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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Palestinian people's blood ... between Netanyahu and Hamas

A NEW holocaust, by all standards, is unfolding today in the Gaza Strip, but this time, the perpetrator is different.

While the world was horrified by Hitler's attempted genocide during World War II, what Netanyahu and his extremist government are doing is even more horrific than what has been reported about the Nazis.

Back then, the world, especially the victorious European powers, sought to atone for their guilt by accelerating the establishment of the Jewish state. This cause gained traction at a time when the Arabs lacked the power to defend their rights, as they were still reeling from the shock of Sykes-Picot and the calamities it had brought upon them.

Conversely, the Arabs failed to capitalize on UN Resolution No. 181, which called for the partition of Palestine, marking the first stage of the conflict, at a time when the Zionist propaganda was still relatively weak.

This situation remained unchanged during the subsequent wars Israel waged to expand its territory, culminating in the complete occupation of all Palestinian lands in June 1967.

As usual, the Arabs exchanged accusations and failed to formulate a unified strategy for confrontation. They rejected all initiatives, starting with that of the late Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, who advocated for the principle of "take and demand." Bourguiba was accused of treason and ostracized. The same fate befell the Rogers Initiative in 1970, also known as the Second Rogers Plan, which was approved by the then-Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser but rejected by the leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization

(PLO).

On the other hand, Tel Aviv seized upon these events to its advantage, spreading the narrative that the Arabs do not seek peace.

When King Fahd's initiative was approved at the Fez Summit, Israel immediately rejected it, just as it did with King Abdullah's initiative. Israel has never accepted, nor will it ever accept, the establishment of a self-governing Palestinian state as stipulated in the Camp David Accords.

Today, 147 countries around the world have recognized the Palestinian state, with four others declaring their intention to do so. Yet, none of these countries offered anything substantial to remove the Israeli "knife" from the Palestinians' throats. What they have provided are nothing more than political statements that can be retracted at any time.

We must acknowledge that the Palestinian division has played a significant role in prolonging the conflict and complicating the path to a resolution. Each Palestinian faction sought to fulfill the interests of its external supporters, which is why many of these groups emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as terrorist organizations and hijacked civilian planes, incited violent events such as Black September, and positioned themselves as a de facto authority during the Lebanese Civil War.

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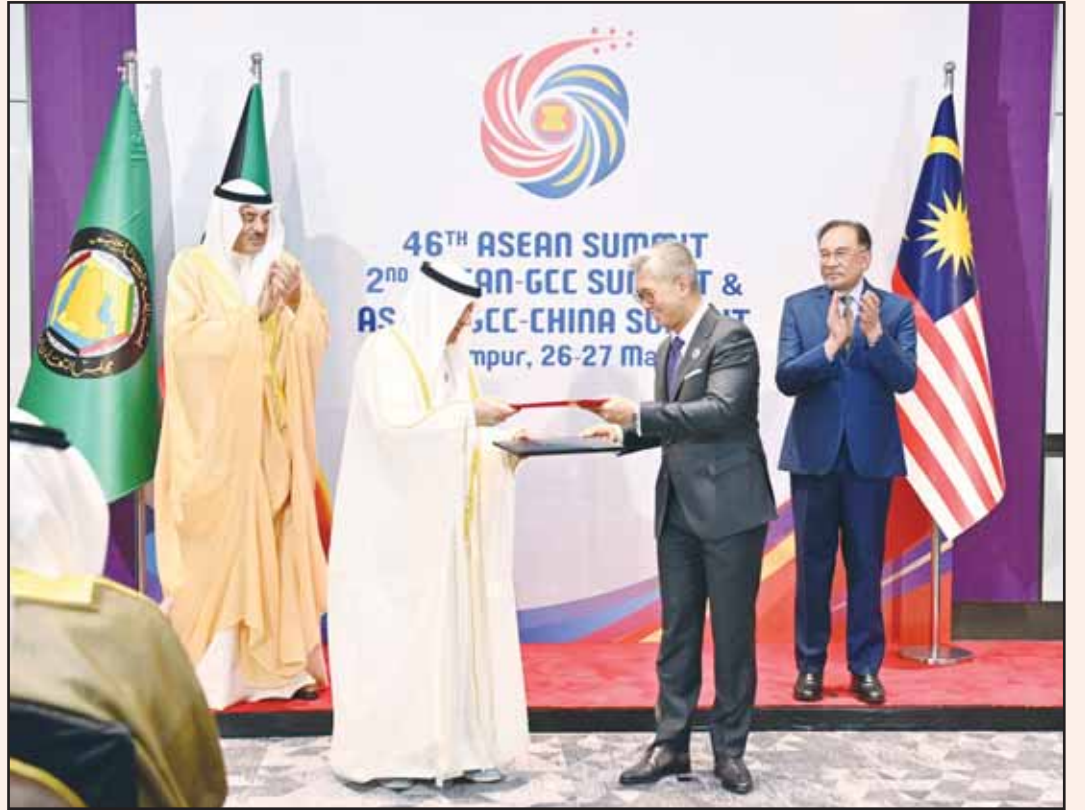
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Crown Prince Diwan photo

HH the Crown Prince, Malaysian Prime Minister attend signing ceremony of GCC Secretary General and Malaysian Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry to launch free trade negotiations.

Pact targets growth and resilience

GCC-ASEAN set sights on free trade

KUALA LUMPUR, May 26, (KUNA): The regional bloc of Southeast Asian nations ASEAN and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states agreed on Monday, in a joint statement, to start negotiations over a free trade agreement.

The agreement was sealed on the sidelines of the ASEAN/GCC summit in the Malaysian capital, in which His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is represented by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The joint statement should serve as a launchpad towards talks on a free trade agreement between the two regional blocs, covering a wide array of sectors and

economic aspects that would further reinforce trade ties between Kuala Lumpur and Gulf Arab states, it underlined.

These talks come as per the directives of the leaders of GCC member states, which urge Gulf Arab countries to bolster their ties with "international partners," said the Riyadh-based bloc's chief Jassem Al-Budaiwi, hailing the agreement as a major step forward in a bid to bring that goal to fruition.

Leaders from the two regional blocs are assembling for talks in the Malaysian capital to discuss current developments and push forward bilateral relations.

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Kuwait, Saudi strike new oil in joint zone

Wara-Burgan well delivers over 500 bpd

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): The Governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have declared new oil discovery in the partitioned zone, according to a joint press release, said the Kuwaiti Ministry of Oil on Monday.

The ministry added in a statement that governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait announced that Wafra Joint Operations have made a new oil discovery in (North Wafra Wara-Burgan) field, located five kilometers north of Wafra field.

Crude oil flowed from the Wara reservoir in the North Wafra (Wara-Burgan-1) well at a rate exceeding 500 barrels per day, with an API gravity of 26 to 27 degrees.

This marks the first discovery since the resumption of production operations in the partitioned zone and its adjacent offshore area in mid-2020.

The discovery is regarded as highly significant, given its positive impact on both countries standing as reliable global energy suppliers and their capabilities in the exploration and production sector.

API gravity is a scale expressing the gravity or density of liquid petroleum products.

Ministry to pursue legal action

Exam process secure, MoE affirms amid 'leak' rumors

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Ministry of Education has denied rumors circulating on social media claiming that the Grade 11 physics exam was leaked, reports Al-Seyasah daily.

The ministry affirmed that these

allegations are completely unfounded and constitute unacceptable attempts to cause anxiety and undermine the confidence of students and parents.

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KUNA photo

Kuwait's Deputy PM receives Special Envoy of India's PM.

Kuwait Deputy PM meets Indian PM envoy

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji met on Monday with the visiting Special Envoy of the Indian Prime Minister Baijayant Panda and his accompanying delegation.

According to a press statement from the Minister's office following

the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance the distinguished Kuwait-India relations across various fields.

The discussions also covered recent developments following the attack in the Indian region of Pahalgam, along with a number of issues of mutual interest. (KUNA)

KRCS-ICRC workshop sends strong message of solidarity

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (Agencies): "Kuwait is keen on strengthening its partnership with various international humanitarian organizations," says Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Ambassador Khaled Al-Maghames.

Al-Maghames made the statement on Monday, during the opening of a workshop on international humanitarian law that KRCS organized in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Al-Bandari Al-Ajmi, served as the Master of Ceremonies, on the first day of the workshop.

In his speech, Al-Maghames also stressed that "Kuwait has paid great attention to humanitarian issues and has always been at the forefront of donor countries supporting humanitarian and relief work."

He affirmed the commitment of the country to continue this humanitarian path in partnership with international organizations, particularly the ICRC.

He added that KRCS is keen on achieving its fundamental humanitarian goals and to extend aid to those in need or affected by crises and disasters, both locally and internationally, in times of peace and conflict.

Meanwhile, Head of the ICRC's Regional Delegation for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Mamadou Sow expressed pride in the ongoing partnership with KRCS; commending its role in advocating for international humanitarian law and defending its values and principles.

Sow said the workshop, hosted by KRCS, is "not merely a training session, but a message of protecting humanity by raising awareness, enhancing restraint, and fostering solidarity with others."

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Ambassador Khaled Al-Maghames



Al-Bandari Al-Ajmi



Photos By Rezk Tawfiq Mamadou Sow



Left: Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al Sabah - Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait. Right: British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Belinda Lewis.



Panel discussion on the topic 'The Road to Green Energy in Kuwait' featuring Deputy Minister of Housing Naser Khraibut (Public Authority for Housing Welfare); Dr. Zeyad Al Mutawa, General Manager at General Control Group; Deputy Chairman of KAMCO, Fahad Al Sharekh and British Green Energy Entrepreneur, Richard Clements.

Clean energy 'Power Box' unveiled

UK, Kuwait mark 250 years of trade with green tech alliance

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The British Embassy organized a reception for green energy stakeholders on Sunday evening.

In a press statement, the embassy revealed that the reception showcased leading UK sustainable energy systems company Green Power Technologies (GPT)'s 'Power Box' -- a durable off-grid power unit designed to deliver clean energy in re-

mote and challenging environments.

It also marked the launching of Kuwait British Renewables (KBR) -- a joint venture between GPT and local power company General Control Group to design and manufacture smart metering systems and electric vehicle charging stations in the country.

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NewsWatch

GENEVA: The World Health Assembly on Monday voted in favor of a resolution to raise the Palestinian flag at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters with 97 member states voting in support and four opposing including Germany.

Introduced by a group of countries, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, South Africa, Egypt and Nicaragua, the resolution was adopted during the 78th session of the Assembly which is currently being held in Geneva in implementation of a previous resolution from the Assembly's 77th session in June 2024. (KUNA)



9 NBK-Egypt reports
EGP 2 billion Net
Profit in 1Q2025

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:19	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:51	Maghrib ..	18:39
Zohr	11:45	Isha	20:09

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot

Weather			
with light to moderate north-westerly wind to light variable wind, with speeds ranging from 08-28 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	44	34	
Kuwait Airport	45	27	

Abdaly	44	—
Bubyan	40	26
Jahra	46	31
Falaka Island	36	30
Salmiyah	39	32
Ahmadi	37	28
Nuwaisib	42	26
Wafra	44	25



HH Crown Prince meets Laos PM



HH Crown Prince meets Singapore PM



Crown Prince Diwan photos
HH Crown Prince meets Sultan of Brunei

Amir Rep. to two ASEAN summits meets Brunei, Singapore, Laos top officials

KUALA LUMPUR, May 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone on the sidelines of the ASEAN-GCC and ASEAN-GCC-China summits.

During the meeting, they reviewed the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Laos, and ways to support and strengthen them for the benefit of the two friendly countries and peoples. They also discussed the most prominent developments regionally and internationally.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary

at the Crown Prince Diwan Mazen Issa Al-Essa, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Bader Saleh Al-Tunaib, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat and Kuwait Ambassador to Malaysia, Rashed Mohammad Al-Saleh.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also met Sultan of Brunei Haji Hassanah Bolkiah.

The meeting was held on sidelines of the Second GCC-ASEAN Summit and the GCC-ASEAN-China Summit.

The two sides explored the bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Brunei, means of beefing up these ties, key issues on the regional and international

arenas.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary at the Crown Prince Diwan Mazen Issa Al-Essa, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Bader Saleh Al-Tunaib, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat and Kuwait Ambassador to Malaysia, Rashed Mohammad Al-Saleh.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir (of the State of Kuwait) Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, met Singapore's Prime Minister and Finance Minister Lawrence Wong.

The meeting was held on sidelines of the Second GCC-ASEAN Summit and the GCC-ASEAN-China Summit.

The two sides explored the bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and Popular Republic of Singapore, means of beefing up these ties, key issues on the regional and international arenas.

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Gulf countries push digital fusing to up gov'ts' output

CAIT targets sustainable development goals: Kuwait

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Executive Committee of the Digital Government of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its 27th meeting on Monday, with delegations from member states in attendance.

Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and head of the Kuwaiti delegation Najat Ibrahim disclosed that the meeting is an extension of the GCC's journey of cooperation in the field of digital transformation. He said it is a fusion of efforts to promote innovation and improve government services to realize the aspirations of citizens and support the sustainable development goals of the GCC states.

Ibrahim said the meeting coincides with the celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the GCC, which fortifies joint Gulf ac-



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
The meeting in progress.

tion and motivates the members to continue building on their achievements.

She commended the GCC Secretariat General for exerting tremendous efforts in coordinating the committee's work and providing technical and administrative support, which has had a significant impact in strengthening joint Gulf action in the field of digital transformation.

She added the meeting is a milestone in enhancing digital integra-

tion between the GCC countries and the continuation of achievements, while ensuring the provision of smart and effective government services that meet the aspirations of citizens.

She revealed the agenda includes a number of vital topics like strengthening the institutional structure of the committees' work, updating the working groups, and following up initiatives in the fields of artificial intelligence, digital trust services and shared

e-services.

She also touched on proposals for the Digital Government Award and the Climate Prediction Initiative.

Meanwhile, head of the delegation of the GCC Secretariat General Dr. Waleed Al Hosani affirmed that the committee, since its formation, has been committed to achieve a complete digital transformation in the government sector; while adopting the best global technologies and innovative ideas in this field that led to achieving advanced global rankings in the digital government sector.

He added "the pursuit of a complete digital transformation confirms the committee's interest in the importance of e-government applications and its belief in the benefits that will accrue for the economies of the GCC states through the establishment of an effective digital government that contributes to increasing productivity, improving efficiency, and providing better and easier services to citizens and the public and private sectors, leading this Gulf entity to higher and more advanced positions."

He said that the meeting's agenda serves as the basis for those responsible for digital government in the member states.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Childhood Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah shows the Kuwait Disability Index to the media persons.

'Reference book launched to gauge disability in a person'

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Childhood Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah on Monday affirmed that launch of "Kuwait Reference for Disability 2025" affirms Kuwait's adherence to relevant national legislations and international treaties.

In remarks to KUNA marking launch of the index, the minister said the move came in implementation of the Law 73/2020 that stipulates in its 48-19 items necessity of placing clear scientific criteria to diagnose the handicap case and compelling the Public Authority for Disability Affairs to publicize such information via its website.

The reference was the fruit of intensive efforts that had lasted for ten years; exerted in cooperation with experts of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, medical and technical committees at the disability affairs authority and MoH specialists.

It includes explicit and specific instructions and criteria to assess cases of mental, psychological, physical, mobility, visual and audio impairments, she said.

It is also partly aimed at aiding the specialists to take the right decisions, unify procedures and guide workers in the sectors of diagnosis, education and employment of the impaired.



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq
Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez rolling the dough at the food exhibition.

'Kuwait, Türkiye share cultural values'

Turkish cuisine healthy, roots embedded in history – envoy

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Turkish Embassy in Kuwait hosted a special reception at the Marina Hotel on Monday, as part of the Turkish Cuisine Week held annually from May 21-27, in cooperation with the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) -- an affiliate of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Sadiq Marafi attended the event, along with a number of members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the culinary sector, well-known chefs, travel agents, social media influencers and media professionals.

Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez delivered a speech at the event; affirming the importance of Turkish cuisine among world cuisines, considering its rich history, focus on health and sustainable features.

She touched on the shared cultural values between Türkiye and Kuwait, particularly in

hospitality and culinary arts. She expressed her confidence that such activities contribute to deepening the friendly relations and cultural ties between the two countries.

The event featured a presentation highlighting the evolution of Turkish culinary culture throughout history, its regional diversity, and the traditional techniques used in food preparation.

Attendees were also given the opportunity to taste a selection of carefully prepared Turkish dishes, drinks and desserts, as well as their detailed recipes and preparation methods.

The event included a special exhibition featuring photographs and recipes of Turkish cuisine, allowing visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the richness of Turkish culinary heritage.

The highlight of the evening was a Turkish folk dance performance by students from the Turkish-Kuwaiti School, which mesmerized the audience.

The evening concluded with a raffle for round-trip tickets to Türkiye, provided by Pegasus Airlines.

Finance bid to acquire Dajeej plot rejected

MC nods requirements of service sector buildings

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Municipal Council Vice-Chairman Khaled Al-Mutairi presided over the session of the council on Monday, which led to the approval of the final version of the proposed amendment to Item No. 16 regarding the requirements and specifications for service sector buildings (No. 16) in Shuwaikh and Al-Rai.

The council made the decision after discussing the most important items in the schedule for the multi-use zone (formerly the free zone).

The most crucial requirements are as follows: the building percentage should reach 130 percent, with three floors and a 100 percent basement that can be used for commercial purposes or parking, with heights not exceeding 12 meters and six meters per floor, and the size of showrooms and offices must not be less than 100 square meters.

The council specified the permitted activities -- administrative offices, shops, showrooms, banking services, health clubs, hotels and warehouses.

It also approved the following:

- Request of the Public Authority for Sports to allocate an alternative site to the previously designated temporary and seasonal site for training and qualifying Kuwaiti youths in skydiving in East Sabah Al-Ahmad Coastal Area.

- Two requests of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate a water service route to supply fresh water to East Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City and to allocate two routes to supply the main transformer station in Umm Al-Hayman.

- Request of Kuwait Fire Force to reduce the size of the Firemen's Club, located in Block Seven, due to natural obstacles.

- Request of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to allocate a site for a Quran memorization center and parking spaces in Abdullah Al-Mubarak, opposite Block Seven.



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq
Municipal Council members during the session on Monday.

- Objections of State Minister for Municipality Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari to certain decisions that the council issued on March 24.

Meanwhile, the council rejected the request of the Ministry of Finance to transfer the allocation of a 5,000-square-meter plot in Dajeej, South Farwaniya.

Other decisions are under further review; including the request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to develop a road connecting the Abdullah Al-Mubarak University campus and the Seventh Ring Road, and the proposal of Municipal Council Vice Chairman Khaled Al-Mutairi to expand Gate Two of Sabah Al-Salem University City on Road 602.

GCC meeting on 'blending learning' kicks off in Muscat

MUSCAT, May 26, (KUNA): The regional meetings of the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries on the topic of "blended learning" began in the Omani capital Muscat on Monday.

The meetings will continue for three days, with the participation of the State of Kuwait.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Advisor to the Minister of Education for Educational Administration Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman Hamad Al-Sarhani said, "We live in an era witnessing profound transformations in digital tech-

nologies, and development of innovative educational models".

Al-Sarhani added that one of the most prominent of these models is the "blended learning" program, which combines the advantages of in-person and e-learning, and which the current meetings revolve around.

He expressed his hope that these meetings would contribute to developing the participants' capabilities in designing and implementing blended learning models.

He extended his thanks and appreciation to the

Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies for its ongoing initiatives to support the educational process in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

In a similar speech, Director of the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States Dr. Mohammad Al-Sharika, emphasized the importance of these meetings.

He stressed the importance of blended learning facing modern education systems by contributing to improving access to knowledge, expanding opportunities for self-learning, and enhancing the use of technology in the educational process.

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Logic of an 'isolated case' or naivety of upper echelons

"THE recent suspected corruption incident at a cooperative society has been described by the Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila as an "isolated case." By that logic, corruption cases within the Ministry of Social Affairs, other ministries, and the cooperative sector are all merely "isolated cases" of fraud and misconduct", columnist **Khaled Ahmed Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"What is not an isolated case, however, is the recurring display of political immaturity by some ministers, as well as their limited grasp of linguistic, media, and political communication. This reflects a deeper issue: a lack of understanding of the nature of corruption cases and the impact that certain terms can have on both legal proceedings and the country's international reputation.



Khaled Al-Tarrah

"If we accept Minister Al-Huwaila's statement describing the corruption incident at the cooperative society as an "isolated case," then by the same logic, the phenomenon of depression, alienation, lack of belonging, school and societal violence, and even the recruitment into terrorist groups must also be considered "isolated cases", and therefore not reflective of the situation in Kuwait.

"If the corruption incident is truly just an "isolated case," then it is the responsibility of the Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila to present the context and justification for this claim to the U.S. Treasury Department and international agencies monitoring money laundering activities. This would help ensure that such agencies do not generalize or cast doubt on Kuwait's integrity or the reputation of its charitable work on a national scale.

"From a psychological, social, and political perspective, Minister Al-Huwaila's use of the term "isolated case" deserves to be translated into international languages and presented to the global community as a framework for addressing corruption and forgery. Framing such incidents as isolated could serve, in theory, to counter the growing wave of international reports on money laundering and corruption in Kuwait.

"Is the involvement of a consumer cooperative in organizing Quran competitions or promoting the Islamization of domestic workers really an "isolated case"? Is the attempt by certain religious groups to influence elementary school students and organize them into parties under the guise of Quran memorization and instruction, also merely another "isolated case"?

"Is it the responsibility of individuals, or the duty of the state, to protect innocent children from the political agendas of religious groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and others? And is the phenomenon of Quran memorization programs in cooperative societies truly an "isolated case"?

"Does Minister Al-Huwaila's description of the incident as an "individual case" reflect her personal opinion and limited experience, or does it represent an official ministerial stance that downplays the seriousness and nature of corruption? "Have we, perhaps, fallen into the trap of generalizing corruption cases, such as the embezzlement of public funds in state investments in Spain, the transportation sector, and social security funds, when, in reality, each is just an "individual case"?

"I may be as unfamiliar with politics and media as Minister Al-Huwaila, but even the most naïve line of questioning leads us to controversial hypotheses such as applying the term "individual case" to the situation involving the former Director General of the Public Institution for Social Security, Fahd Al-Raja'an. It raises a critical concern: could such terminology be legally exploited to downplay serious offenses like accepting commissions and embezzling public funds as mere instances of human error?

"Perhaps it would be useful to present the statement by the Minister of Social Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila, describing corruption as an "individual case," as part of the defense argument in a corruption trial, to truly grasp the legal implications of such an ill-considered statement.

"I once mistakenly objected to the Civil Service Commission's training programs for teaching executive leaders etiquette and media communication. Today, I fully support not only those programs but also expanding them to include ministers, particularly in the areas of media handling and political communication."

Also:

"In a meeting I had with the late Minister of Communications Habib Johar Hayat (May God have mercy on him) he shared several insights, including that the Iranians had requested Kuwait to establish a free trade zone because Kuwait is the closest point of convergence between the Gulf and Iran", Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"After this, Kuwait established the so-called free trade zone at Shuwaikh Port, which initially inspired optimism. However, that optimism was short-lived as the government handed over the free trade zone to the so-called private sector.

"The free trade zone was transformed from a promising trade hub into a housing complex for bachelors and shops charging exorbitant rents, eventually becoming a playground for stray cats and dogs. Projects like this often fall victim to deliberate sabotage or envy, and the free trade zone suffered from both.

"The intention was clear - to prevent Kuwait from opening up and to keep it marginalized.

"Our brothers in the Gulf countries are immune to envy, and they focus on achieving their goals without wasting time looking back or paying heed to the words of enemies or the ignorant.

"By relying on God and through the efforts of patriot citizens, they reached agreements with their Indian and Iranian neighbors to connect their countries via sea tunnels.

"Qatar, for instance, decided to build an undersea tunnel linking Doha to Iran to facilitate trade and passenger transport. This idea emerged in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, when Iran opened its markets to Qatar.

"The UAE has agreed with India to establish two sea tunnels: one connecting Abu Dhabi to India to supply the emirate with fresh water, and the other linking Dubai to Mumbai, which is India's commercial capital.

"I do not care about what others have accomplished but I care about what we are doing here in Kuwait. While it is true that we are working, our progress is lagging behind. We lack initiatives and stand-out projects. We must not deceive ourselves by copying projects from other countries.

"The free zone was either a failed project or deliberately sabotaged. We remain stuck at the gate, while our government's activity is limited to transfers, secondments, reshuffles, or promotions of employees.

"This is why we will continue to be on the margins of success if we operate with a mindset focused on trivial divisions such as searching for who is the son of a free woman and who is the son of a maiden. We will achieve nothing unless we respect and empower creative minds.

"Right now, we are burning our own papers with our own hands by undermining the efforts of our dedicated and innovative citizens. The tunnel projects connecting countries are just one example of how others have advanced while we remain stuck."

"I recently came across a global report that ranked the best cities in the world for walking. It highlighted several advanced cities that have successfully made walking a natural and comfortable part of daily life for both residents and visitors such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, and Tokyo", former member of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources **Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Furaih** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The important features that define a walkable city include safe and well-maintained sidewalks, minimal traffic congestion, easy access to public transportation, and the presence of public amenities such as shops, parks, cafés, and restrooms. Other important elements include clean air, green spaces, clear signage, and wide, unobstructed pathways free from physical barriers.

"It is also important to recognize that the success of major shopping malls and leading global capitals in attracting shoppers is largely due to the ease with which pedestrians can access exhibitions and stores, comfortably and without unnecessary obstacles.

"It is in everyone's best interest - individuals, businesses, and municipalities alike - to invest in improving the walking environment along public streets, making them more attractive, safe, and comfortable for all.

"Back in the 1960s, walking was a pleasant experience along streets like New Street and Fahad Al-Salem Street. Shoppers enjoyed shaded walkways provided by awnings in front of markets such as Souq Waqif and Souq Al-Gharbally.

"Today, the situation is markedly different. Inconsistent shop and building elevations have made sidewalks uneven and difficult to navigate, especially for the elderly and people with special needs.

"During my last visit to Tokyo, I ate a candy bar while walking along a public street. When I looked

for a trash can to dispose of the wrapper, I found none. Yet, the street was remarkably clean. Curious, I asked the hotel staff the reason, and their response was simple and firm: "Our policy is clear... you take your trash home with you." It is a strict rule, but it reflects an effective and deeply rooted community culture.

"While studying in the United States, I also observed the strong emphasis on respecting pedestrians in cities across the country. Violating pedestrian rights, such as parking in a way that obstructs a sidewalk, can lead to your vehicle being towed, often just from a neighbor's complaint. This level of respect for public space demonstrates a high degree of urban awareness, something still lacking in many of our Arab cities.

"In contrast, the Kuwait Municipality could generate millions of dinars simply by enforcing strict littering laws and holding shop and building owners, who profit from renting their properties, responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of sidewalks and walkways in front of their premises.

"I also propose a practical exercise for members of the Municipal Council: walk from the Council building to Al-Hamra Tower along Shuhada Street. This will give them firsthand experience of the uneven sidewalks, the obstacles hindering pedestrian movement, and the advertising poles left protruding 5 to 10 centimeters above the ground - creating dangerous hazards, especially at intersections.

"The streets of Shuwaikh, Al-Rai, Fahahel, and Jahra are cluttered with obstacles, as if designed to discourage pedestrians from accessing nearby shops.

"Strict enforcement of cleanliness regulations is needed for all shops along public streets, and building owners who disregard pedestrian crossings must be held accountable. Cleanliness is a shared responsibility, and pedestrians are an essential part of the city's urban fabric."

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



Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Masha'an talking to officials during her visit to the port.

MPW minister pays surprise visit to inspect Shuaiba Port

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Masha'an paid a surprise inspection visit to Shuaiba Port - Kuwait's main industrial port in Al-Ahmadi Governorate, on Saturday.

During the visit, she met the technical and supervisory teams who briefed her on

the latest developments of the operating mechanisms of the port.

Dr. Al-Mashaan told reporters that she reviewed with the challenges facing the teams and the plans to address them.

She affirmed the vital importance of the port in backing up the infrastructure of the country and national economy.

Court acquits Moroccan citizen of trafficking in drugs and use

3 years jail upheld for blogger in libel suit

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The Criminal Court acquitted a Moroccan of drug trafficking and consumption after finding out that the arrest and search warrant issued by the Public Prosecution was invalid, as it was based on frivolous investigations.

The court explained in its ruling that while the prosecution has the authority to issue the warrant, it is subject to judicial oversight to ensure that the investigations upon which it was based meet the requirements of seriousness and sufficiency.

The court accepted the arguments of the defendant's lawyer, Attorney Abdul-Mohsen Al-Qattan, who argued that the warrant was invalid based on the frivolity of the investigations and the inaccuracy and unreasonableness of the incident.

The lawyer also pointed out that the defendant has no connection to the seized items, not to mention the absence of physical evidence in the documents, invalidity of the nighttime search of his client's residence, and invalidity of the personal search, because it occurred prior to the issuance of the warrant.

The court stated in its reasoning that the investigation report lacked true or accurate in-

formation about the defendant's alleged drug activity, as it was based solely on information from an undisclosed confidential source.

The officer in charge of the investigation stated in his testimony to the prosecution that he monitored the defendant once for an hour from a distance at night, without catching her engaged in any drug buying or selling activity, nor did he identify the type of narcotics or the source from which she obtained them.

The court said these facts confirm the lack of a serious investigation to justify the issuance of the warrant, which invalidates the document and the resulting procedures; leading to the acquittal of the defendant.

3 years jail upheld: The Court of Cassation, headed by Judge Mohammad Al-Khalaf, dismissed the appeal of a citizen accused of insulting the country and upheld his three-year prison sentence as he was convicted of various crimes including the administration of a fake account.

In another case, the Criminal Section in the Court of Cassation upheld the five-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen for joining the ISIS, insulting several heads of State, and disseminating information for the organization.

In this context, the Criminal Court, headed by Judge Mutab Al-Ardhi, sentenced a citizen and a Bedoun to five years in prison for joining ISIS, urging others to join the organization and insulting the emirate.

The court stated in its ruling that "the ideas

Asian commits suicide

Foul play suspected in death of Arab resident

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Security forces in Hawally Governorate were mobilized recently in response to a report that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received regarding a deceased individual found inside a vehicle parked at a waterfront parking lot, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

A security source informed the daily that upon receiving the report, emergency police units and officers from the Hawally Security Directorate were dispatched to the scene. Forensic experts and a forensic physician were also called in to examine the situation.

A preliminary inspection suggested that the death may be criminal in nature. The deceased was identified as an Egyptian, in his 30s.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the exact circumstances leading to the death of the Egyptian.

In another incident, an Asian was found dead in what appears to be a suicide at a barn where he was employed in Kabad.

Security sources revealed that the Asian consumed pesticide.

Forensic teams rushed to the scene and the body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department for examination.

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Modernizing cafeterias: The Ministry of Education is exploring a project to modernize and improve school cafeterias by outsourcing their management to specialized companies, reports **Al-Jarida** daily quoting sources from the educational sector.

"Through this project, cafeterias in schools in one educational district are expected to be managed by Kuwait Flour Mills Company ('Al-Matahen') for one academic year. If successful, the project will be expanded to other districts," sources explained.



Al-Furaih



Damage caused by the blaze.

KFF photo

One hurt as fire breaks out in hotel in Hawally

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Fire broke out in a hotel in Hawally on Sunday afternoon, resulting in injuries to an individual.

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

Police nab 402 criminals

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Last week, police patrols referred 32 individuals to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Interior Ministry after arresting them during security campaigns conducted throughout the country.

The police also arrested 402 individuals wanted for criminal cases, absconding, expired residency and others; in addition to 104 individuals who were detained for failure to present valid identification documents.

The weekly statistics from police patrols indicated the seizure of 23 vehicles wanted by the judiciary, provision of assistance to 736 cases, controlling the parties involved in six fights, and handling 154 traffic accidents including four run-over incidents.

The police patrols also issued 4,633 citations for various traffic violations and impounded two vehicles.

The total number of security operations carried out during these campaigns reached 2,322.

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‘Focus on 4th Ring Road; repairs in full swing’

Tender out for sanitary drains



Asphalt laying continues during the night on the Fourth Ring Road. KUNA photo

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has announced the continuation of major maintenance work on the Fourth Ring Road as part of a comprehensive plan that includes a number of new contracts for the maintenance of highways and main roads.

In a press statement Sunday, the minister confirmed that these works are among the 18 contracts covering various governorates to improve the quality of road infrastructure and enhance safety and security standards, in

line with the best international standards and specifications.

She pointed out that major and periodic maintenance operations directly contribute to preserving the sustainability of roads by extending their lifespan and reducing the need for future reconstruction.

“This positively impacts the level of services provided to citizens and expatriates, and achieve cost savings in the long term,” she explained.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Works announced a tender for the construction and maintenance of roads, stormwater and sanitary drainage systems in the northwestern part of Jahra.

The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) will implement the project, which is included in its annual project plan. The tender will be floated in fiscal 2025/2026.

The project aims to provide infrastructure services and internal road networks, in addition to

the development and expansion of existing roads according to the approved cross-sections and structures.

The ministry explained, through the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm), that the scope of work includes connecting the internal road network to the main network, with a length of 8.72 kilometers; as well as the establishment of a sanitary drainage and stormwater network, with an implementation period of 24 months.

In another development, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi conducted an inspection visit to Al-Rai, accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for Maintenance Affairs Fawaz Al-Shammari, and Director of the Laboratories Department at the Government Center Sector Mahdi Al-Qallaf, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the visit, a comprehensive plan was reviewed to maintain and improve the road network in the area adjacent to Grand Avenue Mall.

Charities in private residences relocated

Dr. Al-Huwaila dissolves women’s society board

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila issued Decision No. 86/2025, which was published in the official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm”, regarding the appointment of an interim board of directors for the Women’s Voluntary Society for Community Development, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Dr Al-Huwaila

Article 1 of the decision stipulates the dissolution of the current board of directors of the Women’s Voluntary Society for Community Development and the appointment of an interim board for a renewable one-year term.

The interim board will be chaired by

Bashayer Salah Al-Ghanim, with members Hawra Nader Al-Habib, Nahla Abdulaziz Al-Shamali, Abdulaziz Adel Al-Mannai, and Abdullah Yousef Al-Hajri.

Article 2 of the decision stipulates that the former board of directors must hand over the society’s headquarters, funds, and all related documents and records to the newly-appointed board within three days from the date of the decision’s issuance.

Article 3 grants the appointed board all powers and authorities vested in the board of directors under Law No. 24/1962 and the society’s bylaws.

Article 5 mandates the interim board to examine the society’s budget, review its books and records, investigate any violations, and take the necessary measures to protect the society’s funds.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations De-

partment at the Kuwait Municipality announced that the supervisory team in the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in the Municipality branch in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate has completed its fifth round of field inspections, reports Al-Anba daily.

These inspections aim to ensure compliance with removal orders issued to charitable committees operating in residential areas.

The latest inspection campaign led to the issuance of 15 warnings. In coordination with the committees, several charitable activities conducted in private residences were relocated.

The department stressed that supervisory teams will strictly enforce all legal measures in accordance with municipal regulations. It also affirmed that many committees complied with removal orders immediately after receiving warnings.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah and Acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Eng. Nouf Behbehani.

Farwaniya Gov, EPA acting DG discuss cleaner environs plan

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Eng. Nouf Behbehani on Sunday at his office to discuss joint cooperation for serving the residents of Farwaniya Governorate.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed enhancing the EPA’s role in the governorate, outlining plans for environmental sustainability, promoting environmental awareness among community members, and instilling a culture of environmental responsibility to help preserve natural resources and public property.

Meanwhile, Eng. Nouf Behbehani thanked the governor for his support and interest in environmental issues, affirming EPA’s readiness to provide technical and logistical support for development projects that promote environmental sustainability and enhance the quality of life for residents of Farwaniya Governorate.

At the end of the meeting, Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah stressed the importance of ongoing cooperation with EPA and strengthening the partnership to ensure a safe and healthy environment for future generations. He also emphasized the need for coordination among relevant authorities to achieve common goals.

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Long-standing KNPC demand met

Nod to promotion of all staff

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Al-Khatib approved the promotion of all employees, who have spent five years in Grade 12 to Grade 13; specifically those assigned in the operations departments at Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries.

Sources told the newspaper that this decision addressed one of the most important labor demands at KNPC in recent years.

Sources confirmed that Al-Khatib consistently emphasized, in her recent meetings, the importance of intensi-

fying the development efforts in the abovementioned refineries. Sources added that she also underscored the need to uphold strict security and safety protocols to prevent the recurrence of minor incidents.

Despite a recent accident, sources stated that Mina Abdullah Refinery continues to maintain an exceptionally high standard of safety. “In 2024, it was ranked first globally in risk management engineering following a field survey conducted by the American firm Marsh, a leader in risk management and insurance services.”

This recognition is attributed to the refinery’s highly skilled and professional emergency response teams,” sources revealed.

News in Brief

New Justice service on Sahel: The Ministry of Justice recently announced the inclusion of the ‘Inquire about my agencies’ service on the Sahel application, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry said the new service includes the addition of an agency preamble, indicating that it is available from the list of agency services.

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Use MoSA new logo: As part of its efforts to unify its visual identity and enhance its corporate image, the Ministry of Social Affairs issued an administrative circular mandating all affiliated sectors, departments, and subsidiaries to use the ministry’s new approved logo on all official documents, advertisements, banners, cards, printed materials, and official events, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The circular emphasized that the old logo is no longer approved and its use is strictly prohibited for any department or subsidiary.

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Eye on forgery bids: The Nationality Investigation Department monitors suspicious activities related to the nationality files to verify the identity and determine if there is any forgery, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed that a citizen, born in the 1950s, was identified recently. His passport was issued in 1995 and expired in 2000. Since then, no activity has been recorded under the name -- a period of around 25 years.

Sources said the citizen’s brothers, sons of the father under whom the person was registered, were summoned. “They admitted that their deceased father registered a fictitious name in the nationality file in order to sell it,” sources added.

Sources stated that investigations proved the fictitious name had no affiliation, indicating the citizenship under such name will be removed from the file as a precaution to prevent being used fraudulently.

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20 minutes deadline set: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has issued a circular to imams and muezzins in all governorates, directing them to perform the Asr prayer “Iqamah” no later than 20 minutes after the call to prayer, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Previously, the ministry had issued a circular reducing the Iqamah time for all prayers to 10 minutes, before granting an exception for the Fajr prayer about two weeks ago, allowing it to be performed 20 minutes after the call. Starting today, the same exception applies to the Asr prayer.

Contenders produce many hours of content already

2028 podcast primary well underway as US Democrats try to reshape image

WASHINGTON, May 26, (AP): The Democrats’ 2028 podcast primary is well underway.

From Govs Gavin Newsom of California, Andy Beshear of Kentucky and Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan to former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, potential presidential contenders are following the lead of President Donald Trump, who frequently went on podcasts appealing to younger men during his 2024 campaign.

Liberal strategists acknowledge Trump showed that Democratic candidates need to master the podcast space, which is typically looser and more freewheeling than a press conference or a traditional media interview.

“The way that politicians communicate and need to be seen by their audience is changing,” said Liz Minnella, who fundraised for Democratic nominee Kamala Harris and this year launched Connect Forward, a group to support liberal influencers. “I hate to give him credit, but he found a way to connect with people, talk to them like human beings in non-political speak.”

Newsom, long derided by conservatives as a San Francisco liberal, has welcomed conservatives onto his podcast and agreed with them on issues such as trans participation in women’s sports. Beshear, a lower-profile Democrat in a red state, hosted his teenagers to teach him how to use the youth slang “skibidi.”

The likely 2028 contenders have produced many hours of content already. Here’s a look at key moments and what we’ve learned about the field so far.

Launching “The Andy Beshear Podcast” earlier this year, the Kentucky governor now has hosted a donor, a former ambassador, businessmen he calls friends and US Sen Amy Klobuchar, who ran for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

He even brought on his two children to explain slang words high schoolers are using, asking them to explain to him how to use terms like “skibidi” to say something looks good, or “doing it for the plot” to say you’ll be taking a risk on something despite a potentially bad outcome.

From his first episode, the 47-year-old politician outlines some rules and says the first is “be authentic, you be you, boo.”

The governor did not respond to a request for comment on his strategy, but has mostly taken a position of dissecting and broadcasting opposition to Trump’s poli-



California Gov Gavin Newsom presents his revised 2025-2026 state budget during a news conference in Sacramento, Calif on May 14. (AP)

cies, such as potential cuts to Medicaid and the use of the Signal messaging app by the president’s national security team to discuss sensitive military operations.

In one of Beshear’s most recent episodes earlier this month, his producer asks the governor a frequent listener’s question: Will you run for president?

“If it were three years ago, this was something that we would have never thought about,” Beshear said, sitting beside his wife, Britany. “But I’m committed to not leaving a broken country to my kids or anyone else’s. Now, what that looks like going forward, I don’t know. My job right now is to try to lift up as many leaders as possible all across the country that are hopefully focused on the right things

with the right message to re-earn the faith of the American people.”

Whitmer recently appeared on “Pod Save America” for a shorter interview than other contenders have done on podcasts. Whitmer had received some backlash for sharing a hug with the president last month as he arrived in her home state, less than a month after she shielded her face from cameras during an Oval Office appearance alongside Trump.

Whitmer and Trump announced a new fighter jet mission at a National Guard base outside Detroit that is seen as a major economic driver for the area.

“This is a BFD,” she said on the podcast, referencing if not outright saying a profane phrase that starts with “big” and ends with “deal.”

“It doesn’t mean I’ve abandoned any of my values. It doesn’t mean that I’m not going to stand my ground and fight where we have to, but this is one of those moments where as a public servant you’re reminded your job is to put service above self and that’s what it was all about.”

In February, California’s governor launched “This is Gavin Newsom” as what he called a mechanism for talking “directly with people I disagree with, people I look up to, and you - the listeners.”

Thus far, he’s had a wide array of guests, including former Trump strategist Steve Bannon and conservative influencer Charlie Kirk, as well as Klobuchar and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Harris’ 2024 running mate.

The conversations have mostly been chummy. Newsom - who has in recent weeks broken with California’s legislature and faced liberal criticism for his positioning on trans issues, immigration and homelessness - has fielded backlash for giving a platform to some of his party’s biggest critics.

Newsom has also drawn criticism for opposing the participation of trans athletes in women’s sports.

“I think it’s an issue of fairness, I completely agree with you on that,” Newsom told Kirk in his debut episode. “It is an issue of fairness - it’s deeply unfair.”

The diverse guest list could be part of Newsom’s attempt to self-brand as a centrist ahead of a possible 2028 run, hearing out conservative critics while trying to assume his party’s mantle. In March, the governor told HBO’s Bill Maher that Democrats had developed a “toxic” brand and criticized some in the party who are unwilling to “have a conversation” with their opponents.

Trump administration releases people to shelters it threatened to prosecute for aiding migrants

McALLEN, Texas, May 26, (AP): The Trump administration has continued releasing people charged with being in the country illegally to nongovernmental shelters along the US-Mexico border after telling those organizations that providing migrants with temporary housing and other aid may violate a law used to prosecute smugglers.

Border shelters, which have long provided lodging, meals and transportation to the nearest bus station or airport, were rattled by a letter from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that raised “significant concerns” about potentially illegal activity and demanded detailed information in a wide-ranging investigation. FEMA suggested shelters may have committed felony offenses against bringing people across the border illegally or transporting them within the United States.

“It was pretty scary. I’m not going to lie,” said Rebecca Solloa, executive director of Catholic Charities Diocese of Laredo.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement continued to ask shelters in Texas and Arizona to house people even after the March 11 letter, putting them in the awkward position of doing something that FEMA appeared to say might be illegal. Both agencies are part of the Department of Homeland Security.



US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers detain a person, (left) on Jan 27, in Silver Spring, Md. (AP)

After receiving the letter, Catholic Charities received eight to 10 people a day from ICE until financial losses forced it to close its shelter in the Texas border city on April 25, Solloa said.

The Holding Institute Community, also in Laredo, has been taking about 20 families a week from ICE’s family detention centers in Dilley and Karnes City, Texas, Executive Director Michael Smith said. They come from Russia,

Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Papua New Guinea and China. Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas, has been receiving five to 10 people day from ICE, including from Honduras and Venezuela, said Ruben Garcia, its executive director.

International Rescue Committee didn’t get a letter but continues receiving people from ICE in Phoenix, according to a person briefed on the matter who spoke on condition of ano-

nymity to discuss information that has not been made public. The releases include people who had been held at ICE’s Krome Detention Center in Miami, the site of severe overcrowding.

ICE’s requests struck Solloa as a “little bit of a contradiction,” but Catholic Charities agreed. She said some guests had been in ICE detention centers two to four weeks after getting arrested in the nation’s interior and ordered released by an immigration judge while their challenges to deportations wound through the courts. Others had been flown from San Diego after crossing the border illegally.

Those released were from India, China, Pakistan, Turkey, and Central and South America, Solloa said.

Smith, a Methodist pastor, said that the FEMA letter was alarming and that agreeing to continue caring for people released by ICE was “probably not a good idea.” Still, it was an easy choice.

“There’s some things that are just right to do,” he said. Tricia McLaughlin, the DHS spokeswoman, drew a distinction with large-scale releases under Republican President Donald Trump’s predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden. The Biden administration worked closely with shelters but, during its busiest times, released migrants at bus stops or other public locations.



In this photo provided by the Horry County Police Department, police officers respond to the scene of a shooting on Sunday, May 25, 2025, in Little River, SC. (AP)

S.Carolina beach town shooting injures 11

At least 11 people were taken to hospitals after a shooting Sunday night in a South Carolina beach town, authorities said. Horry County Police did not give the conditions of anyone hurt or detail how they were injured in the incident, which happened about 9:30 p.m. in Little River.

Investigators were getting reports of more people arriving at the hospital in private vehicles, Horry County Police said on social media.

About 90 minutes after the shooting, police called it an isolated incident and said there is no risk to the community. They did not release any information on possible suspects or what led to the shooting. The shooting happened around a boat dock near the Intracoastal Waterway.

Video from the scene showed dozens of police cars and ambulances rushing in and out of the area.

A North Myrtle Beach police officer responding to the shooting accidentally shot himself in the leg at a marina about 3 miles (5 kilometers) away and is in the hospital in stable condition, North Myrtle Beach spokeswoman Lauren Jessie said. Little River is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northeast of Myrtle Beach. (AP)

Britain’s King Charles III visit to Canada underscores its sovereignty to Trump

OTTAWA, Ontario, May 26, (AP): King Charles III arrives in Ottawa on Monday to underscore Canada’s sovereignty to US President Donald Trump.

Trump’s repeated suggestion that the US annex its northern neighbor prompted Prime Minister Mark Carney to invite Charles to give the speech from the throne that will outline his government’s agenda for the new Parliament. The king is the head of state in Canada, which is a member of the British Commonwealth of former colonies.

“His Majesty King Charles III will read the speech from the throne and thus present the plan of our government, our priorities, as Canada is facing a pivotal moment in its history, the biggest transformation of the global trading system since the fall of the Berlin Wall,” Carney told his caucus Sunday.

Carney said “Canada has a steadfast defender in the sovereign” when he announced the visit earlier this month.

It is rare for the monarch to deliver what’s called the speech from the throne in Canada. Charles’ mother, Queen Elizabeth II, did it twice in her 70-year reign. The last time was in 1977.

Canadians are largely indifferent to the monarchy, but Carney has been eager to show the differences between Canada and the U.S. and he said that the king’s visit clearly underscores the sovereignty of Canada.

The Americans had a revolution to gain independence from Britain. Canada remained a colony until 1867 and continued thereafter as a constitutional monarchy with a British-style parliamentary system.

“We are different and the king il-



Britain’s King Charles, (centre left), and Queen Camilla leave after visiting the Canada House Trafalgar Square, in London on May 20, 2025 to mark 100 years since it opened in June 1925. (AP)

lustrates that,” former Quebec Premier Jean Charest said. “If you look at why King Charles is reading the speech from the throne than you have to then acknowledge Canada’s story.”

But new US Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra said sending messages isn’t necessary and Canadians should move on from the 51st state talk, telling the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation that if there’s a message to be sent there’s easier ways to do that like calling him or calling the president.

Royal historian Carolyn Harris expects Trump to notice the visit because the president has repeatedly spoken about his admiration for the royal family.

Harris said Trump might see how different Canada is from the US.

“It is a very distinctive history that goes back to the waves of loyalists who settled here after the American revolution,” Harris said. “And we’re going to seeing the king in a Canadian context, escorted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, surrounded by Canadian symbolism. This is very much King Charles III in his role as King of Canada.”

The speech, which will be delivered Tuesday, is not written by the king or his advisers in the UK., as the king serves as a nonpartisan head of state. The king will read what is put before him by Canada’s government.



In this photo taken from video released by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on May 25, Russian servicemen leave a plane upon arrival to Chkalovsky airport, outside Moscow, Russia, after returning from captivity by a POWs exchange between Russia and Ukraine. (AP)

Russia sent record number of drones into Ukraine as Trump says Putin has ‘gone crazy’

KYIV, Ukraine, May 26, (AP): Russia overnight launched the biggest drone attack on Ukraine in the more than three-year war, a Ukrainian official said Monday. President Donald Trump said Russian leader Vladimir Putin has gone “crazy” by stepping up the bombing of Ukraine just as the US tries to broker peace.

The Russian bombardment on Sunday night included 355 drones. Yuri Ihnat, head of the Ukrainian air force’s communications department, told The Associated Press.

The previous night, Russia fired 298 drones and 69 missiles of various types at Ukraine in what Ukrainians said was the largest combined aerial assault during the conflict. From Friday to Sunday, Russia launched around 900 drones at Ukraine, officials said.

The escalation appeared to thwart hopes that Trump’s peace efforts might lead to a breakthrough in the near term, as Putin looks determined to capture more Ukrainian territory and inflict more damage.

Russia has this month broken its record for aerial bombardments of Ukraine three times. The expansion of its air campaign came after Kyiv in March accepted an unconditional 30-day ceasefire proposed by the US but Moscow effectively rejected it.

Russia is also still pushing along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where it has made slow and costly progress, and is assembling its forces for a summer offensive, Ukraine and military analysts say.

“Only a sense of complete impunity can allow Russia to carry out such attacks and continually escalate their scale,” Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram on Monday. “There is no significant military logic to this, but there is considerable political meaning.”

He repeated his call for tighter international economic sanctions on Russia as a way of ending the war, because Russia’s “desire to fight must be deprived of resources.”

Europe

Romania’s new prez sworn in: Romania’s newly elected president **Nicusor Dan** was officially sworn in on Monday, ushering in a tentative close to the worst political crisis to grip the European Union country in decades after the annulment of the previous election. But multiple challenges lie ahead.

Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician and former mayor of the capital, Bucharest, decisively won the tense rerun in a runoff on May 18, beating his hard-right opponent George Simion, who later challenged the results at a top court, but was rejected last week.

At the inauguration ceremony in a joint session of Parliament, Dan signed the constitutional oath. In a speech afterward, he promised to tackle Romania’s economic



Dan

woes and to be a president “open to the voice of society.”

The May election redo was held months after the Constitutional Court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu led the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied. (AP)

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Ex-Austrian leader Kurz acquitted: A court in Vienna on Monday acquitted former Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of making false statements to a parliamentary inquiry into alleged corruption in his government, reversing a verdict from last year in which Kurz was given a suspended prison sentence.

Judges at Vienna’s upper state court threw out Kurz’s conviction after a short appeal hearing, the Austria Press Agency reported.

The case centered on Kurz’s testimony to an inquiry that focused on the coalition he led from 2017, when his conservative Austrian People’s Party formed a coalition with the far-right Freedom Party, until its collapse in 2019. (AP)

Pope Leo XIV declares ‘I am Roman!’

ROME, May 26, (AP): Pope Leo XIV declared himself a Roman on Sunday as he completed the final ceremonial steps cementing his role as the bishop of Rome. The first American pope formally took possession of the St. John Lateran Basilica, which is Rome’s cathedral and seat of the diocese, with an evening Mass attended by Roman priests and faithful.

He then took the popemobile for a visit to St Mary Major, where he prayed before Pope Francis’ tomb.

In his homily, Leo said he wanted to listen to them “in order to learn, understand and decide things together.”

One of the many titles that Leo assumed when he was elected May 8 was bishop of Rome. Given his responsibilities running the 1.4-billion strong universal Catholic Church, popes delegate the day-to-day governance of running of the diocese of Roman to a vicar. Sunday’s ceremonies at the St. John Lateran and a stop at St Mary Major basilicas follow Leo’s visit last week to the St Paul Outside the Walls basilica. Together with St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, the four papal basilicas are the most important basilicas in the West.



Pope Leo XIV walks outside the Basilica of St. Mary Major to take possession of the last of the four major papal basilicas that completes the symbolic and liturgical ‘taking possession’ of the four basilicas that signify full papal authority within Rome, in Rome on May 25. (AP)

Australian state plans to ban sale of machetes following violent gang fight

MELBOURNE, Australia, May 26, (AP): An Australian state government is banning the sale of machetes after a violent gang fight in a suburban shopping mall injured a young man.

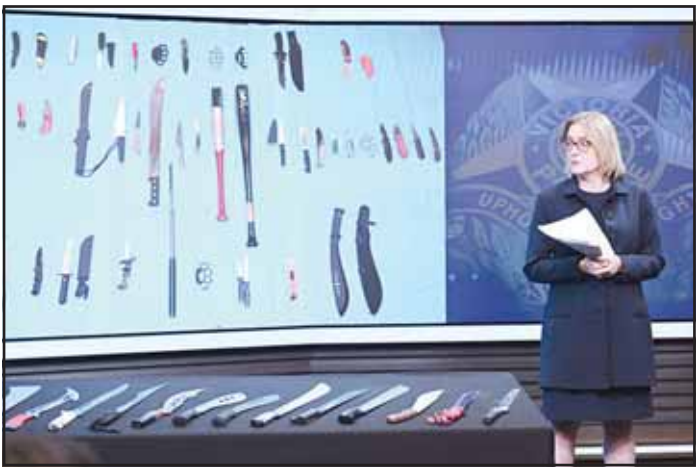
Victoria Premier Jacinta Allan announced Monday the ban on the sale of large knives would take effect Wednesday after machete-wielding gang members clashed at a Melbourne mall on Sunday afternoon.

A 20-year-old man was seriously injured in the fight that involved eight combatants armed with machetes, a police statement said. Four suspects had been arrested and charged by Monday.

"I will introduce as many laws (as needed) to get these dangerous knives off the streets," Allan told reporters.

"We will be bringing in place a ban on the sale of machetes here in Victoria and this ban will be in place from midday on Wednesday. Under consumer powers, using these powers, Victoria will be banning machetes from being sold anywhere in the state," she added.

Victoria is the only Australian



Victorian state Premier Jacinta Allan looks at a display of machetes during an announcement at Victoria Police Headquarters in Melbourne, Australia on March 13. (AP)

state or territory that plans to ban machetes, broadly defined as a cutting edge knife with a blade exceeding 20 centimeters (almost 8 inches) long. Kitchen knives are not included in the ban.

Possession of a machete will be banned with few exceptions in

Victoria, Australia's second-most populous state, from Sept. 1.

The ban on the sale of machetes was to have taken effect on that date. A three-month amnesty will give people time to dispose of their machetes at police stations and secure bins without penalty.

France's Macron on visit to Vietnam urges for greater cooperation in defense and trade

HANOI, Vietnam, May 26, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron called on Monday for closer cooperation between Vietnam and France in an increasingly unstable global landscape as he visited Hanoi as part of a Southeast Asia tour focused on strengthening regional ties.

Macron emphasized the need for "an order based on law" at a time of "both great imbalance and a return to power-driven rhetoric and intimidation." He next heads to Indonesia and Singapore.

The visit comes amid trade tensions, with the US threatening steep tariffs on goods from Europe. Vietnamese imports to the United States were hit with 46% tariffs - among the highest rates applied to any country - in April.

Macron signed more than a dozen agreements on defense, nuclear power and trade, including one with the Vietnamese budget airline company VietJet and Airbus to buy 20 A330-900 planes.

He paid tribute at a Hanoi war memorial to those who fought the French colonial rulers and met with his counterpart Luong Cuong, as well as Communist Party general secretary To Lam.

Macron also visited the 11th century Temple of Literature in the heart of the



French President Emmanuel Macron and Chairman of Vietnam's National Assembly Tran Thanh Man, right, at the National Assembly in Hanoi, Vietnam on May 26. (AP)

Vietnamese capital.

France and Vietnam's "sovereignty partnership" could be the central axis of France's approach in the Indo-Pacific, Macron said.

France has demonstrated its "desire to defend international maritime law" when it deployed the French carrier

strike group in the South China Sea in early 2025, Macron said.

China and Vietnam have long had a maritime agreement governing the Gulf of Tonkin, but have been locked in competing claims in the South China Sea over the Spratly and Paracel Islands and maritime areas.

Malaysia stresses importance of preserving geo-economic cooperation at ASEAN summit

Southeast Asian nations want to discuss tariffs with Trump as unified bloc: Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, May 26, (Agencies): Southeast Asian nations will forge a common front to face challenges including economic headwinds from US tariffs and a four-year civil war in Myanmar, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Monday.

Opening an annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Anwar said he has sought a unified bloc meeting with US President Donald Trump to discuss the tariffs. Officials are hopeful it could happen later this year. Malaysia is the current chair of ASEAN.

"For ASEAN, our peace, stability and prosperity have often depended on an open, inclusive, rules-based international order... These foundations are now being dismantled under the force of arbitrary action," Anwar said.

ASEAN, which has agreed to avoid retaliatory measures, has formed a taskforce to coordinate a response to the US tariffs in parallel with bilateral negotiations by some member countries, Anwar said. ASEAN members include bigger economies such as Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

The region relies on exports to the US and is hurt by the Trump administration's tariffs, which range from 10% for Singapore to as high as 49%

for Cambodia. Trump announced a 90-day pause on tariffs in April for most of the world, and this month struck a similar deal with key rival China, easing trade war tensions.

Anwar said an ASEAN leaders' meeting on Tuesday with Chinese Premier Li Qiang and the Gulf Cooperation Council - the first such tripartite meeting - would spur new cooperation that could help insulate ASEAN's economy. The GCC comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

ASEAN leaders later Monday will launch a new 20-year vision to deepen their economic and social integration, Anwar said.

Analysts said China, which is ASEAN's top trading partner, wants to expand its influence by presenting itself as a reliable ally in the region. But tensions persist over Beijing's aggressive stance in the disputed South China Sea that has led to frequent clashes especially with the Philippines.

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. told the ASEAN summit that a "code of conduct" being negotiated by ASEAN and China to govern the busy sea passage must be binding - one of the factors that has hampered talks.

"We underscore the urgent need to accelerate the adoption of a legally binding code of conduct in the South



Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim attends the plenary session at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on May 26. (AP)

China Sea to safeguard maritime rights, promote stability and prevent miscalculations at sea," he said.

On the Myanmar crisis, Anwar said Malaysia has managed to "move the needle forward" after forming an informal advisory group headed by former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra. Anwar met last month with Myanmar military chief Gen. Ming Aung Hlaing

in Bangkok and held virtual talks with the opposition National Unity Government.

Officials said the current emphasis on aid delivery following a March earthquake that killed 3,700 people could eventually pave the way for peace talks. But critics accuse the army of violating a self-proclaimed ceasefire with dozens of airstrikes, with aid not

freely allowed into areas not under the army's control.

The Myanmar war, which has killed thousands and displaced millions, is a challenge to ASEAN since refugees have fled across borders to neighboring nations. The region has also seen rising transnational crimes and cybercrimes. The bloc has made little headway after the Myanmar military refused to comply with its peace plan, including a ceasefire, delivery of humanitarian aid and negotiations.

Anwar said more engagement is being planned in Myanmar.

"Quiet engagement matters. The steps may be small and the bridge may be fragile but as they say: In matters of peace, even a fragile bridge is better than a widening gulf," Anwar said.

Thomas Daniel from Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies said ASEAN has no real leverage to push for reconciliation. The Myanmar military has reportedly lost control of a large part of the country, making the situation even more challenging.

"The conditions on the ground are extremely difficult. I don't think we have reached a stage where ASEAN can facilitate any kind of political dialogue between conflicting parties. They are not ready for that yet," he said.

Anwar stressed the importance of preserving the geo-economic coopera-

tion model between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and China, emphasizing its role in building a more inclusive and sustainable future for the region.

In his opening remarks at the 46th ASEAN Summit, including the 2nd ASEAN-GCC Summit and the 1st ASEAN-GCC-China Summit, Ibrahim noted that this trilateral model represents a strategic pillar in a multipolar global reality.

He added that the trilateral summit reflects goodwill and enables regional blocs to work with a clear strategic vision, noting that this cooperation symbolizes the strength of regional unity, which will have a positive impact on the world.

(The State of Kuwait's) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, arrived in Malaysia Sunday, to represent Kuwait at this high-level regional summit.

ASEAN is a regional bloc founded in 1967 to promote economic, political, and social integration and achieve peace and stability in the region. It includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

'Argentina is bleeding from inequality'

Milei's austerity policies criticized

MEXICO CITY, May 26, (AP): The Archbishop of Buenos Aires fiercely criticized Argentine President Javier Milei during a religious ceremony the leader attended Sunday, saying that under the government's harsh policies "fraternity, tolerance and respect are dying."

Milei, a libertarian and staunch ally of President Donald Trump, has implemented austerity policies, a sort of fiscal shock therapy, in an attempt to reign in painfully high inflation in the South American nation. But the policies have also left poverty rates soaring and fueled waves of protests, which in some cases have been met with a violent response by police.

On Sunday, Archbishop Jorge Garcia Cuerva denounced those policies and the larger political atmosphere in Argentina in front of Milei, who was kneeling alone in the front row, and members of his Cabinet.

"Argentina is bleeding from inequality," he said. The government "is far away from the people in the streets. They don't feel their pain, nor their frustrations."

Milei watched the speech still faced.



President Javier Milei waves after a Mass marking the anniversary of the formation of Argentina's first independent government, alongside his sister Karina, left, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 25. (AP)

Garcia Cuerva warned of hate and misinformation spreading through social media. He described it as "terrorism through social media," citing former Pope Francis, who hailed from Argen-

tina. Milei's government often uses social media to attack critics, including politicians and journalists, calling them names like "degenerates" and "baboons."



Members of the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces stand guard as they take part in the 21st edition of the African Lion military exercise, in Tantan, south of Agadir, Morocco, on May 23. (AP)

US military shifts messaging in Africa, telling allies to prepare to stand more on their own

TAN TAN, Morocco, May 26, (AP): The US military is backing off its usual talk of good governance and countering insurgencies' underlying causes, instead leaning into a message that its fragile allies in Africa must be ready to stand more on their own.

At African Lion, its largest joint training exercise on the continent, that shift was clear: "We need to be able to get our partners to the level of independent operations," Gen Michael Langley said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"There needs to be some burden sharing," Langley, the US military's top official in Africa, said on Friday, the final day of the exercise.

For four weeks, troops from more than 40 countries rehearsed how to confront threats by air, land, and sea. They flew drones, simulated close-quarters combat and launched satellite-guided rockets in the desert.

Maneuvers mirrored previous editions of African Lion, now in its 21st year. But mostly gone now is language that emphasizes ideas the U.S. once argued set it apart from Russia and China.

Messaging about the interwoven work of defense, diplomacy and development once formed the core of Washington's security pitch. In their place now are calls for helping allies build capacity to manage their own security, which Langley said was a priority for President Donald Trump's Defense Department.

"We have our set priorities now - protecting the homeland. And we're



US and Morocco military forces take part in the 21st edition of the African Lion military exercise, in Tantan, south of Agadir, Morocco on May 23. (AP)

also looking for other countries to contribute to some of these global instability areas," he said, referencing U.S. support for Sudan.

The shift comes as the US military makes moves to "build a leaner, more lethal force," including potentially cutting military leadership positions in places like Africa, where America's rivals continue to deepen their influence.

China has launched its own expansive training program for African militaries. Russian mercenaries are recalibrating and cementing their role as security partner of choice throughout North, West and Central Africa.

In an interview a year ago, Lang-

ley emphasized what US military officials have long called a "whole of government approach" to countering insurgency. Even amid setbacks, he defended the U.S. approach and said force alone couldn't stabilize weak states and protect US interests against the risk of violence spilling out.

"I've always professed that AFRI-COM is not just a military organization," Langley said last year. He called good governance an "enduring solution to a number of layered threats - whether it be desertification, whether it be crop failure from changing environments, or whether it be from violent extremist organizations."



In this photo released by Indian Coast Guard, the Liberia-flagged MSC ELSA 3, a container ship carrying hazardous cargo sinks off Indian southern coast in the Arabian Sea on May 25. (AP)

India rushes to contain spill as cargo ship sinks off Kerala coast

India's southern state of Kerala on Monday issued a high alert along its coastal areas and asked fishermen not to venture near the site of an accident where a container ship carrying hazardous cargo sank off its coast in the Arabian Sea.

The Liberia-flagged MSC ELSA 3 was sailing between the Indian ports of Vizhinjam and Kochi when it sank about 38 nautical miles off Kerala early Sunday. All 24 crew members were rescued, India's defense ministry said.

The vessel went down with 640 containers, including

13 with an unspecified "hazardous cargo" and 12 containing calcium carbide. It also had 84.44 metric tons of diesel and 367.1 metric tons of furnace oil in its tanks.

The Kerala chief minister's office on Monday urged people to stay away from some of the containers that began washing ashore. It also advised fishermen not to venture too close to the sunken ship.

Indian Coast Guard on Sunday said it had sent an aircraft with an oil spill detection system to survey the area. It also deployed a ship carrying pollution control equipment to the site of the accident. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait ends flat

KUWAIT CITY, May 26, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed slightly higher on Monday, with the general index inching up 1.05 points (0.01%) to 8,040.43. Trading totaled 321.2 million shares via 17,615 transactions worth KD 84.2 million (approx. \$258.4

million). The Main Market Index slipped 14.15 points (0.20%) to 6,979.25, while the Premier Market Index edged up 4.88 points (0.06%) to 8,702.47. The Major 50 Index dropped 24.32 points (0.33%) to 7,254.37.

Business

In line with the launch of ‘inspireU’ accelerator

stc organizes workshops with participation of more than 100 entrepreneurs to support startups

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, hosted a series of interactive workshops under the 12th intake of the overall inspireU startup accelerator. The workshops were held at stc’s training center and attracted the participation of over 100 aspiring entrepreneurs and start-up founders.

Organized as part of stc’s inspireU accelerator, the objective of the workshops was to support and empower the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait. Led by industry pioneers, the workshops equipped participants with practical tools and strategic knowledge in preparation for joining the 12th intake of the overall inspireU accelerator. The sessions focused on key pillars essential to launching and scaling a successful startup, including pitch deck development, technology innovation, and securing investments.

Each workshop was led by prominent figures in Kuwait’s startup and investment landscape. Abdullah Al Ateeqi, Co-Founder of Motery App, shared insights on building a scalable tech startup, whereas Abdulrahman Al Kharafi, CEO of Zad Fintech, covered financial strategies and innovation in fintech.

On the other hand, Dakhil Al Dakhil, CEO of Rasameel, delivered an engaging session on attracting and managing investments as well as provided an overview of the investment scene in Kuwait. For her part, Eng. Reem Al Farhan spoke about her experience at inspireU and offered guidance on enhancing companies’ ability to participate in government tenders during a workshop attended by more than 30 business owners.

The inspireU program, is strategically designed to accelerate the growth of innovative Kuwaiti startups and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs. In order to achieve this objective, the program organizes targeted



Eng. Reem Al Farhan among the participants in a workshop dedicated to enhancing companies’ ability to participate in government tenders.



A side view of the workshop that highlights financial strategy.

workshops, hands-on training, and access to industry mentors, creating a dynamic environment that enables startups to succeed in today’s evolving digital economy. Five Kuwaiti startups participated in the “inspireU” accelerator’s 10th and 11th graduation ceremony, organized by stc Group in Saudi Arabia last year. These startups

have expanded their businesses and acquired several commercial projects, such as Motery, Central Trade Company (CTC), and Sparts. stc Group launched the “inspireU” accelerator ten years ago and then expanded the program to Kuwait through stc Kuwait. The accelerator attracted a large number of startups eager to

benefit from the dedicated support that would enable them to grow and scale their businesses to achieve success in the competitive job market.

About stc
Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July,

2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2008. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014.

stc Kuwait is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and solutions to customers, both for

individuals and enterprises, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc Kuwait has expanded its portfolio by acquiring companies such as Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait, and e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries.



Abdullah Al Ateeqi, Co-Founder of Motery App stands among the workshop participants.



Abdulrahman Al Kharafi, CEO of Zad Fintech with workshop participants.

Initiative aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035 and UN SDGs

Gulf Bank partners with LOYAC to bring joy to underprivileged children ahead of Eid Al-Adha

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: As Eid Al-Adha approaches, Gulf Bank, in partnership with LOYAC, launched a meaningful humanitarian initiative to bring joy to children from underprivileged families. Gulf Bank employees visited City Hypermarket to purchase clothes and toys for nearly 60 children, bringing smiles and a sense of celebration to both the children and their families.

As part of its continued commitment to corporate social responsibility, Gulf Bank’s ‘Sawa’ed Al-Khaleej’ volunteering team took part in the initiative, joining the children during their shopping experience and assisting them in choosing clothes and toys they loved – all in a joyful, compassionate, and engaging atmosphere.

This initiative is part of a broader series of activities that Gulf Bank carries out annually under its social sustainability program. The Bank remains steadfast in its

belief in the importance of human solidarity, especially during religious and social occasions that present an opportunity to renew the spirit of giving and kindness within the community.

Gulf Bank’s team emphasized that their role goes well beyond providing banking services. “It was incredibly rewarding to see the children select items that brought genuine joy to their faces,” they shared. “For more than sixty years, Gulf Bank has been an integral part of Kuwait’s economic and social fabric, consistently dedicated to supporting those in need and giving back to the community.”

The team also reaffirmed the Bank’s strong commitment to sustainability by implementing carefully chosen initiatives that benefit both the Bank and the wider community. These efforts align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait Vision 2035.

Gulf Bank is committed to being a responsible corporate citizen by empowering the community and making a meaningful impact through initiatives that foster joy, hope, and respect for everyone.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait’s leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the Bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, “New Kuwait,” and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The Bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.



The Gulf Bank team helps children choose their clothes.



A group photo of the Gulf Bank, LOYAC, and City Hypermarket teams.

‘Human capital development central to KIB’s vision’

KIB celebrates graduation of 3 staff members from Harvard Executive Leadership Program

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: In line with its ongoing commitment to developing national talent and investing in the next generation of banking leaders, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) celebrated the graduation of three employees from the prestigious “Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability” program, delivered and certified by Harvard Business School.

Targeting executive managers, the six-day intensive program marked the sixteenth cohort of this executive education initiative, held under the Central Bank of Kuwait’s (CBK) “Kafa’a” program in collaboration with local banks and the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS).

Commenting on the achievement, **Feras Al-Darmi**, General Manager of the Human Resources Department at KIB, said: “We are incredibly proud of our colleagues for successfully completing one of the most respected executive leadership programs in the world. Their participation reflects our strategic focus on human capital development and our belief that investing in our people is the most effective way to achieve future readiness. This achievement reaffirms our commitment to ensuring our workforce is equipped with world-class expertise and global perspectives, in line with our comprehensive strategic plans.”

Al-Darmi elaborated that the Harvard program focused on two core themes: financial strategy and leadership. Through Harvard’s case-based methodology, participants were equipped with advanced tools and frameworks to navigate the complexities of today’s financial markets, drive innovation, and lead effectively in a climate of digital transformation and organizational change. The ses-



KIB celebrates Harvard Program Graduates.

sions highlighted strategic foresight, decision-making, and the growing role of executive leadership in ensuring financial sustainability.

Al-Darmi added: “This graduation marks yet another significant milestone in KIB’s journey toward realizing its vision of becoming the Islamic bank of choice in Kuwait. It reflects our long-term strategy to cultivate a highly skilled workforce that excels across all areas of Islamic banking, from Sharia-compliant financial services to exceptional customer service. By consistently investing in training and development, we enhance our service quality, drive operational performance, and build stronger, more lasting relationships with our customers. At the core of this progress are empowered employees, whose expertise forms the backbone of a distinctive and trustworthy banking experience.”

It is worth noting that KIB’s involvement in this program is part of its broader strategy to empower Kuwaiti talent and elevate the competencies of its leadership teams. In line with its dedication to social responsibility and the advancement of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, the Bank remains committed to providing its employees with impactful learning experiences that support both institutional excellence and the broader vision of advancing Kuwait’s financial sector.

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

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

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

Samsonite celebrates 115 years with launch of ‘New Streamlite’ collection

In celebration of its 115th anniversary, world luggage leader Samsonite is proud to unveil the New Streamlite, a truly noteworthy collection that not only takes the company back to its roots, but also represents its firm commitment to leading the way in the future of travel.

A Heritage of Craftsmanship and Innovation

This launch marks a bold new chapter for an iconic luggage line that has stood the test of time, captivating travelers with its timeless design and superior craftsmanship. New Streamlite is a modern interpretation of one of Samsonite’s most iconic cases – the original Streamlite from the 1940s. Launched as a signature model, the original Streamlite quickly became an icon and a cornerstone in Samsonite’s history, renowned for its groundbreaking use of lithographed paper for superior printing quality. This innovative material offered outstanding durability and a distinctive leather-look textured finish, setting a new standard as a bestseller in the luggage

category back in the 1940s.

Today, the New Streamlite pays homage to this legacy with a modern twist, blending timeless design with innovation. Its latest iteration incorporates cutting-edge materials and modern engineering to deliver unmatched functionality and durability.

“The New Streamlite is more than just luggage—it is a bridge between past and present, a celebration of our history, and a testament to how design can evolve without losing its soul.

In introducing this new classic, we wanted to preserve the artistry of its past while embracing the possibilities of modern innovation to deliver smarter and more durable designs for our consumers. We are so proud to invite you to be part of this next chapter.” says Henry Yang, Head of Design, Samsonite Asia Pacific.

A Legacy That Inspires New Journeys

New Streamlite reflects a deep respect for heritage while acknowledging the aspirations of modern consumers who seek time-

less elegance without compromising on practicality – it is designed for today’s travelers who value style and substance. The collection has been carefully designed to create the perfect balance between heritage elements, and modern design details and features.

The collection will consist of one briefcase, and two luggage sizes – the Spinner 55 and Spinner 75. All pieces will be available in 2 colours – Admiral Blue and Bermuda Green.

Key product highlights include:

■ **Aero-Trac™ Whirl Suspension Wheel** with ball bearing: The luggage is equipped with Samsonite latest wheel technology; the superior integration effectively minimizes rolling vibration and noise to deliver unrivaled stability and maneuverability on any surface made for effortless mobility.

■ **Framed Exterior Shell:** Strong and sturdy, both briefcase and luggage features a TSA approved lock frame with one-touch control panel to open the luggage for ease of access at all times.



Samsonite launches New Streamlite on 115th anniversary.

Performance marks record 58% growth

NBK-Egypt reports EGP 2 billion Net Profit in 1Q2025



Shaikha Al-Bahar

Al-Bahar:

- The robust growth underscores the bank’s strong financial standing and the agility of its business model across diverse economic landscapes
- The bank delivered solid operational performance across core sectors despite prevailing headwinds
- Upward momentum in key financial indicators reaffirms our path to strengthening NBK’s presence in its most strategic foreign market
- NBK Egypt ranks among the fastest-growing institutions in the Egyptian banking industry
- Egypt remains a pivotal growth market and a cornerstone of the Group’s long-term strategic vision
- The Egyptian economy offers vast potential, positive outlooks, and compelling opportunities for further growth



Yasser El-Tayeb

El-Tayeb:

- The bank sustains its strong performance, delivering robust growth across all key financial indicators
- We aim to reinforce our presence in both the retail and corporate banking sectors
- NBK–Egypt accelerates its expansion of digital services and advances its digital transformation agenda
- We are committed to supporting the global shift toward sustainable finance and the green economy transition

CAIRO, May 26: National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (NBK-Egypt) has reported net profits of EGP 2 billion (Equivalent to KWD 12.6 million) for the first three months of 2025, from the EGP 1.3 billion (Equivalent to KWD 11.7 million) reported in the corresponding period of 2024, showcasing an impressive growth rate of 58%.

Net Operating Income stood at EGP 3.8 billion in 1Q2025, recording an increase of 38% from EGP 2.8 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2024. In the meantime, Net Interest Income grew by 41%, reaching EGP 3.3 billion compared to EGP 2.4 billion in 1Q2024.

Meanwhile, Net Operating Income (excluding interests) increased to EGP 0.5 billion in 1Q2025, compared to EGP 0.4 billion in 1Q2024, up by 20%, while Cost to Net Operating Income dropped from 26% in 1Q2024 to 25% in 1Q2025.

Total assets reached EGP 203 billion by the end of 1Q2025, up by 4% compared to EGP 196 billion by the end of 2024. Furthermore, total loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 109 billion in 1Q2025, reflecting a growth rate of around 5% compared to EGP 104 billion recorded at the end of 2024. Additionally, customer deposits increased to EGP 164 billion by the end of 1Q2025, up from EGP 160 billion at the end of 2024, representing a growth rate of 3%. Furthermore, The Return on Average Assets (ROAA) improved to 4.1% in 1Q2025, compared to 3.6% in the corresponding period of 2024, while the Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased to 35.8% in 1Q2025, up from 33.6% in the corresponding period of 2024.

Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said: “The robust profit growth achieved by National Bank of Kuwait – Egypt in the first quarter of 2025 is a clear testament to the strength of our financial position, the resilience of our business model, and our ability to perform across varying economic landscapes.”

Al-Bahar explained that despite operational headwinds, the bank succeeded in delivering strong performance across its core business segments during the first quarter of 2025. She emphasized that the continued expansion of the bank’s balance sheet and the sustained growth in key financial indicators reaf-

firm the soundness of NBK Group’s strategic vision.

She noted that the bank remains firmly on track to further strengthen its position in what has become the Group’s most significant foreign market, given Egypt’s vast potential, positive outlook, and promising growth opportunities.

Furthermore, Al-Bahar affirmed that Egypt remains a key growth market for NBK Group and represents a cornerstone of its long-term strategic investments. She highlighted that the Group’s operations in Egypt continue to rank among its most profitable, delivering the highest returns on shareholders’ equity and assets. This performance, she noted, reflects the success of NBK’s business diversification strategy and the rapid momentum of its digital transformation journey – both of which are central to the bank’s efforts to expand its market share, particularly in retail banking, within one of the region’s most populous countries and one of its most promising investment landscapes.

She underscored the prominent footprint NBK Egypt has established as one of the fastest-growing banks in the Egyptian banking sector – an achievement clearly reflected in its robust financial indicators and the sustained growth in business performance witnessed over recent years.

Al-Bahar also noted that NBK Egypt is focused on enhancing the quality of its services, expanding its geographical presence, and reaching a broader and more diverse customer base. She highlighted the significant strides the bank has made in modernizing its digital infrastructure, information technology systems, and electronic channels – advancements that have reinforced its position as a strong and competitive player in the Egyptian banking market. This progress comes in tandem with the growing demand for banking services and the rising momentum of financial inclusion across the country.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, said: “The robust financial results achieved by the bank at the end of the first quarter of 2025 underscore the resilience and adaptability of our business model, enabling sustained growth despite the challenges posed by local, regional, and global market conditions.”

El-Tayeb highlighted that NBK Egypt’s business growth is well-balanced across all sectors, while maintaining efficiency and risk ratios aligned with

sustainable expansion. This success is attributed to the bank’s prudent policies and a flexible business model designed to effectively meet customer needs.

He emphasized that NBK-Egypt is experiencing consistent growth across all activities and business sectors while maintaining efficiency rates and risk ratios that align with this expansion. This approach ensures business sustainability and customer satisfaction alike, thanks to the bank’s prudent policies and its robust business model capable of meeting customer needs and diversifying income sources.

He further added that the majority of NBK Egypt’s income is generated from credit operations within the corporate sector, alongside contributions from retail banking. The bank’s credit portfolio encompasses a wide range of clients, including large, medium, and small enterprises, while its retail banking portfolio serves diverse customer segments. This breadth underscores the strength and diversity of the bank’s income sources.

Al-Tayeb emphasized the bank’s commitment to further strengthening its position in the retail banking sector by offering advanced services and products tailored to diverse customer segments, aiming to establish itself as a comprehensive bank that fulfills all their financial and life needs.

He also affirmed the bank’s ongoing commitment to enhancing its digital banking services, aiming to deliver a seamless and unique banking experience that enables customers to carry out most of their transactions anytime and from anywhere. He added that the bank is actively working to encourage wider adoption of digital payment channels, in line with the broader policy directions of the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt.

El-Tayeb concluded by underscoring NBK Egypt’s commitment to supporting the global shift toward sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy. He noted that the bank actively backs environmentally responsible projects that promote sustainability and rely on renewable energy sources. In addition, it continues to explore viable solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and reduce carbon emissions. He further highlighted that sustainable finance has become one of the most critical tools for safeguarding long-term financial stability.

Net interest income witnesses first q-o-q decline in eight quarters

By KAMCO Invest

GCC banking sector bottom-line growth remained steady during Q1-2025 witnessing a q-o-q growth of 7.1% and a y-o-y growth of 8.6% to reach USD 15.6 Bn during the quarter, a new record high for the sector. The increase came despite a decline in net interest income during the quarter and was mainly led by higher non-interest income, lower operating expenses as well as a sharp seasonal decline in impairments during the quarter. The decline in net interest income reflected the impact of rate cuts during the second half of 2024 with aggregate yield on credit for the GCC banking sector falling by 5 bps to 4.16% in Q1-2025 as compared to 4.21% in Q4-2024.

At the country level, the q-o-q growth remained largely positive with five out of six country aggregates showing a sequential growth in net income while the aggregate for the Kuwaiti banking sector showed a marginal decline. UAE-listed banks showed the biggest absolute growth in net profits with an increase of USD 639.6 Mn or 11.8% followed by Saudi and Bahraini banks with growth of USD 338.4 Mn and USD 72.6 Mn, respectively. The y-o-y growth in net income was also mixed with Qatar and Kuwaiti listed banks showing declines while Saudi Arabian banks showed double digit growth of 17.2%.

In terms of topline performance, aggregate banking sector revenues reached a new record high during the quarter at USD 34.6 Bn, although the growth was the smallest in four quarters at 0.04%. The flattish growth was led by a decline in revenues reported by banks in Kuwait and Oman that almost fully offset the increase in revenues registered in other GCC countries. Qatari banks posted the biggest increase in revenues with a q-o-q gain of 2.1% followed by Saudi and UAE-listed banks with distinctly smaller growths of 1.6% and 0.6%, respectively.

Lending growth remained resilient during the quarter, with net loans registering a sequential growth of 4.1% in Q1-2025, the highest in 15 months, to reach USD 2.2 Trillion. The growth reflected resilient non-oil sector growth in the region with non-oil manufacturing consistently well above the growth mark for key economies in the region. Gross loans also showed a healthy growth of 3.6% during the quarter.

Highlights - GCC Banking Sector

This report analyzes the financials reported by 56 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q1-2025. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

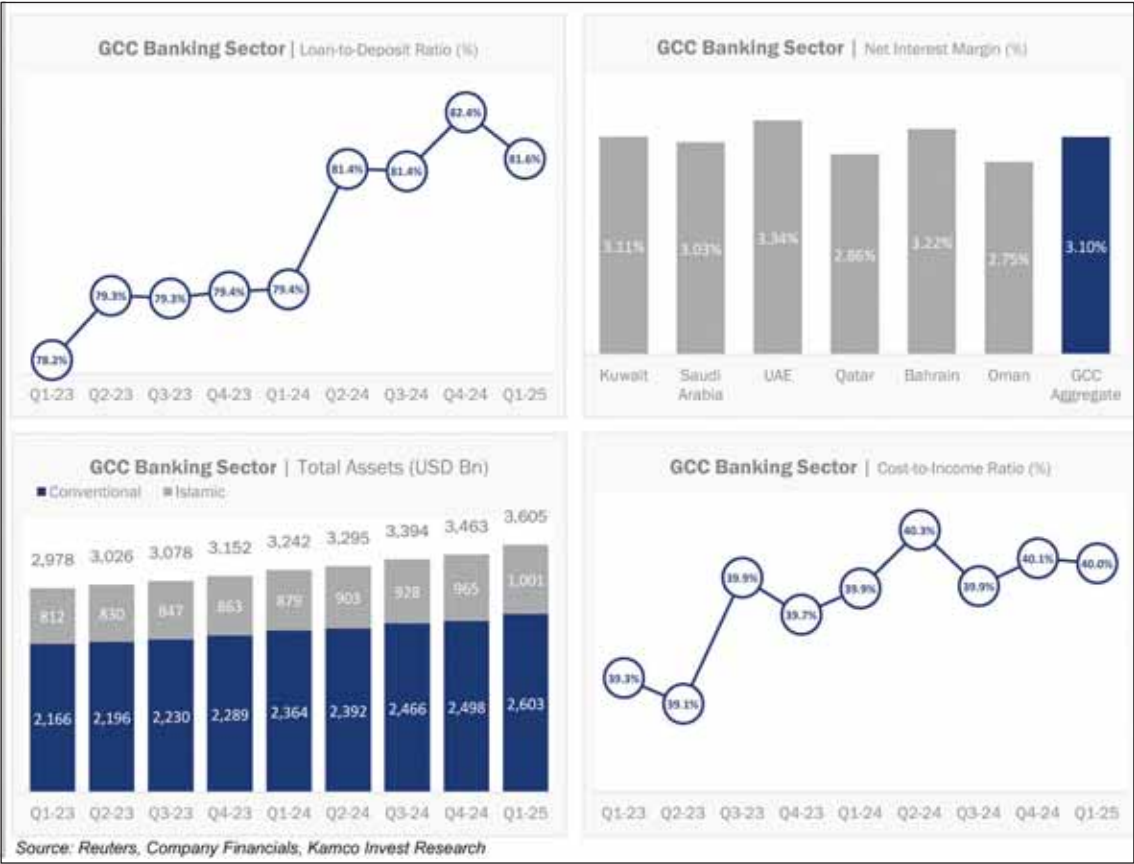
Resilient growth in lending by listed GCC banks...

Aggregate lending by listed banks in the GCC continued to show q-o-q growth during Q1-2025, backed by growth in all GCC markets, barring Kuwait that registered a marginal decline during the quarter. Aggregate gross loans at the GCC level reached a new record high of USD 2.25 Trillion, recording the highest q-o-q growth in 15 quarters at 3.6% in Q1-2025 vs. 2.4% during the previous quarter. The y-o-y growth continued to remain steady in double digits at 12.5%. Banks in Saudi Arabia reported the biggest q-o-q growth in gross loan in the GCC during Q1-2025 mainly led by healthy lending in almost all sectors. Gross loans growth for Saudi-listed banks came in at 5.5% or USD 41.9 Bn to reach USD 801.5 Bn during Q1-2025.

UAE and Qatari banks were next with lending growth of USD 20.1 Bn (+3.2% q-o-q) and USD 14.4 Bn (+3.6% q-o-q), respectively, while Banks in Oman and Bahrain registered marginal increase. Banks in Kuwait registered a marginal decline of 0.5% with gross loans reaching USD 256.9 Bn in Q1-2025. In terms of type of banks, conventional banks in the GCC registered a relatively healthy growth in lending during the quarter with gross loan growth of 4.2% to reach USD 1.6 Trillion while growth in Islamic bank lending came in at 2.4% to reach an outstanding gross loan of USD 677.9 Bn at the end of the quarter.

Financial market volatility drives growth in customer deposits...

Total customer deposits reported by listed GCC banks reached a new record high level at the end of Q1-2025 at USD 2.65 Trillion registering a q-o-q growth of 5.1%. This was one of the biggest quarterly growths recorded in the GCC and was most likely led by volatility in financial markets that led to an increase in flows towards regional banks deposits. The y-o-y growth when compared to Q1-2024 came in at 9.9%. The growth was broad-based as seen in higher q-o-q customer deposits in almost all countries in the GCC. At the country level, UAE-listed banks registered the strongest growth in deposits during the quarter that reached USD 903.8 Bn after a q-o-q growth of 6.7%. Qatari banks were next with a q-o-q growth of 6.1% to reach total customer deposits of USD 438.9 Bn followed by banks in Saudi



Arabia with a growth of 4.8%. Banks in Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait, reported slightly smaller customer deposit growth during the quarter.

Loan-to-deposit ratio declined q-o-q led by higher deposits...

The aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector remained elevated above the 80% mark at the end of Q1-2025. However, the ratio declined sequentially to reach 81.6% when compared to 82.4% in Q4-2024. The ratio has remained consistently above the 80% mark over the last four quarters and reflects improving asset utilization as well as better margins to offset pressure from lowering interest rates. At the country level, banks in Saudi Arabia reported one of the highest levels of the loan-to-deposit ratio that reached 95.5% during the quarter, registering a growth of 70 bps as compared to Q4-2024. This was also the highest loan-to-deposit ratio for the Kingdom when compared to historical levels. Banks in Kuwait also reported a healthy growth in the ratio that reached 76.6%, although it remains relatively low as compared to historical levels in Kuwait. Omani banks also registered a growth of 80 bps with the ratio at the third highest level in the GCC at 88.2%. UAE-listed banks, meanwhile, registered the biggest decline in the ratio with a fall of 220 bps to reach 67.3%, the lowest in the GCC. Qatari banks also registered a sizeable decline of 210 bps with the ratio going below the 90% mark at 89.6%.

A report from Bloomberg highlighted the pressure on increasing deposit growth in the case of Saudi banks given the tight liquidity situation. In the absence of cheaper CASA deposits, the lending growth in the Kingdom can decelerate to around 11%-12% in 2025 as compared to around 14% last year, as per Bloomberg consensus estimates. Banks in the Kingdom continue to benefit from project finance and mortgages, resulting in higher lending to these sectors while corporate overdrafts and trade finance fluctuated over the last few quarters. As per Bloomberg, the share of low-cost CASA deposits declined during Q1-2025 to 52% vs. 54% in Q4-2024 as government related entities as well as private sector shifted cash into interest bearing time deposits. This affected the banking sector’s funding cost that remained elevated at 3.83% during Q1-2025, based on our calculations. Meanwhile, data for larger UAE-listed banks showed that they have increased lending in Saudi Arabia in order to support yields and at the same time easing pressure on banks in the Kingdom.

Net interest income slides from all-time highs...

Aggregate net interest income reported by banks listed in the GCC declined from the record high levels seen in Q4-2024 registering a fall of 1.7% to reach USD 22.8 Bn during Q1-2025. The q-o-q decline came after a greater share of lending was subject to lower interest rates implemented during the 2H-2024. At the country level, the trend remained mixed with four country aggregates showing declines in net

interest income while Saudi Arabia and Qatar continued to show growth. Saudi-listed banks showed a net interest income growth of 1.9% during Q1-2025 to reach USD 7.9 Bn followed by 0.8% growth recorded by Qatari banks reaching USD 3.5 Bn. The quarter also reflected a full 100 bps cut in interest rates implemented by almost all banks in the GCC by the end of the year, barring the Central Bank of Kuwait that slashed the discount rate by 25 bps during the year. The yield on credit also showed the impact of lower interest rates reaching 4.16% for the aggregate GCC banking sector at the end of Q1-2025 as compared to 4.21% at the end of 2024.

Non-interest income drives quarterly revenue growth ...

After registering a healthy growth in revenues during the previous quarter, the sequential growth in total bank revenues for the GCC banking sector was flattish with a marginal growth of 0.04%, reaching USD 34.6 Bn during Q1-2025. The marginal increase was led by a mixed trend at the country level, with Kuwait and Oman registering declines that was more than offset by higher total revenues registered in rest of the GCC countries. Qatari banks registered the biggest growth in revenues with an increase of 2.1% followed by Saudi and UAE-listed banks with growth of 1.6% and 0.6%, respectively.

The flattish growth in total revenues was mainly led by a healthy growth in non-interest income during the quarter that more than offset a decline in net interest income. Non-interest income showed growth for the fourth consecutive quarter, registering an increase of 2.2% to reach USD 11.8 Bn during Q1-2025. Kuwaiti and Omani banks once again registered a decline in non-interest income that was more than offset by an increase in the rest of the GCC countries. UAE-listed banks recorded the biggest absolute increase in non-interest income with a growth of USD 192.9 Mn or 3.9% to reach USD 5.2 Bn, the highest in the GCC. Qatari and Saudi listed banks were next with growth of 5.2% and 1.4%, respectively.

Impairments decline by a third during Q1...

After showing increases for two consecutive quarters, impairments booked by banks in the GCC declined during Q1-2025. Total loan impairments declined by a third during the quarter to reach USD 2.1 Bn as compared to an eight-quarter high level of USD 3.2 Bn during Q4-2024. The decline during Q1-2025 was mainly led by fall in impairments in five out of six countries in the GCC. UAE-listed banks recorded the biggest decline in impairments that fell by two-thirds as few large-cap banks reported reversal of impairments during the quarter. Qatari and Saudi-listed banks also registered decline in impairments, but at a much smaller pace of 18.6% and 11.4%, respectively. On the other hand, Kuwaiti banks booked an increase in impairments during the quarter that reached USD 237.9 Mn in Q1-2025 after increasing by 14.8% vs. Q4-2024.

The steep decline in impairments also helped to lower the cost of risk for the GCC banking sector. The cost of risk (ratio of 12-month provisions vs. average loans) declined to one of the lowest levels in recent quarters to reach 0.45% for the aggregate GCC banking sector vs. 0.47% at the end of Q4-2024. The low ratio as compared to historical levels indicates recoveries, strong economic indicators as well as stable asset quality. The ratio was highest in the case of Qatari banks at 0.79% in Q1-2025 followed by Bahraini banks at 0.62%. The ratio was the lowest in the case of Saudi and Kuwaiti banks at 0.30% and 0.32%, respectively, while UAE-listed banks showed slightly higher cost of risk of 0.45%. The cost of risk has fallen for Saudi banks after peaking in 2020s led by steady economic growth, and the absence of default on payments to contractors and other sectors.

Operating expenses decline from record highs...

Aggregate operating expenses for listed banks in the GCC witnessed a sharp seasonal decline during Q1-2025 after seeing one of the fastest paces of growth during the previous quarter. Total operating expenses for the GCC Banking sector stood at USD 13.6 Bn during Q1-2025 with a q-o-q decline of 4.3% and a y-o-y growth of 10.6%. The q-o-q decline was broad-based and was mainly led by lower expenses reported in five out of six country aggregates in the GCC. Banks in UAE reported the biggest q-o-q absolute decline in expenses that dropped by USD 203.5 Mn or 4.0% to reach USD 4.9 Bn, the highest in the GCC. Saudi banks were next with an drop of USD 174.6 Mn or 3.8% to reach USD 4.4 Bn in expenses. Kuwaiti banks also reported a sharp decline of 9.9% or USD 168.9 Mn to reach USD 1.5 Bn in Q1-2025 as compared to USD 1.7 Bn in the previous quarter. Qatari banks, on the other hand, reported an increase in operating expenses by 3.7%.

The decline in operating expenses also resulted in a marginal drop in the cost-to-income ratio for the GCC banking sector by the end of Q1-2025. The ratio declined by 10 bps to reach 40.0% at the end of the quarter as compared to 40.1% during Q4-2024. The decline reflected adrop in the ratio for three of six country aggregates. At the country level, the aggregates for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait showed a decline in the ratio by 20 bps, respectively, while Qatar showed a bigger decline of 70 bps and boasted the lowest ratio at 37.7% during Q1-2025.

NIM declined led by the impact of rate cuts...

The aggregate net interest margin reported by GCC-listed banks continued to decline during Q1-2025 as a larger share of lending was repriced at the lower interest rates after the rate cuts announced during the second half of last year. The NIM at the GCC level reached 3.10% at the end of Q1-2025 falling marginally when compared to 3.14% at the end of Q4-2024. The ratio showed a broad-based decline falling in four out of six countries in the GCC. The ratio for Bahraini and Kuwaiti banks showed marginal increase during the quarter to reach 3.22% and 3.11% at the end of Q1-2025. On the other hand, banks in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman registered declines.

UAE banks once again ranked first in the GCC in terms of NIMs that reached 3.34% in Q1-2025 as compared to 3.39% during Q4-2024. The higher margins as compared to gulf peers reflect ample liquidity that allows UAE banks to capitalize on the tightening interest rate cycle with more modest asset growth. The composition of loan book in the UAE also helped in generating relatively higher NIM as personal loans accounted for close to a quarter of total banking credit facilities in the country.

GCC banking RoE continues to grow...

Aggregate return on equity (RoE) for the GCC banking sector declined marginally q-o-q during Q1-2025 from one of the highest levels recorded during Q4-2024. Aggregate RoE reached 13.6% during Q1-2025 as compared to 13.7% recorded during the previous quarter. The marginal decline in the ratio reflected a fall in the case of four out of six country aggregates in the GCC. Banks in Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Oman recorded a slight decline in the ratio during Q1-2025 while Bahrain and Saudi-listed banks showed marginal improvements. Total shareholder equity reached USD 453.0 Bn at the end of Q1-2025, registering a growth of 0.8% as compared to Q4-2024.

At the country level, UAE-listed banks once again topped in the region with the highest RoE at the end of Q1-2025 at 16.6%, although it declined slightly by 10bps for the second consecutive quarter. Saudi-listed banks were next with an RoE of 13.0%, registering a quarterly increase of 10bps followed by Qatari banks with an RoE of 12.7% recording a decline of 30 bps from the previous quarter. The biggest y-o-y growth in RoE was also seen for Bahraini banks at 20 bps reaching 9.9%. ROEs for Kuwaiti banks stayed elevated at a double-digit level of 10.6%.



Abdulla Al Sumait, Afrah Al Arbash, and, Salem Al Sarraf accompanied by members of the executive management and bank employees, met with Ahmad Marafie and participants of the academy.



Abdulla Al Sumait honoring one of the participants in the presence of Salem Al Sarraf, Afrah Al Arbash, and Ahmad Marafie.

‘Technology is at the core of banking innovation’

ABK and CODED celebrate graduation of new cohort from joint I.T. Academy



Ms. Afrah Al Arbash, GM of Human Resources at ABK

■ Afrah Al Arbash: This program is a testament to ABK's investment in the future of Kuwaiti talent.

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), in collaboration with CODED, Kuwait's first coding academy, proudly celebrated the graduation of the new cohort from the ABK x CODED I.T. Academy. This was attended by Abdulla Al Sumait, Acting GCEO, along with a series of Executive Management members. This milestone marks a significant step in ABK's ongoing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving digital economy.

The ABK x CODED I.T. Academy was launched with the mission of equipping young Kuwaiti graduates with vital technical skills, in alignment with the Central Bank of Kuwait's strategic objective to develop a highly qualified national workforce. Over a span of 23 weeks, participants underwent immersive, hands-on training in

high-demand disciplines including cybersecurity, databases, web and application development, and network and server administration.

The Rigorous program that was tailor made by CODED for ABK was designed to meet the high standards of the bank when it comes to investing in the young Kuwaiti nationals and is the biggest of its kind in Kuwait.

Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, commented, "This program is a testament to ABK's investment in the future of Kuwaiti talent. We are proud to contribute to a national initiative that not only enhances career opportunities for our youth but also strengthens Kuwait's position in the global digital landscape."

Salem Al Sarraf, Chief Information Officer at ABK, added, "Technology is at the core of banking innovation, and through this academy, we are building a future-

ready generation. The dedication and output of these graduates have exceeded expectations, and we are confident they will make valuable contributions to the tech and financial sectors."

Furthermore, Ahmad Marafie, CEO of CODED, said, "We are proud to conclude this training boot camp, which was held in collaboration with ABK, reaffirming our joint commitment to developing young national talents and equipping them with advanced technological skills."

He added "We believe that investing in Kuwaiti youth is the true investment in the future. That's why we ensured that the bootcamp offered a comprehensive and practical learning experience, combining programming, app development, cybersecurity, design, and a range of technical skills that prepare our graduates to meet the demands of both the local and global markets."

We are pleased with the outcomes achieved by the trainees and look forward to seeing their contributions in the bank's digital transformation journey and for Kuwait as a whole."

The graduation ceremony celebrated not only the accomplishments of the program's participants but also the strategic partnerships that are shaping Kuwait's digital future.

This initiative highlights ABK's unwavering commitment to investing in talent development as a cornerstone of its manpower strategy. By equipping our IT Academy graduates with future-ready skills, ABK reinforces its belief that continuous learning and development are essential to healthy, progressive careers. This initiative reflects the Bank's broader vision to build a resilient, dynamic workforce capable of driving innovation and sustaining long-term success.



Salem Al Sarraf, Chief Information Officer

■ Salem Al Sarraf: Through this academy, we are building a future-ready generation.

Euro shares gain as Trump pushes back planned 50 pct tariffs on EU

Germany's DAX added 1.7% to 24,020.48

HONG KONG, May 26, (AP): European shares have opened higher and U.S. futures also surged after U.S. President Donald Trump said he would delay a threatened 50% tariff on goods from the European Union to July 9.

Oil prices rose while Asian shares were mostly lower.

Trump announced the decision to push back the higher import duties after a call Sunday with Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, who said she "wants to get down to serious negotiations," according to the U.S. president's retelling.

Last week, Trump said on social media that trade talks with the European Union "were going nowhere" and that "straight 50%" tariffs could go into effect on June 1.

The future for the S&P 500 gained 1.3% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 1.1%.

Germany's DAX added 1.7% to 24,020.48 and the CAC 40 in Paris was 1.3% higher to 7,830.99.

Markets were closed in Britain for a holiday.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 1% to 37,531.53, while the Kospi in Seoul picked up 2% to 2,644.40.

But most other regional markets declined.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.4% to 23,282.33 and the Shanghai Composite Index fell 0.1% to 3,346.84.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei index at a securities firm Monday, May 26, 2025, in Tokyo. (AP)

nearly unchanged at 8,361.00.

Taiwan's Taiex fell 0.5% and the Sensex in India gained 0.5%.

On Friday, U.S. stocks fell as traders weighed whether Trump's latest threats were just negotiating tactics.

The S&P 500 lost 0.7% to end its worst week in the last seven. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.6% and the Nasdaq composite sank 1%.

Apple dropped 3% and was the heaviest weight on the S&P 500 after Trump said he's been pushing Apple CEO Tim Cook to move production of iPhones to the United States. He warned a tariff "of at least 25% must be paid by Apple to the U.S." if it doesn't.

Trump later clarified his post to say that all smart phones 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."

Trump has been criticizing companies individually when he's frustrated with how they're acting because of his tariffs and because of the uncertainty his trade war has created. He earlier told Walmart it should "eat the tariffs," along with China, after the retailer said it would likely have to raise prices to cover the increased cost of imports.

Deckers Outdoor, the company behind the Hoka and Uggs brands, became one of the latest companies to say all the uncertainty around the economy means it won't offer financial forecasts for the full upcoming year.

Its stock shed 19.9%, even though

the company reported a stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than expected.

Ross Stores fell 9.8% after it pulled its financial forecasts for the full year, citing how more than half the goods it sells originate in China.

On the winning side of Wall Street was Intuit, which rose 8.1% after the company behind TurboTax and Credit Karma reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Stocks in the nuclear industry also rallied after Trump signed executive orders to speed up nuclear licensing decisions, among other measures meant to charge up the industry. Oklo, which is developing fast fission power plants, jumped 23%.

Trump's latest tariff threats stirred up Wall Street after it had recovered most of the losses it had earlier taken because of the trade war. The S&P 500 dropped roughly 20% below its record at one point last month, when worries were at their height about whether Trump's stiff tariffs would cause a global recession. The index then climbed back within 3% of its all-time high after Trump paused his tariffs on many countries, most notably China.

In other trading early Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gained 43 cents to \$61.96 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added 40 cents to \$64.61 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar advanced to 142.81 Japanese yen from 142.48 yen. The euro edged higher, to \$1.1388 from \$1.1367.

‘Europe is ready to advance talks...’
Trump says he’ll delay 50% tariff on the EU until July

WASHINGTON, May 26, (AP): President Donald Trump said that the U.S. will delay implementation of a 50% tariff on goods from the European Union from June 1 until July 9 to buy time for negotiations with the bloc.

That agreement came after a call Sunday with Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, who had told Trump that she "wants to get down to serious negotiations," according to the U.S. president's retelling.

"I told anybody that would listen, they have to do that," Trump told reporters on Sunday in Morristown, New Jersey, as he prepared to return to Washington. Von der Leyen, Trump said, vowed to "rapidly get together and see if we can work something out."

In a social media post Friday,

Trump had threatened to impose the 50% tariff on EU goods, complaining that the 27-member bloc had been "very difficult to deal with" on trade and that negotiations were "going nowhere." Those tariffs would have kicked in starting June 1.

But the call with von der Leyen appeared to smooth over tensions, at least for now.

"I agreed to the extension - July 9, 2025 - It was my privilege to do so," Trump said on Truth Social shortly after he spoke with reporters on Sunday evening.

For her part, von der Leyen said the EU and the U.S. "share the world's most consequential and close trade relationship."

"Europe is ready to advance talks swiftly and decisively," she said. "To reach a good deal, we would need the time until July 9."

Sri Lanka and New Zealand discuss ways to deepen ties

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, May 26, (AP): Debt-stricken Sri Lanka hosted one of New Zealand's top ministers to discuss ways to deepen bilateral ties in areas such as trade, tourism and agriculture.

Winston Peters, New Zealand's deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister, met Sri Lanka Foreign Affairs Minister Vijitha Herath in the capital Colombo on Monday. The five-day visit by Peters is scheduled to continue until Wednesday.

The visit comes as Sri Lanka struggles to emerge from its worst economic crisis, which began in the Indian Ocean island nation three years ago.

The countries have improved relations in recent years, establishing a New Zealand embassy in Colombo in 2021 and a Sri Lankan embassy in Wellington this year.

The discussion Monday focused on advancing ties in trade, investment, agriculture, education and tourism, Herath said.

"We also explored expanding trade links in high-potential sectors such as dairy, processed food, fresh produce and discussed improving market access for Sri Lankan products," Herath told reporters.

He commended New Zealand's support in developing Sri Lanka's dairy industry, saying it had a "transformational impact on rural livelihoods."

Sri Lanka has embarked on an effort to expand and modernize its domestic dairy industry in recent years, but still produces only about 40% of the country's demand for milk and dairy products, while the balance is imported.

New Zealand is a key supplier of those dairy products, especially

milk powder. In 2024, New Zealand exported \$335 million in goods to Sri Lanka, with dairy products forming the bulk.

Trade balance between the nations favors New Zealand, which in 2024 imported goods worth \$64 million from Sri Lanka including tea, coffee, apparel and rubber products.

The discussion included reducing red tape at the border and how to "increase Sri Lanka's market access capabilities," Peters said.

"We discussed the growing number of New Zealand companies working with and investing in Sri Lanka or looking to work with Sri Lankan partners," said Peters, adding that those collaborations will benefit Sri Lanka's tourism, agriculture and healthcare sectors.

Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt, more than half to foreign creditors. It sought the help of the International Monetary Fund, which approved a \$2.9 billion, four-year bailout package in 2023 under which Sri Lanka was required to restructure its debt.

In September last year, Sri Lanka said it had concluded the debt restructuring process after reaching agreements with bilateral and multilateral creditors and private bondholders. Sri Lanka is seeking to obtain \$17 billion in debt service relief.

Sri Lanka's crisis was largely the result of economic mismanagement combined with fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with 2019 terrorism attacks that devastated its important tourism industry. The pandemic also disrupted the flow of remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad.

Powell defends Fed in Princeton speech amid onslaught of attacks from Trump

WASHINGTON, May 26, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell defended the central bank's response to the COVID-19 pandemic Sunday in a Princeton University speech in which he also praised government employees and U.S. universities, both of which have been targeted by the Trump administration.

Powell and the central bank have been subject to extensive criticism in recent weeks by President Donald Trump and a potential successor, former Fed governor Kevin Warsh.

Speaking at a baccalaureate service ahead of Tuesday's commencement, Powell, who noted he graduated from Princeton 50 years ago, specifically defended the central bank's decision to cut its key interest rate to nearly zero in response to the pandemic. It also launched an asset-purchase program that involved buying trillions of dollars of Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities,

intended to keep longer-term interest rates low.

"With little warning, economies around the world came to a hard stop," Powell said, referring to the pandemic. "The possibility of a long, severe, global depression was staring us in the face. Everyone turned to the government, and to the Federal Reserve in particular as a key first responder."

Powell also singled out longtime government employees for praise: "Career civil servants at the Fed who are veterans of previous crises stepped forward and said, 'We got this,'" he said.

Trump has subjected Powell to a stream of attacks for several months because the Fed has kept its key rate unchanged this year, after cutting it three times at the end of 2024. Trump has said there is "no inflation" so the Fed should reduce borrowing costs.

Earlier this month, Trump called Powell a "fool" for not cutting rates and last week called the Fed

chair "Too Late Powell."

Powell has not responded to Trump's attacks, which has previously won him support among Republicans on Capitol Hill.

In his Sunday speech, he defended American universities, which have come under sharp attacks from the Trump administration as research grants and other funding have been cut for several Ivy League universities, including Princeton.

"Our great universities are the envy of the world and a crucial national asset," Powell said. "Look around you. I urge you to take none of this for granted."

Late last month, Warsh, who served as one of the Fed's governors from 2006 to 2011, slammed the central bank for letting inflation spike to its highest level in four decades in 2022. Warsh is considered a leading candidate to become the next Fed chair when Powell's term ends in May 2026.

"Each time the Fed jumps into action, the more it expands its size

and scope," Warsh said in a speech on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund's spring meetings. "More debt is accumulated ... more institutional lines are crossed and the Fed is compelled to act even more aggressively the next time."

The Fed does not issue debt, but Warsh and other Fed critics argue that its purchase of Treasury bonds enabled to federal government to borrow and spend more.

Powell has acknowledged that the Fed could have moved quicker to raise interest rates once inflation began to rise in 2021. Still, on Sunday, he defended the Fed's pandemic record.

"Through the joint efforts of many, we avoided the worst outcomes," Powell said. "It is hard to imagine the pressure people face at a time like that. Their collective efforts saved our economy, and the career civil servants involved deserve our respect and gratitude; it is my great honor to serve alongside them."

What's On



The British School of Kuwait celebrates extraordinary academic success with top marks in international exams.

BSK students achieve top marks in international examinations

BSK celebrates unprecedented success in int'l exams

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The British School of Kuwait (BSK) is celebrating an extraordinary wave of academic achievements, as its students have secured top marks and accolades in international examinations across a diverse range of subjects. This remarkable performance underscores the school's commitment to academic excellence and the dedication of its students and staff.

Leading the list of exceptional achievers from BSK is Luaidh Williams, whose outstanding performance earned him the highest marks in Kuwait in Physics (OxfordAQA International A-Level), Further Mathematics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), and Mathematics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level). Williams's multi-subject success highlights the rigorous academic environment fostered at BSK.

Further demonstrating the breadth of talent within BSK,

Omar Badr (Head Boy 2023/24) achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Chemistry (Pearson Edexcel A-Level); Alifa Iqbal achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Economics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), while Angelica Mayahi achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Art, Craft & Design (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), and Harshini Kamalakannan earned the highest mark in Kuwait in Fine Art (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), showcasing the diverse talents nurtured at BSK.

In Year 12 at AS Level, Farbod Farrokhi Derakhshandeh achieved the highest mark in the world in Chemistry (Pearson Edexcel AS-Level). This truly is an exceptional achievement and Farbod has proven himself repeatedly to be an outstanding student.

Thenuwara Bandara achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in both Mathematics and Further Mathematics (Pearson

Edexcel AS-Level) while Dison Wikeratne earned the highest mark in Kuwait in Physics (OxfordAQA IAS).

The success continued at the GCSE level, with numerous BSK students achieving 'Highest mark in Kuwait' awards. Ahmed Bakrash achieved the most coveted 'Highest mark in the world' award for Biology. He also achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Information and Communication Technology.

Khaled Alshawwaf was recognised for the 'Highest mark in Kuwait' in three subjects: English Language, English Literature and History, which is an incredible achievement. Emanuela Nistor achieved 'Highest mark in Kuwait' in both Geography and French. Darlin Thanasi also achieved two 'Highest marks in Kuwait' awards for GCSE Fine Art and GCSE Design Technology.

There were an additional nine students who achieved

the 'Highest mark in Kuwait' accolade for a single subject: Zara Hasnain for IGCSE Business; Mohammed Ftayeh for IGCSE Computer Science; Abdallah Deebas and Amirah Ali for IGCSE Physics (from Pearson Edexcel and OxfordAQA respectively); Dana Abdelrahman for GCSE Fine Art; Mar-yam Abu Rouss for GCSE Music; Sebastian Jose Chaparro Brito for GCSE Spanish; Shreshtha Basu for IGCSE Economics and Akshita Sundee Singh for GCSE Graphic Communication.

These outstanding results are a testament to the dedication of BSK's students, the unwavering support of their families, and the exceptional quality of education provided by the school. The achievements reflect BSK's commitment to fostering academic excellence and preparing students for success in a globalised world, solidifying its position as a leading educational institution in Kuwait.



A group photo from the event.

Panel discussions, workshops highlight leadership and technology in safety

ASSP Kuwait hosts 12th HSSE & Loss Prevention Conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), Kuwait Chapter is an ISO-certified premier voluntary, non-profit Health, Safety, and Environmental organization that strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy, and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

As a part of its continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSP Kuwait Chapter organized the 12th International HSSE & Loss Prevention Professional Development Conference (PDC) and Exhibition on May 7 and 8, under the patronage of Minister of Oil, State of Kuwait. The conference provided platform for HSE professionals and practitioners to participate in the mega event as technical experts, presenters, exhibitors, authors, or delegates. As part of its continuing efforts to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and adverse impacts on the environment by ensuring the professional development of HSE professionals, ASSP Kuwait Chapter has been organizing PDC since the Year 2000.

The two-day conference, with the theme "Advancing HSSE: Synergizing Technology, Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship" was inaugurated by Ms. Nouf Behbehani, Acting Director of Kuwait Environment Public Authority as a representative of H.E. Minister of Oil, State of Kuwait.

The inaugural session was attended by Eng. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman of the ASSP Kuwait Chapter, Ahmad Ismael, Director for the 12th PDC, Bader Mubarak Al-Hadhrani, President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter, Eng. Hanan Al-Mohammad, Deputy Director of the Conference, Eng. Ahmad Eissa Al-Shatti, Ambassador for the Conference and several other dignitaries from oil sector companies, ministries dignitaries, BCSP representatives and other distinguished guests.

Speeches were delivered by the conference core committee members Eng. Fadhel Al Ali - Chairman of the ASSP Kuwait Chapter; Ahmad Ismael - Director for the 12th PDC; Bader Mubarak Al-Hadhrani - President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter and Head of Technical Proceedings Committee; Eng. Hanan Al-Mohammad - Deputy Director of the Conference; Eng. Ahmad Eissa Al-Shatti - Ambassador for the conference, who played a crucial role in organizing this mega international conference along with the committee heads Eng. Heba Kumainasy - Head of Conference WISE Committee; Syed Kashif Vali - Head of Certificates & Memento Committee; Mustakbeg Akbarbeg Mirza - Head of Exhibition & Sponsorships Committee; Sanjay Jaiswal - Head of Workshops & Trainings Committee; Prabeesh M.P - Head of Social media & Public Relations Committee and Abdul Gani - Venue Committee.

At the end of the inaugural ceremony, all the dignitaries were recognized with

a memento. The ceremony was concluded with a thanking speech by Eng. Ahmad Eissa Al-Shatti. Later, the dignitaries inaugurated the conference exhibition.

After the inaugural ceremony, Executive Panel Discussion - 1 on "The Evolving Role of Leaders in a Technology Driven Landscape" was held with the participation of Mohammad Hussain, Ex-CEO, EQUATE; Vladimir Reznik, Sales DIR. of Portable Gas Detection in META-Honeywell; Hassan Al-Ibrahim, (Responsible care & EH & S, Director, EQUATE) facilitated by Eng. Ahmad Al-Shatti - Team Leader, KOC, WK. Executive Panel Discussion - 2 by WISE Committee held on "Women Leadership: Resilience & Sustainability" was held with the participation of Eng. Fatema Alzeizelah, Project Engineer SAPHO; Ms. Lama Al-Oraiman, Analog Astronaut, Founder & CEO of BluDot; Ms. Mercedes Vazquez, Public Speaker, Global Women in Leadership; Eng. Nadia Khaled Al Zeabot, Certified Chief Innovation Officer- GlnI, USA; facilitated by Eng. Noor Al-Sadi - Hon. Secretary, ASSP KC, HSSE Manager, IHS Towers.

Collaboration

PPE Runway organized in collaboration with M/s. Safety & Fire Experts, M/s. Raja Trading Co. & M/s Reda Hazard Control. During the two-day conference, four-panel discussions, three symposiums, namely Health and Well-Being, Towards a Resilient Future: Synergizing Safety, Technology, and Sustainability & HSE Regulations in Kuwait, nine concurrent Technical sessions on topics related to Occupational Health & Industrial Hygiene, Process Safety, Personal Safety, Fire Safety, and Environment Management, were presented. In addition, E-posters are presented on various topics. During the two days of the Conference, 50 plus papers were presented with the participation of more than 500 Delegates, visitors, and guests.

In addition to presentations, pre- and post-conference workshops have been organized, with more than 100 delegates participating.

The HSE Champion 2025 quiz was conducted, and the prizes were distributed with the sponsorship of M/s Raja Trading Company.

An evening PDC technical session was organized with five presentations for the members of the ASSP Kuwait Chapter. Initiated with a brief introduction by Balamuralikrishna Simma, presented on "From Risk to Opportunity: Integrating ESG, Sustainability into the Core of Business" The second speaker Prabeesh M.P, presented on "Shaping your HSE Journey." The third speaker Mansour Faiz Al Maghamisi presented on "Saudi National Council For Occupational Safety and

Health (NCOSH) " The fourth speaker Mr. Mohammad Riaz presented on "The Art of Incident Investigation".

The fifth speaker DTM. Cajetan Barreto presented on "Leverage Artificial Intelligence to build Public Speaking skills".

The second-day opening session featured keynote speeches from recognized HSE professionals of organizations like ASSP, Vasudevan Narayanan, Regional Vice President- ASSP Region IX, Ashok Garlapati, Director - BCSP, USA.

The opening session of the second day was followed by the Executive Panel Discussion-3 on "HSSE Beyond Compliance: Cultivating a Culture of Excellence" held with the participation of Dr. Massimiliano Porcelli, Research Specialist & AHA ITC Coordinator, KISR; David Bibby, Vice President, ISNet World; Trevor Warren, Country Manager (Kuwait & Bahrain), Ensign Energy Services"; Dr. Ali M. Khuraibet, President of the Kuwaiti Union of Environmental establishments and companies (Government Approved Union); Facilitated by Snr Eng. Yaser Al-Hamad of KIPIC

Executive Panel Discussion-4 on "Cybersecurity in the Energy Sector: Challenges, Trends, and Solutions" held with the participation of Abdulaziz Al-Duaij, Former Oil Sector IT Consultant; Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim, CEO & Founder CyberHeal, India; Ms. Sundus Bushahri, Country Managing Director - SAP Kuwait; Dr. Hanan Al-Sharah, Academic Instructor Specialized in Entrepreneurship & AI; facilitated by Mohammad Riaz Shareef, ASSP Director Area - 3, Sr. HSE Trainer & Consultant, VCONEX, Malaysia

An exposition by more than 20 major industrial suppliers, service providers, and consultants was organized during this two-day Conference, where the delegates had an opportunity to witness the latest innovative technology and safety and fire equipment.

The Conference was endorsed by KPC and its subsidiaries E as well as supported/endorsed by many international agencies like the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC), the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP), World Safety Organization (WSO) and the Gulf Downstream Association (GDA) as the Knowledge Partner of the Conference.

The conference delegates, including managers, team leaders, consultants, specialists, engineers, physicians, coordinators, inspectors and supervisors of various disciplines from the oil sector and other companies, attended the Conference. The evening session was also conducted for the benefit of the ASSP members.



A photo from the event.

TEF marks 'KodaiVizha 2025' with festivities

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: Tamilnadu Enginners Forum (TEF), Kuwait hosted its much-anticipated cultural extravaganza "KodaiVizha 2025" on Friday, May 16 at Al Zumerida Hall, Salwa, celebrating the vibrant spirit of Tamil culture with a day full of joy, talent, and togetherness. The event welcomed members and their families for a fun-filled day that blended tradition with entertainment.

The program commenced at 8:30 AM with a respectful rendition of the Tamil Thai Vaazhu, followed by a Safety Moment presented by Eng. Arun Golden and a Thirukkural recital by Eng. Stanley. The formal Welcome Address was delivered by TEF's General Secretary, Mr. Balasubramanian, who set the tone for a day of celebration and unity.

The event was graced by prominent guests from Chennai:

- Muthukumaran, Bigg Boss title winner
- Senthil Das, renowned playback singer
- Mani Chandra, popular Dance Master and Bigg Boss fame

These celebrity guests not only entertained the audience but also judged various on-stage competitions and encouraged the participants with their insights and support.

A wide array of competitions unfolded throughout the day, including Fancy Dress Competition, Best Out of Waste Exhibition, Instrumental Music (Solo & Group), Group Dance Performances, Dumb Charades, Tamil Speech Competition, Solo Singing using Ka-

raoke and a spirited debate show "TamizhaTamizha", hosted by Mr. Muthukumaran, featuring teams divided by gender.

Special highlights included a live musical performance by Playback Singer Senthil Das, which was a treat for the audience and one of the most memorable parts of the day.

TEF had earlier conducted a series of off-stage competitions for their members over the past three weeks, including Coloring, Drawing, Rangoli, Mehendi, Short Film, Reels, Memes, Thirukkural Recital, Tamil Jam, English Elocution, and more - all leading to the grand finale performances at KodaiVizha.

Prizes were distributed to winners across all categories, recognizing their creativity, talent, and enthusiasm. Members and families were treated to breakfast from 7:30, a delicious lunch, and evening snacks and tea, making it a truly wholesome experience for all attendees.

The event was meticulously organized by the TEF-2025 Committee Members under the guidance of President Raja, whose leadership ensured the event's grand success. The day concluded around 7:00 PM with a warm Vote of Thanks delivered by Eng. Justine, acknowledging the efforts of the organizing committee, volunteers, participants, and supporters. KodaiVizha 2025 came to a joyous close at around 7:00 PM, leaving the members with cherished memories and a sense of cultural pride.

Oddball duo captivates viewers in surprise hit

‘Lilo & Stitch’ joins Cruise for monster Memorial Day weekend

LOS ANGELES, May 26, (AP): “Lilo & Stitch” teamed with Tom Cruise for a monster Memorial Day box office weekend.

Disney’s live action version of “Lilo & Stitch” earned a staggering \$145.5 million in North American theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday, the second biggest domestic opening of the year after “A Minecraft Movie.”

The movie is a faithful remake of the 2002 original’s story of a six-legged alien and a Hawaiian girl that has created a big cult following in the decades since. But the duo was no little brother and sister to the better-known figures in Disney’s parade of live-action remakes. It was second only to the \$185 million opening of “The Lion King” in 2019 and out-shot all projections, wowing box office observers.

“This overperformed by a huge

margin,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore.

“Lilo & Stitch” surpassed Cruise’s 2022 “Top Gun: Maverick” as the biggest domestic Memorial Day weekend earner ever, and global estimates put it past \$300 million.

Paramount Pictures’ “Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning,” the eighth and (probably) last appearance of Cruise as Ethan Hunt in a nearly three-decade run, was a distant second, but still brought in a franchise record \$63 million through Sunday, outearning “Mission: Impossible - Fallout,” which opened domestically to \$61 million in 2018.

And the spy thriller with Cruise’s frequent partner Christopher McQuarrie in the director’s chair for the fourth time in the franchise was the top global earner with \$127 million.

Cruise has been a relentless global



This image shows Maia Kealoha, (left), and Sydney Agudong in a still from the film ‘Lilo & Stitch.’ (AP)

promoter of his movies, and he’s been the industry’s loudest cheerleader for going to theaters. This film, like its predecessor in the series, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

“The spectacle of what Tom and McQ put on the screen, it screams theatrical,” said Chris Aronson, Paramount’s president of domestic distribution. “The product they put out just screams, ‘This has to be in

theaters.”

The previous film, 2023’s “Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One” launched with a franchise-best \$80 million over five days in a July opening, though it came in shy of industry expectations with a \$56.2 million haul over a three-day weekend.

This weekend as a whole blasted past last year, when the Memorial Day box office saw just \$132 million for all films in the Friday-through-Monday span. And it appears that it will top 2013 as the best Memorial Day the industry has had, with an estimated overall total of \$325 million.

Critics were wearying of Disney’s live action and CGI remakes of its animated classics. Mark Kennedy of The Associated Press called this “Lilo & Stitch” “utterly unnecessary.” There were signs audiences

were agreeing. “Snow White” opened to a sleepy \$43 million in March, and several similar releases were tepid.

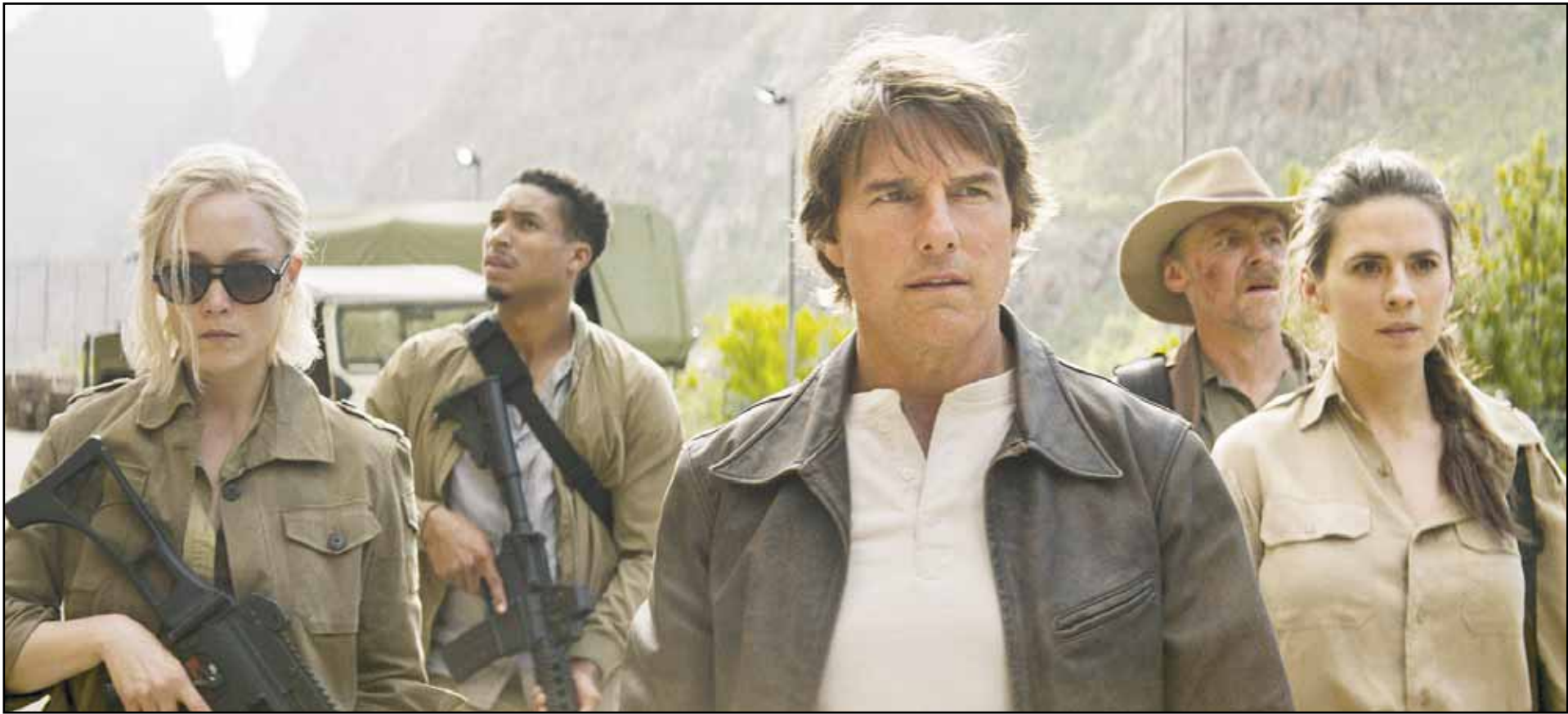
But this film tapped into a latent love for oddball pairing.

It also furthered a trend that includes “A Minecraft Movie” of PG-rated films outpacing the PG-13 movies that usually dominate, made all the more impressive by the lower kids’ ticket prices the more family-oriented films bring.

Dergarabedian credits a strong lead-up of films that have put people in theaters and remain the box office top 10, including “Minecraft,” “Sinners,” “Thunderbolts” and “Final Destination: Bloodlines.”

“I can’t think of a better lineup of films to ignite leading up to Memorial weekend to ignite the spark that got us this record-breaking holiday frame,” he said.

Film



This image shows Pom Klementieff, (from left), Greg Tarzan Davis, Tom Cruise, Simon Pegg, and Hayley Atwell in a still from the film ‘Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning.’ (AP)

Action triumphs over storytelling

Cruise goes for broke in ‘The Final Reckoning’

LOS ANGELES, May 26, (AP): Tom Cruise’s Ethan Hunt is getting a bit of a savior complex. It’s not exactly his fault after defying death and completing impossible missions time and time again. But in “Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning,” there’s a breathlessness to the naive trust from his growing band of disciples, including the US president (the formerly skeptical Erika Sloane of “Fallout,” played by Angela Bassett), and Paris (Pom Klementieff), the once delightfully fun manic assassin who has been reduced to brooding French philosopher. In a series that has often been best when it’s not taking itself too seriously, these dour developments start to feel a little unintentionally silly. And, for at least the first hour, it’s all we have to hang onto.

Perhaps this is part of the point in pitting a human man against a parasitic artificial intelligence set on inciting nuclear extinction, something we’re meant to believe has been brewing in some way since the beginning of the franchise. You can almost see the behind-the-scenes wheels turning: Gravity is kind of a prerequisite when this much is on the line, and when so much pain has been taken to link 30 years and seven movies that were certainly never meant to be connected by anything other than Ethan Hunt.

But we don’t come to “Mission: Impossible” movies for the bigger picture, and definitely not to learn what the rabbit’s foot was in the third movie. We come to be awed by the thrills and Cruise’s execution, whether he’s speeding through Paris on a motorbike, driving one-handed through Rome in a tiny old Fiat, or hanging on the outside of an Airbus, or bullet train, or helicopter, or the Burj Khalifa.

And unlike, say, the “Fast & Furious” movies, which long ago jumped the shark, the “Mission” stunts have always felt grounded in some reality and playfulness. It’s not just Cruise’s willingness

to tether himself to all forms of high-speed transportation for our enjoyment. His reactions - surprise, panic, doubt - are unparalleled. Ethan Hunt is never too cool to look unsure.

“Final Reckoning,” Christopher McQuarrie’s fourth “Mission” movie in the director’s chair, does deliver two truly unforgettable sequences. One is in a long-defunct submarine at the bottom of the sea that will have you squirming; another involves two classic biplanes careening at 170 miles per hour (274 kilometers per hour) over lush South African landscapes. Though they may induce vertigo on IMAX, these are the things that make the trip to the theater worth it. But be warned: It takes a good long while of labored exposition, manic flashbacks and Oscar broadcast-ready greatest-hits montages to get there.

Script

McQuarrie, who co-wrote the script with Erik Jendresen, might have learned the wrong lessons from the past decade of overly interconnected franchise filmmaking. Or perhaps it still seemed like the right call when this two-part finale was put into motion seven years ago. Not only does realizing one previously enjoyable character is related to and motivated by a character from the past do little to raise the stakes, it also bogs everything down.

“Final Reckoning” also overstuffs the cast with faces that are almost distracting (like Hannah Waddingham as a US Navy officer, though her American accent is quite good). Maybe it’s overcompensating for the movie’s flesh-and-bone villain Gabriel (Esai Morales), who seems to be there because Ethan needs someone to chase.

There are some fun additions to the lot: “Severance’s” Tramell Tillman as a submarine captain, as well as Lucy Tulugarjuk and

Rolf Saxon, for anyone wondering what became of the poor guy in the Langley vault.

Simon Pegg, as the capably flustered tech wiz Benji, is still great, Ving Rhames gets to flex emotionally, and Bassett really makes you believe she’s chosen a US city to destroy as an offering to “The Entity.” But many get lost in the unnatural, one-size-fits-all dialogue, which is especially true in the bizarrely sweaty Situation Room where everyone is always finishing each other’s sentences.

Maybe when you have a larger-than-life movie star, you need larger-than-life character actors. Besides, everyone knows they’re there as side players supporting the Cruise show - no one more so than Hayley Atwell as Grace, the once inscrutable pickpocket turned wide-eyed Madonna supporting and tending to Ethan. The loss of Rebecca Ferguson is acutely felt here.

The “Mission: Impossible” movies, even when they’re mediocre, remain some of the most effortlessly enjoyable cinematic experiences out there, a pure expression of “let’s put on a show.” There’s nothing else quite like it and maybe they’ve earned this self-important victory lap, though it seems to have gone to the characters’ heads.

Saving the showstopper for last will certainly leave audiences exiting the theater on a happy high note. But it’s hard to shake the feeling that in attempting to tie everything together, “Mission: Impossible” lost the plot.

“Mission: Impossible: The Final Reckoning,” a Paramount Pictures released in theaters last Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for “bloody images, action, brief language, and sequences of strong violence.” Running time: 179 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Obit

‘A trailblazer’

Feminist, author Brownmiller dies

NEW YORK, May 26, (AP): Susan Brownmiller, a prominent feminist and author of the 1960s and ‘70s whose “Against Our Will” was a landmark and intensely debated bestseller about sexual assault, has died. She was 90.

Brownmiller, who had been ill, died Saturday at a New York hospital, according to Emily Jane Goodman, a retired New York State Supreme Court justice and practicing attorney who serves as the executor of Brownmiller’s will.

A journalist, anti-war protester and civil rights activist before joining the “second wave” feminist movement in its formative years, Brownmiller was among many women who were radicalized in the ‘60s and ‘70s and part of the smaller circle that included Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and Kate Millett who radicalized others.

While activists of the early 20th century focused on voting rights, the second wave feminism transformed conversations about sex, marriage reproductive rights, workplace harassment and domestic violence. Brownmiller, as much as anyone, opened up the discussion of rape. “Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape,” published in 1975 and widely read and taught for decades after, documented the roots, prevalence and politics of rape - in war and in prison, against children and spouses. She denounced the glorification of rape in popular culture, contended that rape was an act of violence, not lust, and traced rape to the very foundations of human history.

Memoir

“Man’s structural capacity to rape and woman’s corresponding structural vulnerability are as basic to the physiology of both our sexes as the primal act of sex itself,” she wrote.

In her 1999 memoir “In Our Time,” Brownmiller likened the writing of “Against Our Will” to “shooting an arrow into a bulls-eye in very slow motion.” Brownmiller started the book in the early 1970s after hearing stories from friends that made her shriek “with dismay.” It was chosen as a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and considered newsworthy enough for Brownmiller to be interviewed on the “Today” show by Barbara Walters. In 1976, Time magazine placed her picture on its cover, along with Billie Jean King, Betty Ford and nine others as “Women of the Year.”

Brownmiller’s book inspired survivors to tell their stories, women to organize rape crisis centers and helped lead to the passage of marital rape laws. It was also received with fear, confusion and anger. Brownmiller remembered a newspaper reporter shouting at her, “You have no right to disturb my mind like this!”

Brownmiller was also faulted for writing that rape was an assertion of power that helped all men and was strongly criticized for a chapter titled “A Question of Race,” in which she revisited the 1955 murder in Mississippi of Black teen Emmett Till. Brownmiller condemned his gruesome death at the hands of a white mob but also blamed Till for the alleged incident that led to his death: whistling at Bryant’s wife, Carolyn Bryant.

‘You attain a level of mastery’

Spelling Bee champs say it set them up for success

NEW YORK, May 26, (AP): Joanne Lagatta arrived at the University of Wisconsin in 1995 with a flawless academic record and an achievement on her resumé that she didn’t like to talk about - but that no other undergrad on the sprawling Madison campus could claim: Scripps National Spelling Bee champion.

The bee winner in 1991 at age 13, Lagatta nonetheless struggled adjusting to life outside her rural hometown of Clintonville, Wisconsin - until she got a push from a professor who was a devoted spelling-bee fan.

“I went in thinking I was a smart kid who had won a National Spelling Bee, and I must be able to compete with the highest-level academic kids. I signed up for a bunch of advanced classes I clearly had no place being in. I thought I was going to fail my chemistry class,” Lagatta says. “I went to my professor. He stared me down and said, ‘I know who you are. I know what you’re capable of. You are not failing my class.’ He pushed me through that class. I certainly didn’t get an A, but I didn’t fail.”

Lagatta, now 47, turned out fine. She’s a neonatologist at Children’s Wisconsin, a hospital in Milwaukee. And like many former champions of the National Spelling Bee - which celebrates its 100th anniversary when it starts Tuesday at a convention center outside Washington - she says the competition changed her life for the better because it taught her she could do hard things.

Winners of the spelling bee aren’t celebrities,



In this June 3, 1999 file photo Nupur Lala, 14, from Tampa, Fla. reacts upon winning the 72nd annual National Spelling Bee in Washington after correctly spelling ‘logorrhea.’ (AP)

exactly. Those who competed before it was televised by ESPN - it now airs on Scripps-owned ION - aren’t often recognized by strangers. But they have to accept being known forever for something they accomplished in middle school. Google any past bee champion, and it’s one of the first things that pops up.

Many past champions have remained involved with the bee. Jacques Bailly, the 1980 champion, is the bee’s longtime pronouncer. Paige Kimble, who won a year later, ran the bee as executive director from 1996-2020. Vanya Shivashankar, the

2015 co-champ, returns each spring as master of ceremonies, and her older sister, Kavya, is one of several former champs on the panel that selects words for the competition.

Even for those former champs who’ve moved on entirely, the competition has remained a cornerstone of their lives. The Associated Press spoke to seven champs about their membership in this exclusive club.

Anamika Veeramani, the 2010 champion, graduated from Yale in three years and got her medical degree at Harvard. A resident in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, she is training to become a craniofacial surgeon, and the focused and disciplined approach that led her to the spelling bee title has been a throughline in her life since.

“You attain a level of mastery over a subject that you wouldn’t have otherwise, and that feeling of mastery is very similar across fields,” the 29-year-old Veeramani says. “Once you know a subject well enough, you’re able to really just play with that subject and come up with things, and there’s just a joy and delight in what you’re doing. ... I’m going to spend the rest of my career in surgery chasing that.”

Molly Baker was never uncomfortable about her past as the 1982 spelling-bee champion, and in the right context, she’s happy to bring it up - as an icebreaker or a standout line on her resumé.

“Oh, I was never cool,” Baker says. “I knew people who were state tennis champs, and they were, you know, in their own way equally as

nerdy. I would always joke about it, that I was queen of the dorks.”

Baker, 55, worked as a staff writer at the Wall Street Journal and wrote a book, “High Flying Adventures in the Stock Market.” She’s now a freelance journalist, and she says there’s no question her spelling bee title helped her career.

“One summer in college I was an intern at, it was called ‘Real Life with Jane Pauley.’ It was an evening magazine TV news show,” Baker says. “And that, I’m sure, was partly a result of having been interviewed on the ‘Today’ show by Jane Pauley in 1982. I was not shy about saying that when I applied.”

Jon Pennington knew he was socially awkward when he won the bee in 1986. He even wore his mother’s bulky sunglasses on the bee stage because the bright lights bothered him.

When he was 40, he was diagnosed with autism, a condition he proudly embraces.

“I did not win the National Spelling Bee in spite of my autism. I did not win the National Spelling Bee by triumphing over my autism. I won the National Spelling Bee because of my autism,” the 53-year-old Pennington says. “For me, it almost felt like if you hear a chord played on a piano but there’s a dissonant note in that chord, that’s what it felt like when you came across a misspelling.”

Pennington, who lives in Minneapolis with his wife and dog, worked for years in corporate human resources and is now working as a writer, collaborating on an as-yet unpublished biography of songwriter Eden Ahbez.

From custom prosthetics to personalized drugs

How 3D printing changing the future of health care

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

By Anne Schmitz and Daniel Freedman
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Three-dimensional printing is transforming medical care, letting the health care field shift from mass-produced solutions to customized treatments tailored to each patient's needs. For instance, researchers are developing 3D-printed prosthetic hands specifically designed for children, made with lightweight materials and adaptable control systems. These continuing advancements in 3D-printed prosthetics demonstrate their increasing affordability and accessibility. Success stories like this one in personalized prosthetics highlight the benefits of 3D printing, in which a model of an object produced with computer-aided design software is transferred to a 3D printer and constructed layer by layer. We are a biomedical engineer and chemist who work with 3D printing. We study how this rapidly evolving technology provides new options not just for prosthetics but for implants, surgical planning, drug manufacturing and other health care needs. The ability of 3D printing to make precisely shaped objects in a wide range of materials has led to, for example, custom replacement joints and custom-dosage, multidrug pills.

Three-dimensional printing in health care started in the 1980s with scientists using technologies such as stereolithography to create prototypes layer by layer. Stereolithography uses a computer-controlled laser beam to solidify a liquid material into specific 3D shapes. The medical field quickly saw the potential of this technology to create implants and prosthetics designed specifically for each patient. One of the first applications was creating tissue scaffolds, which are structures that support cell growth. Researchers at Boston Children's Hospital combined these scaffolds with patients' own cells to build replacement bladders. The patients remained healthy for years after receiving their implants, demonstrating that 3D-printed structures could become durable body parts. As technology progressed, the focus shifted to bioprinting, which uses living cells to create working anatomical structures. In 2013, Organovo created the world's first 3D-bioprinted liver tissue, opening up exciting possibilities for creating organs and tissues for transplantation. But while significant advances have been made in bioprinting, creating full, functional organs such as livers for transplantation remains experimental. Current research focuses on developing smaller, simpler tissues and refining bioprinting techniques to improve cell viability and functionality. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between laboratory success and clinical application, with the ultimate goal of providing viable organ replacements for patients in need. Three-dimensional printing already has revolutionized

the creation of prosthetics. It allows prosthetics makers to produce affordable custom-made devices that fit the patient perfectly. They can tailor prosthetic hands and limbs to each individual and easily replace them as a child grows. Three-dimensionally printed implants, such as hip replacements and spine implants, offer a more precise fit, which can improve how well they integrate with the body. Traditional implants often come only in standard shapes and sizes. Some patients have received custom titanium facial implants after accidents. Others had portions of their skulls replaced with 3D-printed implants. Additionally, 3D printing is making significant strides in dentistry. Companies such as Invisalign use 3D printing to create custom-fit aligners for teeth straightening, demonstrating the ability to personalize dental care. Scientists are also exploring new materials for 3D printing, such as self-healing bioglass that might replace damaged cartilage. Moreover, researchers are developing 4D printing, which creates objects that can change shape over time, potentially leading to medical devices that can adapt to the body's needs. For example, researchers are working on 3D-printed stents that can respond to changes in blood flow. These stents are designed to expand or contract as needed, reducing the risk of blockage and improving long-term patient outcomes. Three-dimensionally printed anatomical models often help surgeons understand complex cases and improve surgi-

cal outcomes. These models, created from medical images such as X-rays and CT scans, allow surgeons to practice procedures before operating. For instance, a 3D-printed model of a child's heart enables surgeons to simulate complex surgeries. This approach can lead to shorter operating times, fewer complications and lower costs. In the pharmaceutical industry, drugmakers can three-dimensionally print personalized drug dosages and delivery systems. The ability to precisely layer each component of a drug means that they can make medicines with the exact dose needed for each patient. The 3D-printed anti-epileptic drug Spritam was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2015 to deliver very high dosages of its active ingredient. Drug production systems that use 3D printing are finding homes outside pharmaceutical factories. The drugs potentially can be made and delivered by community pharmacies. Hospitals are starting to use 3D printing to make medicine on-site, allowing for personalized treatment plans based on factors such as the patient's age and health. However, it's important to note that regulations for 3D-printed drugs are still being developed. One concern is that postprinting processing may affect the stability of drug ingredients. It's also important to establish clear guidelines and decide where 3D printing should take place - whether in pharmacies, hospitals or even at home. Additionally, pharmacists will need rigorous training in these new systems. (AP)



Nurse Préjoste Mexandra administers medicine to a child at the Caring for Haitian Orphans with AIDS orphanage, in Balan, Plaine-du-Nord, Haiti, Wednesday, May 21. (AP)

'It's like a suicide'

Haitians with HIV protest USAID cuts, med shortage

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, May 26, (AP) A video showing dozens of people marching toward the office of Haiti's prime minister elicited gasps from some viewers as it circulated recently on social media. The protesters, who were HIV positive, did not conceal their faces - a rare occurrence in a country where the virus is still heavily stigmatized. "Call the minister of health! We are dying!" the group chanted. The protesters risked being shunned by society to warn that Haiti is running out of HIV medication just months after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump slashed more than 90% of USAID's foreign aid contracts and \$60 billion in overall aid across the globe. At a hospital near the northern city of Cap-Haitien, Dr. Eugene Maklin said he struggles to share that reality with his more than 550 HIV patients. "It's hard to explain to them, to tell them that they're not going to find medication," he said. "It's like a suicide." More than 150,000 people in Haiti have HIV or AIDS, according to official estimates, although nonprofits believe the number is much higher. David Jeune, a 46-year-old hospital community worker, is among them. He became infected 19 years ago after having unprotected sex. "I was scared to let people know because they would point their finger at you, saying you are infecting others with AIDS," he said. His fear was so great that he didn't

tell anyone, not even his mother. But that fear dissipated with the support Jeune said he received from nonprofits. His confidence grew to the point where he participated in Monday's protest. "I hope Trump will change his mind," he said, noting that his medication will run out in November. "Let the poor people get the medication they need." Patrick Jean Noël, a representative of Haiti's Federation of Associations of HIV, said that at least five clinics, including one that served 2,500 patients, were forced to close after the USAID funding cuts. "We can't stay silent," he said. "More people need to come out." But most people with HIV in Haiti are reluctant to do so, said Dr. Sabine Lustin, executive director of the Haiti-based nonprofit Promoters of Zero AIDS Goal. The stigma is so strong that many patients are reluctant to pick up their medication in person. Instead, it is sent via packages wrapped as gifts to not arouse suspicion, Lustin said. Lustin's organization, which helps some 2,000 people across Haiti, receives funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While their funding hasn't been cut, she said that shortly after Trump was sworn in, the agency banned prevention activities because they targeted a group that is not a priority. By that, Lustin said she understood they were referring to gay men.

Foreign universities roll out attractive offers

Scientists hit by job, grant losses in US find new opportunities abroad

NEW YORK, May 26, (AP) As the Trump administration cut billions of dollars in federal funding to scientific research, thousands of scientists in the US lost their jobs or grants - and governments and universities around the world spotted an opportunity. The "Canada Leads" program, launched in April, hopes to foster the next generation of innovators by bringing early-career biomedical researchers north of the border. Aix-Marseille University in France started the "Safe Place for Science" program in March - pledging to "welcome" US-based scientists who "may feel threatened or hindered in their research."

Australia's "Global Talent Attraction Program," announced in April, promises competitive salaries and relocation packages.

"In response to what is happening in the US," said Anna-Maria Arabia, head of the Australian Academy of Sciences, "we see an unparalleled opportunity to attract some of the smartest minds here."

Invention

Since World War II, the US has invested huge amounts of money in scientific research conducted at independent universities and federal agencies. That funding helped the U.S. to become the world's leading scientific power - and has led to the invention of cell phones and the internet as well as new ways to treat cancer, heart disease and strokes, noted Holden Thorp, editor-in-chief of the journal Science. But today that system is being shaken.

Since President Donald Trump took office in January, his administration has pointed to what it calls waste and inefficiency in federal science spending and made major cuts to staff levels and grant funding at the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, NASA and other agencies, as well as slashing research dollars that flow to some private universities. The White House budget proposal for next year calls to cut the NIH budget by roughly 40% and the National Science Foundation's by 55%.

"The Trump administration is spending its first few months reviewing the previous administration's projects, identifying waste, and realigning our



In this photo provided by the University Health Network, Ontario Premier Doug Ford, (center), stands with other government and UHN officials in custom hockey jerseys during the announcement of the 'Canada Leads' program in Toronto on Monday, April 7, 2025. (AP)

research spending to match the American people's priorities and continue our innovative dominance," said White House spokesperson Kush Desai.

Already, several universities have announced hiring freezes, laid off staff or stopped admitting new graduate students. On Thursday, the Trump administration revoked Harvard University's ability to enroll international students, though a judge put that on hold. Research institutions abroad are watching with concern for collaborations that depend on colleagues in the US - but they also see opportunities to potentially poach talent.

Threats

"There are threats to science ... south of the border," said Brad Wouters, of University Health Network, Canada's leading hospital and medical research center, which launched the "Canada Leads" recruitment drive. "There's a whole pool of talent, a whole cohort that is being affected by this moment." Universities worldwide are always trying to recruit from one another, just as tech companies and businesses in other fields do. What's unusual about the current moment is that many global recruiters are targeting researchers by promising something that seems newly threatened: academic freedom. European Commission President

Ursula von der Leyen said this month that the European Union intends "to enshrine freedom of scientific research into law." She spoke at the launch of the bloc's "Choose Europe for Science" - which was in the works before the Trump administration cuts but has sought to capitalize on the moment.

Eric Berton, president of Aix-Marseille University, expressed a similar sentiment after launching the institution's "Safe Place for Science" program. "Our American research colleagues are not particularly interested by money," he said of applicants. "What they want above all is to be able to continue their research and that their academic freedom be preserved."

It's too early to say how many scientists will choose to leave the US. It will take months for universities to review applications and dole out funding, and longer for researchers to uproot their lives.

Plus, the American lead in funding research and development is enormous - and even significant cuts may leave crucial programs standing. The US has been the world's leading funder of R&D - including government, university and private investment - for decades. In 2023, the country funded 29% of the world's R&D, according to the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Innovation, policy

China advances rare disease care

HAIKOU, May 26, (Xinhua): At the entrance of the 2025 International Conference on Rare Diseases, visitors are greeted by a poignant painting: a young girl lies in a hospital bed as a nurse approaches with a cart filled with medication. Outside the window, birds soar gracefully against a backdrop of blue sky that stretches endlessly over the open sea.

The artwork is by Liu Xinrou, a Chinese girl with an inherited disorder of bone growth. A small plaque beside her painting notes: "Pseudoachondroplasia. Orthopedic surgeries at age 8 and 15."

Liu's painting offers a quiet but powerful message -- even amid pain and uncertainty, there is strength and resilience. Her story mirrors the experiences of more than 300 million people worldwide living with rare diseases.

From Friday to Sunday, experts from across the globe, including clinicians, researchers, pharmaceutical representatives, policymakers, and patient advocates, convened in Haikou, capital of China's southern island province of Hainan, to discuss the future of rare disease diagnosis and care.

Globally, more than 7,000 rare diseases have been identified, yet only about 5 percent have approved treatments. In China alone, over 20 million people are affected by rare conditions.

Progress

However, progress is now clearly taking shape. As China works to fulfill its pledge of ensuring health for its 1.4 billion people, patients like Liu are starting to experience tangible improvements.

At the conference, Ma Xudong, an official with China's National Health Commission, highlighted a multifaceted strategy that is making significant strides in steadily advancing care for patients with rare diseases. Key measures include the creation of a national rare disease list, expanded insurance coverage, improved clinical guidelines, and accelerated drug development.

China has established a collaborative hospital network covering all provincial-level regions. The network, now comprising 419 hospitals, facilitates case referrals, telemedicine, and data sharing -- helping to reduce the average diagnostic time for rare diseases from four years to less than four weeks, while slashing costs by 90 percent.

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Hyderabad beats Kolkata by 110 runs

Bottom side Chennai ends season in style by routing top team Gujarat

AHMEDABAD, India, May 26, (AP): Dewald Brevis scored 57 runs off 23 balls as bottom side Chennai Super Kings wrapped up its Indian Premier League season in style by routing first-placed Gujarat Titans by 83 runs.

Also, Sunrisers Hyderabad scored 278-3 - the third-highest total in IPL history - and beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 110 runs. Heinrich Klaasen hit an undefeated 105 off 39 balls.

Chennai won the toss and scored 230-5 in its 20 overs with Devon Conway hitting a 35-ball 52. In reply, Gujarat was dismissed for 147 in 18.3 overs.

Gujarat, Punjab Kings, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Mumbai Indians have already secured playoff spots.

Gujarat finished with 18 points from 14 games but its spot in the top two is under threat. Second-placed Punjab (17 points) and fourth-placed Mumbai (16 points) meet Monday in their last game, and Bengaluru (17 points) faces Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday.

Opener Ayush Mhatre gave Chennai a

good start with a 17-ball 34. The big runs came from two overseas batters - Conway providing the base, with Brevis attacking toward the end.

Conway hit six fours and two sixes. Brevis got four fours and five sixes. Urvil Patel (37 off 19) and Ravindra Jadeja (21 not out off 18) also contributed as Chennai put up a strong total.

Gujarat's chase started badly - reduced to 30-3 in 4.3 overs - and its middle-order disappointed despite the chance to take an insurmountable points lead at the top. Sai Sudharsan top-scored with 41 off 28 balls.

Pacer Anshul Kamboj finished with 3-13, and wrist spinner Noor Ahmed 3-21. Ravindra Jadeja, who opened the bowling, took 2-17.

Chennai won four of its 14 IPL games.

Klaasen, the league's most expensive overseas player, hit nine sixes and seven fours in his second IPL century to help Hyderabad pile on a massive 278-3 in 20 overs.

In reply, Kolkata was bowled out for 168 in 18.4 overs in Delhi.

Both teams had already been eliminated.

Hyderabad finished sixth with six wins in 14 games. It was a seventh loss in 14 games for 2024 champion Kolkata, which finished eighth.

Openers Abhishek Sharma (32 off 16) and Travis Head put on 92 off 41 balls after Hyderabad opted to bat first.

Head scored 76 off 40 deliveries, with six sixes. Klaasen was promoted to No. 3 and combined with Head to add 83 off only 35 balls for the second wicket.

Klaasen got to 50 from only 17 balls. The South African shared a partnership of 83 off six overs with Ishan Kishan (29 off 20).

Klaasen reached his ton off 37 balls.

In reply, Kolkata's Sunil Narine scored 31 off 16 balls but didn't get support from the top-order.

Kolkata was down to 70-5 in eight overs and the chase was pretty much done. Manish Pandey top-scored with 37 off 23 balls.

Jaydev Unadkat (3-24), Harsh Dubey (3-34) and Eshan Malinga (3-31) did the damage.



Chennai Super Kings' Dewald Brevis bats during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, India, Sunday, May 25, 2025. (AP)

Qalandars complete record chase to win 3rd PSL crown



Lahore Qalandars' players and officials pose for photo with trophy after winning the final of Pakistan Super League T20 cricket match against Quetta Gladiators, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

Raza arrives just in time from England

LAHORE, Pakistan, May 26, (AP): Zimbabwe all-rounder Sikandar Raza flew in from England, arrived 10 minutes before the toss, and went on to lead Lahore Qalandars to its third Pakistan Super League title in four years.

Lahore's record successful chase saw it beat Quetta Gladiators by six wickets with a ball to spare in a thrilling final.

Raza had played in a test match against England at Nottingham, which Zimbabwe lost by an innings on Saturday.

He made a vital unbeaten 22 off seven deliveries on Sunday while Kusal Perera smashed a 31-ball 62 not out to carry Lahore to 204-4 in 19.5 overs after Quetta had chosen to bat first and scored 201-9.

Quetta mystery spinners Abrar Ahmed (1-27) and Usman Tariq (1-38) had squeezed Lahore, and when Raza arrived, the home team still needed 57 runs off the final 20 balls.

Raza showed no signs of fatigue after multiple flights to reach Lahore and smashed fast bowler Mohammad Amir for a four and a six off the first two balls he faced.

With eight runs needed off Faheem Ashraf's final three balls, Raza smacked the fast bowler over

point for a six before hitting the winning boundary wide of mid-on.

Earlier, Pakistan's rising star T20 batter Hasan Nawaz smashed 76 off 43, and Ashraf (28) hit Salman Mirza for 23 runs off the final over to take Quetta past the 200-run mark.

The fast bowling duo of captain Shaheen Shah Afridi (3-24) and Haris Rauf (2-41) pegged back Quetta in the death overs when they claimed four wickets in the space of two runs but Ashraf's late onslaught gave Quetta hope to claim its first PSL title in six years before Raza stole the show.

Lahore won the PSL titles in 2022 and 2023, and with its third win, it equaled Islamabad United's record of three PSL titles.

Griffin hangs on at Colonial through tough final round, beats Schmid by 1

Cabrera makes it two majors in week, rallying past Harrington at Senior PGA

BETHESDA, Md., May 26, (AP): Angel Cabrera sensed his opportunity when Padraig Harrington - playing a few groups ahead - faltered on the 15th hole with a double bogey.

"I was like, 'This is my turn,'" Cabrera said through a translator.

While Harrington was erratic down the stretch, Cabrera was steady, shooting a 3-under 69 on Sunday for a one-stroke victory in the Senior PGA Championship at Congressional. It was his second senior major in a week.

Cabrera, the 2007 U.S. Open and 2009 Masters champion, won the rain-delayed Regions Tradition on Monday in Alabama, which was the Argentine's first senior major. Six days later at Congressional, he trailed Harrington by two strokes after Harrington rolled in a long birdie putt on No. 14.

But Harrington double bogeyed No. 15, and Cabrera birdied that same hole a short while later to take the lead. After a bogey by Harrington on the par-4 18th, Cabrera needed only a bogey on that hole and got it.

Cabrera spent 20 months in an Argentine prison after he was accused of making threats toward former partners. He was released on parole in August 2023 and won a PGA Tour Champions event last month before missing the cut



Ben Griffin celebrates after winning the Charles Schwab Challenge golf tournament at Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas. (AP)

at the Masters.

Cabrera finished at 8-under 280. Harrington (68) and Thomas Bjorn (68) tied for second, with Retief Goosen (71), Jason Caron (71) and Stewart Cink (70) another stroke back.

Defending champion Richard Bland tied for 14th at 2 under.

Cabrera was part of a four-way tie

for first at the beginning of the day, but Harrington - who was two strokes back - was in great shape after birdieing seven of the first 14 holes in the final round.

His high point came on No. 14 after a strange situation in which there appeared to be some bird excrement on the green next to his ball - which he

was able to deal with after a rules consultation.

Ben Griffin has his first individual PGA Tour victory a month after winning a team event, hanging on to beat Matti Schmid at Colonial after breaking a tie with his co-leader for good on the first hole.

Griffin shot a 1-over 71 to finish at 12-under 268 in the Charles Schwab Challenge, one shot ahead of Schmid as both struggled through the final round on a warm day with wind gusts around 30 mph at Hogan's Alley.

Schmid forced Griffin to make a 4-foot par putt on the 72nd hole after his chip from the deep rough behind the green went in for birdie. Griffin saved par from the rough, standing in the bunker while choking way down on the club on his chip. Schmid shot 72.

Griffin and Schmid, the 27-year-old German seeking his first tour win in his 79th start, had matching scores each of the first three days.

Schmid was the one who surged in front early in the third round, taking a three-shot lead. Griffin had a five-shot edge after just five holes in the final round, and finally let Schmid get within a stroke with a two-shot swing at 16 before getting the lead back to two with a hole to play.

'This thing is fresh from Florida'

Chastain wins Coca-Cola 600 from last place in backup car

CONCORD, N.C., May 26, (AP): Ross Chastain stood on top of his No. 1 Chevrolet in his white fire suit and held a watermelon above his head as the crowd at the Charlotte Motor Speedway roared with delight in anticipation.

Then, with a sense of ferocity, Chastain slammed it to the track, smashing it into pieces.

Chastain began smashing watermelon as a way to uniquely honor his family's legacy as eighth-generation watermelon farmers. The tradition began after his first NASCAR Cup Series race and has continued after every win as his own unique way to celebrate his strong ties to watermelon farming.

But this win was extra special, his first at a crown jewel event.

"This thing is fresh from Florida," Chastain said with a laugh. "It just came up from our family farm. Man, for the Florida watermelon industry, that's your watermelons you're getting right now, so y'all better go buy a dang watermelon to celebrate. I want to see videos of smashed watermelons flood the socials. I want to see it. Florida watermelons are in season."

Chastain passed two-time Daytona 500 winner William Byron with six laps left and won the Coca-Cola 600 on Sunday night at Charlotte Motor Speedway, capping a remarkable comeback and becoming the first driver to win the event after starting at the back of the field.

NASCAR said he's the first driver to win from an official starting position of last since Bobby Allison at the Richmond Fairgrounds in 1969.

William Byron won the first three stages and led 283 laps, but surrendered the lead to Chastain, who started in 40th place and led just eight laps in his first NASCAR Cup Series victory of the year.

It was a huge boost to Trackhouse Racing, and a bitter disappointment for Byron, the Charlotte native who had signed a four-year contract extension Friday with Hendrick Motorsports. Byron has finished in the top three in the last three Coca-Cola 600s without winning.

Chastain said his crew stayed up all night to build him another car after a crash in practice on Saturday.

"To drive on that final run in the 600 and pass two cars that had been better than me all night, wow," said Chastain, who celebrated by standing on his car and slamming a watermelon down on the track as has become his tradition following a victory. "Holy cow! We just won the 600."

Chastain said the plan was the fix the original car after the wreck, but NASCAR intervened. It might have been a good thing they did.

"We thought we were going to have to fix the primary, and NASCAR said, No, there is something bent (so go build another one)," Chastain said. "That's how we did that."

Chastain's crew chief, Phil Surgen, said it was "deflating" when a tire went down and Chastain crashed during practice because their original car had been running so well, finishing fastest among the field in 10-, 15-, and 20-lap averages.

But he said more than 30 employees came into the nearby race shop to work on the car, with nearly a dozen staying until 2:30 a.m. to get it ready to race. The car they used was slated to be a backup car at the Nashville race, but didn't have an engine and needed several other additions.



Ross Chastain celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Union claims league title: Union Saint-Gilloise sealed its first Belgian league title in 90 years with a 3-1 win over Genk.

Promise David scored twice and Franjo Ivanovic added another goal to help the small Brussels club secure its first league title since 1935.

Union entered the final round of the championship playoffs with a one-point lead and after near misses in the past three seasons.

In 2022 and in 2024 Union led the regular season standings then faded in the playoffs to let Club Brugge take the title. The epic 2023 title race had a dramatic ending when a helicopter carrying league officials and the trophy had to turn away from Union's tiny Joseph Marien Stadium.

Only Union and Brugge were in title contention on Sunday. Brugge drew 1-1 with Antwerp to finish in second place, three points behind.

Union had a slow start to the season under new coach Pocognoli, after more sales of star players for eight-figure fees. Led by goals from David, Union moved up to third in the regular season standings.

This time, Genk was the leader that collapsed in the playoffs. Union surged with a run of five clean sheets, including a 1-0 win at Brugge on April 24, to go top for the first time. (AP)

□ □ □

Sparks beat Sky: Kelsey Plum hit six 3-pointers and finished with 28 points, Azura Stevens scored a season-high 24 and the Los Angeles Sparks beat the Chicago Sky 91-78 on Sunday to snap a three-game skid.

Los Angeles (2-3) won for the first time since beating the expansion Golden State Valkyries in its season opener.

Odyssey Sims scored 12 points for the Sparks. Dearica Hamby added 10 points, six rebounds, eight assists and a career-high six steals.

Angel Reese led Chicago (0-3) with 13 points, 12 rebounds, four assists and two steals. Kamilla Cardoso scored 12 points on 6-of-9 shooting. Courtney Vandersloot and Rebecca Allen added 11 points apiece.

Stevens hit a 3-pointer a little more than three minutes into the second half that gave the Sparks the lead for good at 51-48. She made another 3 about three minutes later to spark a 9-0 run that pushed the lead to 15 with two minutes left in the third quarter.

Reese scored inside to cap a 10-0 run and trim the Sky's deficit to 76-71 with 7:06 left in the game. Sarah Ashlee Barker answered with a jumper. Steven made back-to-back baskets and Plum hit a pull-up jumper to push the lead to 13 with 4:59 to go.

The Sky play at Phoenix on Tuesday. The Sparks wrap up a three-game homestand Tuesday against Atlanta. (AP)

Kuwait clinches 7 medals across various age categories

ALSAYER Group’s sponsorship powers the success of inaugural West Asian Laser Run Championship in Kuwait



Participants pose with officials after the closing ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: ALSAYER Group is proud to have supported and sponsored the 2025 West Asian Laser Run Championship, held at Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in Al-Nasr Sports Club, Kuwait. The event concluded with great success for the host nation, as Kuwait won 7 medals across various age categories.

This inaugural West Asian Laser Run Championship was the first official competition of its kind in Kuwait, held under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency Mr. Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. His generous support played a vital role in making this championship a landmark moment for the region’s modern pentathlon movement. Organized by the West Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation (WAMPC) in partnership with the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation, the championship brought together 66 athletes male and

female from seven countries: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq, and Kuwait. Across the event, 11 competitions were held, and 33 medals were awarded to the top performers.

The event was driven by the dedication of over 30 young volunteers, including founding members of the club and federation, demonstrating the strong leadership and community commitment of Kuwait’s youth. Distinguished attendees included WAMPC President Hussein Al-Abdulwahab, Vice President Nasser Al-Waleed, and ALSAYER Group delegates: Ibrahim Al Fouzan, Senior Business Director and Vice Chairman of Sustainability Committee, Abdulaziz AshurSaid Kiradoh, Group Chief Financial Officer, Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence and the Corporate Excellence Team.

“At ALSAYER Group, we believe in the power of sport to shape future

leaders and build bridges across cultures,” said Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence at ALSAYER Group. “Supporting initiatives like the West Asian Laser Run Championship reflects our long-standing commitment to youth development, community engagement, and national pride. We are honored to play a part in empowering young athletes on their journey to excellence.”

As a company deeply committed to supporting youth and sports development in the region, ALSAYER Group is proud to have contributed to the success of this event. We extend our sincere appreciation to all participating athletes, organizers, volunteers, and esteemed guests whose presence and efforts made this championship a true celebration of sporting excellence. Together, we move forward building a stronger, more connected sporting future for our youth, both regionally and internationally.



Left-right: Winners of West Asian Laser Run Championship celebrate on the podium.

Juve secures Champions League berth with wild victory at Venezia

Fiorentina leapfrogs Lazio into sixth

ROME, May 26, (AP): Igor Tudor was hired in March to make sure that Juventus qualified for the Champions League.

He fulfilled the goal - albeit barely - when the Bianconeri won 3-2 at Venezia in the final round of Serie A to finish fourth. “There were a lot of emotions, incredible adrenaline,” Tudor said. Juventus finished one point ahead of Roma, which won 2-0 at Torino to secure a Europa League spot.

Venezia, which was relegated along with Empoli, surprised Juventus with an early goal from Daniel Filia in the second minute.

Kenan Yildiz and Randal Kolo Muani struck back to put Juventus in control after 31 minutes.

Ridgesciano Haps equalized after the break for Venezia before Man-

uel Locatelli restored Juve’s lead with a penalty.

“We definitely made some mistakes during the season. But the Champions League was one of our goals and we were able to make it,” Locatelli said.

Tudor replaced the fired Thiago Motta and was given a contract through the end of the season. There was speculation that his contract included an automatic renewal in case of Champions League qualification but Juventus now appears interested in rehiring Antonio Conte, who just led Napoli to the title.

“You need to accept this coaching life, where you’re always in limbo,” Tudor said.

Juventus will now prepare for the upcoming Club World Cup in the United States.

“The choice needs to be made before the Club World Cup,” Tu-

dor said.

Leandro Paredes converted a first-half penalty and Alexis Saelemaekers headed in after the break for Roma in the final match of Claudio Ranieri’s coaching career.

Roma was 12th when Ranieri was hired in November and the Giallorossi lost just once during the second half of the season.

“I told the lads that we should fight until the last second,” Ranieri said. “We’re not going to be in the Champions League and I’m very sorry about that for the fans. But we gave everything.”

Ranieri was involved in the choice of Roma’s new coach, who has not been revealed yet, and will move into an advisory role.

“When the president wants to announce it, it’s only right that he says it,” Ranieri said, referring

to Roma’s American owner, Dan Friedkin.

Fiorentina leapfrogged Lazio into sixth to take the Conference League spot with a 3-2 win at 10-man Udinese.

Moise Kean scored the decisive goal for Fiorentina with a deflected shot.

Lazio lost 1-0 at home to 10-man Lecce, which got a first-half goal from Lassana Coulibaly, and was left out of Europe.

Daniel Maldini scored two goals in a minute for Atalanta in a 3-2 loss to Parma.

First, Maldini slid in to redirect a cross then he scored with a long-range effort.

Substitute Jacob Ondrejka scored two late goals for Parma to make sure his team avoided relegation.

Empoli lost 2-1 to Hellas Verona.

Ten Hag replaces Alonso at Leverkusen

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, May 26, (AP): Bayer Leverkusen has appointed former Manchester United coach Erik ten Hag as Xabi Alonso’s replacement.

The Bundesliga club said Monday that the 55-year-old Ten Hag had signed a contract through 2027, making his return to coaching after he was fired by United in October.

He inherits a team that finished second in the Bundesliga and reached the German Cup semifinals this season. Leverkusen won both competitions under Alonso the year before and became the first unbeaten Bundesliga champion ever. Alonso left to take over as Real Madrid coach.

Ten Hag is “an experienced coach with impressive sporting successes,” Leverkusen sporting director Simon Rolfes said in a statement, adding that “Erik demonstrated his quality as a coach with the ensuing success at Manchester United under difficult circumstances at times.”

Ten Hag won two domestic cups in his two and a half years in charge at United but was fired after the club’s worst start to a season, with four defeats in nine league

games.

United’s subsequent troubles under Ten Hag’s successor Ruben Amorim helped restore its former coach’s reputation. Ten Hag was United’s fifth manager in nine years when he took over.

“I’ve come to Leverkusen to continue with the ambition shown in recent years. It’s an attractive challenge to set up something together in this period of change and develop an ambitious team,” Ten Hag said in a club statement.

He previously succeeded in bringing the good times back to Ajax, leading the biggest team in the Netherlands to three Eredivisie titles and the Champions League semifinals in entertaining style in 2019.

Ajax reportedly wanted to bring Ten Hag back as Francesco Farioli’s replacement after his team’s late-season meltdown allowed PSV Eindhoven clinch the Eredivisie title.

At Leverkusen, Ten Hag will be charged with maintaining the team’s upward trajectory under Alonso, though he will likely need to do it with a much-changed side.



Lazio’s Taty Castellanos, center, in action during the Serie A soccer match between SS Lazio and US Lecce at Rome’s Olympic stadium, Italy. (AP)

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NEWS



Toluca's Alexis Vega raises the winner's trophy after beating America on the Mexican soccer league final match at Nemesio Diez stadium in Toluca, Mexico. (AP)

Sports

KBA approves financial reports and budget

Kazma seeks revenge as Kuwait Club eyes fourth consecutive win in rivalry

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

KUWAIT CITY, May 26: The semifinals of the Basketball Federation Cup will tip off today at the Federation Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex, promising two intense showdowns. At 5:00 pm, Kuwait Club will face Kazma followed by defending champion Al-Qadsia against Al-Sulaibikhat at 7:00 pm.

The opening match is expected to be the most competitive of the evening, as Kuwait Club and Kazma reignite a rivalry that has seen them clash in the decisive league finals three times – all victories for Kuwait Club. Those past wins were attributed to Kuwait Club's cohesive performances on both ends of the court.

However, today's contest poses a new challenge for team captain Hussein Al-Khabbaz and key players including Hamad and Mohammed Adnan, Imran Johar, Turki Hamoud, Alexander Al-Ghais, Fahad Al-Dhafiri, Abdulrahman Al-Juma, Yousef Al-Hamdan, and Musaed Al-Otaibi. They will also rely heavily on the contributions of their professional trio: Jakar Sampson, Robert Lowry, and Jamal Jones.

Kazma, last season's Cup runner-up, enter the semifinals determined to clinch a title, especially as the Federation Cup marks the final championship opportunity this season. Much depends on the fitness of captain Ahmed Al-Balushi, who missed crucial games during the league title race. The team's prospects will also hinge on the performance of Abdulrahman Al-Sahou, Youssef Burhama, Abdullah Ibrahim, and Hamad Al-Ali, in addition to the sharpshooting abilities of American Johnny Brahmanskel and the inside presence of fellow professionals Joan Johnson and Dwayne Jackson.

In the second semifinal, national coach Fahad Barjas will look to orchestrate a surprise upset as Al-Sulaibikhat takes on powerhouse Al-Qadsia. The defending champion enters the match with strong momentum, boasting high technical and physical readiness and superior individual talents across their roster.

On the administrative side, the General Assembly of the Kuwait Basketball Association convened at the Association's headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. During the meeting, members approved both the financial and administrative reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025. The Assembly also gave the green light to the Association's 2025–2026 work plan and proposed budget. Twelve of the thirteen affiliated clubs were present, with only Yarmouk Club absent.



The Kuwait Basketball Association General Assembly takes place at Association's headquarters.

Knicks trim series deficit after epic Game 3 win over Pacers



New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns (32) reaches for a rebound next to Indiana Pacers center Myles Turner (33) during the first half of Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals of the NBA basketball playoffs in Indianapolis. (AP)

Towns drops 20 in 4th to rescue New York

INDIANAPOLIS, May 26, (AP): With the New York Knicks teetering on the brink of a third consecutive playoff loss and Jalen Brunson stuck on the bench with five fouls after three quarters, Karl-Anthony Towns took matters into his own hands.

The Knicks needed everything he could muster - even on a sore knee.

Towns scored 20 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter as New York erased yet another 20-point deficit, and Brunson helped close out the 106-100 victory Sunday night to take Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals, making it three straight wins for the road team.

"It's a true test when you're down 20-plus," Towns said. "Tonight was the kind of night where he had to have that never-say-die attitude."

New York still trails in the series 2-1 with Game 4 set for Tuesday night in Indianapolis.

But with the Knicks trailing by 16 midway through the third quarter and still down 10 entering the fourth, the dreaded 3-0 deficit looked like a real possibility-until Towns asserted himself by driving to the basket and muscling his way into position for more scores. He opened the fourth with a 3-pointer before making two layups to get New York within 82-79.

Brunson's layup with 7:10 to play finally gave New York

an 89-88 lead, and New York trailed only two more times the rest of the night. The Knicks never led by more than four until the final free throws with 2.6 seconds left. Brunson finished with 23 points despite spending most of the night in foul trouble.

"They put me in great spots to succeed, and I just wanted to capitalize on the opportunity," Towns said after also grabbing 15 rebounds. "All of us are just trying to do whatever it takes to win, get ourselves back in the game. We wanted to put ourselves in a position where, at the end of the game, we found ourselves with a chance of winning."

Tyrese Haliburton led the Pacers with 20 points and six assists. Myles Turner added 19 points as Indiana dropped to 0-4 all-time when playing on the same day the Indianapolis 500 was run. Two of those losses came to the Knicks.

Team officials handed out gold-and-blue T-shirts with the words "Vroom Baby" to celebrate the rare Pacers and racers doubleheader, and the winner, Spain's Alex Palou, made the short trek across town where he received during the second quarter, as Indiana started pulling away to a 55-35 lead late in the first half. Six players from Indiana's 2000 Eastern Conference champs, including Hall of Famer Reggie Miller, also were inside Gainbridge Fieldhouse.

But after rallying twice from fourth-quarter deficits to take the first two games in New York, and losing their top defender, Aaron Nesmith, with a sprained right ankle in the third quarter, Indiana failed to seal this one.

Alonso officially takes over as Madrid's coach and vows to follow in the footsteps of Ancelotti

MADRID, May 26, (AP): Xabi Alonso officially took over Real Madrid's coaching job on Monday, vowing to follow in the footsteps of Carlo Ancelotti and saying he has "a good feeling" about the team's future under his command.

Madrid announced the hiring of Alonso on Sunday, a day after the club paid tribute to Ancelotti at the team's final Spanish league match of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Ancelotti is taking over the Brazil job after four mostly successful seasons in his second stint with the club.

"I'm here to take over from Carlo Ancelotti, who was my coach and is a great person," Alonso said. "He is a coach who left his mark on me and had a great influence. Without his guidance, I probably wouldn't be here. I'll pick up his legacy with pride and honor of now being in the position that Carlo was before, and I hope to live up to the expectations and lead this club to achieve all of its objectives."

He said he will try to instill his own style at Madrid, but did not give many hints about his tactics. He emphasized the desire to play ambitiously and with a proac-

tive attitude.

"You have to be flexible in soccer today, you have to be dynamic," Alonso said. "I can move pieces during a game or before a game. I have an idea already of what I'm going to do, but it can change. What I want is for the team to transmit emotion, energy, to show that we want to be ambitious."

Alonso said it felt good returning home to Madrid, where he won six titles as a player from 2009-2014.

"Without a doubt this is a very special day for me," Alonso said. "I'm very happy to be at a place where I feel is my home. I may have been a few years away, but the link with Real Madrid and Madrid fans has always existed."

The ceremony to introduce Alonso began with the showing of a video with some of Alonso's highlights as a player for Madrid, Spain and other clubs where he played as a midfielder. There were also highlights of his stints as a coach at Madrid's youth squads, Real Sociedad's "B" team and with Bayer Leverkusen,

which he left after this season. The 43-year-old Alonso, who arrives on a contract until June 2028, watched the video alongside his wife and other invitees.

"Today is a very special day for all of us, it's the start of a new phase," Madrid president Florentino Pérez said. "Because we have a new coach who already is one of the best in the world and who represents the values of Real Madrid because he knows exactly what this shield and this shirt means."

Alonso is returning to Real Madrid to take over a club that failed to meet expectations this season. It won the UEFA Super Cup title but mostly struggled after that, failing to lift another trophy and losing all four "clásico" matches against rival Barcelona, which clinched a league and cup double.

"We have a great team, with fantastic players," Alonso said. "I'm convinced that I can achieve important things, worthy of Real Madrid. I want to inspire the fans, make them proud of the team that they see on the field. I have a good feeling that we can start something great."

Fritz loses to Altmaier in first round at French Open

Swiatek and Alcaraz get off to good starts



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz returns the ball to Italy's Giulio Zeppieri during their first round match of the French Tennis Open, at the Roland-Garros stadium, in Paris. (AP)

PARIS, May 26, (AP): Iga Swiatek, who has struggled lately, and Carlos Alcaraz, who has not, got off to good starts in their French Open title defenses Monday, recording straight-set victories to reach the second round.

Swiatek was up first in Court Philippe-Chatrier and defeated 42nd-ranked Rebecca Sramkova 6-3, 6-3. Swiatek compiled 25 winners and 17 unforced errors in the 1-hour, 24-minute contest.

Alcaraz needed only about a half-hour more than that for a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over Giulio Zeppieri, an Italian qualifier who is ranked 310th. Alcaraz won all 14 of his service games, saving the three break points he faced, at Court Suzanne-Lenglen.

Both Swiatek and Alcaraz sat in the Chatrier stands a day earlier to watch the farewell tribute to 14-time champion Rafael Nadal - and both active players wore the rust-colored T-shirts that read "Merci Rafa" distributed to spectators. Swiatek has often talked about her admiration for Nadal; Alcaraz is considered the 22-time Grand Slam champion's heir apparent.

Alcaraz is seeded No. 2 behind Jannik Sinner, who was scheduled to play Monday night, and is coming off a clay-court title at the Italian Open a little more than a week ago. Alcaraz beat Sinner in the final there.

Monday's result gave Alcaraz 28 wins in his past 30 matches on red clay, including going 7-for-7 a year ago at Roland-Garros. One of the losses came against Novak Djokovic in the gold-medal match at last year's Paris Olympics, held at the same site as the French Open.

Swiatek has slipped to No. 5 in the rankings, her first time out of the top two spots in about three years. She hasn't reached a final at any tournament since collecting her third consecutive championship - and fourth in five

years - in Paris in 2024.

The 23-year-old from Poland extended her French Open unbeaten streak to 22 matches and is trying to become the first woman to with four trophies in a row at the tournament in the professional era, which began in 1968. Monica Seles and Justine Henin also won three straight titles at Roland-Garros.

U.S. Open runner-up Taylor Fritz lost in the first round of the French Open as the tournament's No. 4 seed on Monday, eliminated 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 by 66th-ranked Daniel Altmaier of Germany.

Altmaier broke Fritz's big serve five times at Court Simone-Mathieu and ended the Californian's 15-match Grand Slam winning streak against players ranked outside the top 50.

Fritz's exit followed another by a top-10 American: No. 9 Emma Navarro was bounced from the women's bracket earlier Monday.

In September, Fritz lost the U.S. Open trophy to Jan-nik Sinner, becoming the first U.S. man to reach a major final since Andy Roddick in 2009. In Paris, Fritz was the highest-seeded American man at the French Open since Roddick was No. 3 in 2007.

While hard courts are Fritz's preferred surface, he did have a run to the second week on the red clay of Roland-Garros a year ago, making it into the fourth round before losing to Casper Ruud.

This is not Altmaier's first big win at the French Open. He beat No. 8 seed Matteo Berrettini there in 2020, and Sinner in 2023.

Emma Navarro, the ninth-seeded American who reached the U.S. Open semifinals last September, bowed out quickly in Paris, eliminated 6-0, 6-1 in just 57 minutes by Jessica Bouzas Maneiro of Spain.