military authorities on Friday accused diplomats from Europe of engaging in subversive activities, in an escalation of tensions over European criticism of human rights violations by Uganda’s security forces.

Some European diplomats are mobilizing on behalf “the negative and traitorous groups opposed” to the government of President Yoweri Museveni, the military said in a statement.

The statement singled out the German ambassador, Matthias Schauer, charging that “the intelligence services are aware about his clearly undiplomatic practices that have been taking place in different parts of the country for some time now.”

That statement was issued by Col. Chris Magezi, a close associate of Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the president’s son who also serves as Uganda’s top military commander.

Kainerugaba’s military rise has been a source of concern among Ugandans who believe he is poised to take over from Museveni in a chaotic political transition. Kainerugaba frequently asserts his wish to succeed his father as president of the east African country, alarming Ugandans who don’t want to see hereditary rule.

Kainerugaba has gained notoriety most recently for his unpredictable posts on the social platform X.



Ugandan opposition leader and four-time presidential candidate Kizza Besigye, stands in the dock at the Makindye Martial Court in Kampala, Uganda on Nov 20, 2024. (AP)

He has threatened to behead Bobi Wine, a prominent opposition figure, and he drew widespread criticism earlier this month for reporting the apparent torture in his “basement” of Wine’s bodyguard, who was missing at the time.

Schauer, the German ambassador, is among a group of European diplomats who complained about Kainerugaba in a meeting on Thursday with Gen. Salim Saleh, a retired army officer who is Kainerugaba’s uncle and an influential member of Uganda’s security apparatus. Saleh apologized for Kainerugaba’s pro-

vocative posts on X, according to reports in the local press.

The strong response from Kainerugaba’s press office on Friday marks an escalation in relations between the Ugandan government and diplomats it accuses of meddling.

It was not immediately possible to get a comment from Schauer or Jan Sadek, the top EU diplomat in Uganda.

The EU has repeatedly urged Ugandan authorities to protect civil liberties ahead of presidential elections next year.

Trump ‘twisted’ facts to push baseless genocide claims, says S.Africa minister

JOHANNESBURG, May 24, (AP): South Africa’s top law enforcement official said Friday that US President Donald Trump wrongly claimed that a video he showed in the Oval Office was of burial sites for more than 1,000 white farmers and he “twisted” the facts to push a false narrative about mass killings of white people in his country.

Police Minister Senzo Mchunu was talking about a video clip that was played during the meeting between Trump and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the White House on Wednesday that showed an aerial view of a rural road with lines of white crosses erected on either side.

“Now this is very bad,” Trump said as he referred to the clip that was part of a longer video that was played in the meeting. “These are burial sites, right here. Burial sites, over a thousand, of white farmers, and those cars are lined up to pay love on a Sunday morning.”

Mchunu said the crosses did not mark graves or burial sites, but were a temporary memorial put up in 2020 to protest the killings of all farmers across South Africa. They were put up during a funeral procession for a white couple who were killed in a robbery on their farm, Mchunu said.

A son of the couple who were killed and a local community member who took part in the procession also said the



South African businessman Johann Rupert, standing right, watches a video during a meeting between President Donald Trump and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the Oval Office of the White House on May 21, in Washington. (AP)

crosses do not represent burial sites and were taken down after the protest.

Kuwaiti crude drops 47 cents to \$63.58 pb

KUWAIT CITY, May 24, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil fell 47 cents during Friday’s trading to hit USD 63.58 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 64.05 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Saturday. Brent futures rose by 34 cents to US 64.78 pb and West Texas Intermediate went up by 33 cents to USD 61.53 pb.

Other Voices

Shift to cleaner, sustainable energy

OPEC+ production decisions raise oil market uncertainty

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

WITH the upcoming meeting of OPEC+ next month in Vienna, oil markets are anxious about the group’s potential decision to raise production again. This has raised concerns about a further weakening of oil prices, which no one desires, but it is a sign that OPEC+ is worried about the lack of discipline among some of its own members. Non-adherence to agreed production limits is becoming a regular phenomenon.



Al-Harami

Currently, oil prices hover around \$64 a barrel, significantly lower than the \$70–\$80 range needed to balance many OPEC members’ annual budgets. This has forced several member countries to seek loans from international banks to cover budget deficits.

Most oil-producing countries require prices between \$90 and over \$100 per barrel in the coming years, unless they manage to suppress annual consumption, which is highly unlikely. Reducing electricity consumption must be carefully planned, especially given the current low electricity prices in Kuwait, where consumers pay only 2 fils per kilowatt-hour, while the government’s cost exceeds 10 fils. This makes electricity one of the cheapest in the region.

Despite calls to escalate prices based on individual consumption, which means the more you use, the higher your bill, which is fair, the demand remains high.

During the summer months, it is necessary to increase oil production to meet electricity needs due to the lack of alternatives to oil. Otherwise, Kuwait would

have to import gas, which is more expensive financially but cleaner, requires less maintenance, and is more environmentally friendly.

Until Kuwait discovers large gas reserves, which are still under exploration and have yet to be confirmed, oil will remain the primary energy source.

Since the call by the U.S. president to reduce oil prices, this trend has continued, with OPEC+ increasing crude oil production to maintain its market share and prevent other producers from encroaching on it.

The solution for oil-producing countries is to find alternatives to oil, switch to other energy sources and adapt to new discoveries. We have the ability to borrow funds and collaborate with neighboring countries on joint energy projects.

It is time to seriously consider options and explore alternatives. Oil will remain with us, but investing in cleaner, sustainable energy sources is the right move to stay ahead. We possess the financial resources and borrowing capacity to think proactively, invite international firms to partner with us, and help promote alternatives to oil. Solar energy, for example, could be a promising alternative.

We are a young nation with a youthful population and abundant financial resources, which can be invested in seeking and developing alternatives to oil. Relying solely on oil for income is no longer a sustainable strategy.

We have the means and access to international expertise to explore these alternatives. Thinking ahead and planning for the future is neither a bad thing nor a taboo, but it is a responsibility we owe to the next generation.

We must build a new future with alternatives that have been serving us since 1946.

□ □ □

Email: nafitkuwaiti@yahoo.com

Behavioral insights crucial for tailored investment strategies

Risk profiling key to personalized wealth management

By NBK Wealth

A core pillar of successful wealth management for individual investors is a deep understanding of their circumstances — financial and psychological. Beyond assessing income, net worth, and return objectives, wealth managers must also evaluate behavioral and personality traits that influence how clients react to market fluctuations. A widely adopted method to achieve this is — risk profiling — a structured process for determining how much investment risk an investor can and is willing to tolerate over a given investment horizon.

Risk profiling is typically conducted through a client questionnaire, the structure and depth of which may vary by firm due to the lack of a global standard. Regardless of the format, its primary aim is to prevent unsuitable investments and ensure alignment between the investor’s portfolio and long-term financial goals. The importance of proper profiling became especially apparent following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, prompting global regulatory bodies to enforce stricter suitability frameworks to better safeguard retail investors.

The Wealth Management Process & Risk Profiling

At the center of a robust wealth management framework lies the Investment Policy Statement (IPS) — a formal document that translates the investor’s objectives into an actionable investment strategy. The IPS typically includes portfolio parameters such as target asset allocation, required rate of return, rebalancing guidelines, and performance reporting frequency. It also captures investor-specific elements like time horizon, liquidity needs, special circumstances, and, importantly, risk tolerance.

While many IPS components, such as time horizon or return targets, can be modeled quantitatively, defining risk tolerance is a more nuanced challenge. Risk tolerance is a blend of both measurable financial conditions and less tangible behavioral characteristics. Quantitative elements may include age, income, wealth level, and liquidity needs. While qualitative dimensions, by contrast, involve attitudes, personal experiences, and behavioral tendencies, particularly under market stress.

To evaluate these attributes, advisors often use structured or psychometric questionnaires designed to uncover long-term behavioral patterns and risk attitudes. These tools help capture how clients emotionally respond to potential losses and how stable their preferences are over time.

Components of Risk Tolerance

Effective risk profiling in practice involves understanding four key components: risk capacity, risk appetite, risk perception, and risk composure.

Risk Capacity is the investor’s financial ability to absorb losses without materially affecting their long-term financial goals. It is influenced by objective factors like wealth, income stability, and investment duration. An investor with a long-horizon, strong-income, and substantial assets typi-



QR-code

cally has a high-risk capacity.

Risk Appetite reflects the investor’s emotional and psychological willingness to accept risk. It is more subjective and shaped by personal experiences, values, and attitudes toward uncertainty. Even with similar financial backgrounds, individuals may exhibit vastly different risk appetites due to formative life events or psychological disposition.

Risk Perception relates to how an investor interprets the riskiness of markets. It is both dynamic and personal, shaped by internal influences like financial literacy and external ones such as media, peer influence, or prevailing market sentiment. For instance, during prolonged bull markets, investors may underestimate risk and become overly optimistic. Conversely, in downturns, perceived risk often spikes even as opportunities improve—highlighting the cyclical nature of investor psychology.

Risk Composure is best viewed as the stability of an investor’s risk perception over time. It gauges how often and how dramatically an investor’s behavior changes in response to market volatility. Composure is not tied to capacity or appetite; rather, it reflects emotional discipline. An investor might score high on capacity and appetite but still panic in turbulent markets if composure is low. Recognizing such patterns is critical in developing a strategy that the investor can adhere to in both calm and volatile conditions.

Practical Implications for Advisors

Understanding these four dimensions allows advisors to design portfolios that are not only suitable on paper but are also behaviorally aligned with the investor. Among the four, the most limiting factor should guide the overall risk level. For example, an investor with a high-risk capacity and risk appetite but low-risk composure should be placed in a more conservative strategy than their financials alone would suggest. This approach minimizes the risk of emotional decisions that could derail long-term plans.

Advisors must also distinguish between long-term attitudes and short-term emotional responses.



NBK wealth

Portfolios should be anchored in stable, long-term tolerance levels, while short-term discomforts should be managed through measured adjustments. These may include reducing exposure to volatile assets temporarily or incorporating familiar instruments that offer psychological reassurance without fundamentally altering the investment plan.

Moreover, maintaining investment discipline requires ongoing effort. Reducing portfolio monitoring frequency, framing performance in historical context, and focusing on long-term objectives are all effective behavioral tools. Transparent communication and consistent engagement further support investor confidence, especially during times of uncertainty.

Conclusion

Risk profiling is not merely a regulatory requirement. It is foundational to personalized and effective wealth management. By going beyond surface-level metrics and exploring how clients truly experience and respond to risk, advisors can construct portfolios that clients are more likely to maintain through market cycles. A structured understanding of risk tolerance, anchored by financial, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, enables the delivery of advice that is suitable and enduringly sound.

Key Takeaways

■ Risk profiling is the structured process of assessing an individual investor’s risk tolerance and investment preferences. It forms the foundation for investment advisors to recommend suitable asset allocations and solutions.

■ Advisors must distinguish between long-term stable attitudes towards risk and temporary concerns about market volatility to be able to deliver suitable recommendations.

■ A long-term perspective should always be encouraged, and performance should be presented in the context of historical trends and future financial goals. This would encourage maintaining investment discipline and looking beyond short-term market volatility.

■ Risk profiling should go beyond regulatory compliance. It is essential for a long-term investment success. When advisors understand risk tolerance in depth, they can develop personalized investment strategies that align with both financial goals and the investor’s sense of security.

Kamco Invest wins ‘Kuwait’s Best Investment Bank-DCM’ at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025

Recognized for its leadership in structuring and execution excellence

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse and one of the active Investment Banks in the region, announced that it has been named “Kuwait’s Best Investment Bank – DCM” at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025.

Abdullah M. AlSharekh, Managing Director of Markets and Investment Banking, and Omar Zaineddine, Executive Director of Debt Capital Markets, received the award on behalf of Kamco Invest at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025 ceremony held in Dubai. The prestigious recognition was a result of a competitive evaluation process that included a detailed submission on the Company’s achievements, followed by an in-depth interview with Euromoney’s judging panel.

The “Kuwait’s Best Investment Bank – DCM” award recognizes Kamco Invest’s performance in successfully closing transactions for local and regional clients. Throughout 2024, the Debt Capital Markets (DCM) team managed nine bonds and sukuk issuances for financial institutions and corporates in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE worth USD4.2bn. These included acting as Joint Lead Manager (JLM) for three Kuwaiti issuers worth USD1.09bn.

These issuances include the first Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bond issuance denominated in Kuwaiti Dinar by a bank, which is also considered to be amongst the largest Kuwaiti Dinar issuances in the sector and a landmark achievement for the local debt market. Leveraging on its strong regional presence and wide network of investors, the team also managed six regional issuances, three in UAE worth USD1.4bn, two in Saudi Arabia worth USD1.25bn, and one in Bahrain worth USD500mn.

Commenting on this recognition,



Photo during the Euromoney Awards.

AlSharekh said, “We are proud to be recognized for our successful track record in managing several local and regional debt capital market transactions. This achievement reflects the trust and confidence our clients place in our expertise, further strengthening our position as a leader in managing DCM transactions, not only in Kuwait, but across the GCC. As part of the commitment that we uphold to our clients and partners, we will continue to focus on providing bespoke

financial solutions coupled with our deep market expertise to empower client growth strategies, while supporting the development of regional capital markets.”

Kamco Invest has consistently ranked amongst the top Joint Lead Managers for USD-denominated issuances in the GCC. The Company has also built a reputation of being the first in introducing various funding solutions to clients. In 2024, Kamco Invest structured and launched the first KWD

perpetual capital instrument, introducing flexible funding solutions for issuers and diversified investment options for investors.

Zaineddine commented, “2024 marked another landmark year for our DCM team, underpinning our continued commitment to delivering innovative financial solutions across the Kuwaiti and regional debt capital markets. By collaborating closely with clients, we successfully executed strategic deals and achieved impactful results. Over the past five years, we have successfully led and executed 35 local and regional DCM deals worth USD13.7bn, with full focus on growing further our regional footprint. With increasing interest from issuers and investors alike, our DCM team remains dedicated to identifying market opportunities and structuring tailored debt solutions that address our clients’ evolving financing needs.”

Kamco Invest’s Investment Banking division has managed mandates amounting to over USD41.8bn since inception, which include USD11.1bn managed and co-managed equity capital market transactions, USD20.7 Islamic and conventional debt capital market deals, and USD9.9bn merger & acquisition mandates, as of 31 March 2025.

About Kamco Invest

Kamco Investment Company K.S.C (Public) “Kamco Invest” is a regional non-banking financial powerhouse headquartered in Kuwait with offices in key regional financial markets, established in 1998 and listed on Boursa Kuwait in 2003. It is an Independently managed subsidiary of KIPCO Group adopting highest standards of corporate governance and regulated by the Capital Markets Authority and Central Bank of Kuwait.

Kamco Invest has AUM of over USD16.9bn as of 31 March 2025 allocated to various asset classes and jurisdictions, making it one of the largest asset managers in the MENA region. It has acted as investment banker to deals exceeding USD41.8bn from its inception till 31 March 2025 in equity capital markets, debt capital markets and mergers & acquisitions.

‘No branch visit needed’

NBK launches first fully digital account opening

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Reinforcing its pioneering role in digital banking, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has introduced a fully digital account opening feature through its NBK Mobile Banking App — marking a first-of-its-kind service in Kuwait’s banking sector.

The innovative service enables non-NBK customers to open any type of account through a seamless, fully digital process — anytime, anywhere — without the need to visit a branch. Users can simply fill in the application and electronically sign the agreement using “Kuwait Mobile ID” digital verification system via the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) takes few minutes, so customers can enjoy the offerings of exceptional banking

Following the verification process, users create their login credentials and gain instant access to NBK Mobile Banking, where they can deposit funds into their new account through K-Net and manage all banking transactions with ease, speed, and security.

Commenting on the new service, Mr. Mohammad Al-Dakhil, AVP - Digital Business at NBK, said: “This launch underscores NBK’s commitment to delivering cutting-edge digital banking services that enable customers to enjoy a faster, easier, and more integrated banking experience.”

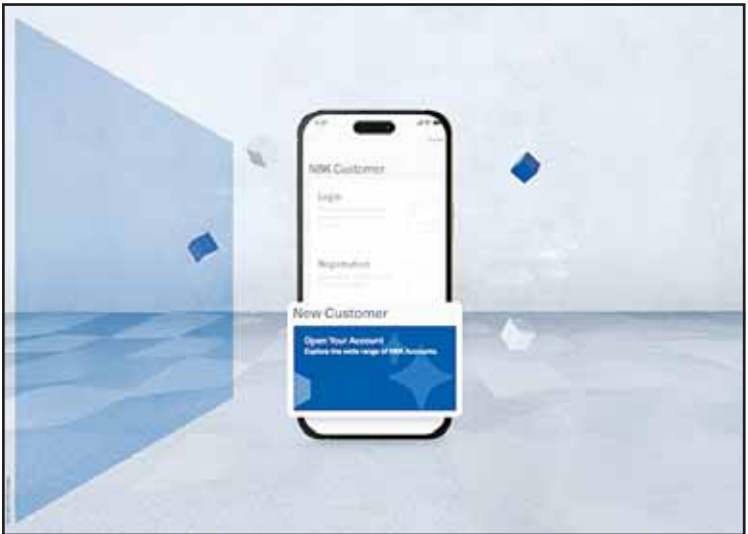
He added that the new account opening feature opens the door for non-NBK customers to join the NBK family effortlessly and benefit from a wide range of innovative products and



Mohammad Al-Dakhil

services. The rollout is part of NBK’s ongoing efforts to enhance and expand its mobile banking capabilities by introducing new features and optimizing existing ones.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, customers can perform a variety of banking transactions, including opening new accounts, reviewing account and card activity, checking NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Points, make credit card payments and settle e-bills, updating personal information, and locating NBK branches, ATMs, and CDMs across Kuwait — all in a secure digital environment. The NBK Mobile Banking App is available for download via the Apple App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery.



NBK mobile banking app.



A group photo of participants at the event.



Rami Al-Dhafiri during his participation in the panel discussion.

Confirming its commitment to advancing digital transformation in Kuwait and supporting the New Kuwait Vision 2035

Burgan Bank participates in Cedar-IBSi ‘Building a Future-Ready Bank’ event



Mr. Rami Al-Dhafiri, Assistant General Manager – Digital Transformation at Burgan Bank.

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Burgan Bank recently took part in the Cedar-IBSi event titled “Building a Future-Ready Bank”, joining industry leaders and top market influencers at Jumeirah Messilah Beach in vital conversations around the future of banking in Kuwait, as guided by the national goal to achieve the New Kuwait 2035 Vision. The Bank’s participation, represented by **Mr. Rami Al-Dhafiri**, Assistant General Manager – Digital Transformation, echoes its steadfast commitment to exchanging expertise and vital knowledge as well as building valuable networks and partnerships, in a bid to catalyze the develop-

ment of Kuwait’s local economy and banking sector. As part of Burgan Bank’s participation, Al-Dhafiri contributed to a panel discussion on “NextGen Transaction Banking & Payments,” which analyzed the influence of modern technologies on the market, how they are shaping the banking and finance sector, and the anticipated future foreseen as a natural evolution for the advancement unfolding today. Hosted by Cedar Management Consulting, a global strategy consulting firm, and IBS Intelligence, a leading FinTech research and advisory firm, the “Building a Future-Ready Bank”

event is part of a global series designed to spotlight innovation and leadership in banking technology and financial services. “It is a privilege to be part of an institution as forward-looking as Burgan Bank, in a market that is as digitally ready as Kuwait,” Al-Dhafiri commented on his participation in the event. “Thanks to the forward-looking ecosystem fostered by the nationwide Vision 2035, Burgan Bank continues to take confident leaps along its robust digital transformation strategy, allowing us to remain abreast of the highest international standards of excellence.” In addition, the event covered other

pressing topics concerning digital banking and artificial intelligence (AI), such as “Future of Banking | A Business Leadership Strategic Perspective” and “AI in Action | Pioneering the Next Wave of Digital”, as well as an overview the emerging banking and technology trends. It is worth noting that Burgan Bank remains committed to participating in and sponsoring some of the most important local and regional industry events, confirming its steadfast resolve to be a proactive contributor to the comprehensive development of banking and finance in Kuwait and the region.

To highlight its leading role and achievements across different levels

KFH Group participates in the Global Banking and Markets Middle East Conference at Dubai

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Kuwait Finance House Group participated in the Global Banking and Markets Middle East Conference on May 20-21 at Dubai’s Madinat Jumeirah Convention and Events Centre. General Manager Corporate Banking and Syndication, **Nasser Alshaya**. At the conference, General Manager Corporate Banking and Syndication at KFH, Nasser Alshaya said that KFH’s involvement in this prominent regional event offers an ideal opportunity to showcase its growth and success, as well as its leading role in the financial sector throughout the region. “KFH is a giant banking entity, leading all Kuwaiti banks and companies listed on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization, which currently exceeds KWD 13 billion. KFH operates in eight countries globally, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey, the UK, and Germany, through an extensive international business network comprising over 600 branches,” he added. Alshaya explained that KFH held extensive meetings and discussions with banking and investment representatives, leading to the exploration of new opportunities and enhanced cooperation. The bank’s



Alshaya



AlRukhayes



From right: Zakaria Alansari, Nasser Alshaya, Khalid Alshami, Khalid AlRukhayes, Mohammed Al-Khazam, Saad Al-Sabah, Hamzah Alanjari

presence at the conference, particularly its dedicated pavilion, proved successful in showcasing its prominent financing services. This included highlighting innovative products and solutions that address the needs of diverse companies and customer segments, as well as detailing distinct and varied financing options for major projects in Kuwait and the Group’s international operating countries. Deputy General Manager Global Markets Trading and Investments, **Khalid AlRukhayes**. Deputy General Manager Global Markets Trading and Investments at KFH, Khalid AlRukhayes, said that this significant annual conference con-

venes over 2000 participants, including key decision-makers, representatives from sovereigns, major companies, and banking and investment experts from across the region. He emphasized that the event offers a prime opportunity to directly connect with investors, business leaders, and financial industry figures; discuss financial sector trends in capital markets and sukuk issuances regionally; exchange insights with top financial experts; and identify collaborative finance and investment opportunities. AlRukhayes explained that KFH’s participation in the Global Banking and Markets Middle East Conference under-

scored its prominent regional standing and its dedication to fostering strong partnerships within the financial sector. This involvement is also aimed at boosting cooperation with investment and development stakeholders and reinforcing KFH’s adaptability to market shifts. He added that the KFH pavilion drew considerable attention from attendees interested in its unique products and services available in Kuwait and through its various global subsidiaries. Visitors, banking researchers, fund managers, and those keen on the evolving Islamic banking industry, lauded these offerings, acknowledging KFH’s leadership, exemplary performance, and sustained growth.

New board elected for 3-year term

Agility holds AGM for FY ending 31 December ’24

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Agility Public Warehousing Company KSCC, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, held its Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting on Thursday, 22 May 2025, with a quorum of 63.7%. The company’s shareholders approved all the items on the agenda, including Agility’s audited financial results for the year 2024, and endorsed the Board of Directors’ recommendation for a cash dividend of 10%, equivalent to 10 fils per share, for the year 2024. These dividends are entitled for the shareholders who will be registered on the company’s shareholders’ record on the settlement date 25 June 2025. Dividends will be distributed on 30 June 2025. The Annual Ordinary General Assembly also elected new board of directors for the coming three years. **New board members are as follows:** **Non-Independent Members:** 1. Arab Market General Trading and Contracting Co represented By Mr. Faisal Al Sultan 2. White Tower General Trading and Contracting represented by **Mr. Tarek Abdulaziz Sultan Al Essa** 3. Mr. Abdulaziz Nader Al Essa 4. Public Institution for Social Security (appointed) **Independent Members:** 1. Mr. Naser Mohammad Fahad Al Rashed 2. Mr. Sultan Anwar Al Essa 3. Mr. Abdulmajeed Hajji Hussein Al Shatti In 2024, reported full year net income of KD 63 million equivalent to 25.07 fils per share. EBITDA stood at KD 277 million and revenue of KD 1,528 million. **About Agility** Agility is a global leader in supply



Tarek Sultan



Agility logo

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

MoU signed in Tokyo for strategic open RAN collaboration

Zain Kuwait, Rakuten Symphony partner to deploy Cloud-Native Open RAN

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Zain Kuwait and Rakuten Symphony have announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will see the organizations collaborate on a pilot project to establish a functional cloud-native Open Radio Access Network (Open RAN) in the country. Zain Kuwait will utilize Rakuten Symphony’s ORAN and Cloud portfolio to deliver 5G Standalone sites as part of a project that will represent Kuwait’s first Open RAN deployment of its kind. The MoU was signed at Rakuten Symphony’s headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, by Daaij Al-Oud, Chief Technology Officer at Zain Kuwait, and Sharad Sriwastawa, President of Rakuten Symphony, along with executive teams from both partners. The project will be the initial phase for planned large scale commercial deployment of Open RAN in Kuwait and across Zain Group, which operates in eight markets across the Middle East and North Africa region. As part of the project, Rakuten Symphony will supply its innovative Open RAN virtualized Distributed Unit and Centralized Unit software, along with cloud-native virtualized software, as well as ensuring that its Open RAN solution is fully functional and capable of handling commercial traffic. Zain Kuwait will allocate the required cell sites as well as providing data center infrastructure and 5G SA Core with related transport connectivity. Daaij Al-Oud said, “This collaboration with Rakuten Symphony marks a significant step in our journey to transform Kuwait’s telecom infrastructure. By piloting the country’s first cloud-native Open RAN deployment, we aim to unlock new levels of network agility, efficiency, and scalability. This initiative is not just a technological milestone for Zain Kuwait, but a strategic move that aligns with our broader vision of leading digital innovation across the region.” Sharad Sriwastawa said, “Rakuten Symphony is pleased to support Zain Kuwait in delivering the country’s



Daaij Al-Oud and Sharad Sriwastawa sign the MoU.



Exchange of commemorative gifts.



Al-Oud and Sriwastawa with Zain and Rakuten Symphony executives in Tokyo.

first Open RAN deployment of its kind. By venturing into networks driven by cloud-native, open principles and lev-

eraging Rakuten Symphony’s proven portfolio, Zain Kuwait has the potential to realize the benefits of increased

operational flexibility and reduced time to market, in turn delivering better performance for customers.” Rakuten Mobile, in collaboration with Rakuten Symphony, will apply the achievements obtained from the “Research and Development Project of the Enhanced Infrastructures for Post-5G Information and Communication Systems (JPNP20017)”, subsidized by the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO). **About Zain Kuwait** Founded in 1983 as the first telecom operator in the Middle East and North Africa, Zain has pioneered several regional milestones – from launching the first GSM service in 1994 to introducing nationwide 5G in Kuwait in 2019. The company remains committed to exceeding customer expectations through cutting-edge digital and traditional services, including AI-based tools and comprehensive support networks. Zain plays a strategic role in Kuwait’s development by fostering public-private partnerships and driving digital transformation across key sectors. Deeply rooted in corporate sustainability, Zain actively supports initiatives in education, health, youth, sports, and the environment, championing positive social impact and community empowerment. **About Rakuten Symphony** Rakuten Symphony is reimagining telecom, changing supply chain norms and disrupting outmoded thinking that threatens the industry’s pursuit of rapid innovation and growth. Based on proven modern infrastructure practices, its open interface platforms make it possible to launch and operate advanced mobile services in a fraction of the time and cost of conventional approaches, with no compromise to network quality or security. Rakuten Symphony has operations in Japan, the United States, Singapore, India, Europe and the Middle East Africa region.

Company emphasizes continuous improvement at annual convention

ALSAYER Group celebrates employee achievements



Top and above: Some photos from the event to celebrate ALSAYER Group employees.

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: The ALSAYER Group recently hosted its annual employee convention, celebrating the achievements across its various divisions, including Mohamed Naser Al Sayer Est. Co. W.L.L for Toyota and Lexus Sales Service and Parts Division, Bahrah Trading Company for commercial vehicles and heavy equipment including HINO, Bobcat, Doosan, Car Rental and Leasing, Insurance, ALSAYER Engineering for Yokohama tires, Cofran and Abaar lubricants and NexaAutocolor, KAFF for animal feed, Al Dhow Holding for Investment and ALSAYER International Real Estate.

The event was attended by the Board of Directors of the Group Mr. Faisal Bader Al-Sayer Chairman, Mr. Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO, Mr. Mohamed

Naser Al-Sayer Executive Board Member alongside the Executives and Management team.

In his speech, CEO Mr. Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer emphasized the group's strength being rooted in its employees' curiosity and dedication, highlighting the management's commitment to providing growth opportunities for everyone. The event underscored ALSAYER's foundational promise to not only deliver quality products but also to enhance customer and employee experience.

Mr. Bengt Schultz, the Chief Operating Officer, praised the team for integrating Kaizen principles – focused on continuous step-by-step improvement

– with the agility to adapt strategically. He encouraged the cultivation of a culture where improvement is a collective journey.

Mr. Jacques Feghali, Chief Services Officer, reinforced the importance of departmental initiatives towards continuous improvement, urging every employee to be proactive in fostering a shared vision for progress.

During the convention, teams excelling in Business Improvement Initiatives were acknowledged for their contributions, underscoring the group's commitment to innovation and teamwork. The event served as a platform to reinforce ALSAYER's dedication to teamwork, customer focus, and ongoing development.

Trump threatens 50% tariffs on EU and 25% penalties on smart phones

US leader's trade war intensifies

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): President Donald Trump on Friday threatened a 50% tax on all imports from the European Union as well a 25% tariff on smart-phones unless those products are made in America.

The threats, delivered over social media, reflect Trump's ability to disrupt the global economy with a burst of typing, as well as the reality that his tariffs have yet to produce the trade deals he is seeking or the return of domestic manufacturing he has promised voters.

The Republican president said he wants to charge higher import taxes on goods from the EU, a longstanding US ally, than from China, a geopolitical rival that had its tariffs cut to 30% this month so Washington and Beijing could hold negotiations. Trump was upset by the lack of progress in trade talks with the EU, which has proposed mutually cutting tariffs to zero even as the president has publicly insisted on preserving a baseline 10% tax on most imports.

"Our discussions with them are going nowhere!" Trump posted on Truth Social. "Therefore, I am recommending a straight 50% Tariff on the European Union, starting on June 1, 2025. There is no Tariff if the product is built



US President Donald Trump silences his phone that rang twice as he was speaking to reporters after signing executive orders regarding nuclear energy in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, May 23, 2025, in Washington, as Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth watch. (AP)

or manufactured in the United States."

Speaking later in the Oval Office, Trump stressed that he was not seeking a deal with the EU and might delay the tariffs if more companies invested in the United States.

"I'm not looking for a deal," Trump told the reporters. "We've set the deal. It's at 50%."

The EU's top trade official, Maros Sefcovic, posted on the social media site X that he spoke Friday with U.S. Trade

joins Amazon, Walmart and other major U.S. companies in the White House's crosshairs as they try to respond to the uncertainty and inflationary pressures unleashed by his tariffs.

"I have long ago informed Tim Cook of Apple that I expect their iPhone's that will be sold in the United States of America will be manufactured and built in the United States, not India, or any-place else," Trump wrote. "If that is not the case, a Tariff of at least 25% must be paid by Apple to the U.S."

Trump later clarified his post to say that all smartphones made abroad would be taxed and the tariffs could be coming as soon as the end of June.

"It would be also Samsung and anybody that makes that product," Trump said. "Otherwise, it wouldn't be fair."

The statements by Trump are critical in that he suggests the company itself would bear the price of tariffs, contradicting his earlier claims as he rolled out a series of aggressive tariffs over the past several months that foreign countries would shoulder the cost of the import taxes. In general, importers pay the tariffs and the costs are often passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices.

In response to Trump's tariffs on China, Apple CEO Tim Cook said earlier this month that most iPhones sold in the U.S. during the current fiscal quarter would come from India, with iPads and other devices being imported from Vietnam.



Workers, back, unload vehicles while a car, center front, is moved to another location of the area, where export vehicles are parked at the Daikoku vehicle terminal center in Yokohama, near Tokyo, April 8, 2025. (AP)

Two leaders talk on telephone

Ishiba says he & Trump agreed to a 'productive' round of trade talks

TOKYO, May 24, (AP): Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Friday that he spoke by telephone with U.S. President Donald Trump and agreed to hold "productive" discussions at an upcoming round of tariff talks between the two sides.

"Investment, not tariffs," Ishiba told reporters after the talks. He said Japan's position to keep pushing Washington to drop all recent tariff measures is unchanged and that he stands by plans to push for Japanese investment to create more jobs in the U.S. in exchange.

The two leaders held talks just after Economic Revitalization Minister Kyosei Akazawa, Japan's chief tariff negotiator, headed to Washington for a third round of talks with his U.S. counterparts. In the earlier rounds of talks, the U.S. had not agreed to the Japanese requests.

Ishiba said he reminded Trump that Japan's position was for the U.S. administration to scrap all recent tariffs on imports from Japan, to which the U.S. president made no specific response.

"I expressed my expectations for productive discussion to be held, and we agreed," Ishiba told reporters.

The U.S. is charging a 25% tariff on imports of autos, a mainstay of Japan's trade with the U.S. and a key driver of growth for the economy. Trump has relaxed some of those tariffs but has kept in place higher tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Friday's talks were requested by Trump and the two leaders spoke for about 45 minutes on a range of topics that also included security cooperation between the two allies and the U.S. president's recent visit to the Middle East, Ishiba said.

He said the two leaders also agreed to hold talks when they both attend the Group of Seven summit in Canada next month.

KWEEP launches Mentorship Program for women in Kuwait and introduces 'Future Women Leaders Series'

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: On Thursday, the Kuwait Women's Economic Empowerment Platform (KWEEP) achieved a significant milestone in its mission to advance women's leadership and professional development in Kuwait's private sector with the launch of the KWEEP Mentorship Program, along with the inaugural workshops of its new Future Women Leaders Series, designed to strengthen the pipeline of women leaders across various industries.

The mentorship program, officially launched during an MoU ceremony, was developed in partnership with Playbook, a global leadership and career development platform founded in the MENA region, with a network spanning 100 countries and a community of over 10,000 women professionals. The workshops were sponsored and facilitated by Edvantage, a Kuwait-based education consultancy and KWEEP Signatory. The full-day event



Signing: Left-right: Aminah Al Matouq, Senior Strategic HR Business Partner at Kuwait Finance House (KFH); Fatimah Dashti, Human Resources Director at Alghanim Industries; Salma Al-Hajjaj, Chief Human Resources Officer at Gulf Bank; and Wafa AlObaidat, Founder and CEO of PLAYBOOK.

took place at Al Hamra Tower's Business Center, with the venue generously provided by Al Hamra Real Estate, also a KWEEP Signatory.

Representing KWEEP, the MoU was signed by attending representatives: Salma Al-Hajjaj, Chief Human Resources Officer at Gulf Bank; Fatimah Dashti, Human Resources Director at Alghanim Industries; and Aminah Al Matouq, Senior Strategic HR Business Partner at Kuwait Finance House (KFH). Wafa AlObaidat, Founder and CEO of Playbook, signed on behalf of the platform and also provided an overview of the program and its features. In her opening remarks, Salma Al-Hajjaj emphasized the private sector's commitment to empowering women in the workplace by equipping them with the knowledge, tools, and skills needed to succeed in their careers.

'US Steel will keep HQ in Pittsburgh'

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): President Donald Trump said Friday that U.S. Steel will keep its headquarters in Pittsburgh as part of what he called a "planned partnership" that seemed to signal that he'll approve a bid by Japan-based Nippon Steel to make a big investment in the iconic American steelmaker, if not buy it outright.

Still, Trump's statement left it vague as to whether he is approving Nippon Steel's bid after he vowed repeatedly to block the deal to prevent U.S. Steel from being foreign-owned.

More recently, Trump suggested that Nippon Steel would invest in U.S. Steel, not buy it, and one union official suggested Friday that the federal government will have a role in the company's management going forward. But investors seemed to take Trump's statement as a sign that he's approving some sort of merger, sharply pushing up U.S. Steel's shares, and the companies issued approving statements.

Nippon Steel said the partnership is a "game changer - for U.S. Steel and all of its stakeholders, including the American steel industry, and the broader American manufacturing base."

FTC abandons Biden-era effort to block Microsoft's acquisition of Activision

WASHINGTON, May 24, (AP): The Republican-controlled Federal Trade Commission is abandoning a Biden-era effort to block Microsoft's purchase of "Call of Duty" video game maker Activision Blizzard.

In an order issued Thursday, the FTC said it had determined that "the public interest is best served by dismissing the administrative litigation in this case."

It was the second time in one day that the

FTC pulled out of litigation begun during the Biden administration. Earlier Thursday, the FTC said it was dismissing a lawsuit against PepsiCo that was filed by the Democratic-controlled FTC in January.

Microsoft announced a \$69 billion acquisition of Activision in January 2022. It's one of the most expensive tech acquisitions in history and was designed to boost sales of Microsoft's Xbox gaming console, which has lagged in

sales behind Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo.

In December 2022, the Federal Trade Commission - then led by Democratic Chairwoman Lina Khan -- sued to temporarily block the acquisition, saying it would let Microsoft suppress competitors who want access to Xbox and its subscription content.

In July 2023, the U.S. District Court in Northern California denied the FTC's request to pause the acquisition, but the FTC appealed.

Earlier this month, a federal appeals court also denied the FTC's request.

In the meantime, Microsoft completed its purchase of Activision in October 2023 after it won approval from Britain's competition watchdog, which had also considered blocking the merger.

Brad Smith, Microsoft's vice chairman and president, said Thursday in a statement on X that the decision is a victory for video game players

and for "common sense in Washington D.C."

"We are grateful to the FTC for today's announcement," Smith said.

Khan stepped down from the FTC when President Donald Trump took office in January, and Trump fired Democratic Commissioners Rebecca Slaughter and Alvaro Bedoya in March. Bedoya and Slaughter have sued the Trump administration, saying their removal was illegal.

Power outage hits Cannes Film Festival and traffic

Jafar Panahi's presence in Cannes speaks volumes

CANNES, France, May 24, (AP): Before this week, the dissident Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi hadn't attended the premiere of one of his films in more than 15 years.

Panahi, one of the leading international directors, was banned from traveling out of Iran in 2009 for attending the funeral of a student killed in the Green Movement protests, a judgment later extended to two decades. But even when placed under house arrest, Panahi kept making movies, many of which are among the most lauded of the century. He made 2011's "This Is Not a Film" on an iPhone in his living room. "Taxi" (2015) was clandestinely shot almost entirely within a car.

These and other films of Panahi's premiered to considerable acclaim at international film festivals where the director's conspicuous absence was sometimes noted by an empty chair. When his last film, 2022's "No Bears," debuted, he was in jail. Only after his hunger strike made worldwide news was Panahi - who had gone to Tehran's Evin Prison to inquire about his friend, the then-jailed filmmaker Mohammad Rasoulof - released, in early 2023.

Two years later, with his travel ban finally lifted, Panahi arrived at the Cannes Film Festival with a film, "It Was Just an Accident," riven with the fury and pain of incarceration by the Islamic Republic.

"Being here does matter, of course. But what's even more important is that the film is here," Panahi said in an interview on a Palais terrace. "Even when I went to jail, I was happy that the film was done. I didn't mind being in prison because my job was done."

Yet Panahi's appearance in Cannes, where the film premiered Wednesday, carries tremendous meaning - and risk - for a filmmaker who has played such a massive role in international cinema in absentia. But

for a director who has previously had his films smuggled out of Iran on USB drives, risk is a constant for Panahi.

"Yes, this is an ongoing risk," he says, speaking through an interpreter. "Now it will probably be higher. But the Iran situation is unpredictable. It changes everyday. New politics everyday. So we have to see what happens the day we go back."

Last year, in order to reach Cannes, Panahi's countryman Rasoulof crossed the Iranian border on foot before resettling in Germany. (His film, "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," was ultimately nominated for best international film at the Oscars.) Panahi says they speak every other day. After the premiere of "It Was Just an Accident," Rasoulof texted Panahi to congratulate him on the moment.

Unlike Rasoulof, though, Panahi - whose "No Bears" captured him emotionally gazing across, but not crossing, the border - has no plans to flee.

"I'm flying back to Tehran on Sunday," he says.

"It's simple. I'm unable to live here," he elaborates. "I have no ability to adapt to a new country, a new culture. Some people have this ability, this strength. I don't."

What Panahi does have, as his latest film shows once again, is the ability to deftly lace complicated feelings of resistance, sorrow and hope into gripping movies of elegant, if heartbreaking, composition.

In "It Was Just an Accident," which is in competition for the Palme d'Or in Cannes, a man named Vahid (played by Vahid Mobasser) believes he sees his former captor and torturer. Though blindfolded while imprisoned, Vahid recognizes the sound of the man's prosthetic leg. He abducts him, takes him to the desert and begins to bury him in the ground.

But to satisfy pangs of doubt, Vahid decides to confirm his suspicion by bringing the man, locked in

his van, to other former prisoners for identification. In this strange odyssey, they are all forced to confront revenge or forgiveness for the man who ruined their lives. Panahi drew from his own imprisonment but also from the stories of detainees jailed alongside him.

"It was the experience of all these people I met in prison, mixed with my own perception and experience," said Panahi. "For instance, the fact of never seeing the face of your interrogator is everyone's experience. But then the people who have spent over a decade in prison have more experience than myself, so I've been very sensitive to their narratives."

"It Was Just an Accident" may be Panahi's most politically direct film yet. It's certainly his most anguished. That's a product of not just his personal experience in prison but of the protests in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini.

"I think ultimately violence will be inevitable. And it's exactly what the regime wants, because it gives a justification to the repression," says Panahi. "The longer they remain and the more pressure they put on the people, the more the people will feel that they have no other solution. And that's when it will get dangerous."

Also:

CANNES: A major power outage struck southeastern France on Saturday, disrupting traffic and briefly halting events at the Cannes Film Festival as the prestigious event prepared to hand out its top prize.

About 160,000 households in the Alpes-Maritimes department lost electricity after a high-voltage line fell Saturday morning, electricity network operator RTE said on X. The outage came hours after a fire at an electrical substation near Cannes overnight had already weakened the grid.



Director Jafar Panahi poses for a portrait photograph for the film 'It Was Just an Accident' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Wednesday, May 21. (AP)

No prison

Robbers convicted in Kim's Paris case

PARIS, May 24, (AP): A Paris court on Friday found the ringleader and seven other people guilty in the 2016 armed robbery of **Kim Kardashian**, but did not impose any additional time behind bars for their roles in what the US celebrity described as "the most terrifying experience of my life."

The chief judge, David De Pas, said that the defendants' ages - six are in their 60s and 70s - and their health issues weighed on the court's decision to impose sentences that he said "aren't very severe."



Kardashian

He said that the nine years between the robbery and the trial - long even by the standards of France's famously deliberate legal system - were also taken into account in not imposing harsher sentences. The court acquitted two of the 10 defendants.

Aomar Ait Khedache, 69, the ringleader, got the stiffest sentence, eight years imprisonment but five of those were suspended. Three others got seven years, five of them suspended. Three more got prison sentences ranging from five to three years, mostly or completely suspended, and an eighth person was found guilty on a weapons charge and fined.

With time already served in pretrial detention, none of those found guilty will go to prison and all walked out free. The trial was heard by a three-judge panel and six jurors.

Still, the chief judge said that Kardashian had been traumatized by the Oct. 2, 2016, jewel heist in her hotel during Fashion Week.

"You caused harm," the judge said. "You caused fear."

Kardashian, who wasn't present for the verdict, said in a statement issued afterward that she was "deeply grateful to the French authorities for pursuing justice in this case."

"The crime was the most terrifying experience of my life, leaving a lasting impact on me and my family. While I'll never forget what happened, I believe in the power of growth and accountability and pray for healing for all. I remain committed to advocating for justice, and promoting a fair legal system," said the celebrity who is working to become a lawyer.

Cannes



Elle Fanning poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Mastermind' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, May 23. (AP)

Scarlett, Kristen, Harris on making their first films

Stars step behind the camera at Cannes

CANNES, France, May 24, (AP): The Cannes Film Festival has played host to the directorial debuts of three stars: Scarlett Johansson, Kristen Stewart and relative newcomer Harris Dickinson.

Their films are very different but the fulfillment of longtime dreams of being behind the camera. All three movies are part of Cannes' Un Certain Regard section, which has helped launch the careers of directors like Yorgos Lanthimos, Lynne Ramsay and Molly Manning Walker.

At 28, Dickinson is an up-and-coming actor, known for "Babygirl," "Where the Crawdads Sing" and the Palme d'Or-winning "Triangle of Sadness," who worked for years to develop his film, "Urchin."

Johansson, a two-time Oscar acting nominee who's been a star since her teens and played Black Widow in multiple Marvel films, brought "Eleanor the Great," a film about a nonagenarian who coopts her late friend's Holocaust story, to Cannes this week.

Stewart, also an acting Oscar nominee, debuted "The Chronology of Water," an adaptation of Lidia Yuknavitch's 2011 memoir, last week.

Awards for the Un Certain Regard section was to be announced Friday, a day before the Cannes Film Festival closes.

Here's what the actors-turned-directors had to say about their first forays into creating a film from behind the camera.

"I wanted to direct from a very young age. I wanted to make films," says Dickinson, who got his start as many young creators do now: on YouTube. He even had a web sketch series. "That was my first love, just making things."

Dickinson's profile as an actor has exploded in recent years, but his desire to direct was so strong, he started saying no to roles.

"'Urchin' was all I could think about. It was pouring out of me. It was all that was on my mind," he said. "It's easy to say no when you've got something to take you away from that, you know? Nothing that came in would make me question my own film, which is a sign that I had to make it at this time."

The film stars Frank Dillane as a homeless Londoner suffering from drug addiction.

Johansson is now one of the world's most recognizable stars. She's also one of its most respected, earn-



Director Scarlett Johansson poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Eleanor the Great' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, May 21. (AP)



Director Kristen Stewart poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Bono: Stories of Surrender' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, May 16. (AP)



Director Harris Dickinson poses for a portrait photograph for the film 'Urchin' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes May 18. (AP)

ing two Oscar nominations in 2020, for "Marriage Story" and "Jojo Rabbit."

Her success as an actor helped her take on new roles on films, including producing, and, now, directing.

"At some point, I worked enough that I stopped worrying about not working, or not being relevant - which is very liberating," Johansson says. "I think it's something all actors feel for a long time until they don't. I would not have had the confidence to direct this film 10 years ago."

She says that throughout her career, imagining how to make movies has been part of her process: "Whether it was reading something and thinking, 'I can envision this in my mind,' or even being on a production and thinking, 'I am directing some elements of this out of necessity.'"

The New York-set "Eleanor the Great" stars June Squibb as a 94-year-old who, out of grief and loneliness, takes over her friend's story of Holocaust survival as her own.

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

Stewart in interviews has talked about challenging the myth that men are better suited to directing.

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

Yuknavitch's memoir recounts her surviving sexual abuse by her father and how she sought refuge in competitive swimming and, later, writing.

While Stewart expressed doubts that she offered much to her film's star, Imogen Poots, in terms of useful direction, the actor disagrees.

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



Lola, (centre), receives the Palm Dog award on behalf of Panda, who could not attend, during the Palm Dog award ceremony. (AP)

Panda wins the 2025 Palm Dog at Cannes

CANNES, France, May 24, (AP): It's called the Palm Dog contest, but Friday's winner of the annual Cannes Film Festival tradition was a Panda.

Panda, though, is an Icelandic sheepdog who stars in "The Love That Remains," from Icelandic director Hlynur Pálmason. Always positioned at the tail end of the festival, the beach-side Palm Dog ceremony comes a day before the winner of the festival's Palme d'Or is announced.

Pálmason's tragicomic film, which premiered at Cannes not in competition, follows five characters - Panda included - over the course of a year after the breakdown of a marriage. Panda is ever-present and very much part of the on-screen family and at the heart of the movie. Panda, who retains her name in the film, is Pálmason's dog and stars alongside his real-life children in the movie, which may explain the award-winning performance.

While Panda sadly could not be there to collect the award, a look-alike local pooch was on hand to collect the coveted dog collar along with one of the film's human producers. Panda did make a virtual appearance with an acceptance video, on a car journey through Iceland. She succeeds last year's winner, Kodi, from "Dog on Trial."

This year's awards marked the 25th anniversary of the much-loved event. Palm Dog founder Toby Rose explained that it has had more impact that he could imagine, becoming a fixture at Cannes.



Takashi Murakami greets visitors to an exhibit of his art at the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Thursday, May 15. (AP)

Exhibit to feature more than 100 wide ranging works

Japan’s Murakami opens exhibit in Ohio museum

CLEVELAND, May 24, (AP): Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami has never been limited to one medium, creating paintings, sculptures, luxury goods with fashion houses like Louis Vuitton, album covers and an exclusive merchandising collection with Major League Baseball.

Now, he has filled a US museum hall with portraits in every color as part of an exhibit opening Sunday at the Cleveland Museum of Art. “Takashi Murakami: Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow,” an update of an exhibit first shown in Los Angeles, features more than 100 ranging works.

Murakami, known for his smiling rainbow-colored flower icon, intentionally layered light-hearted themes with historical events linked to trauma, he told The Associated Press.

The art explores the impact of trauma on people and culture, said Ed Schad, curator and publications manager at contemporary art museum The Broad in Los Angeles.

The portraits “have historical roots and that they could actually tell you a lot about what a society is

doing, how healthy a society is, what a society is responding to,” Schad said. “What society is responding to most often in this exhibition is the idea of trauma.”

One sculpture depicts Murakami and his dog with half of their bodies in anatomical form, showing their bones and organs, while the other half is their outward appearances. The sculpture, Pom and Me, is described as Murakami’s interpretation of his experience in the West through the lens of his Japanese identity.

Square portraits featuring cartoonish flowers with facial expressions cover one wall of the exhibit, organized by background color to create a rainbow effect. One flower is wiping a tear from its eye, while another appears to be a zombie. One has blood dripping from its mouth. One appears to be in awe watching fireworks.

Though there are no obviously direct visual references to historical events, the museum said the art can be seen through the lens of three events in Japanese history: the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki by the United States during World War II, the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, leading to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Murakami said it’s a bit of a misunderstanding that his work “is very easy and very popular.”

“But this is okay because this is one of my tricks,” he said.

What someone might admire about his art as a child, Murakami said, would likely not be what is admired by an adult.

Before entering the exhibit on the lower floor of the museum, visitors can walk through a version of the Yumedono, the octagonal-shaped building at Horyuji Temple in Nara, Japan. Murakami said he was inspired to create the structure after viewing the 2024 television series “Shōgun.”

Inside the structure are four new paintings - “Blue Dragon Kyoto,” “Vermillion Bird Kyoto,” “White Tiger Kyoto” and “Black Tortoise Kyoto” - created between 2023 and 2025.

The ticketed exhibit runs until early September.

Music agent killed

San Diego crash hits alt-rock hard

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): The alternative music community is in mourning after a private jet hit a power line in foggy weather early Thursday and crashed into a San Diego neighborhood, killing multiple people on board.

Among them was the groundbreaking music executive **Dave Shapiro**, a pillar of his music scene, and Daniel Williams, a former drummer for the popular Ohio metalcore band The Devil Wears Prada. Also killed were two employees of Shapiro’s Sound Talent Group agency: Kendall Fortner, 24, and Emma Huke, 25.

Both Williams and Shapiro served as success stories for their respective rock music scenes - proof that these subcultural sounds had real mainstream appeal.

Williams’ band, which had two releases reach the Top 10 of the Billboard 200, was a client of Sound Talent Group. He co-founded the company in 2018 with fellow agents Tim Borrer and Matt Andersen, who previously worked at the Agency Group and United Talent Agency.

Sound Talent Group’s roster focused on bands in and across pop-punk, metalcore, post-hardcore and other popular hard rock sub-genres - such as Sum 41, Pierce the Veil, Parkway Drive, Silverstein, I Prevail - plus pop acts like the ‘90s brother-boy band, Hanson, best known for their song “MMMBop,” and “A Thousand Miles (Interlude)” singer-songwriter Vanessa Carlton.

The post-hardcore band Thursday called Shapiro, 42, an inspiration “who despite achieving success never forgot the scenes and the communities they came from.”

“It’s hard to put into words how much this man meant to so many of us,” Pierce the Veil, which has been performing for nearly two decades including a sold-out concert this week at New York’s Madison Square Garden, said in a tribute on the social platform X.

The World Alive, a band signed on Shapiro’s label, said he was among “the most influential and positive forces in our music scene and beyond. And Dan was one of the most influential and positive forces behind the kit.”

Shortly after punk rock entered the cultural zeitgeist in the late ‘70s, it inspired musical sub-movements fueled by its “do-it-yourself,” community-minded ethics: hardcore punk begat post-hardcore, metalcore, emo and so on. Across decades, these music genres evolved in sound and scope, moving from underground popularity at concerts held in garages and basements to real mainstream fame, while refusing to abandon its independent ethos.

Thomas Gutches, who manages Beartooth and Archetypes Collide, recalled a time when now-popular bands like The Devil Wears Prada were getting their start playing in “DIY shows” in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, in which you could see 10 bands perform for \$5.



Shapiro

Obituary



Photographer Sebastiao Salgado waves to photographers during the presentation of his exhibition, ‘Kuwait: A Desert on Fire’, at the Galleria Meravigli, in Milan, Italy, Oct. 20, 2017. Salgado, known for his long-term projects and images of nature and humanity, died at age 81, the Instituto Terra confirmed on Friday, May 23. (AP)

‘He fought for a humane, and ecological world’

Brazilian photographer and activist Sebastião Salgado passes away at 81

SAO PAULO, May 24, (AP): Brazilian photographer and environmentalist Sebastião Salgado, known for his award-winning images of nature and humanity, died at 81 from leukemia, his family said Friday. Local media reported he died in Paris, where he lived for more than 55 years.

Salgado’s style is marked by black-and-white imagery, rich tonality, and emotionally charged scenarios. Many of his best pictures were taken in impoverished communities, especially in the Amazon and in Africa. He was recently experiencing undisclosed health problems.

“Through the lens of his camera, Sebastião tirelessly fought for a more just, humane, and ecological world,” Salgado’s family said in a statement.

“As a photographer who traveled the globe continuously, he contracted a particular form of malaria in 2010 in Indonesia while working on his Genesis project. Fifteen years later, complications from this illness developed into severe leukemia, which ultimately took his life,” the family added.

Earlier, Instituto Terra, which was founded by Salgado and his wife Lélia Wanick Salgado, and the French Academy of Fine Arts, of which he was a member, announced his death, but did not provide details on the circumstances or where he died.

“Sebastião was more than one of the best photographers of our time,” Instituto Terra said in a statement. “His lens revealed the world and its contradictions; his life, (brought) the power of transformative action.”

Composer Laurent Petitgirard, secretary of the French Academy of Fine Arts, said in a statement that Salgado, one of his colleagues, was “remarkable for his moral integrity, his charisma, and his commitment to serving art.”

“He leaves behind a monumental body of work,” Petitgirard said about a photographer who received many awards, and was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States in 1992 and to the French Academy of Fine Arts in 2016.

Salgado’s main works include the recent “Amazonia” series, “Workers,” which shows manual labor around the world, and “Exodus” (also known as “Migrations” or “Sahel”), which

documents people in transit, including refugees and slum residents.

Salgado had his life and work portrayed in the documentary “The Salt of the Earth” (2014), co-directed by Wim Wenders and his son, Juliano Ribeiro Salgado. The film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary in 2015.

One of Brazil’s most famous artists, though, always insisted he was “just a photographer.”

Salgado moved to France in 1969 as Brazil endured a military dictatorship. He said in different interviews he was then a leftist militant against the regime.

It was in Paris in 1973 that he started to fully dedicate his time to photography and develop his black-and-white style, years after his economics degree.

His first professional works were for the agency Sygma in 1974. The following year, he documented the lives of peasants and Indigenous peoples in Latin America for the Gamma agency. Five years later, he joined Magnum, a top brand for photographers, of which he later became president.

Career

Salgado left it in 1994 to found Amazonia Images with his wife, an agency that exclusively handles his work.

Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who received Salgado’s support throughout his political career, requested a minute of silence during a ceremony in the capital city of Brasília to honor “one of the greatest, if not the greatest, photographer the world has ever produced.”

“His nonconformity with the fact that the world is so unequal and his stubborn talent in portraying the reality of the oppressed always served as a wake-up call for the conscience of all humanity,” Lula said. “Salgado did not only use his eyes and his camera to portray people: he also used the fullness of his soul and his heart.”

France’s President Emmanuel Macron posted a picture of Salgado’s in Alaska in his Instagram profile as a tribute to the photographer, who also had French citizenship.

Salgado and his wife, whom he married in 1967, raised their two sons, Juliano and Rod-

rigo, in France. His friends said every morning that he could he would breathe the air near the Canal Saint-Martin in Paris. His death also caused commotion in the country he adopted.

François-Bernard Mache, a major French composer who worked with Salgado for his exhibition “Aqua Mater” in Paris, said the Brazilian was an “authentic and warm man.”

“His gaze transformed landscapes, and beyond the spectacular, he reached a kind of inner truth (...). With him, photography fulfilled one of its highest ambitions by going far beyond mere appearances,” Mache told The Associated Press.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said Salgado was passionate about their city.

“Tonight I cry for a very close friend, a rare soul; a loyal, discreet and sensible man. His death moves us profoundly. He already leaves us an immense void,” Hidalgo said. “Paris, the city that loved him, will give him the honors he deserves.”

An exhibition of about 400 of Salgado’s works is currently on display in the city of Deauville, in northern France.

Brazilian newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, which published several of Salgado’s works over the last decades, said he recently canceled a meeting with journalists in the French city of Reims due to health problems. He was scheduled to attend an exhibition with works by his son Rodrigo for a church in the same city on Saturday, the daily reported.

Salgado and his wife had been working since the 1990s to restore part of the Atlantic Forest in Minas Gerais. In 1998, they turned a plot of land they owned into a nature reserve, according to Salgado’s biography on the French Academy of Fine Arts’ website. That same year, they created Instituto Terra, which promotes reforestation and environmental education.

So far, Instituto Terra has planted more than 3 million trees in the city of Aimores, which lies in what was once a somewhat deserted region in the countryside of the Minas Gerais state. The photographer was born there in 1944.

In an undated interview with Forbes Brasil published on Thursday, Salgado said that attending the exhibition of his works in Deuville felt like a stroll through his life.

AIDS research

amfAR gala draws stars, raise mlns

ANTIBES, France, May 24, (AP): Artwork by Adrien Brody and James Franco and a chance to sit courtside at a Knicks game with director Spike Lee were among the starry offerings at the annual amfAR Gala to raise money for AIDS research.

Held at the famous Hotel Du Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes on Thursday, the evening attracted scores of celebrities in the area for the Cannes Film Festival. Guests included Brody, Lee, Colman Domingo, Michelle Rodriguez, Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez, and Heidi Klum.

This year’s top items for sale included a Dodge Charger that featured in “Fast X,” sold off by Rodriguez, raising 475,000 euros (\$536,843). There were also some Chopard pear-shaped, yellow-diamond earrings that reached 400,000 (\$452,005) euros in the bidding.

During the meal guests were also entertained with musical performances from Ciara, who opened the night, Adam Lambert and headlining the dinner with Duran Duran. Guest shimmied from their tables to the front of the room to stand in front of the stage and sing along to hits like “Notorious” and “View to a Kill” (which wouldn’t be the only James Bond reference of the night).

The sale included artwork from Brody - sold for 375,000 euros (\$423,755) with lunch with the star thrown in - and Franco - (sold for 325,000 euros (\$367,254) also with a lunch offered with the winning bid. Another highlight was a May 2025 George Condo painting that raised 1.15 million euros (\$1.26 million).

Lee came to the stage and offered a surprise lot, a walk-on part in his next movie. Part of the way through the bidding he added tickets to sit next to him courtside at a New York Nicks game next season, driving the price up to 400,000 euros (\$452,005).

The fashion show is a regular feature of the auction curated by Carine Roitfeld, this year was Bond-inspired and saw 27 models turn the middle of the dinning room into a catwalk as they paraded through the room waving at guests they recognized and posing for photos on route. The collection made 450,000 euros (\$508,505) for the charity, auctioned off as one complete lot.



Paris Jackson poses for photographers upon arrival at the amfAR Cinema Against AIDS benefit at the Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, during the 78th Cannes international film festival, Cap d'Antibes, southern France, Thursday, May 22. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: A man charged with stalking Jennifer Aniston and crashing his car through the front gate of her home has been found mentally incompetent to stand trial, but he demanded a second opinion at a court hearing Thursday.



Aniston

Jimmy Wayne Carwyle a 48-year-old from Mississippi, appeared while in custody behind glass at a Hollywood courthouse that specializes in mental health cases. He had a long, gray beard and wore a thick, blue smock that jails use for suicide prevention.

A county-appointed psychiatrist who evaluated Carwyle found the defendant incompetent, Deputy Public Defender Robert Krauss told the judge as he stood near his client with glass separating them. But Krauss said Carwyle, as is his right, would like an evaluation from a different psychiatrist. (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: Rapper Kid Cudi testified Thursday that Sean “Diddy” Combs broke into his Hollywood Hills home in 2011 after finding out he was dating Combs’ ex-girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, and said he was sure Combs was behind the firebombing of his car weeks later.

Speaking at Combs’ federal sex trafficking trial in Manhattan, Cudi said that while he and Cassie were briefly dating, he took her to a West Hollywood hotel in order to get her away from the seething Combs. While there, he said, he got a call from Combs’ assistant Capricorn Clark. She told him Combs and an affiliate were in Cudi’s house and she had been forced to go with them. (AP)



Musician Billy Joel performs during his 100th lifetime performance at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday, July 18, 2018, in New York. (AP)

Billy Joel diagnosed with brain disorder

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): Billy Joel has canceled all his upcoming concerts across North America and England after being diagnosed with fluid buildup in his brain that has affected his “hearing, vision and balance.”

Joel revealed on Instagram that he has Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus, “a brain disorder that can affect brain-related abilities, including thinking and concentrating, memory, movement and more,” the Cleveland Clinic says.

“This condition has been exacerbated by recent concert performances, leading to problems with hearing, vision and balance,” according to a statement from Joel’s team. “Under his doctor’s instructions, Billy is undergoing specific physical therapy and has been advised to refrain from performing during this recovery period.”

In an accompanying statement, Joel said, “I’m sincerely sorry to disappoint our audience, and thank you for understanding.”

In March, “The Piano Man” and “Uptown Girl” singer announced that he underwent surgery and had to undergo physical therapy. A statement at the time said doctors expected him to make a full recovery. It is unclear if his medical issues at the time were related to Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus.

Armorer completes sentence in ‘Rust’ shooting

SANTA FE, N.M., May 24, (AP): A movie armorer convicted in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin on the set of the Western movie “Rust” was released from a New Mexico prison on Friday after completing an 18-month sentence.

Prison records show Hannah Gutierrez-Reed signed out of the Western New Mexico Correctional Facility in Grants to return home

to Bullhead City, Arizona, on parole related to her involuntary manslaughter conviction in the death of Halyna Hutchins in 2021.

Gutierrez-Reed also is being supervised under terms of probation after pleading guilty to a separate charge of unlawfully carrying a gun into a licensed liquor establishment.

Baldwin, the lead actor and coproducer for “Rust,” was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a

rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

A jury convicted Gutierrez-Reed of involuntary manslaughter in March 2024. Gutierrez-Reed has an appeal of the conviction pending in a higher court. Jurors acquitted her of allegations she tampered with evidence in the “Rust” investigation.



Photos from the awarding ceremony.

KUNA photos

Kuwait and China recognized for elderly care excellence

WHO awards Sheikh Sabah Prize to Prof. Wang, Kuwait Geriatrics

BERN, May 24, (KUNA): The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Friday that professor Huali Wang from China and the Geriatric Healthcare Directorate of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health were awarded His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for the Promotion of Healthy Ageing (2025).

WHO held the award presentation ceremony at the UN headquarters in Geneva on sidelines of the organization's 78th General Assembly.

It was attended by Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadi, the State of Kuwait Permanent Representative at the United Nations and International Organizations in Ge-

neva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, Hisham Kellendar, the Assistant Undersecretary for External Health Services in Kuwait, WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, officials from the international health organization and representatives of member states.

WHO officials during the ceremony lauded Professor Wang's contributions to working out China's national geriatric plan and the national action plan for treating Alzheimer, forming 150 teams for health care in 27 Chinese regions, carrying out disease early diagnosis, helping in social education, supporting and training people receiving health care in collaboration with WHO.

They praised the State of Kuwait for its achievements at identical levels, namely the services provided at the Geriatric Department, noting that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health had designed a national strategy for elderly care (2024-2030), thus improving the health care to this segment by more than 40 percent.

WHO affirmed that Professor Wang and the Kuwaiti department earned the prize after meticulous examination of their tasks by an independent panel.

The annual award, originally launched by the State of Kuwait, is granted annually by WHO to individuals and institutions of significant health care contributions.

Medical accountability key

Kuwait committed to patient safety, transparency: minister

GENEVA, May 24, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi affirmed on Friday on the State of Kuwait's commitment to promoting the principles of transparency and accountability in the health sector, which serves patient safety and enhances the efficiency of the health system.

The remarks came at an event organized by Kuwait in Geneva in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The event was attended by health ministers, ambassadors and a number of senior WHO officials and representatives of medical councils and regional and international organizations.

In a speech delivered on Thursday during the event, the Minister of Health expressed Kuwait's pleasure in hosting the event, held on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly, entitled "Enhancing the Quality of Health Care through

Medical Accountability."

The minister stressed in his speech "Kuwait is committed to promoting the principles of transparency and accountability in the health sector, which serves patient safety and enhances the efficiency of the health system."

For his part, the Chairman of the Medical Accountability Authority, Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah, highlighted Kuwait's pioneering experience in establishing an independent specialized body tasked with reviewing professional conduct, investigating patient complaints, and providing technical opinions on related issues.

Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah emphasized that the Medical Liability Authority is an integrated system that ensures impartiality and enhances citizens' confidence in the health system.

The event witnessed rich discussions addressing the most prominent challenges and international experiences in the field of health governance.

The event emphasized the importance of cooperation among member states to exchange expertise and establish common reference frameworks for medical liability.



Dr. Al-Awadhi

Recall

Lead detected in 'baby food'

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): The supermarket chain Publix has recalled fruit and vegetable baby food sold in eight states because product testing found elevated levels of lead, according to federal health officials.

Publix recalled 4-ounce Greenwise Pear, Kiwi, Spinach & Pea Baby Food pouches sold at more than 1,400 stores.

The pouches were produced by Bowman Andros, a French company with a manufacturing plant in Mount Jackson, Virginia, according to the company's website. Publix issued the voluntary recall on May 9, but it wasn't added to the US Food and Drug Administration recall list until late Thursday.

The potential contamination was flagged by officials in North Carolina, the state that first identified a 2023 lead poisoning outbreak linked to tainted applesauce pouches that sickened more than 500 U.S. children.

Routine sampling of the baby food pouches found lead levels at 13.4 parts per billion, according to North Carolina agriculture officials. That exceeds the FDA's recommended limit of 10 parts per billion for such products intended for babies and young children.

Publix said all the potentially contaminated products have been removed from store shelves. No illnesses have been reported, the company said. Customers can return the pouches to local stores for full refund. This is the second baby food pouch recall because of potential lead contamination in two months. In March, Target recalled more than 25,000 packages of its store brand Good & Gather Baby Pea, Zucchini, Kale & Thyme Vegetable Ppure because of elevated lead levels.

North Carolina collaborates with the FDA to conduct routine testing of food products, officials said.

In 2023, state health officials investigated reports of lead poisoning in four children who consumed WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree. Those findings led to the detection of a nationwide outbreak linked to the pouches, which were widely sold in Dollar Tree and other stores. Tests showed they contained lead at levels 2,000 times higher than the FDA's maximum recommended level, as well as chromium.

Sunscreen protects beyond skin cancer

You should wear sunscreen even if you have darker skin: research

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): People with darker skin still need to wear sunscreen - for more reasons than one.

Too much ultraviolet exposure from the sun can lead to sunburn, dark spots and wrinkles, and increased risk of skin cancer.

The melanin in darker skin offers some extra protection from the sun, but dermatologists say that isn't enough on its own.

"Everyone needs sunscreen. But the reasons that one might be reaching for sunscreen may differ depending on your skin tone," said Dr. Jenna Lester, who founded the Skin of Color Clinic at the University of California, San Francisco.

White people are overall more likely to get skin cancer compared to Black and Hispanic people. But Black and Hispanic people are less likely to survive the most dangerous kind of skin cancer called melanoma, according to the American Cancer Society.

Black patients more commonly get melanoma on their hands and feet - places that are more shielded from the sun. Still, sunscreen is an additional protective layer that helps prevent a host of other problems including sunburns, hyperpigmentation after acne, rosacea and dark patches on the face.

Dr. Oyetewa Asempa at Baylor College of Medicine often reminds her darker-skinned patients: "All of the problems that you're coming to see me for are caused or worsened by the sun."

To stay safe in the sun, it's important to grab sunscreen with a sun protection factor or SPF of at least 30 and reapply every two hours. People headed for the pool



Cleveland Indians right fielder Melky Cabrera sprays sunscreen before a baseball game against the Texas Rangers, Sunday, July 22, 2018, in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

or beach should put on sunscreen beforehand, remembering to reapply liberally and after getting out of the water.

Most people don't wear enough sunscreen when they apply, Lester said. Make sure to put two long fingers' worth on the face and a hefty blob for the body.

Look for chemical-based sunscreens to avoid ashy white cast. Two key ingredients in mineral-based products - zinc oxide and titanium oxide - are the culprits for that pesky discoloration on dark skin.

Tinted sunscreens contain pigments that block visible light from

the sun, offering additional protection against dark spots. And wearing a hat or sun-protective clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor or UPF grading can provide an extra safety boost.

Whatever the sun protection routine, it's important to keep it up, Lester said. Some UV rays can climb right through car and house windows to cause sun damage even when indoors, making it even more important to take care of the skin while the sun shines.

"It's about trying to make it a daily habit," she said. "Consistency over intensity."

Weight-loss drugs may cut cancer risk in the diabetics

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): Excess body weight can raise the risk of certain cancers, leading researchers to wonder whether blockbuster drugs like Wegovy, Ozempic and Zepbound could play a role in cancer prevention.

Now, a study of 170,000 patient records suggests there's a slightly lower risk of obesity-related cancers in US adults with diabetes who took these popular medications compared to those who took another class of diabetes drug not associated with weight loss.

This type of study can't prove cause and effect, but the findings hint at a connection worth exploring. More than a dozen cancers are associated with obesity.

"This is a call to scientists and clinical investigators to do more work in this area to really prove or disprove this," said Dr. Ernest Hawk of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, who was not involved in the study.

The findings were released Thursday by the American Society of Clinical Oncology and will be discussed at its annual meeting in Chicago. The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, was led by Lucas Mavromatis, a medical student at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine.

"Chronic disease and chronic disease prevention are some of my passions," said Mavromatis, a former research fellow with an NIH training program.

GLP-1 receptor agonists are injections used to treat diabetes, and some are also approved to treat obesity. They work by mimicking hormones



Boxes for the medications Wegovy and Zepbound are arranged for a photograph in California on May 8, 2025. (AP)

in the gut and the brain to regulate appetite and feelings of fullness. They don't work for everyone and can produce side effects that include nausea and stomach pain.

In the study, researchers analyzed data from 43 US health systems to compare two groups: people with obesity and diabetes who took GLP-1 drugs and other people with the same conditions who took diabetes drugs like sitagliptin. The two groups were equal in size and matched for other characteristics.

After four years, those who took GLP-1 drugs had a 7% lower risk of developing an obesity-related cancer and an 8% lower risk of death from any cause compared to those who took the other type of diabetes drug. There were 2,501 new cases of obesity-related cancer in the GLP-1 group compared to 2,671 cases in the other group.

The effect was evident in women, but not statistically significant in men. The study couldn't explain that difference, but Mavromatis noted that differences in blood drug concentration, weight loss, metabolism or hormones could be at play.

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Qalandars’s faith on rookie opener Naeem pays off

Lahore routs defending champion Islamabad by 95 runs to reach PSL final

LAHORE, Pakistan, May 24, (AP): Lahore Qalandars qualified for their third Pakistan Super League final in four years after an emphatic 95-run win against defending champion Islamabad United.

Captain Shaheen Shah Afridi grabbed two wickets for three runs in his three overs as Islamabad was routed for 107 in 15.1 overs in reply to Lahore’s imposing 202-8.

Islamabad struggled to get going in the chase in the absence of star opener Alex Hales, who missed the crucial eliminator to attend a friend’s wedding in Spain.

Afridi got a wicket with his third ball when he uprooted the middle stump of Mohammad Shahzad for a duck.

Lahore pace bowler Salman Mirza (3-16) took all of his wickets inside the powerplay as Islamabad never recovered after crumbling to 33-4. Mirza bowled league leading run-getter Sahibzada Farhan for 3.

Pakistan Twenty20 captain Salman Ali Agha top-scored with 33 off 26 balls and Islamabad skipper Shadab Khan made 26 off 14 balls. Nobody else reached double figures.

Bangladesh leg-spinner Rishad Hossain

picked up 3-34 and Afridi bagged the last two wickets to seal the win.

Earlier, Lahore’s faith on rookie opener Mohammad Naeem paid off in the crunch game when he smashed 50 off 25 balls with seven fours and two sixes.

Sri Lankan left-hander Kusal Perera added 61 off 35 and countryman Bhanuka Rajapaksa made a valuable 22. Asif Ali smashed two late sixes to ensure Lahore breached 200.

Lahore won the league in 2022 and 2023 and will meet 2019 winner Quetta Gladiators in the final on Sunday at Lahore.



Lahore Qalandars’ Kusal Perera, right, plays a shot during the Pakistan Super League second qualifier match between Islamabad United and Lahore Qalandars, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

Defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad dents Bengaluru’s hopes of top-two finish



Sunrisers Hyderabad’s Ishan Kishan plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Kishan’s unbeaten 94 off 48 balls helps side to victory

LUCKNOW, India, May 24, (AP): Ishan Kishan’s unbeaten 94 off 48 balls helped Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Royal Challengers Bengaluru in its penultimate game of the Indian Premier League.

Kishan hit five sixes and seven fours as Hyderabad notched up a huge 231-6.

In reply, Bengaluru was bowled out for 189 in 19.5 overs, a defeat that dents its chances of finishing in the top two of the table.

Bengaluru has already qualified for the knockouts and sits third. While it still has a game in hand, Bengaluru is dependent on Punjab Kings’ final two results for a top-two finish, which holds advantage in the knockouts.

Hyderabad has already been eliminated from contention but managed to register its fifth win in 13 games.

Opting to bowl, Bengaluru was hit by a quick start from the Hyderabad openers. Abhishek Sharma scored

34 off 17 balls and put on 54 off 24 balls with Travis Head.

Hyderabad was pegged back to 54-2 in 4.2 overs - both openers were dismissed in the space of three

deliveries.

Kishan then took charge and smacked 50 off 28 with four fours and two sixes. He hit three more sixes and another three fours racing

towards a second century of the season but ran out of balls to hit.

Cameos from Heinrich Klaasen (24 off 13) and Aniket Verma (26 off nine) - the duo hit five sixes - also steered Hyderabad past 200, including a whirlwind 43 off the last three overs.

Bengaluru started well. Phil Salt survived a no ball to score 63 off 32 balls and put on 80 off 43 balls with Virat Kohli.

Kohli scored 43 off 25 with seven fours and a six.

Salt reached 50 off 27 and overall hit five sixes and four fours. The openers put Bengaluru’s chase on track, but fortunes changed with Kohli’s dismissal in the seventh over.

Mayank Agarwal, in for the injured Devdutt Padikkal, was out for 11 and Rajat Patidar for 18.

Stand-in skipper Jitesh Sharma made 24 off 15, sharing 44 off 26 with Patidar, but the lower order couldn’t hold the momentum.

Bengaluru lost seven wickets for 16 runs across 25 balls.



Sunrisers Hyderabad’s Ishan Kishan loses his balance while playing a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Rizvi lobbies for sport’s awareness and Para inclusion

LONDON, May 24, (AP): Naqi Rizvi loves the “absolute freedom” he feels on the tennis court.

Winning titles is fun, too.

The 34-year-old blind tennis champion is on a mission to not only raise awareness but also elevate the sport into the Paralympics.

“That would be the dream, and I’d love to be the first Paralympic champion if I can,” Rizvi said.

The London resident, fully blind from the age of 7 because of congenital glaucoma, only took up the sport a decade ago and is now the No. 1-ranked men’s player in the world for his category.

Also an avid runner, Rizvi has completed two marathons and although jogging with a guide is great, tennis offers more.

“On a tennis court, I have absolute freedom because I know where the boundaries are, no one needs to tell me which way to turn, I don’t need to have a cane or anything of this sort,” he told The Associated Press during a practice session at the National Tennis Center in southwest London.

“It’s just the absolute sense of freedom to know that I can run comfortably, make my own decisions, and then be able to play points or rallies. It’s just incredible.”

The rules are basically the same as mainstream tennis just with smaller dimensions and slightly lower net. Tactile lines are taped onto the court so players like Rizvi can feel the boundaries. Depending on the level of visual impairment, you are allowed up to three bounces of the ball. The foam ball contains a bell so players can audibly track it.

“What I find interesting about blind tennis is it’s incredibly technical,” said Rizvi, who also possesses a big serve.

The problem-solving aspect of the sport is something Rizvi enjoys - no surprise given that he studied engineering at University College London.

“You really need to anticipate after you’ve heard the first bounce where the second and third will be,” he said. “You obviously can’t see how your opponent has hit the ball, so it’s a lot of anticipation and a lot of practice and getting used to different trajectories that the ball can take.”

Rizvi didn’t even know that tennis was an option until he visited Metro Blind Sport in London a decade ago. He was hooked right away.

“I can almost assure you that if you did a survey of blind and partially sighted people,” he said, “the majority of them wouldn’t have any idea because it’s not

televised, it’s not in any other mainstream events, so how are people supposed to find out?”

The Lawn Tennis Association supports a visually impaired program that includes practice sessions at the governing body’s National Tennis Center. That’s where Jack Draper, the world No. 5 player, tried out the different levels. The LTA also runs tournaments each year and sends “Team GB” to an international competition.

Rizvi noted that there’s not much financial backing in the sport. There’s no prize money at tournaments and players often fund their own travel.

“Unless you obviously have the visibility and the money behind it, it’s really hard,” he said. “Governing bodies need to take a more active role and try and give parity to all forms of disability tennis not just the ones that have made it big like wheelchair tennis, for example.”



Blind tennis champion Naqi Rizvi plays a shot during a visually impaired tennis training session in London. (AP)

Valkyries beat Sparks

Loyd hits 3 with 1.9 seconds to go as Aces beat Mystics

LAS VEGAS, May 24, (AP): Jackie Young scored 25 points, Jewell Loyd hit a corner 3-pointer with 1.9 seconds left, and the Las Vegas Aces scored the final nine points to beat the Washington Mystics 75-72 on Friday night.

Chelsea Gray added 17 points and A’ja Wilson finished with 15 points, 10 rebounds, five assists and three blocks for Las Vegas (2-1). Wilson moved past Elizabeth Williams into 10th in WNBA history with 447 career blocked shots.

Young stole a pass and then made a layup before the Aces forced a shot-clock violation with 15.9 seconds remaining. Wilson hit Young for a wide-open layup to tie it 72-all with 11.1 seconds to go, Kiah Stokes blocked a shot and grabbed the rebound and Wilson fed Loyd for the go-ahead 3-pointer.

Loyd finished with nine points on 2-for-9 shooting, including 2 for 7 from 3-point range.

Sonia Citron converted a three-point play to give Washington a nine-point lead with 3:49 to play. Young answered with two free throws and then made a jumper before Dana Evans hit a 3-pointer that made it a two-point game with 2:02 remaining.

Citron hit a 3 just 19 seconds later and Jade Melbourne made 1 of 2 from the free-throw line with 1:15 to go that gave the Mystics a 72-66 lead.

Citron hit four 3-pointers and scored 19 points to lead the Mystics (2-2). Kiki Iriafen had 17 points and 13 rebounds.

Iraiafen, the No. 4 pick in last month’s WNBA draft, has a double-double in three consecutive games, the first rookie to accomplish the feat in franchise history.

Iriafen made a layup with a little more than a minute remaining in the first quarter that made it 16-14 and the Mystics led until Loyd’s winner.

Golden State 82, Sparks 73

In Los Angeles, Carla Leite scored 19 points, fellow rookie Janelle Salaun had 18, and Kayla Thornton added 14 points and 10 rebounds to help the Golden State Valkyries beat the Los Angeles Sparks.

Salaun grabbed eight rebounds and Leite made 7 of 10 from the field. Veronica Burton added 12 points and five steals for the Valkyries (2-1).

Expansion Golden State, which beat Washington 76-74 on Wednesday, has won consecutive games for the first time franchise history.

Thornton made a floater with 6:43 to play that gave Golden State a 73-58 lead but the Valkyries went scoreless for the next five-plus minutes. Kelsey Plum hit a 3-pointer and Dearica Hamby scored the final five points in a 10-0 run before Thornton made three free throws with 1:33 remaining that made it 76-68.

Hamby led Los Angeles (1-3) with 25 points, Plum scored 16 and Odyssey Sims had 13.

The Sparks have lost three games in a row since beating Golden State 84-67 in the season opener.

Sims hit a 3-pointer that gave the Sparks a nine-point lead with 2:11 remaining in the first period. They missed their next 15 field-goal attempts and committed six turnovers as Golden State went on a 26-1 run that gave the Valkyries a 42-26 lead when Temi Fagbenle made a layup with 2:59 left until halftime.

Valkyries visit New York on Tuesday, and Sparks host Chicago on Sunday.

Lynx 76, Sun 70

In Minneapolis, Napheesa Collier had 33 points and 11 rebounds, and the Minnesota Lynx used a late run to rally and beat the Connecticut Sun.

The Lynx held the Sun scoreless for more than 4 1/2 minutes after Tina Charles hit a jumper to give Connecticut a 68-53 lead with 5:20 left.

Collier hit a short jumper, the Lynx forced a shot-clock violation on the other end and then Collier made two free throws to tie it 68-all with 1:38 to play. Marina Mabrey missed a 3-point shot for the Sun before Natisha Hiedeman hit a straight-away 3 to cap an 18-0 run and give Minnesota its first lead of the game.

Hiedeman scored eight of her 11 points as the Lynx (4-0) closed on a 23-2 run over the final five minutes. Jessica Shepard added 13 points.

Mabrey hit four 3-pointers and finished with 22 points, eight rebounds and six assists for Connecticut (0-3). Haley Peters scored 12 points, Saniya Rivers added 11 and Olivia Nelson-Ododa finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Bridget Carleton hit a 3 about two minutes into the second quarter that trimmed the Lynx’s deficit to three points but Connecticut scored 14 of the next 19 before going into halftime leading 45-35.

Minnesota limited Connecticut to 10-for-39 shooting and forced 13 Sun turnovers in the second half.

Lindsay Allen (leg) left the game in the opening minutes and did not return for Connecticut.



Las Vegas Aces center A’ja Wilson (22) and Washington Mystics guard Jade Melbourne, front right, fight for the ball during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Hassan makes history: Benjamin Hassan made history by becoming the first Lebanese tennis player in the Open era to qualify for the main draw of the French Open.

The 30-year-old defeated Japan’s James Trotter 6-2, 7-6 (5) in the final round of qualifying.

Germany-born Hassan secured his place at Roland-Garros by winning three straight matches in the qualifying tournament on the clay courts of Paris.

Ranked No. 177 in the world, Hassan is no stranger to breaking new ground for Lebanese tennis.

Last summer, at the Paris Olympics, which also took place on the clay courts of Roland-Garros, Hassan became the first player to represent Lebanon. He defeated American Christopher Eubanks in the first round, claiming the first win in the history of the competition for his country.

His qualification is the second major milestone for Lebanese tennis this year. In January, Hady Habib, who is currently ranked 159th, won a first-round match at the Australian Open. This was the country’s first Grand Slam match victory.

Following Hassan’s win on Friday, the Lebanese Tennis Federation congratulated him in a message published on Facebook.

“The journey continues,” said the federation. “Keep making Lebanon proud.”

In the first round of the French Open, which begins Sunday, he is scheduled to face another player who also came through the qualifying round, the Italian Matteo Gigante. (AP)

Yarmouk volleyball teams celebrate strong season across all age groups

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Khaled Al-Fulaikawi, Board Member of Yarmouk Club and Head of the Volleyball Division, praised the impressive performances delivered by the club's volleyball teams during the recently concluded season.

Highlighting the achievements, Al-Fulaikawi noted that the Under-10 team secured third place in the league, while both the Under-12 and Under-16 squads finished as league runners-up. The Under-16 team also claimed second place in the Cup competition, and the Under-19 youth team earned second place in the Cup as well.

Al-Fulaikawi emphasized that these results were the outcome of consistent hard work and dedication by the technical staff, referring to them as the backbone of the "Sons of Mishref" volleyball program. He expressed optimism for even greater success in the upcoming season, reaffirming the club's commitment to nurturing talent and competing at a high level.

Osama Madkour, head coach of Yarmouk's Under-19 team and technical director, extended heartfelt thanks to the club's management for their continued

support. He credited club officials, including President Ahmed Al-Jarki, Secretary General Fouad Al-Filakawi, and Volleyball Head Khaled Al-Filakawi, for their constant presence and encouragement throughout the season.

"The supportive environment created by the management allowed us to focus on building the teams and achieving strong results," Madkour said. "With our recent success, the technical staff's mandate has been renewed, and we are committed to further developing player performance and producing future champions."

The Yarmouk Club's volleyball operations are overseen by Head of the Volleyball Apparatus, Khaled Al-Filakawi, and his deputy, Othman Haji. The technical team includes:

- Khaled Al-Mutairi – First Team Coach
- Abbas Al-Gharib – Assistant Coach
- Osama Madkour – Under-19 Coach
- Ahmed Al-Lawati – Under-16 Coach
- Nasser Fatih – Under-14 Coach
- Hussam Ramadan – Under-12 Coach
- Firas Bin Mahmoud – Under-10 Coach

With a strong support system and a skilled coaching lineup, Yarmouk Volleyball is positioning itself for continued success and long-term player development.



Yarmouk Board Members with the coaching staff.

Pacers take 2-0 lead over Knicks



New York Knicks forward OG Anunoby (8) and Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) battle for a loose ball during the third quarter of Game 2 of the NBA basketball Eastern Conference final in New York. (AP)

Siakam scores 39 points in 114-109 victory

NEW YORK, May 24, (AP): Pascal Siakam scored a playoff career-high 39 points, and the Indiana Pacers beat the New York Knicks 114-109 for a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Myles Turner added 16 points and Tyrese Haliburton had 14 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for the Pacers, who head home halfway to their second trip to the NBA Finals. They lost to the Lakers in 2000 in their only shot at the title.

Game 3 is Sunday in Indiana, though the Pacers might prefer to keep it right where it is. They have won six straight road games since falling at Milwaukee in Game 3 of the first round.

Siakam finished 15 for 23 from the field on a night nobody else on the high-scoring Pacers had more than five baskets.

"Special game," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "In the first half he was the guy that got us going and got us through some difficult stretches."

Jalen Brunson had 36 points and 11 assists for the Knicks, who need a quick turnaround or their first appearance in the conference finals in 25 years will be a brief one. They defended much better after their crushing collapse in a 138-135 overtime loss in Game 1, but couldn't find enough scoring to come back after a bad start to the fourth quarter.

Mikal Bridges and Karl-Anthony Towns each had 20 points and seven rebounds for the Knicks, but Towns played just 28 minutes as coach Tom Thibodeau went longer with backup Mitchell Robinson, a much better defender who grabbed nine rebounds.

No team has lost the first two games at home and come back to win a series in the conference finals. "Going into the fourth quarter it's a tie ballgame. We've just got to make better plays, more winning plays," Thibodeau said.

It was tied at 81 after three, before the Pacers opened

the fourth with a 13-4 run to move ahead 94-85 on Siakam's 3-pointer with 9:17 remaining. They would quickly push the margin back to around there every time the Knicks got any momentum, and it was 110-100 after another basket by Siakam with 2:45 to play.

The Knicks scored nine straight to make it 110-109 on Josh Hart's basket with 14 seconds to go. Aaron Nesmith made two free throws for the Pacers, Brunson was well off on a 3-point attempt and Turner finished it out with two free throws.

The 50th playoff meeting between the rivals - the Pacers lead 28-22, all since 1993 - more closely resembled their defensive battles of the 1990s than the shootout of two nights earlier. The Knicks led that one by 14 with 2:45 to play before the Pacers caught them on Haliburton's jumper as time expired and won it in OT.

This time, Indiana raced to a 19-9 lead, but the Knicks quickly caught them when Robinson and Deuce McBride entered and the game remained within a single-digit margin nearly the entire rest of the night.

Unique transfer window

Infantino cites discussions for Ronaldo to play in Club WCup

GENEVA, May 24, (AP): FIFA president Gianni Infantino says Cristiano Ronaldo might play in the Club World Cup because of a unique transfer window.

Ronaldo's Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr did not qualify for the tournament, but Infantino suggested that the Portugal star could switch to one of the 32 teams playing in the competition in the United States starting next month.

"Cristiano Ronaldo might play in the Club World Cup," Infantino told online streamer IShowSpeed, whose YouTube channel has more than 39 million subscribers.

"There are discussions with some clubs, so if any club is watching and is interested in hiring Ronaldo for the Club World Cup, who knows. Still a few weeks time, will be fun."

FIFA confirmed Wednesday that last-minute transfer signings are open to all teams going to tournament, which fueled more speculation that one of them will try to sign the 40-year-old Ronaldo on a short-term deal, potentially a loan.

Such a move would be unprecedented in modern soccer though could appeal to FIFA by boosting the profile and ticket sales of an inaugural tournament being played in 11 U.S. cities.

A transfer for Ronaldo also would reunite him and Lionel Messi in the same competition for the first time since the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Last October, FIFA invited Messi's Inter Miami to enter the tournament in the slot that was expected to be reserved for the host nation's champion. Inter Miami was eliminated in the MLS Cup playoffs.

Speculative reports have linked Ronaldo to the one Saudi club that qualified, Al Hilal, the Brazilian club Palmeiras and Wydad of Morocco, even though that club is currently banned by FIFA from registering new signings.

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.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino addresses the FIFA 75th Congress at the Connebol Convention Center in Luque, Paraguay. (AP)

Pant named vice-captain

Gill named India new test skipper ahead of tour

MUMBAI, India, May 24, (AP): Shubman Gill was named as India's new test skipper on Saturday to lead the team on its five-test tour of England starting June 20.

The 25-year-old batter takes over from Rohit Sharma, who announced his retirement from test cricket this month followed by batting great Virat Kohli doing the same. Sharma last led India against Australia during the Boxing Day test.

"We discussed every option that's there, over the last year or so, and we have looked at Shubman various times," selection committee chairman Ajit Agarkar said. "We have taken a lot of feedback from the dressing room. We are hopeful he is the guy - he is a terrific player and our best wishes to him."

Gill will lead India for the first time in tests, having had only T20 captaincy experience prior. He had led India in Zimbabwe in 2024 when other senior players were rested. He currently leads Gujarat Titans atop the Indian Premier League.

His ascension to Indian cricket's top job comes ahead of the 2025-27 world test championship cycle - India begins its campaign against England.

"You don't pick captains for one tour or two tours," Agarkar said. "We have seen some progress over the last year or two with him. No doubt, it is going to be tough as it gets."

Headingley in Leeds is the setting



In this file photo, India's Shubman Gill celebrates his century on the third day of the second test match between India and England, in Visakhapatnam, India. (AP)

for the first test.

Gill made his test debut against Australia in December 2020 and has featured in 32 matches since, scoring 1,893 runs at average 35.05.

He is the fifth-youngest cricketer to become India's test captain.

Keeper-batter Rishabh Pant has been named vice-captain for India's tour of England.

Jasprit Bumrah had been an option for the captaincy. He led India

during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy - in the first test at Perth and then again in the final test at Sydney, where Sharma dropped himself. However, the pacer wasn't chosen considering his fitness issues.

"We don't think he will be available for all five tests - whether he plays three or four, we will see based on how the series goes and his workload," Agarkar said. "We are happy he is part of the squad and have spoken with him. Jasprit understands the decision and his fitness. With him, it is about workload management."

Sharma, Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin, who had also retired mid-series in Australia, are the key names missing from India's squad. Karun Nair returns to the test fold to lend some experience and is expected to bat in the middle order.

"Virat reached out to us in early April and felt he had given everything he had," Agarkar said. "We have seen him give 200 percent even when he is on the field, so if he couldn't keep up to the standards, (he felt) it was time for him. It came from him and we had to respect that."

Nair has a test triple hundred to his name - against England in Chennai (2016) - and has recently been in fine form. He scored 863 runs in nine Ranji Trophy games (First-Class) and 779 runs in eight Vijay Hazare Trophy games (List-A) in the 2024-25 domestic season. He

also played for Northamptonshire in the 2024 County season and scored a double hundred.

Other notable inclusions are those of batter Sai Sudharsan and left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh.

Sudharsan currently leads the IPL batting charts with 638 runs in 13 games for Gujarat Titans. He is expected to bat at number three, with Gill slotting in at number four to replace Kohli. Experienced batter Lokesh Rahul is expected to open with Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Meanwhile, Singh has been India's mainstay in white-ball formats and has earned this call-up to the test side after 9 ODIs and 63 T20s. He was also part of India's 2024 T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies.

Pacer Mohammed Shami was left out owing to poor form and fitness concerns.

Bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur, who was part of India's last tour to England in 2021-22, also returns to the squad, which includes spin all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar.

India's squad: Shubman Gill (captain), Rishabh Pant, Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Karun Nair, Nitish Reddy, Ravindra Jadeja, Dhruv Jurel, Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav.

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NEWS



Napoli's Scott McTominay and Cagliari's Antoine Makoumbou vie for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Cagliari at the Diego Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait clinches multiple titles at 4th Arab Tennis Pioneers Championship

CAIRO, May 24: The 4th Arab Tennis Pioneers Championship concluded in grand style at the Soho Square Tennis Complex in Sharm El-Sheikh, under the organization of the Arab Tennis Federation, led by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, in co-operation with the Egyptian Tennis Federation.

In a press statement, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber expressed his deep satisfaction with the championship's remarkable success. He praised the outstanding organization and the significant efforts made by the Egyptian Federation, under the leadership of Captain Ismail El-Shafei, to deliver a well-executed and memorable event.

Sheikh Ahmed congratulated all the winners and applauded the high level of dedication and skill displayed by the participants, noting that such performances elevated the prestige and competitiveness of the tournament. He also highlighted the strong cooperation and enthusiasm shown by the players throughout the championship, which featured more than 100 participants from 10 Arab nations.

Kuwaiti players left a strong mark on the tournament across several categories:

Mixed Doubles Victory: Kuwaiti duo Ahmed Dashti and Asrar Abdulmajeed clinched first place, defeating Egypt's Moataz Mabrouk and Lilian Fawzi in the final.

Over-35 Doubles Champions: Kuwaiti player Hussein Al-Bahbahani teamed up with Algeria's Hamra Al-Ain Abdelhaq to claim the title after overcoming Egyptian pair Adel Hegazy and Mostafa Bahnasi.

Over-45 Doubles Runners-up: Ahmed Dashti, this time alongside Moataz Mabrouk, finished second in the over-45 men's doubles.

Over-65 Singles: Kuwaiti veteran Adel Safar earned second place in the over-65 men's singles category.

Over-35 Women's Singles: Asrar Abdulmajeed secured another podium finish with a second-place result in the over-35 women's singles.

The event successfully combined competition with camaraderie, affirming its importance in fostering regional tennis development and sportsmanship among Arab nations.



The Kuwait delegation poses with its trophies.

Napoli wins Serie A title as Conte makes history

Inter's victory at 10-man Como not enough for Nerazzurri

ROME, May 24, (AP): The two players who Antonio Conte wanted more than any others secured Napoli its second Serie A title in three years.

Scott McTominay scored with an acrobatic bicycle kick before halftime and Romelu Lukaku doubled the lead with a solo goal after the break in the decisive 2-0 home win over Cagliari.

Conte became the first coach to win the Italian championship with three different teams.

"Everyone contributed to this - but the coach most of all," Napoli captain Giovanni Di Lorenzo said. "Napoli needed him to get back on top. He's phenomenal."

Comparing it to his three Serie A titles won at Juventus and one at Inter Milan - not to mention a Premier League title at Chelsea - Conte said it was "the most unexpected, the most difficult, and the most stimulating in terms of the challenge."

Conte also noted how he had to try and convince players to stay when he arrived last June.

Napoli needed only to do the same or better than defending champion Inter in the final round of matches, so Inter's 2-0 win at 10-man Como wasn't enough for the Nerazzurri.

Napoli finished Serie A one point ahead of Inter.



Napoli's players hold the trophy after winning the Italian league soccer title at the end of the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Cagliari at the Diego Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

The southern squad's fourth Serie A title overall capped an impressive turnaround after the Partenopei finished 10th during a dismal title defense last season.

"The one two years ago was one we were (expecting) for months, whereas this week we had so much anxiety, we couldn't wait to get on the field and win this in front of our fans," said winger Matteo Politano, who provided the cross for McTominay's goal.

Diego Maradona led Napoli to its first two titles in 1987 and 1990. The 2023 team led by Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia clinched with five rounds to spare.

Inter was heading toward the title until McTominay went airborne to

redirect a pass from Politano in the 42nd minute for his 12th goal this season after transferring from Manchester United.

"For me to come and experience this, it's a dream," McTominay said.

Lukaku, who was signed from Chelsea in August, controlled a long

vertical pass and dribbled by two defenders before scoring in the 51st. It was his 14th goal along with his league-leading 10 assists.

Conte watched the match from the tribune after getting sent off last weekend. But he went down to the pitch at the final whistle and embraced Lukaku, with whom he also won Serie A at Inter in 2021.

McTominay dropped to the pitch in tears when the match finished. Minutes later he was honored as Serie A player of the season.

Napoli players held up signs that read "Again" featuring a "4" for the

team's fourth title.

Napoli fans began cheering and singing hours before kickoff at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona and erupted in celebration at the final whistle - including at jumbo screens that were set up in several of the city's central piazzas.

Cagliari was already sure of avoiding relegation but goalkeeper Alen Sherri was inspired at the start, denying Napoli on multiple occasions early on.

While Napoli won by 16 points two years ago under Luciano Spalletti, this season was a duel with Inter virtually all season. It was also unexpected after Napoli went through three coaches last season - Rudi Garcia, Walter Mazzarri and Francesco Calzona.

But Conte constructed the best defense in Serie A, and brought in Lukaku and McTominay to play alongside holdovers from the 2023 team like captain Di Lorenzo, goalkeeper Alex Meret and midfielder Stanislav Lobotka.

Di Lorenzo matched Maradona by captaining Napoli to two titles.

It also helped that Napoli did not play in Europe this season - keeping the team fresher for Serie A.

Defender Stefan de Vrij scored 20 minutes in for Inter, redirecting a corner kick with a bouncing header.

Como was reduced to 10 men when goalkeeper Pepe Reina was sent off at the end of the first half for a foul on Mehdi Taremi. It was Reina's final game before retiring.

Joaquín Correa added another for Inter after the break in almost the same moment that Lukaku scored for Napoli.

Inter, which is also preparing for the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain in eight days, rested most of its usual starters, including top strikers Lautaro Martinez and Marcus Thuram.

FINA president Hussain Al-Musallam meets Croatian Prime Minister to boost aquatic sports cooperation

ZAGREB, May 24: Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Belonković welcomed FINA President Captain Hussain Al-Musallam in an official meeting attended by Dr. Josif Bardović, President of the Croatian Swimming Federation.

The high-level discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in aquatic sports, highlighting Croatia's recent progress in this field. The talks also explored the country's potential to host international swimming competitions and championships in the near future.

Captain Al-Musallam expressed his appreciation for the warm reception and praised the productive dialogue with Croatian officials. He emphasized the significance of such collaboration in promoting aquatic sports and expanding their reach both regionally and globally.

Al-Musallam also underlined the importance of youth integration into FINA's development programs, reaffirming ongoing support for swimming academies and training centers across Europe and the Middle East. These efforts align with FINA's broader strategy to advance the sport worldwide.



The meeting in progress.

The meeting is expected to pave the way for concrete initiatives

that will enhance Croatia's presence on the international aquatic sports stage.

that will enhance Croatia's presence on the international aquatic sports stage.

Kuwait Club closes in on league title

KUWAIT CITY, May 24: Kuwait Club is eyeing a critical victory today in its quest to secure the Premier Handball League title as it faces Burgan at 6:00 pm in the fifth and final round of the Second Division of the league at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex and follows an earlier clash between Al-Arabi and Sulaibikhat at 4:30 pm, with Kazma and Salmiya squaring off at 7:00 pm.

Currently, Kuwait Club leads the standings with 44 points, followed by Burgan with 37 points. Kazma holds third place with 28, while Salmiya (23), Sulaibikhat (20), and Al-Arabi (18) trail behind.

With only Kuwait Club and Burgan left in the title race, today's showdown is pivotal. Kuwait Club, who have dominated the league for the past 12 consecutive seasons, are just two wins away from clinching another championship. A victory today would leave it needing only one win in the upcoming third-division stage, which begins next Wednesday - a task well within reach considering the team's strong form and depth.

On the other side, Burgan is aiming to halt Kuwait Club's



Players challenging for the ball.

momentum and keep its slim title hopes alive. A loss would end its championship dreams, but a second-place finish remains within reach. Securing runner-up status would grant Burgan a historic qualification to the Asian Club Championship for the first time - an achievement that would reflect the dedicated efforts of the club's management, technical team, and players.

Meanwhile, Kazma and Salmiya are battling for third place, as Al-Arabi is out of contention and Sulaibikhat's hopes of staying in the third division are fading.